

Epistle 79

by George Fox

George Fox's Epistle 79 calls believers to remain steadfast in their divine calling and to live in obedience and humility towards God and one another.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 7:20

Topics: "Spiritual Guidance", "Obedience To God"

Description

George Fox preaches to Friends, calling them to abide in their calling and to avoid reasoning with flesh and blood, disobedience, and pride. He warns against turning back to worldly ways and emphasizes the importance of following the pure guide within to lead towards God. Fox urges believers to walk in the spirit, obey it, and serve one another in love, while cautioning against words without life that draw one away from the truth. He encourages submission to the pure within, subjecting to Christ, and growing in wisdom and unity through obedience to the spirit.

Transcript

To all dear Friends, who are called, who are enlightened, whose minds are turned from the world's worships and teachers, having your eye to the light and guide within, which is leading you out of this dark world, and your old, vain conversations, towards God and the world which is without end; mercy and peace from God the Father be multiplied among you [Jude 1:2]! Every one of you abide in your calling [1 Cor 7:20], waiting upon God where he hath called you. And take heed of reasoning with flesh and blood [Gal 1:16], for there disobedience, pride, and presumption will arise; and there ye will grow up to be trees that bear no fruit [Jude 1:12], and as a fig tree which beareth leaves and no fruit [Mark 11:13f], and as wells without water [2 Pet 2:17].

Oh! therefore, mind the pure, which would lead you out of this corruptible, heathenish, dark world and its vain ways, and from destruction and death to life. And so the Lord God of power bless you, guide you, and preserve you on in your way towards the holy city, being called out of the unholy city; for he that hath called you is holy [1 Pet 1:15]. Now many are called but few are chosen Mat [22:14]. Oh! therefore, abide in that which hath called you, (which is holy and pure,) up to him who is holy and pure, and let the time past of your evil ways be sufficient [Mat 6:34?], wherein ye have lived in wickedness, and in the ways of this untoward generation [Acts 2:40]; lest your minds turn back into Egypt [Acts 7:39] and the world, and so cause the worthy name of the Lord to be blasphemed, (which hath called you,) [James 2:7] by turning aside, and growing into hardness of heart, and turning from a pure conscience, and making shipwreck of

it, and of faith [1 Tim 1:19].

For ye may see, how far many may go, and did go, and were led out of many things; yet did turn again into the world. So mind your present guide, and your present condition, and your call, what ye are called from, and what ye are called to; for whom the Lord hath called and chosen, are the Lord's freemen [1 Cor 7:22]. And so, abide every one in your calling with God, where God hath called you, and there walk in newness of life [Rom 6:4], and not in the oldness of the letter [Rom 7:6]; for he that turneth from him that calleth, walks not in the life of God.

Therefore, all Friends, walk in the truth and in the love of it up to God; and every one in particular mind your guide, that ye may grow up in wisdom [Luke 2:51], and improve your own talents [Mat 25:14-30], and the gift which God hath given you. And take heed of words without life, for they tend to draw you out of the power to live above the truth, and out of your conditions; which nature will not have peace, except it have words. But every particular submit to that which is of God in you, to guide you to God.

And be ye all servants to the truth, and diligent in your callings, and serve one another in love [Gal 5:13], in which ye can wash one another's feet [John 13:14]. So, serve one another in love, and do not lavish out yourselves without the fear of God; such are clouds without water [Jude 1:12], which have the words but not the power, flown up into the air [1 Cor 14:9]; which have a light, and yet are as wandering stars [Jude 1:13], which lead up into the presumption [2 Pet 2:10]; and thou that art there, thy garments are defiled [Rev 3:4], for thou goest from the spirit which should sanctify thee; for ye are sanctified through obedience to the spirit [1 Pet 1:2].

Therefore every particular, walk in the spirit and obey it, then ye will all have unity one with another in the spirit, and ye will see, knowledge, tongues and prophecies shall cease [1 Cor 13:8]; but he that cometh to the end, to him who openeth all truth, is blessed.

