

Epistle 361

by George Fox

George Fox's Epistle 361 emphasizes the necessity of abiding in Christ to experience true liberty and discernment in the faith amidst false teachings.

Scripture: Matthew 28:18, John 1:17, John 8:32, John 15:4, 1 Corinthians 15:45, Galatians 5:1, 2 Timothy 3:5, Hebrews 12:2, 1 John 1:7, Revelation 3:10

Topics: "Abiding In Christ", "True Liberty"

Description

George Fox preaches about the importance of abiding in Christ through His grace, truth, and light, emphasizing that without Jesus, we can do nothing and that true Christians must walk in the light, grace, and truth to have His presence and strength. He warns against false teachers who have the form of godliness but deny its power, urging believers to turn away from them. Fox highlights the significance of true liberty found in the gospel, faith, and spirit of Christ, guiding believers to stand firm in the freedom that comes from Jesus. He encourages believers to seek heavenly unity, worship in spirit and truth, and hold fast to the pure faith and liberty provided by Christ.

Transcript

My dear friends,--The peaceable truth live in, which you have received from Jesus your saviour, that by the grace and truth that is come by him [John 1:17] into your hearts, you may all abide in Christ, and grow up in him, from whence it comes. For, as Christ saith, 'Except you abide in me, ye cannot bring forth fruit [John 15:4f].' And there is none that abide in Christ, but who abide in his light, grace, and truth.

And Christ saith, 'Without me ye can do nothing [John 15:5];' who is the heavenly and spiritual man, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven [1 Cor 15:45,47], who hath all power in heaven and earth given to him [Mat 28:18].

So without this truth, and grace, and light, and power, and spirit of Christ Jesus, which you receive from him, you cannot abide in him. This brings you to abide in him, and to have his presence to strengthen you, so that through him you may do all things which he commands [John 15:14] and requires of you.

And now, dear friends, to the light, and grace, and truth in your hearts you were turned at the first, and now as you do all walk in the light, and are established in the grace and truth, in your hearts, minds, and souls, it brings you to Christ, the heavenly spiritual rock and foundation, and to build upon him [1 Cor 10:4/Mat 7:24f] , with the light, grace, and truth that come from him; and then you will see such as Christ

speaks of, that did profess him and preach him, but did not abide in his light, grace, and truth, so not in Christ Jesus; and such Christ will not know, that do not abide in him, with his light, grace, and truth, from whence it comes.

For the grace, truth, and light that cometh by Jesus, this makes inward christians, and the Jews inward [Rom 2:29], who have the praise of God, though may be not of men [1 Cor 4:5/John 12:43].

And the apostles in their days, had to do with several sorts of people, some that preached Christ of envy, and some of contention, and some of good will [Phil 1:15f]; notwithstanding, the apostles rejoiced that Christ was preached [Phil 1:18]. But then after a time, when many had gotten the form of christianity and godliness, and denied the power thereof [2 Tim 3:5], he exhorted the faithful, that kept their habitation [Jude 1:6] in Christ Jesus, to turn away from such [2 Tim 3:5].

And yet such were under the name of christians, else they could not have the form of godliness.

And likewise, such as got the good words and fair speeches, with which they deceived the hearts of the simple [Rom 16:18], these were got to be preachers among the christians.

And the heady, high-minded, and fierce despisers [2 Tim 3:4], these had the form of godliness, though they denied the power of it, which they were turned from.

So they that lived in the light, grace, and truth, and the power and spirit of Christ, were to turn away from such, that had the form of godliness, and denied the power.

And such as these, that had the form of godliness and denied the power, were come farther than such as taught for doctrine the rudiments and precepts of the world, and doctrines of men [Isa 29:13/Col 2:20,22]; or the professing Jews and Gentiles, that stood against the name of Christ, which were altogether unbelievers of the very form of godliness of the new covenant.

And likewise such that were doting about questions, and in strife about words [1 Tim 6:4], vain janglers [1 Tim 1:6], and disputers, men of corrupt minds [1 Tim 6:5], and those that were unruly, and vain talkers [Tit 1:10]; many of these were teachers, who were troublers of the churches in the apostles' days.

