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Selected Epistles of George Fox

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Epistle 24

TO all Friends every where, dwell in the truth, and walk in the love of the truth, in patience, and every one in your measure keep your habitations, and learn that good lesson of Jesus Christ, to be low and meek in heart, giving no occasion to the adversary by evil doing. But walk all honestly and uprightly; for the upright and meek in heart know God, and God delights in the upright and righteous. And walking in uprighteousness, ye will be bold as lions, resisting the wicked with your spiritual weapons, not by bloody hands, as the wicked are tearing and rending the just that dwell in the truth. For the lions want, and hunger, and rage; but ye that fear the Lord, shall want no good thing; and they that wait upon the Lord, he will give them their hearts desire. I witness the words of the Lord to be true, praised be his name! Oh! Friends, dwell in the fear of the Lord, and take heed of presumption, that your minds run not out into vanity and lightness, that the world may not take occasion, and the truth suffer. But every one keep your habitation where God hath called you; and take heed of deceit, and form nothing in your own wills or minds, but grow up in the inner man, (putting off the old man with his deeds,) as trees of right eousness, which the Lord hath planted, growing in wisdom and understanding to do the will of God, and not your own wills. He that doth the will of God, abideth in that which

endureth for ever, and seeth all flesh to be as grass and the glory of the world to pass away. Wo unto you proud men, who compass the earth, to set your nest on high! all your gods of gold and silver must perish, and that mind that holds them up must perish. But all Friends, mind that which is eternal, which gathers your hearts together up to the Lord, and lets you see that ye are written in one another's hearts; meet together every where, growing up in the spirit to the Lord, the fountain of life, the head of all things, God blessed for ever! Let not hard words trouble you, nor fair speeches win you; but dwell in the power of truth, in the mighty God, and have salt in yourselves to savour all words, and to stand against all the wiles of the devil, in the mighty power of God.

For God hath raised up his own seed in his saints, which seed, Christ, is but one in all, and spreads over all, and throughout all; and we now are thorough him come to have dominion and power over the evil one, and to tread upon that which hath been too strong for us, the enemy of our peace, and the enemy of our unity with God and one with another. So in that, which is raised up in us, which trampleth upon the earthly dark power, have we unity with God, and fellowship with his son, and unity one with another; so are known to one another in that, which none, who are of the world, knoweth. So our life is hid, and our happiness, joy, and delight hid from all, who are ruled and governed by the prince of the air, from under whose dominion and government we are redeemed by the only redeemer Christ Jesus, not with corruptible things, neither is our redemption of man, nor by man, nor according to the will of man, but contrary to man's will. And so, our unity and fellowship with vain man are lost, and all his evil ways are now turned into enmity; and all his profession is now found to be deceit, and in all his fairest pretences lodgeth cruelty; and the bottom and ground of all his knowledge of God and Christ is found sandy, and cannot endure the tempest. For being brought off from that foundation and having suffered the loss of all, which seemed beautiful upon the sand, (which was there builded according to that wisdom which was not eternal, but was earthly, upon which the curse of God was, and yet doth remain, where it is standing,) we declare against that bottom and foundation, by the power of God, in that light of Christ, which discovers all false foundations, and makes manifest all sandy bottoms, which man hath builded upon. For where the only true seed takes root, there all man's plants and plantations are plucked up; for there the earth, in which the earthly plants grow, is broken up, ploughed up, and ripped up, and all things made manifest, which have lain hid in it. For in the earth dwell all the noisome creatures, and the evil beasts, which are hurtful to the creation: for in the earth the devil dwells and walks; but the earth being ploughed up, he is made manifest, and the seat of his dwelling is broken up. That mind, which doth speak of God, but lives not, dwells not,

nor abides in the fear of God, that mind must suffer, and pass under the judgment of God, for the curse of God is upon that mind: for that mind is earthly, and of the earth, upon which the curse of God is. And that mind may talk of God, and speak of God, but not in union with God, nor from enjoyment of God in the spirit, nor from having purchased the knowledge of him through death and sufferings; but from hear-say of him, and from custom and tradition. But the true fear of God doth destroy that mind which speaks of him, but doth not live in his fear: and that mind is raised up, which doth abide in his fear; and this is acceptable sacrifice, which is pure, clean, holy, and without spot. Then that which knows God, speaks of him, which hath purchased the true knowledge of him through suffering; and to such there is no condemnation, but joy and peace. And this mind sings true praises to God, the other in hypocrisy; and therefore the wo is unto it. And this mind is stayed upon God, the other is gadding after the creatures, committing fornication with other lovers; and speaks of God, but is not subject to God, and must pass through condemnation.