. . . . Now every one in particular, mind the pure in you, for the chaste virgins follow Jesus Christ [2 Cor 11:2], the lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world [John 1:29]; and who are not chaste, will not follow him. For that in every particular of you, which is not chaste, will not submit to the pure, which would guide you to God, but rather submit to their own thoughts, and follow them, and run after them and their own wills, and seek to accomplish them; and so run out into that generation whose thoughts were not as God's thoughts, nor ways as God's ways [Isa 55:8]. Therefore watch all, and abide all in your callings [1 Cor 7:20]; the light is that which will let you see your transgression and your running aside, and the by-paths and crooked ways, and the generation of serpents and vipers [Mat 23:33]. And this light is Christ, which sheweth these things. Now, before these things be known and judged of aright, judgment must be brought forth into victory [Mat 12:20], and set up in the earth, where this state is witnessed.

Now the woman, (which is the church,) must be subject to her husband in all things. Jesus Christ is the husband; in every thing she must be subject to him [Eph 5:23f]. Who are in the flesh know nothing of this in the first nature, for it is the mystery which the apostle speaks of [Eph 5:32]; and so it is a mystery still, but where it is opened and made manifest, such are subject to the husband Christ Jesus. And therefore, walk in the power of the truth, that the name of the Lord God may be glorified among you, and his renown may be seen in you and among you, and all the world may be astonished, and the Lord admired in ordering of his people, who are guided by his wisdom [Wis 8:1], and in it found. And take heed of running out, to make conceited ones wise; for then thou wilt consume that which the Lord hath given thee upon their lusts, and so give holy things unto dogs, and a pearl to a swine [Mat 7:6] for want of

wisdom, and savour, and salt, and discerning. Therefore have salt in yourselves [Mark 9:50], and be low in heart; the light is low in you, and it will teach you to be low [Mat 11:29], and to learn that lesson of Jesus Christ, to the plucking down all the high thoughts and imaginations. And take heed of strife in your minds; and if there be, then glory not, for it is the vain mind, and it is not good. Let no strife be amongst you, and let none seek for the highest place [Luke 20:46], for there is the separated Pharisee; but be lowly-minded, condescending one to another in a low degree [Rom 12:16], and bear one with another in patience; and be not high-minded, but fear [Rom 11:20]. And all who are servants, labour in love, as unto God, for 'the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof [Psa 24:1];' and labour in singleness, as unto the Lord [Eph 6:5]. And all who have families, rule in the power and love of God, that that love may be head among you. For the time is coming, that it shall be, 'as with the servant, so with the master; and as with the maid, so with her mistress. [Isa 24:2]' For it is one seed that hath raised them up with one power, out of one grave, one death, which seed all the promises of God are to; and as thou passest out of death, thou shalt witness the promises of God fulfilled, which are to the seed, destroying the one and raising up the other in thee. So all Friends, this is to you who know the voice of the living God, and know your calling, stand fast, and waver not, lest ye lose your recompense of reward [Heb 10:35?]; but stand fast, that ye may receive the recompense of reward. For God is just in all his ways, and abideth faithful [2 Tim 2:13]. Turn not aside, lest he whet his sword [Psa 7:12], and cut you asunder; for ye that do, the wo followeth you.

Therefore, all Friends, mind that which is of God in you, which is pure, which is but one, to guide you to the Father of life, who gives you food, and raiment, and strength; that ye may gather strength, and flourish, and your souls delight themselves in fatness [Isa 55:2], and feed and eat of the abundance of riches with him and from him which filleth all things, and of the daily bread which cometh from above, which none can feed upon, but who are above the world [John 6:35-58]; for who are below, never could nor would, but are ready to stone them that confess, they eat of the bread of life, and would give of it to them. Dear friends, wait upon the Lord [various, e.g. Isa 40:31], that all of you may grow up in the inward man, and be comforted and cherished there, in the things that be eternal. So with bowels of love to you all, I rest.

Read this among Friends, who have an understanding, and are called of the Lord; and so farewell!

And stand in the will of the Lord, and be obedient to him. And the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, which teacheth you to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts [Titus 2:11f], that grace fill and establish your hearts [Heb 13:9], that your hearts may grow up in that grace to God, from whence all gifts and graces come. Amen.

And all Friends, take heed of unruliness, and vain talking and talkers [Titus 1:10], for such are not obedient to the truth; therefore avoid and shun it and them 2 Tim 2:16].

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