

Epistle 45

by George Fox

George Fox's Epistle 45 emphasizes the importance of overcoming temptation through faith in Christ and the necessity of spiritual rebirth to enter the kingdom of God.

Scripture: Matthew 2:15, John 1:12, John 3:3, Romans 8:4, Galatians 3:29, Hebrews 2:10, 1 Peter 1:23, 1 John 3:8-9

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "New Birth"

Description

George Fox preaches about following Christ, who overcame temptations and fulfilled the law, urging believers to walk in the spirit and overcome the world's temptations. He emphasizes the importance of standing in God's power to resist the devil's schemes and warns against entering into worldly temptations that lead to despair and separation from God. Fox highlights the need for believers to have fellowship with Christ in suffering and to confess Him in this dark world to partake in His glory. He also stresses the significance of being born again, living a righteous life, and testifying against the works of the devil to manifest as children of God.

Transcript

They are the heirs of the kingdom of God, and of the generation of God, that live out of the kingdom of the wicked world, (up to God, in the seed, which all the promises of God are to [Gal 3:29],) following after Christ, who was in Egypt, and passed out of Egypt [Mat 2:15f], the house of darkness [Exo 10:21]. And he was in the wilderness, and there he was tempted to lust after the creature [Mat 4:1-4]; he was tempted to make himself away [Mat 4:5-7]; he was tempted to worship the devil, (to bow down and worship him [Mat 4:8-10].) He is the captain of our salvation [Heb 2:10]; he is gone before, he endured the cross, he despised the shame, he suffered the contradiction of sinners [Heb 12:2f], for the glory that was set before him, he hath won the crown. He hath overcome Egypt, and he hath fulfilled the law [Mat 5:17], he hath overcome the world [John 16:33], he hath overcome the temptations; he is able to succour all who are tempted [Heb 2:18]. It is no sin to be tempted, but to enter into the temptation, that is sin. He is the head of the body, he is the head of the church [Col 1:18], who hath blotted out the ordinances [Col 2:14] and traditions of men; who is the end of the daily sacrifice; who is the end of the Levitical priesthood [Heb 7:27,24]; he is the end of all outward temples [Rev 21:22], who is the substance of the prophets, for they all witnessed of him [Acts 10:43]. He is ascended above all principalities and powers [Eph 4:10/Col 1:16].

Now, to all dear ones, the same seed, which is Christ, the same spirit is now manifest, as ever was; the same world is now, as ever was; the same temptations, and the same devil, and the same vain worship of

the world, twining into another form and colour. And Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life [John 14:6], the door, that all must pass through [John 10:7,9], and he it is, that opens it [Rev 3:7]; the same door that ever was, the same Christ yesterday, to day, and for ever [Heb 13:8]. And all who follow Christ, the seed, and are of his generation, and are brought out of Egypt, the house of darkness, and from under the law, the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in them; who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit [Rom 8:4], (as the apostle saith,) which we do witness. And the seed's generation hath passed through the wilderness, where they have been tempted to lust after the creature. Ye that have been in the wilderness, can witness this with me, and the same temptations, even to despair, and to make themselves away. The devil, before he would go out of his kingdom, he would destroy all. But look at the captain Jesus Christ, who hath passed before, who was tempted (the captain of our salvation) with the same temptations to worship the devil; and that if thou wouldst worship the devil, thou shouldst have the glory of the world; if not, be called a devil, as Christ was, and be called a mad man, as he was [John 10:20]; and that none followed him, but a cursed people, (as they said.) [John 7:49] And they that worship the devil, gave those titles to him. And thou shalt lose thy good name, and be a laughing stock to them that worship the devil, and as a derision among them, and a mark for every one of them to shoot at, and the drunkards to make songs of. This is the portion of them, who deny the worship of the world, and the glory, and the favour, and the evil fashions thereof, and cannot fashion themselves to it; who are tempted to all these things. But it is no sin to be tempted; but standing in the power of the Almighty God, ye will be enabled to stand against, and above all the wiles of satan [Eph 6:11]. So dwell in the power of Almighty God, which carries through the wilderness, and through temptations to the end, and gets the victory over all the carnal ordinances [Heb 9:10], and commands, and traditions of men; [Col 2:20,22] and he that overcomes, ascends above them all. And he that overcomes, shall sit down with Christ in his throne [Rev 3:21]. So, every one must witness Christ born in them, passing through death to him, through the world, through the law, through temptations, through the wilderness, and out of the world; and the son of God ye will witness to arise, who doth overcome, who was born of God. And the same spirit, that raised up Jesus Christ, the same spirit raiseth you up, and quickeneth your mortal bodies [Rom 8:11]; and he that hath not the same, is none of his [Rom 8:9].