George Fox, 1653

Epistle 222

A general epistle to be read in all the christian meetings in the world. Blessed is he that readeth, and blessed is he that heareth and understandeth, and the eyes that see. Read this over, and you may read that which you have not read, and see that which you have not seen.

My dear friends all every where, in the seed dwell, which is Christ the top stone over all; feel it laid, in which is life eternal, which is over death, and before death was, and the devil, the power of it; every one sitting under their own vine, which is Christ the life, by whom the world was made, that in that ye may all bear fruit to God; and all walking in the name of the Lord, (which is the power,) then you will walk in safety. For Blessed are all you that rise in the power of God, and lie down in the same power; your beds are pure, holy, and undefiled, who lie down in the power of God, before unholiness was. And so you that are gathered in the name of Jesus, who have bowed to the name of Jesus, whose name is called, the power of God, and the word, light, life, and truth; and for bowing to his name, for his name sake have ye suffered all along by many powers; his name is a strong tower. So who have bowed to the name, and gathered in the name of the Lord, ye are in the strong tower, in which is safety and peace; for being gathered in the name of Christ Jesus, whose name is above every name, (for all things that were

made, were made by Christ,) above all other names and gatherings are you gathered, who are gathered in the name of Jesus Christ, by whom all things were made and created; and being gathered in the name of Jesus Christ, by which salvation is brought, by the name of Christ, and not by any other name under heaven, but by the name of Jesus Christ is salvation brought, by whom all things were made. So ye being gathered in this name, by which salvation is given, here ye come to be heirs of salvation, and then to inherit salvation, which is Christ; and by this you come to fathom all other names under the whole heaven, and to see them, that there is no salvation in them; and so likewise all other gatherings in all other names, no salvation in them; therefore cry people, there is no assurance of salvation upon the earth, who are gathered in other names, but not in the name of Christ, by which salvation is brought and given; by the name of Christ, by whom all things were made; and this is the standing gathering; in the name, in the strong tower, where is the safety, where is the salvation given and brought. Rejoice ye all that are brought into this gathering, and have bowed to the name of Jesus.

Now to bow at the name of Jesus, who is called, the power of God, is to bow to the power of God; all things in heaven, and things in earth, must bow to the name of Jesus, before they be reconciled to God; for all things in heaven, and things in earth, are reconciled by him in one. So they must bow to the name of Jesus, as they have bowed to the evil through which they are at difference one among another, and not at unity, but bowing to the name of Jesus brings to reconciliation; for all things in heaven, and things in earth, must bow at the name of Jesus, must bow at the power of God, before they be reconciled in one. So bow at the name of Jesus.

Secondly. You must bow at the cross of Christ, which is the power of God, which since the apostles' days the apostate christians have lost; and therefore they bow to a cross, a stick, a stone, a piece of iron, a piece of wood. Now bowing to the cross of Christ, which is the power of God, that strikes over the nature of fallen man; for who bends and submits, and yields, and bows to the power of God within, feels it to rise over and strike over, and work over the carnal part, and that part that turns into ungodliness, and all that is bad, and is a cross to it. So bow to the power of God. If all Christendom had done this, they had had a fellowship in this cross of Christ, which is a mystery; but a cross stick, a cross piece of wood, or iron, or stone, this is not a mystery; but the power of God, that crosseth down the earthly, carnal, ungodly part in man and woman, and works over it, and strikes over it, and goes over it, and crosseth it. There is the mystery of the cross of Christ, the power of God, in which is the fellowship; which power of God keeps the mind over all outward things, in the everlasting power of God above them;

for the power of God was before unrighteousness and uncleanness, and the idolatrous part in man was; which power of God is a cross to it, and in that is the true glorying in the cross of Christ, by which ye all are crucified to the world, and dead to the world, and the world is dead to you; dead to the world through the power of the cross, and the world is dead from the power of the cross, (in which power is the fellowship of the cross of Christ.)

