

Epistle 363

by George Fox

George Fox's Epistle 363 emphasizes the importance of unity in the Spirit and steadfastness in faith among believers in Christ.

Scripture: Ephesians 1:3

Topics: "Spiritual Unity", "Steadfastness in Faith"

Description

George Fox emphasizes the spiritual blessings bestowed upon believers through Christ, urging them to walk in love and unity, as they are all part of one body in the Spirit. He highlights the importance of steadfastness in faith, encouraging the faithful to remain grounded in their spiritual order despite physical separations. Fox reassures that true fellowship exists in the Spirit, transcending earthly divisions, and calls for believers to live godly lives, ministering to one another as stewards of God's grace. He concludes by affirming the eternal nature of their faith and the importance of being immovable in Christ, the foundation of their hope.

Transcript

Dear friends and brethren, in the Lord Jesus Christ! and blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world [Eph 1:3f].

And now, that all may walk in him [Col 2:6] in love, who hath seen the great deliverances of the Lord, and hath been acquainted with his great mercies [Psa 18:50?], that endure for ever; deliverance after deliverance, multitude of deliverances, out of great trials and temptations; and hath seen how the Lord hath brought to confusion the enemies of his truth, both within and without, from the beginning; and therefore in the Lord's spirit and power, all that live in it, that know the Lord, are encouraged to trust in him. God hath raised you up together, and quickened you who were dead in Adam [Eph 2:1, Col 2:13], and made you to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus [Eph 2:6], that you might show forth the riches of his grace and glory, and his kindness towards you through Jesus Christ [Eph 2:7]. For by one spirit we are all baptized into one body; whether we be Jews or Gentiles, bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one spirit [1 Cor 12:13]. And therefore, endeavour all to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace [Eph 4:3], and live and walk in the spirit [Gal 5:25]: and the fruits of this spirit of God, is love, joy, and meekness, &c [Gal 5:22f]. And by this one spirit, you have access to the Father of spirits [Eph 2:18/Heb 12:9]; and this one spirit, which baptizes you into one body, both male and female, knows your

service [Rev 2:19?] to God: for the spirit of God divides severally to every one of you, as he wills [1 Cor 12:11] your offices and places, yet all in unity in the spirit, with which you are baptized into one body, and drink into one spirit. And the apostle Paul, who wrote from Rome to the Colossians, told them, that 'they were complete in Christ Jesus [Col 2:10];' and said, 'Though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ [Col 2:5].'

And now the Lord hath gathered his people, by his power, into the same spirit that the apostles and churches were in, in the primitive times: and though they be absent in the body, or flesh, men in one room, and the women in another; yea, as far as the east is from the west [Psa 103:12], or the north is from the south, yet they are present in the spirit, rejoicing and beholding with the spirit, the spiritual order that the churches and apostles were in, and the steadfastness of their precious, holy, and divine faith, which Christ (the second Adam) [1 Cor 15:47] is the author and finisher of [Heb 12:2]; and this is no separation, but they are the household of his holy, divine, and precious faith [Gal 6:10]; and live and walk in this holy faith, and spirit of God, by which they are baptized into one holy body, of which Christ Jesus, the holy and spiritual man, is the head. . . . And therefore, let no man beguile you by enticing words [Col 2:4], from this spiritual order, fellowship, and unity. And again, the apostle saith, 'For I verily, as absent in the body, but present in the spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed [1 Cor 5:3].' So here was a spiritual sight, and a spiritual judgment; yea, a judgment, though absent in the body, by a spiritual sight of such as walk not in the spirit, but walk out of the order of it. 1 Cor. v. 3.

And this is to the spiritual-minded, who can judge of these things, for 'as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God [Rom 8:14];' and the Lord now, by his spirit, is separating his sons and daughters from the apostasy and sin, which hath separated from the spirit that the apostles were in, that they may behold one another with joy and comfort with the spirit, in the spiritual order, fellowship, and unity; though they be absent in the body and in the flesh, yet they are present in the spirit, and know one another in the spirit of God. And also, the apostle saith, 'As many as are baptized into Christ, have put on Christ: there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free; and here is neither male nor female, but ye are all one in Christ Jesus [Gal 3:27f].' So, though these be absent in the body, one from another, Jews, Greeks, bond, or free, males or females, yet they are all one in Christ Jesus, the spiritual and heavenly man [1 Cor 15:47], and with the spirit joying and beholding one another's spiritual order [Col 2:5]; so the joying, unity, and fellowship stand in the spirit of God, and not in the outward fleshly bodily presence, and carnal and natural sight. And therefore keep your spiritual order, joying in the spirit, beholding your spiritual order, and steadfastness of your faith in Christ Jesus. And in this you will be all steadfast men and steadfast women, and not tossed up and down with every windy doctrine, and the cunning crafts and slights of men [Eph 4:14], but steadfast men and steadfast women in the faith of Christ, as trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord [Isa 61:3], whose 'fruit is unto holiness, and whose end is everlasting life [Rom 6:22].' And such have fruit on their own trees, and water in their own wells [Prov 5:15], and are not shaken with winds, storms, nor tempests, that may rise up within or without, but are steadfast and immoveable, built upon the rock and foundation of life, Christ Jesus [Mat 7:24f]. So that as every one hath received the gift, even so minister one to another, 'as good stewards of the manifold grace of God [1 Pet 4:10].' And this is the grace of God wherein ye stand, that will teach you to live godly, righteously, and soberly, and brings salvation [Tit 2:11f]; so not only to talk godly, but to live godly, keeping yourselves in the love of God [Jude 1:21], and building up yourselves in the most holy faith [Jude 1:20], which you have from Christ Jesus, which makes you steadfast and immoveable, from him who is the author and finisher of it [Heb 12:2]; and with the spirit of God, in which you (spiritually) behold your substantial and steadfast spiritual order, over all outward and carnal orders, and will out-last them all; with which spirit you all see your work and service for

the eternal immortal God of truth; to whom be all glory, honour, thanks, and praises in the church of Jesus Christ, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

From your friend and brother in the kingdom and patience of Jesus.

Worplesdom, the 22nd of the 5th month, 1680.

G. F.

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