And those that Peter and Jude cried against, that were come so far as Balaam, to prophesy [2 Pet 2:15f], and Cain to hear the voice of God [Gen 4:8?], and a Cora, who came out of Egypt; many of these got up to be teachers, having high swelling words [2 Pet 2:18, Jude 1:16], whom the apostle judged amongst the fallen angels, and the old world, and Sodom [2 Pet 2:4-6]; who were turned to be mockers [Jude 1:18?].

And such like as these were they, that separated themselves, being sensual, having not the spirit [Jude 1:18]. And so it seems these did set up separations from the apostles and saints in their days.

And the apostle declareth, how 'the Lord saved his people out of the land of Egypt, and afterwards destroyed them that believed not; and the angels that kept not their first state, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. [Jude 1:5f]

And so these, who went under the name of christians, that had been convinced, and had got a form of godliness and christianity, that kept not their first state, in the light, and grace, and truth, and by it their habitation in Christ Jesus, they came under the chain of darkness.

And therefore, friends, you see how the apostle was troubled with the false apostles [2 Cor 11:13] and satan's messengers [2 Cor 11:15/12:7], that got among the Corinthians, and how they despised the apostle.

And likewise what was got up among the Romans and Galatians, and in the days of John, as he manifests in his epistles.

And therefore, how careful were the true apostles, of the saints, in their watching over them!

For John said, 'If ye walk in the light, as he is in the light, then have we fellowship one with another [1 Jn 1:7]. And that ye also may have fellowship with us; for truly our fellowship is with the Father and his son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full [1 Jn 1:3f].'

For many may talk of the light, and preach the light; but to walk in the light, that is it which grafts into Christ Jesus, and brings to live in him, which talking of him doth not.

And as the apostle said, 'As every one hath received Christ Jesus, so walk in him [Col 2:6].' And the sayers of the word, and not the doers, deceived their own souls.

So there may be many sayers of the word, deceivers of their own souls and others, and preachers of Christ Jesus. But the doers of the word, and the walkers in Christ Jesus, are they that are accepted of the Lord.

And again, as the apostle saith, 'The word of faith was nigh them, in their hearts and mouths, to obey it and do it; and that was the word of faith which they preached [Rom 10:8].'

'And the light shined in their hearts, to give them the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus [2 Cor 4:6].'

'And the anointing which you have received of him, abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, that is true, and is no lie; and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him [1 Jn 2:27]. And these things I have written unto you,' saith the apostle, 'concerning them that seduce you [1 Jn 2:26].'

So here may all the inward christians in the grace, light, truth, power, and spirit of Christ Jesus, see what the apostles exhorted the saints unto, that they might be preserved in their day, and so by the same now, from them that deceived their own souls and others.

And so by this light, this word, the anointing, grace, truth, power and spirit of Jesus Christ in the heart, mind, and soul, must all the saints be guided now, by which they may come to be inward christians, and have a habitation in Christ Jesus, and so built upon him the living rock and foundation, as the saints were in the apostles' days; and so to have salt in yourselves [Mark 9:50], and the leaven in your own meal [Mat 13:33], and the pearl in your own field [Mat 13:44-46], and your lamps lighted in your own tabernacles, and nourished with the heavenly oil. So that you may put a difference betwixt the clean and the unclean [Lev 10:10], and what you are to touch, and what you are not. And that no man or woman may look below heaven for their bread, to nourish their souls and inward man, and below God and Christ for their springs, which by continuing in the light, which is the life in Christ the word, by which all things were made [John 1:3] and created, they shall have a spring from him the fountain, springing up in them to eternal life [John 4:14]; so they shall have both the upper and nether springs [Josh 15:19] to nourish the plant that God hath

planted.

And such as came out of Egypt with Moses, and after rebelled against the Lord, and Moses, and the law and the prophets, were a greater grief to Moses and the prophets than the heathen.