Thirdly. The fellowship of the gospel, the power of God, expels away all that which hath darkened the understanding, darkened the mind, darkened the heart; and by the power of God life and immortality are brought to light in you; by which power of God ye come to see before that was, that hath darkened you from life and immortality, and over that life and immortality shines, being in the power of God, which was before that was that had darkened mankind; and the power of God (the gospel) expels away that which burdened your spirits, minds, hearts, consciences, and souls; so that being driven away by the power of God, and the mind set at liberty, the spirit, the conscience, the heart, the soul that is immortal being brought up by the power of God, here the soul hath its pleasure in God; then, by the power of God, man seeth over that which hath burthened his spirit, mind, soul, and conscience, and beyond it, and before it was; where the spirit, soul, mind and conscience cry "glad tidings." And here is the joyful gospel, and here is the faith in the everlasting gospel, the power of God; and here is life and immortality come to light through the power of God, (the gospel,) which power of God, the everlasting gospel, was before that was that darkened man from life and immortality, and hath loaded people's minds, hearts, souls, and consciences; the power of God was before that was, and remains when that is all gone. So now, ye that are come to be heirs of the gospel, know it your portion; for as a man is heir of a piece of land or house, it is his portion, (which must have an end,) and he comes to inherit it; so heirs of the gospel. It is the portion of man and woman; and they that inherit it, they inherit the power of God, which hath no end; which was before the power of darkness was, which hath darkened people from life and immortality, and loaded their spirits; but being heirs of that which was before that was, here you inherit the gospel, you inherit the power of God, in which is stability; here you are church members, and here you are living stones, and here you are built up together a spiritual household; here the church in God is known, the Father of Christ, who is the way to God, where the church is; for now, as Adam and Eve were drove from God, and being in the fall, their sons and daughters have their churches enough, heaps upon heaps, one against another, and heads of every church, and there they plead for sin while they live upon the earth; but the church that is in God, the Father of Christ, doth not so; for as mankind were drove from God, they must come up again out of that state, where they are defiled, and be washed, sanctified, and cleansed, and brought up out of the fall, up to God again. If

they come to the church that is in God, and the fellowship which is the gospel fellowship, which is the power of God, in which is stability, before that was that hath unestablished people; the gospel, the power of God was, and before the devil was, that hath unestablished people. In which gospel is peace, stability, life, and immortality, which is come to light again. In this is the church fellowship with Christ in God, which will stand; for the gospel is everlasting; the church of God is the pillar and ground of truth. Therefore this will stand, when all other churches and fellowships amongst the sons and daughters of men in the fall, will have an end. The church in God will stand, the pillar and ground of truth, and the fellowship of it will remain. Therefore ye heirs of the gospel, (and church members of it,) inherit it, and set down in the fellowship of the same. And this is beyond all the writings, subscribings, and promisings to the church fellowships that be among the sons and daughters of Adam in the fall; that when a storm comes, or a tempest, they fly from their church and fellowship both. But the gospel stands, the church in God stands, the pillar and ground of truth; which the gates of hell cannot prevail against.

Fourthly. The worship of God is in the spirit and in the truth, that is the public worship which Christ set up; he preached it when he put down the worship at the mountain, and at Jerusalem, and said, "God is a spirit; and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and truth; and the hour is come, and now is, that the Father seeks such to worship him." Then the hour was, that worship was set up, above sixteen hundred years since, when he denied and put down the worship at the mountain and at Jerusalem, where the forefathers worshipped. So this worship in the spirit and in the truth, was contrary to the forefathers. This is the public worship, and this is not private nor particular; The nation's worships are particular, which the sons of Adam are broken into, the several worships one against another; but this worship in the spirit and in the truth, hits all men and women; they must come to the spirit in themselves, and the truth in the inward parts; this is public, this is not a private worship, but brings every man and woman to the spirit of God in their own hearts, and truth in their inward parts; in which spirit and truth they must bow down, and come into it, if they be worshippers of God in the truth and in the spirit. And this is the standing worship that Christ preached up, atop of the hill, where the forefathers had worshipped. And this worship is over the worship that was at Jerusalem, and over the worship that was at the mountain; so by this must every man, every son of Adam, and daughter, come to the spirit in their own particulars, and truth in themselves; by which they must know God is a spirit, and will be worshipped in the spirit, and in the truth; and so no man must grieve, nor vex, nor quench the spirit, but all must worship in it, and they must come to the truth in the heart, to the hidden man in the heart, to a meek and quiet spirit. And they must not rebel

