

# Epistle 317

by George Fox

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*George Fox's Epistle 317 emphasizes the importance of adhering to the gospel's order and the power of God while fostering unity among believers.*

**Scripture:** Isaiah 63:10, John 12:36, Acts 26:18, 2 Corinthians 5:19, Ephesians 4:30, 1 Thessalonians 5:19, Hebrews 12:2, 1 Peter 1:12, 1 John 1:1, Revelation 14:6

**Topics:** "Unity in Christ", "Gospel Order"

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## Description

George Fox emphasizes the importance of returning to the light and power of God, urging believers to be reconciled with Him through the eternal gospel. He warns against the spirit of confusion that seeks to undermine the established meetings for men and women, which are rooted in divine order and the Holy Spirit. Fox encourages the faithful to maintain their possessions in the gospel's power, asserting that true unity and liberty come from being in Christ and His teachings. He cautions against those who oppose the gospel order, reminding the congregation that the power of God will ultimately prevail over all false spirits and orders. His message is a call to live in love, unity, and the practice of pure religion, which is essential for spiritual growth and community edification.

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## Transcript

Friends and brethren,--It lies upon me from the Lord to write unto you these following lines. First, I was sent out by the Lord God, in his eternal light and power, to preach the word of life [1 Jn 1:1], which was before the word of death, and to turn people to the light [Acts 26:18], which was before darkness and the power of it, that all might be reconciled to God, by the word [2 Cor 5:19]; and that all might believe in the light, which is the life in Christ the word, and so become children of the light [John 12:36], and to know Christ the author of their faith; and their faith to stand in him, who is the author and finisher of it [Heb 12:2]; and to turn people to the spirit, which they had quenched, vexed, and grieved, and rebelled against [1 Th 5:19/Eph 4:30/Isa 63:10]; that in that holy spirit, they might see before the spirit of error [1 Jn 4:6] was; and that in the spirit they may know God and Christ, and the scriptures, which were given forth from it [2 Tim 3:16]; and that in the same spirit, they might all have fellowship one with another [1 Jn 1:7], and with the Father and son [1 Jn 1:3]; and so to preach the everlasting gospel [Rev 14:6], the power of God [Rom 1:16], (which was before the devil was,) that brings life and immortality to light [2 Tim 1:10], in all that do receive it, that they might see over him that had darkened them.

Which gospel I received not of man, nor by man, but of the Lord Jesus Christ [Gal 1:12], by his holy spirit sent down from heaven [1 Pet 1:12]. And so after I had received this, and preached it, and many thousands were come into it, in several places of the nation, then by the same power, and spirit, and light, I was moved to advise, to the setting up the men's Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, and the women's meetings. So that all in the power of God, the gospel, which was before the devil was; and in the light, which was before darkness was, and all in the holy spirit, before the unholy spirit was.

That they might be all in their possessions of the light, spirit, and power of God; and therein to keep this heavenly order of the gospel, being heirs of Christ, and of his government; of the increase of which there is no end [Isa 9:7]. Which gospel order is over all the orders of Adam in the fall, or amongst the apostates from that gospel the apostles were in, and will stand, (the power of God, the gospel,) when they are gone. So that all the heirs of life and grace [1 Pet 3:7], and heirs of the gospel, might be in their possession, and keep in the power which was before the fall was; and into this no apostacy can come.

So here in this power of the gospel, all have their liberty, and all have unity, and all have liberty in the spirit [2 Cor 3:17], and unity in the light, and unity in the faith [Eph 4:13], that Jesus Christ is the author of. So that all may see him and his government, which is over the government of Adam in the fall; for he was before old Adam was, and will be when he is gone. And so that all might be in the possession of Christ, and as they have received him, so to walk in him [Col 2:6], the heavenly and spiritual man [1 Cor 15:47]; of the increase of whose government there is no end; but there will be an end of old Adam's.