And likewise, those that came to be christians, (called,) and had got the form of godliness, came to be a greater grief to the apostles than the world; for their work was to seek to destroy that which the apostles had begotten, and them that they had turned to Christ. And therefore well might the apostle exhort the saints 'to turn away from such that had the form of godliness and denied the power [2 Tim 3:5];' and therefore he told the saints, 'The kingdom of heaven stands not in words, but in power [1 Cor 4:20];' and therefore they were to know one another in the spirit and power; and that is the internal knowledge. And their fellowship was to be in the holy ghost, and their unity in the spirit, which was the bond of peace [Eph 3:4]; and their fellowship was to be in the gospel [Phil 1:5], which was the power of God [Rom 1:16]. So an everlasting fellowship in the everlasting power of God, that will out-last the power of darkness; for it was before it was. And also, their unity was to be in the precious divine faith, which Christ was the author and finisher of [Heb 12:2]; the mystery of which was held in a pure conscience [1 Tim 3:9]; and their worship was in the spirit of God, and in truth [John 4:24]. So you may see what a heavenly unity and fellowship, and a worship Christ and the apostles set up.

And the saints in the light, grace, truth, spirit, and the power of God, the gospel, lived in it, and walked in it. So with the light, grace, truth, power, spirit, and word of life in the heart, all hold Christ the head, who is the head of all things, by whom all things were made, who is the treasure of the heavenly saving wisdom and knowledge [Isa 33:6?], who is called the second Adam, the Lord from heaven [1 Cor 15:45/47].

And therefore, all are to have their knowledge and their wisdom from him the treasure, by the light, grace, truth, power, and spirit that comes from him, it leads you to him your treasure of heavenly wisdom and knowledge; by which knowledge you know God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, which is life eternal to know [John 17:3].

And now, my dear friends, concerning true liberty.

The true liberty is in the gospel, the power of God, which the devil and his instruments, with his false liberty, cannot get into.

And in this gospel is the saints' fellowship, which the devil with all his false fellowships cannot get into, nor find it; for it is a mystery. Likewise, true liberty is in the faith, which Jesus Christ is the author and finisher of [Heb 12:2], which gives victory [1 Jn 5:4] over that which separated man and woman from God, and by which they have access to God [Rom 5:2] again. And in this holy, pure, divine, precious faith, that is held in the pure conscience [1 Tim 3:9]; which pure conscience hath its pure, holy, divine, precious liberty, in this holy, divine, precious faith, which works by love [Gal 5:6], (and not as the dead faith doth, which works by enmity,) which is the fruit of this holy, pure, divine faith; and in it is the divine, pure, holy, and precious liberty and freedom. So here is the divine, holy, pure, and precious liberty in this faith, which works by love, that is the victory over that which brought man and woman into bondage, and slavery, and false liberty. So this living faith is the victory over all dead faiths and false freedoms and liberties; which holy, divine, pure, and precious faith, the saints were and are to contend for [Jude 1:3], which Christ the Holy One is the author and finisher of. So in this holy, divine, pure, and precious faith, they have a holy, divine, pure, and precious unity and liberty, which is the victory over the enmity and the adversary, the destroyer, and all his instruments; and they cannot come within this holy, divine, pure, and precious unity and liberty,

which is in the faith; for it is a mystery, and gives victory over him, and the access to the pure God, and to Christ the author of it; which all are to stand fast in that liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free [Gal 5:1], who is the heavenly and spiritual man, the second Adam [1 Cor 15:45/47].

For the bondage, captivity, and thralldom, false freedom, and false liberty, were and are in old Adam, in transgression; and the true liberty is that which Christ the pure and holy one makes free in; and this is a pure holy liberty, which Christ makes, and sets his people free in; in which they are all to stand fast over all the false liberties and freedoms, which are bondage.

Also, the true liberty is in the truth, which if the truth hath made you free [John 8:32], then are you free indeed [John 8:36], from him that abode not in the truth, in whom there is no truth [John 8:44]. So then there is no true freedom nor liberty in him; and he in whom there is no truth, cannot come into this freedom and liberty, which is in the truth, but remains in the false.

For the Jews in the days of Christ, boasted of their liberty and freedom, though they were in bondage both inwardly and outwardly; and that they were of Abraham their father [John 8:39]; but Christ told them, 'the devil was their father, and his lusts ye will do [John 8:44].'

And also in the days of the apostles, many of the false christians boasted of their liberty; but who was overcome by them was brought into bondage.

And the apostle was so careful of his liberty in Christ Jesus, that such as came to spy it out [Gal 2:4], and were somewhat in conference; but they added nothing to him; and unto such he would not give place by subjection [Gal 2:5], but rather reproved them; and directed every one to walk according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to them [2 Cor 10:13].