against the spirit, if they worship in it; and all coming to it, they have the adorning, that which beautifies and adorns them in the eyes of God; none must walk despitefully against the spirit of Grace, nor turn the grace of God into wantonness, if they worship God in the spirit; if they grieve, vex, quench the spirit of God within, and turn the grace of God into wantonness, and walk despitefully against the spirit of God, and rebel against the spirit of God within, and are haters of the light. These go from the public worship of God in the spirit and truth, to the particular, which fallen men have invented; but they that worship God in the spirit and in the truth, are in that which the devil is out of, and the dragon's worship, and the beast's worship, and the will worship are out of; who worship in the truth and in the spirit, are over all these worships. For truth is before they all were, (and the spirit,) and will stand when they are all gone.

Fifthly. To pray in the spirit, this was public, the public prayer set up among the christians; the temple was the public place of prayer among the Jews; but to pray in the spirit, is the public prayer set up by the apostles: every man, every woman then must come to the spirit of God in their own selves; for it will give them understanding and knowledge, and give them instruction, it will help their infirmities, it will let them see their wants. So, in that must every son and daughter of Adam pray in the spirit to God, who is a spirit; then in this spirit have they fellowship and unity, and a bond of peace: and this moderates all people, and mortifies, circumciseth, and baptizeth. Now, who grieves, and quenches, and vexes, and rebels against the spirit of God within, in which they should pray, they are like the Jews, babblers, and go into the particular forms, and go from the public, which is universal, whereby all men and women must pray to God, who is a spirit, in the spirit, and keep out of the particular. One hath one set form, another another, that is particular, as I said before; but the praying in the spirit is general, by which every man and woman might see their necessities and wants, and turn to God, who is a spirit, for his help: for Christ the quickening spirit, and the spirit of the Lord within, is that which brings people to lift up their eyes to the Lord in spirit and truth, and to watch and pray, by which they know temptations; and the spirit giveth them understanding, and wisdom, and power to withstand them.

Sixthly. Singing in the spirit is public; every man and every woman in the whole world, they must not grieve it, nor vex it, if they sing in it; and this is public. But they that go from the spirit of God within, they go into the particular singing, inventing this thing and that thing, and then one will do it, and another will not do it, and so there is no true fellowship, because it is not done in the spirit; and there is no true fellowship in their worshipping, nor in their praying, because it is not done in the spirit; for the true

fellowship in singing, in praying, in worshipping of God, is in the spirit of God, which the devil is out of; for in that is the bond of peace.

