

Epistle 383

by George Fox

The sermon emphasizes the importance of striving for peace, living in love, and dwelling in God, and encourages believers to outstrip the world in virtue, chastity, modesty, and temperance.

Scripture: Matthew 5:9, John 13:34, Romans 14:19, 1 Corinthians 12:13, 1 Corinthians 13:7, Ephesians 4:3, Philippians 4:8, Colossians 3:17, 2 Timothy 3:2, 1 Peter 2:9

Topics: "Christian Living", "Marriage And Unity"

Description

George Fox preaches about the importance of striving for peace, unity, and love among believers, emphasizing virtues such as honesty, purity, patience, and charity. He encourages avoiding strife, disputes, and selfishness, and instead, showing kindness, gentleness, and forgiveness towards one another. Fox also addresses the topic of marriage, urging for chastity, virtue, and temperance, and living in a manner that glorifies God. He concludes by exhorting believers to live in Jesus Christ, the source of blessings, rest, and peace, and to walk in His light and power.

Transcript

Dear friends and brethren in the Lord Jesus Christ, your life and salvation, your rock and foundation, rest and sanctuary, in all storms, trials, and sufferings.

Now, dear friends, my desire is, that you may all strive for that which makes for peace [Rom 14:19]. 'For blessed are the peacemakers, they are called the children of God [Mat 5:9].' And therefore, whatsoever things are honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, if there be any virtue and praise, think on these things [Phil 4:8] to practise them. So that in the power of the Lord, that is over the devil and his power, all may be kept chaste, pure, and holy, to the glory of God; and all that are in the true faith and knowledge may show it forth in virtue, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and true charity [2 Pet 1:5-7] or love, which beareth all things [1 Cor 13:7]. For they that dwell in love, dwell in God [1 Jn 4:16], that is their habitation. And let all things be done in love, in the name and power of Jesus Christ [Col 3:17]. And all to strive in the spirit of the Lord God, and his truth, to be of one mind and judgment; so that you may all be baptized with one spirit into one body, and so all to drink into one spirit [1 Cor 12:13]. And keep the unity and fellowship in the holy spirit of God, which is the bond of peace [Eph 4:3] amongst all God's children, that are led by his holy spirit [Rom 8:14], whose communion and fellowship is in the holy ghost [2 Cor 13:14/Phil 2:1], by which ye are led into all truth [John 16:13].

Now, dear friends, let there be no strife in all your meetings, nor vain janglings [1 Tim 1:6] nor disputings [Phil 2:14]; but let all that tends to strife be ended out of your meetings, that they may be kept peaceable; so that you may be at peace among yourselves, and the God of peace and love may fill all your hearts, which love edifies his church [Eph 4:16]. And condescend one to another [Rom 12:10/16] in the fear of the Lord, to that which is honest, just, virtuous, and of good report; and where any weakness has been in any thing, let it be covered and buried in the spirit and love of God, that his spirit and love may be uppermost in you all, to unite all your hearts together: and that you may all show forth that you are the children which the heavenly wisdom is justified of [Mat 11:19], which is pure, (mark,) pure, peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated [Jas 3:17], which is above the wisdom that is below, that is neither pure, peaceable, nor easy to be entreated, &c. And in all matters of business, or difference, or controversies, treat one another in such things kindly and gently, and be not fierce, or heady, and high minded [2 Cor 3:3f]; for that spirit will bring men and women to be lovers of themselves [2 Tim 3:2], and to be despisers of others, and that which is good [2 Tim 3:3], which leads nature out of its course, and so loses natural affections, and at last comes to be without natural affections [2 Tim 3:3]; which spirit we see most of christendom is led by: for, if they were in natural affections, they would not destroy their fellow creatures about religion; but being without natural affections, they have not affections to their fellow creatures; to wit, man and woman, which were made in God's image [Gen 1:27]. The law and the prophets commanded to 'love their neighbour as themselves [Lev 19:18];' and Christ commands, to 'do unto all men, as they would have men do unto them [Mat 7:12].' And the gospel commands, to 'love one another;' by which they are known to be Christ's disciples [John 13:34f]; and to 'love their enemies, and to pray for them [Mat 5:44], and to forgive one another,' as Christ has forgiven them [Col 3:13]. So that those, whose conversation is according to the gospel of peace, do establish the law and the prophets; who know the divine nature, and are made partakers of it [2 Pet 1:4], are not without natural affections, but have affections to it, to cherish and preserve it. And this the word of wisdom [1 Cor 12:8] teaches, by which all things were made and created good and blessed; by which all things are upheld [Heb 1:3], by which all things are sanctified to God's people, that God created by his word, and made them good, and blessed them: by which word and wisdom all things are sanctified to God's people, (as before,) and are used and ordered by his word of wisdom to his glory [Wis 8:1/1 Cor 10:31] and praise.

And now, dear friends, whereas there have been formerly some discourses by some in your meeting, of marrying within a year after the decease of the wife or of the husband; my desire is, in those things, friends may show forth both chastity, and virtue, and temperance: for formerly hasty marriages were reckoned amongst the infamous persons, as for a man or a woman to marry within the year of the death of the wife or husband. And therefore, for virtue and chastity's sake, and the truth, and good example's sake [1 Tim 4:12], that which is honest, lovely, and of good report, keep, and walk in, and follow [Phil 4:8]: for we ought, in the power of Christ Jesus, to outstrip the world in virtue, chastity, modesty, and temperance, and in that which is of good report. For our heavenly light ought to 'shine so before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven [Mat 5:16].' And therefore all in the church of Christ ought to live in the spirit [Gal 5:25] and power of Christ, in which they do judge the world and all the fallen angels [1 Cor 6:2f]. So in this heavenly power, the virtue, purity, chastity, flows and shines over all; and they that do possess, as though they did not; and they that marry, as though they married not [1 Cor 7:29f]: they are all resigned in the power of Christ, that gives dominion over the world, which brings all into one mind, and to be of one heart and soul [Acts 4:32], and to one judgment, and are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, and holy nation; a peculiar people, that show forth the praise of Christ, who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light [1 Pet 2:9], and as living stones, are built up a spiritual household, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ [1 Pet 2:5].

And so, my dear friends, my desire is, that in Jesus Christ ye may all live and walk, who is the seed of the woman, 'that bruises the serpent's head [Gen 3:15];' that is, the head of all wickedness and strife; and in this seed, Christ, all nations are blessed, as they live and walk in him: and the blessings from above, and the blessings beneath [Gen 49:25], rest upon them: and in this seed Christ all have rest and peace, who is the first and the last [Rev 22:13], over all blessed for ever. Amen. In him is my love to you all, as though I named you.

G. F.

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