And also true liberty is in the light, and grace, and the spirit which comes by Jesus, which by believing in the light, they are grafted into Christ [Rom 11:17], and so into true liberty and freedom, and so are entered into the rest, out of the toil of old Adam; for they are grafted into him, who was before old Adam.

For unbelievers in the light are grafted into old Adam, in transgression. And the believers in the light [John 12:36], (which is the life in Christ [John 1:4],) are grafted into Christ the word, by which all things were made [John 1:1,3] and created. So here is perfect, true freedom and liberty.

And likewise, the true liberty and freedom is in the grace which brings salvation, and not destruction; and teaches to live godly, not ungodly; and soberly, not unsobberly; and righteously, not unrighteously; and teaches to deny the world [Tit 2:11f], and not to cleave to it, and follow it.

This grace establishes the heart, and seasons the words [Heb 13:9/Col 4:6]; the fruits of its liberty and freedom will manifest itself.

And also, the true liberty in the pure holy spirit of God and Christ doth baptize and plunge down that which is gotten up by transgression in man and woman, and circumcises and cuts off the body of death and sin in the flesh [Col 2:11/Rom 7:24], that is gotten up in man and woman by transgression, and mortifies and kills that which would grieve, vex, or quench the motions of the pure spirit of God [Eph 4:30/Isa 63:10/1 Th 5:19]; so that in this holy, pure spirit, of this pure God and Christ, is the holy pure freedom and liberty over all bondage and false liberties and freedoms.

And the fruits of this pure spirit are pure love, righteousness, and godliness, patience, temperance, and humility [Gal 5:22f]; by which spirit all are made to drink into one spirit [1 Cor 12:13]; so that all are the living wells, that have their living water from God and Christ [John 4:10], their true and living fountain; and in which spirit they have a holy and spiritual fellowship, in this baptizing, mortifying, circumcising spirit [1 Cor 12:13/Rom 8:13/Rom 2:29], yea, one with another [1 Jn 1:7], and with the son and the Father also [1 Jn 1:3], through which the love of God warms every one's heart. But when the love of many waxes cold [Mat 24:12], as Christ saith, then they go from this grace, light, truth, power, and spirit, and the anointing [1 Jn 2:27], and the word of God in their own hearts [Deut 30:14]; then such turn to be betrayers, and not saviours upon mount Zion [Obad 1:21]. And against such God's swift judgment turns, and suddenly falls, though they may cry for a time, liberty, freedom, and peace, peace [Jer 6:14]; but a day of trouble will overtake them ere they are aware [Ezek 7:7?].

And therefore, all ye friends of Christ Jesus, stand fast in that liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free [Gal 5:1], by his light, grace, truth, spirit, faith, and everlasting gospel, the everlasting power of God, which is an everlasting freedom and liberty above all bondage and false fallen liberties and freedoms; in this glorious gospel, and glorious joyful liberty, where all may exercise God and Christ's holy gifts in his holy supernatural light, grace, truth, spirit, and divine faith, and word of life [1 Jn 1:1], and the gospel; which word cannot be bound [2 Tim 2:9] with all the world's cords or chains; 'for it is a fire to burn, and a hammer to break, and a sword to cut in pieces [Jer 23:29/Heb 4:12].' And therefore love the word, and keep the word of patience [Rev 3:10], and the Lord will keep you, for it is a tried word [2 Sam 22:31, Psa 18:30], and it will keep you in all trials, which shall come upon all the world to try them. For the word was before the world was, and will be when the world is gone, which all the new born babes of the incorruptible seed, who partake of the milk of the word [1 Pet 1:23/2:2], grow by it up into an immortal life, and kingdom that is without end [Luke 1:33]; 'Glory and praises to the Lord God for ever.'

And now, ye babes of Christ, if the world do hate you, it hated Christ your Lord and master also [John 15:18f]; if they do mock, and reproach, and defame, and buffet you, they did so to your Lord and master also; who was and is the green tree [Luke 23:31], that gives nourishment to all his branches, [John 15:4f] his followers.