Now, friends, whosoever shall come, under what pretence soever, to alter these meetings, or to deny or speak against the men and women's meetings, it is the spirit of confusion and opposition, which would be seeming to do something, yet its work is to disquiet the simple minds; and it is the very same spirit with John Perrot's; and mark his end, and their end, and such as join with it. For it is against the power of God, in which the order is established, and the eternal spirit and light, in which the men and women's meetings were set up; in which all things should be established, and are fastened, in the light which was before darkness was, and in the power of God, before the devil was, and in the holy spirit, before the unclean spirit was, and will stand when he is gone. Therefore, in it keep your possessions in the power of God, and in his light and spirit, that you may know the mountain of the Lord established above all mountains [Isa 2:2]. And they are none but loose spirits, and such as tend to looseness, that stand against the men and women's meetings, though it may come under pretence to set up a better way; or, under pretence only to alter them to another day; and, it may be, pretend their fear of the corruption of observing a day [Gal 4:10]. All this is but from a corrupt spirit of darkness, which God will blast; for we put no holiness in the usual and constant days of Monthly and Quarterly Meetings. For I would have them all to know, that they who are heirs of the gospel, and of Christ Jesus, are redeemed out of the vain observation of days, and out of the Jewish and apostate christians' holy days, to God by Christ, who made all days, and every thing good, and their eyes are to the supernatural day of Christ [Phil 1:10]; and they are the children of this day [1 Th 5:5].

And that is a creeping spirit, that would go to alter the usual and constant meeting days, under pretence to prevent people from the corruptions of observing a constant day, or under a pretence of keeping people out of a form, and so would father their deceit upon God. For they who are in the possession of the power, by which all true forms and all things are upheld [Heb 1:3], (which word and power gives form and being to all things,) and all they that are in it, are above all such things, and judge all such dark spirits. And they that are in the observation of days, are not heirs of the power, nor of Christ, who was before days were, and such cannot sit in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus [Eph 2:6], to do his churches' business. So, I say, that after people were turned to the light [Acts 26:18], power, and spirit of God; and they all come into

the light, power, and spirit of God; all such are to make up the men and women's meetings; and in it to feel the wisdom of God, by which all things were made and created [Wis 7:22], and with it to be ordered, and to order all things [Wis 8:1] to God's glory [1 Cor 10:31]: so that wisdom may be justified of her children [Mat 11:19]. . . .

. . . . So as Friends come to truth, which the devil is out of [John 8:44], and to the power of God, which was before the devil was; all being heirs of life, and the gospel, and heirs of Christ; I say, take your possession of life, and come into the order of life, and into the order of the gospel, and then you will have a witness in yourselves, and will say with me, our order is not of man, nor by man, but by Jesus Christ, and his gospel [Gal 1:12]; and of his government, of the increase of which there is no end [Isa 9:7]. And so all be faithful, keeping in your possessions, and in your inheritance, in that where no apostacy can come: for I must tell you, here is the same spirit stirring, if it could prevail, that would lay waste God's heritage, and bring you out of your possessions, that it might rule over you: but if you keep your possessions of the gospel order, the power of God in Christ Jesus, you will rule over it, being in and upon the foundation of God, that stands sure; though some earthly loose spirits it may draw after them. But mark the end of it; for the power remains, and will remain, and the seed reigns over the head of all such false spirits, and orders, and governments, that are not set up by Jesus Christ, and it will grind them to pieces [Mat 21:44]: that is the word of the Lord God to you, let whoever will oppose it; for the power was before they were, and will stand when they are gone. For all our men and women's meetings, which are set up by the power and spirit of God, these meetings are for the practice of religion, and to see that all that do profess truth, do practise it and walk in it. And all such as are against them, are begetters of people into talking, and not walking, and of saying, but not doing; and such always were judged by all them that walked in the truth, and in the pure religion, that is undefiled before God, that kept and keeps from the spots of the world [Jas 1:27]. And all such are never like to prosper, that are against the practice of the pure religion.

And therefore, as I said before, live in the possession of the gospel and its order, the power of God, which was before the devil was, or the apostacy either; and know his government, of the increase of which there is no end, who is set up from everlasting to everlasting, the Amen [Rev 3:14].

And live in love and unity one with another; for that edifies the body [Eph 4:16] of Christ, and that is it, which will bear all things [1 Cor 13:7]; and in the patience run the race, and have the crown [Heb 12:1/1 Cor 9:24f], and keep in the meekness of the Lamb, that will have the victory [Rev 17:14].

And such opposers as cry against forms, and prescriptions, and edicts of men, they are the most in it themselves this day, and gather into a separation, by prescriptions and subscriptions; and under a pretence of crying against such things, oppose the power, and them that are in the possession of it. But the power will blast them, and make them to wither, like the grass and corn on the house-top [Psa 129:6], as it did John Perrot and his company; to whom it was the word of the Lord then, and so it is to these now; and the word lives, and abides, and endures for ever [1 Pet 1:23].

So with my love in the Lord Jesus Christ to you all, in whom is my labour and travail for your eternal good and settlement upon the eternal rock. Amen. Farewell.

G. F.

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