Seventhly. The teachers of the world told us (who called themselves ministers of Christ) that they had received a gift from Christ, who ascended on high, and led captivity captive; and this gift was for the work of the ministry, and for the perfecting of the saints, and that they were to bring people to the knowledge of the son of God, from whence they had received this gift, and to the unity of the faith, which faith gives the victory, and brings to have access to God, and also to a perfect man's state, and to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. And thus people followed them, and were glad that they would bring them to a perfect man's state, that is to the state of Adam and Eve before they fell, for they were perfect then; and when we had followed them, some twenty, some thirty, some more, some less years; then they told us again, that they hoped we would not look for perfection while we are upon the earth, on this side the grave, for we must carry a body of sin about us; and they hoped we would not look for perfection, and would not hold the erroneous doctrine of perfection; and yet told us, as before, that they would bring us to a perfect man's state; and so we looked they would have fulfilled their words; for we had given our money, and had spent our labour in following after them, and hoped they would have fulfilled their words, and brought us to the knowledge of the son of God, and so to the unity of the faith, and to a perfect man's state, to our father Adam's and Eve's state before they fell; and now they have gotten our money, they hope we will not look for perfection here. Oh, deceivers! We will never set foot more after them, who will neither fulfill their words, nor give us our money back again; for we gave our money, that they should bring us to the knowledge of the son of God, and to the unity of the faith, and bring us to a perfect man's state, and to a measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: and now the scriptures that speak of sin and imperfection, they bring to prove that we should not be perfect, against their own promises and words; and all the scriptures that speak of perfection or overcoming, they tell us there must be a meaning put to them: and thus they deceived us, instead of bringing us to the measure of the stature of Christ, who never fell, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, who said, they would bring us to his stature; and now they cannot bring us to the measure of the stature of the righteousness and holiness of our father Adam and mother Eve, that they were in before they fell; for they had no body of sin before they fell, nor spot, nor wrinkle, nor blemish: so, the deceivers have got our money, and now call that an error, which they said they would bring us unto, (a perfect man's state,) and so will not fulfill their words, nor give us our money back again neither. Therefore now mark which of these three states the shepherds, the teachers, and leaders kept their flock in, and do keep them in. Whether is it in the state of Adam and Eve in the fall, where the body of death, the

curse, wrath, and wo are, imperfection, spots, wrinkles, and blemishes, and tell them that must be there for term of life? Or, whether or no can they keep them in the measure of the stature of Christ, who never fell.

Now consider which of these three states do these shepherds pretend to keep their flocks in, that deny perfection, and say their sheep must carry a body of death on their backs while on earth; for, "As the tree falls, it lies," and there is no repentance in the grave. Whether it be not in Adam and Eve in the fall, with his sons and daughters? Or, in that state before they fell, which was a good state in righteousness and holiness? Or, whether it be in Christ that never fell, whom it cost his blood and his life to fetch Adam and Eve, and his sons and daughters, out of that state in the fall, (out of the unjust state,) to set them in the state before they fell; and not only there, but to bring them into himself that never fell. Now what value, and price, and worth have they made of the blood of Christ, that cleanseth from sin and death; and yet told people that they would bring them to the knowledge of the son of God, and to a perfect man, and now tell them they must not be perfect on the earth, but carry a body of sin about them to the grave? As much as to say, they must be in the state of their father Adam and their mother Eve in the fall, under the wrath, curse, and wo, and must not come to the state they were in before they fell, to the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness. And thus the deceivers are not worth the setting foot after. And yet ask them for what end Christ came? they will say, to destroy the devil and his works. And then ask them if the body of sin and death be not the devil's works and imperfection? they will say, yes; and are in confusion: Christ came to destroy the devil and his works, they say, and yet they must carry them to the grave; and yet people are saved by Christ, they will say; but while you are upon earth, you must not be made free from sin. This is as much as if one should be in Turkey a slave, chained to a boat, and one should come to redeem him to go into his own country; but say the Turks, thou art redeemed, but while thou art upon the earth, thou must not go out of Turkey, nor have the chain off thee. So say satan's messengers, you are redeemed, but must carry a body of death about you, and cannot go to your father Adam's house before he fell, but you must live in your father Adam's house in the fall, while ye be upon earth. But I say you are redeemed by Christ; it cost him his blood to purchase man out of this state he is in, in the fall, and bring him up to the state man was in before he fell; so Christ became a curse, to bring man out of the curse, and bore the wrath, to bring man to the peace of God, that he might come to the blessed state, and to Adam's state he was in before he fell; and not only thither, but to a state in Christ that shall never fall. And this is my testimony to you, and to all people upon the earth. And so the teachers of the world cried, men are redeemed, but while on the earth they must have original sin in them, and that is the devil, for he