Now, if the world do persecute you, and take away your goods or clothes, was not your Lord and master so served? Did not they cast lots for his garments [Mat 27:35]? Was not he haled from the priests to Herod, and before Pontius Pilate, and spit upon [Mat 26:67]? And if they hate thee, and spit upon thee, he was hated and spit upon for thee. Did he not go to prison for thee? And was he not mocked and scourged for thee [Mat 20:19]? Did not he bow to the cross and grave for thee, he who had no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth [2 Pet 2:22]? And did he not bear thy sins in his own body upon the tree [2 Pet 2:24]? And was he not scourged for thee, by whose stripes we are healed [Isa 53:5]? Did not he suffer the contradiction of sinners [Heb 12:3], who died for sinners [Rom 5:8], and went into the grave for sinners, and died for the ungodly [Rom 5:6], yea, tasted death for every man [Heb 2:9], who through death destroyed death, and the devil, the power of death [Heb 2:14], and is risen? For death and the grave could not hold him [Acts 2:24], nor the powers and principalities [Col 2:15], with all their guards and watches, could not hold him within the grave; but he is risen, and is ascended far above all principalities, powers, thrones, and dominions [Eph 4:10/Col 1:16], and is set down at the right hand of God [Eph 1:20], and remaineth in the heavens till all things be restored [Acts 3:21]. And he is restoring with his light, grace, truth, power, spirit, faith, gospel, and word of life [1 Jn 1:1]; so that you read of some, that came to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus [Eph 2:6].

And therefore all must bow at the name of Jesus [Phil 2:10] their saviour, in his light, grace, truth, power, spirit, and gospel, (for he hath bowed for you,) if you rise with him; and you must suffer with him, if you will reign with him [2 Tim 2:12]; and die with him, if you will live with him. And all that are dead and buried with Christ, and are risen with him [Col 2:12], they will seek those things that come down from above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God [Col 3:1]; and there you will seek those things which come down from above, and not things which are below. . . .

The eternal living God of truth [Psa 31:5], he is a God of order, and is not the author of confusion, but of peace [1 Cor 14:33] in all the churches of the saints.

Now the author of confusion, and not of peace, is the god of the world [2 Cor 4:4], who abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him; and when he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it [John 8:44].

Now the Jews, who did the god of the world's lusts, and those called christians that do, were in strife, confusion and disorder.

For the Jews went out of the order of Aaron [Heb 7:11] and Moses, going from the spirit of God poured out upon the house of Israel [Ezek 39:29], and so went from the Lord, and his law, into confusion and disorder, which the living God of truth was not the author of.

Also the christians, who go from the light, grace, truth, power, spirit, gospel, and faith, which Christ Jesus is the author of [Heb 12:2], they go from Christ and his order, who was not made a priest after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedeck [Heb 6:20, 7:11], who was without beginning of days, or end of life [Heb 7:3]; an everlasting order. . . .

And such will cry against the order of the truth, light, grace, spirit, gospel, faith, and word of life [1 Jn 1:1], which brings into the order of Christ, and the order of the living eternal God of truth [Psa 31:5], who is a God of order, and delights in order, having pleasure in them that live in his spirit, and law of life [Rom 8:2], and the gospel, and its order. For blessed is the man that delights in the law [Psa 1:1f], or order of God; it was so under the old covenant. Much more blessed is the man or woman that delights in the law and order of love [Jas 2:8], and the law and order of faith [Rom 3:27], and the law and order of life, and of the gospel, the power of God [Rom 1:16]. . . .

And Christ, the truth, hath an everlasting kingdom [Dan 4:3], that stands in everlasting righteousness, and power, and joy in the holy ghost [Rom 14:17/1 Cor 4:20]; yea, an established kingdom, that will never have an end [Isa 9:7], and cannot be broken [Dan 11:4]; and no imperfect, defiled, nor corruptible thing enters into it [Rev 21:27].

And all Christ Jesus's subjects of his everlasting kingdom, that see it, and enter into it, are born again, not of the will of man, but of an incorruptible seed, by the word of God [John 1:13/1 Pet 1:23], and have the incorruptible milk of the word [1 Pet 2:2] of God, by which they grow from babes to men of God; and have the fine linen, the incorruptible clothing, the righteousness of Christ, which is the fine linen [Rev 19:8], which they do wear in Christ's kingdom. . . .

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