So, examine yourselves, and see if ye have fellowship with Christ in his sufferings, and be brought to be conformable to him in his death [Phil 3:10], and to have fellowship with him in his temptations and reproaches, and buffetings, and scornings, and the contradiction of sinners, and to be spit upon, as he was [Mat 26:67]; and he that hath fellowship with him in his sufferings, shall have fellowship with him in his glory. And he that doth confess him in this dark world, him will he confess before his Father, and his angels; and he that doth deny him in this world, him he will deny before his Father and his angels in the world to come [Mat 10:32f].

Now to all you who are convinced, and have your understandings enlightened, and the worship of the world doth appear to you to be contrary to the worship of God and Christ in spirit, and all the prophets and apostles, who worshipped the living God in newness of life [Rom 6:4], in the second birth, beware ye enter not into the temptation, to lust after the creature, and give not way to the lazy, dreaming mind, for it enters into the temptations [Luke 22:46]. So there thou wilt be polluted with the pollutions of the world [2 Pet 2:20]; then thou wilt be tempted to despair, and the devil there gets power upon thee, if thou enter into temptations, and follow thy imaginations in going from the light of Christ within thee. And then thou judgest with evil thoughts; and he will come with his instruments, his evil angels, to tempt thee from God's worship to the false worship, or else thou wilt lose thy credit or good name, or thy place, or thy authority, where thou art, except thou wilt bow to him [Mat 4:9f]. And every one will stare at thee, and thou wilt be gazed at,

and wondered at. So if thy mind go from the light, and out of the fear of the Lord, then thou wilt consult with flesh and blood [Gal 1:16], which must never enter into the kingdom of God, and that carnal reason must never enter. And then thou wilt take counsel of the harlot [Prov 29:3?], and so the eye of thy mind will be turned out from God, and so thou goest under the power of the prince of the air, which rules and reigns in the children of disobedience [Eph 2:2], and so under the dominion of satan. And then, though thou hast the praise of the world, and the glory of the world [Mat 4:8]; yet disobeying that, which should have led thee into the kingdom of God, and from under the dominion of satan, thy latter end will be worse than thy beginning [2 Pet 2:20]. And in the world there thou mayst have thy honour, and the fleshly man is nourished, and thy glory and renown may grow again among the fleshly ones, who are gone out from God, and have disobeyed the light in them, which should have led them from under the dominion of satan, (under whose dominion they are now,) up to God, where there is joy eternal, where there are riches and glory eternal, and where there is comfort eternal; whose kingdom is for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion [Dan 4:3,etc]. But thou, who forsakest the right way, goest into eternal destruction. Wo, wo is to thee! For the love of the world is an enemy to God [James 4:4]; and he that loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him [1 Jn 2:15]. And thou, who settest thy hand to the plough, and lookest back, art not fit for the kingdom of God [Luke 9:62].

And all who can witness the second birth, and are born again, know the promises of God in and to the seed are yea and amen [2 Cor 1:20]; and ye coming out of that which was in time, ye come up to God, who was before time was. This is a mystery, he that can receive it let him [Mat 19:12]; and he that hath an ear to hear it, let him hear what the spirit saith [Rev 2:7, etc]. Abel was the second birth, he was no murderer, nor no sinner; for God called him. And God saw no iniquity in Jacob [Num 23:21], but Esau the first, is hated [Mal 1:3, Rom 9:13], and not perfect. And except ye be born again, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God. [John 3:3]. Flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God [1 Cor 15:50]. And 'he that is born of God, sins not, because the seed of God remains in him, neither can he sin, because he is born of God [1 Jn 3:9].' And 'he that is born of God overcomes the world [1 Jn 5:4];' he that is born of God, is not of this world. And he that is born of God testifies against all the works of the world, and the wickedness of it; and he that is born of God, doth not commit sin [1 Jn 3:9]. He that committeth sin is of the devil [1 Jn 3:8], and hath not seen God at any time [3 Jn 1:11]. Hereby are the children of God made manifest from the children of the devil [1 Jn 3:10]; for he that sins is of the devil, and knows not God. For this purpose was the son of God made manifest, to destroy the works of the devil [1 Jn 3:8]; and he that doth righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous [1 Jn 3:7]. And they that were of the second birth, were taught of God, and needed no man to teach them [1 Jn 2:27]; and were come into the everlasting covenant. And those are the second birth, who are born again of the immortal seed [1 Pet 1:23] by the will of God, and not by the will of man. And as many as received Christ, he gave power to them to become the sons of God, which are not born by the will of man, but by the will of God [John 1:12f]; not by water only, but by water and the spirit [John 3:6].

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