is the original of sin, and of the body of death, and that they are redeemed; but they must never come to the state of their father Adam before he fell, while on the earth. This is sad tidings! Are these messengers of God, or messengers of satan? So you may see by this where the shepherds have brought their flocks, and in what they sit, in Adam and Eve in the fall; not in Adam and Eve before they fell, a good, blessed state, but in Adam and Eve in the fall, a bad, cursed state, and not in Christ that never fell. Now mark, the apostle said, "He hath quickened us, who were dead in sins and trespasses, and hath made us to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might show forth his exceeding riches and kindness towards us." Now the ages are come, glory to the Lord God over all, in the highest for ever, that this kindness and these riches are seen, that the apostle's preaching is fulfilled, who said, "He hath quickened us, and made us to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." So mark, in Christ Jesus, us the church, us the saints, us the believers and true christians, made us to sit together. Here was their meeting, here was their sitting in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, him that was glorified with the Father before the world began, him that never fell, but fetched man and woman out of the fall, to the state that man and woman were in before they fell; and they not to sit there in Adam in the fall, nor in Adam before he fell, but in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, before Adam fell. And there is the safe sitting, in Christ the new and living way, the word of God, the power of God, the light, the life, and truth, in the first, and in the last, in the beginning, and in the ending, in him in whom is no shadow of turnings nor variableness; in him the saints sit, (the church,) in Christ the head, and there are the exceeding riches and kindness known again. For are not here kindness and riches, for man and woman to be brought out of that state in the fall, to the state of Adam and Eve before they fell. And he that doth bring them thither is Christ, and it is by his blood, it cost him his blood, his life, and he doth not leave them in the state that Adam and Eve were in before they fell, but he sets them down in himself, who never fell, a safer state than Adam was in before he fell. Now who sit here in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, the first and the last, the beginning and ending, the safe place, in the wisdom of God, 1. They see where Adam and Eve sat before they fell; blessed, and in a good state, in the image of God, in righteousness and holiness. 2. They see where Adam and Eve sat in the fall, with their sons and daughters fallen from righteousness and holiness, and the image of God, where they have no peace, neither do they see God, nor have dominion over the creation. 3. They see where the Jews sat, in the types, figures, and shadows, and the temples, and oaths, in the offerings and sacrifices, and there were to sit till Christ the substance came to end them all; which Christ the substance was before they were. 4. They see where the apostles sat in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, the substance of all the types, figures, and shadows, who ended them all, and

was before them all, and will be when they are all gone. 5. They see where the Gentiles sit, in the traditions, inventions, idols' temple, which God never commanded. 6. They see where all the apostate christians have sat since the apostles' days, in the rudiments, inventions, handiworks, and traditions, and cannot sit long in them, therefore turn one against another. 7. Now the age is come that the kindness and riches of the Lord are seen, which were manifest among the apostles and saints who sat in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, where many sit now, in Christ the seed, the first, the last, the beginning, and the ending; and who sit in him, as I said before, see where all the apostatized Christians have sat since the apostles' days; who have removed their seat from the apostles, and have not sat in the seat the apostles and saints sat in; for had they sat in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, him that destroyed the enmity, the devil, and his works, they had all sat in unity and peace. And they see where Jews sit, where Gentiles sit, and where Adam and Eve sat before they fell, and where they sat in the fall, with their sons and daughters, and where the apostles sat, in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. They that sit in Christ, they sit in him the apostles sat in, who is the first and the last, the beginning and the ending; they see the top and corner stone over all set, in which the life flourisheth over all which was before the devil, the power of death, and the power of darkness were; which seed (Christ) bruise and destroyeth the serpent's head, the devil, and his works; and in him (Christ) the saints sit, in whom they have the pastures of life, that floweth over all death, and was before it was, and the power of it. 8. So, as new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, (mark,) the milk that comes from the word which was in the beginning, by that milk is the growth, and not in the traditions, handle not them, nor the rudiments, nor the vain inventions of men neither, touch them not, taste them not, for they perish with the using of them; so then they do not grow by them. But they may say thou deniest the means, because thou dost not handle the doctrines, the commandments, the rudiments that perish with the using. Now that is not the means, but that is the means, the milk that comes from the word, by which thou must grow, thy growth is not by that which perisheth; but as I said, by the milk that comes from the word, which was in the beginning, before the false doctrines, traditions, rudiments of men, false churches, false ways, false teachings, worship, and religion were; before all these were the word of God was; thou dost not grow by any of those, if thou shouldst teach them all thy life time, and spend thy days, thou art never the nearer, neither dost thou grow by them, nor by the tongues, which make their divines, the beginning of which was Babel, which builds up, and throws down, as you may see: did they not build up the church faith and directory, and now throw them down again? Here is Babylon; and were they not offended because you would not touch their ordinances, and told you, you denied the means. Now doth not the word of God live, abide, and endure for ever, when they are all gone. So feed upon the milk of the word, that you may grow by that milk

that comes from the word, that was before their tongues; and when you are redeemed from the tongues, and see the beginning of tongues, Babel, thou that seekest for the milk of the word, thou must seek to be before Babel and Babylon was; for the word was before Babel was, and stands when Babylon is down. So the milk which cometh from the word, is it by which thou must grow up in the things of God; and this keeps the eye pure, and nourisheth thee up in the word of wisdom, word of life, word of patience, by the milk that comes from it, up into the word of wisdom, (for wisdom is with the gray hairs,) and so up into the life, up into a living, abiding state; for the word liveth and abideth for ever; and by the milk that cometh from the word which was in the beginning, before the fall of man was, with all the confusions, false ways, worships, churches; the word was before they all were, and abides when they are all gone; feed of the word, the milk of it, and be quiet with the milk by which thou growest and art nourished up to everlasting life, by which thy fruits will be unto holiness, and the end everlasting life, feeding upon the milk that comes from the word which was before unholiness was, and stands and remains when all that is gone; by this you are all nourished, by this you all grow in a living and abiding state, up into the word Christ, whose 'name is called the word of God,' in whom is the sitting down; so heirs of Christ, and of salvation, inherit salvation, and heirs of the power of an endless life, and heirs of a kingdom that hath no end, and of a power of a world to come. So know this to be your portion every one, that you may be heirs of the blessings and inherit them, that with them you may be clothed, meeting in the name, in the strong tower, meeting in the spirit, in which you may pray unto and worship God, and sing, which is the public worship of God, which hath been lost since the apostles' days, by and amongst the inward ravengers from the spirit of God, which have been got up into particular worshipping and praying; which if they come to the public, they must come to the spirit of God, which their forefathers inwardly ravened from, and to the public praying in the spirit. So dwell in the love of God, and build up yourselves in the most holy faith, and keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace; and worship God in the spirit and truth, (which the devil is out of,) and in that meet in the truth, in the power of God, which was before the devil was, in which is the perfect fellowship, the gospel fellowship, which stands in the power of God, which was before the devil was, or the fall of man either, where all imperfection was, and is, which the power of God expels away, in which is the perfect fellowship, as I said before. The worship of God is a perfect worship, it is in the truth, in the spirit; so the truth is that the devil is out of, and all imperfection, which truth was before imperfection was. The worship in the truth never changeth, which is of the God of all truth, who is a spirit; and this is the perfect standing worship, which will stand when all the worships in the fall are gone, devil, dragon, beast, and will worship; for the truth was before they all were; for they are not perfect, being out of the truth, out of that which is

perfect. So all Friends, be faithful and valiant for the truth of God upon the earth. For there are religions only for the summer, while the sun shines, amongst the sons of Adam in the fall; but when the storm comes, their flight is in the winter. So this day manifesteth every birth of what sort it is, and at that look; it is not professing God, nor Christ, nor scriptures, nor the ordinances, but mind the birth, he that is born of the flesh, and he that is born of the spirit, together with each birth's fruits. For he that is born of the spirit is the royal birth of God, whose fruits are above him that is born of the flesh below, not in righteousness and love, nor of the spirit; and so each birth hath its religion, hath its worship, hath its praying, and its singing; but when the winter comes, then is its flight, and then the wall makers are discovered, the hireling fleeth because he is a hireling; but ye, mind the power of God, which was before winter storms were, and such religions as are while the sun shines and the summer is; but when the winter comes are gone. Therefore mind ye the power of God, that ye may bear fruit in winter, and sit under your vine, Christ Jesus, that ye may see before winter storms and tempests were, and to that which shall never have an end, nor change; in this is the pure religion. And so in the name of the Lord being gathered, having bowed to it, then ye are in the strong tower, in the deepest storms and tempest, being in the name of the Lord, by whom all things were made; there is the strong tower, then ye are safe in all waves, tempests, winds, hail, floods, being in the name of the Lord, your strong tower. And so feel the seed of God, (friends, and brethren, and babes,) over all that set that makes to suffer, which was before that was, and will stand and remain, when that is gone that makes to suffer, that in that you may know Christ's reign, and the seed to reign, in which there is life eternal, and therein ye will have life eternal; and so feel the top stone over all laid; and hearing the voice of Christ, which is the light, the light's voice, the life's voice, the truth's voice, the power of God's voice, which goes before you, through which ye may have life eternal, in Christ's fold, where his sheep carry no body of sin upon their backs, for that is carried in satan's fold, which Christ's sheep are put out of, in which life (Christ) did foresee the hirelings flying, when the wolf comes. And so christendom have more minded the hireling's voice, than Christ the light's voice, the truth's voice, the voice of the life and power of God in themselves; they have gone from that, and gone to the voice of the hireling, who flies when the wolf comes, and leaves his flock, and cares not for it. Therefore you that have heard the voice of Christ, who are his sheep, and follow him, who hath put you forth, who goeth before you, and ye have followed him; follow him still, and he will give you life eternal, for he is the rest; and know the sitting down in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, being heirs of grace, which grace comes by Christ. Now the grace of God that brings salvation, hath appeared unto all men; which if all men minded, this is public, it would teach them to live righteously, soberly, and godly, and to deny the contrary, and then come to be heirs of this grace, and inherit it, and

so inherit their teacher that bringeth salvation, and so come to enjoy salvation, and inherit Christ, in whom are the light and life, and in him is the sitting down in the salvation.

All keep to the beauty of holiness; for in holiness lies your beauty; and the fruits of righteousness is a tree of life, and the name of the Lord is a strong tower, and the righteous flee into it, and are safe.

George Fox

From Cockford in Essex the 12th day of the 11th month, 1662.

EPISTLE 227

Sing and rejoice, ye children of the day and of the light; for the Lord is at work in this thick night of darkness that may be felt. And truth doth flourish as the rose, and the lilies do grow amongst the thorns, and the plants atop of the hills, and upon them the lambs do skip and play. And never heed the tempests nor the storms, floods nor rains, for the seed of Christ is over all, and doth reign. And so be of good faith and valiant for the truth: for the truth can live in the jails. And fear not the loss of the fleece, for it will grow again; and follow the lamb, if it be under the beast's horns or under the beast's heels; for the lamb shall have the victory over them all. And so all live in the seed Christ, your way that never fell; and you do see over all the ways of Adam's and Eve's sons and daughters in the fall. And in the seed Christ, your way, you have life and peace; and there you do see over all the ways of Adam in the Fall, in which there is no peace. So in the seed Christ stand and dwell, in whom you have life and peace; the life that was with the Father before the world began.

George Fox

9th month, 1663

Epistle 236

All my dear friends, in the everlasting power, life, and truth live, for you cannot live without it in the winds and storms. And though the hills and the mountains are burned, and the trees are become fruitless, and winter hath

devoured the former fruits, and you do see that persecution hath choked them, and the heat hath scorched them; whereby the untimely figs are fallen, and the corn is withered on the house-top, and the night is come, and the evil beasts go out of their den. But truth lives, and the power of God is over them all; and Christ ruleth, and there is bread of life, and water of life in him, and in his house; though the caterpillars and locusts are agreed to eat up all the green. But, as you are in the truth, you are in its day; and they in the darkness, are in the day of darkness. And all who are in the truth, rejoice through Christ, in the God of truth, and never heed prisons, for they are but for a time; and mind him who hath all times and seasons in his hand. And never heed the raging waves of the sea, nor be troubled at his tongue that speaks nothing but tribulation, anguish, and bondage; nor be troubled at the cords of the ungodly; for the cords of love, the power of God are stronger. And what doth he that sits in heaven, but laugh them to scorn? And so be valiant for the truth upon the earth, for the power is the Lord's. And so my love to all Friends in the everlasting seed, that never fell nor changeth.

George Fox
1664

