

# Epistle 367

by George Fox

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of living in holiness, righteousness, and justice, and the role of rulers in a society to rule justly and fear God.*

**Scripture:** Exodus 23:6-8, Leviticus 19:15, Deuteronomy 1:16-17, Deuteronomy 16:18-20, 2 Samuel 23:3, Proverbs 28:15, Zechariah 8:16, Matthew 5:8, Matthew 5:20, John 8:44, Romans 13:3, Colossians 3:5, Hebrews 12:14, James 3:17

**Topics:** "Righteousness", "Leadership"

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## Description

George Fox emphasizes the necessity of living a life of righteousness and holiness, as it is essential for seeing God and maintaining peace within a community. He warns that unholiness leads to a lack of divine vision and peace, urging his listeners to embody truth, justice, and equity in their actions. Fox stresses the importance of just leadership, reminding that rulers must be righteous to guide their people effectively. He calls for a commitment to God's spirit to overcome wickedness and to ensure that all judgments are fair and just. Ultimately, he desires that all may act in humility and in the power of Christ, reflecting God's glory in their lives.

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## Transcript

Dear friends,--The Lord by his mighty hand and power having brought you to that place, and now you are settled there, my desire is, that your lives and conversations may preach righteousness and holiness; for without holiness none shall see God [Heb 12:14]. And going into unholiness, that is the cause that none see God; and the cause why there is not peace among a nation or people is, they do not live and walk in righteousness; but walk and follow the unrighteous spirit, which is out of the truth [John 8:44]. And again, Christ says, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God [Mat 5:8].' For it is the defiled and impure hearts that do not see God. And therefore, keep in the pure spirit of God, that does mortify all impurity and unholiness [Col 3:5], which blind people from the sight of the pure God.

And now, my dear friends, the eyes of other nations will be upon you; and now you profess truth beyond them all; but if you do not exceed them in truth, in righteousness [Mat 5:20?], in holiness, justice and equity, and in the wisdom of God, that is pure, peaceable [Jas 3:17], &c. by which you may answer the good in your government, and all governments about you likewise, (which is my desire that you may, that they may not see any nakedness among you,) if you do not, you will bring both the judgment of God upon you, and the judgment of truth [Zech 8:16] that you and we profess.

For you know how that Friends in England, and other places, have admonished the governors and rulers to do that which is just and right; and therefore now ye are come into place, have a care that you do that which is just and right, lest you come under the same reproof by others.

And therefore, have an eye to the Lord in all your actions. For David saith, (2 Sam. xxiii. 3.) 'The God of Israel said, the rock of Israel spake to me, he that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God: and he shall be as the light of the morning (that doth so) when the sun riseth, even as a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain [2 Sam 23:3f].' Here you may see, it must not be unjust men, and men that do not fear God, that must be rulers, for they do not receive his wisdom to rule withal; and such will be as clouds without water [Jude 1:12], (as in Jude,) and then they are not like to refresh the tender grass, but hurt it.

And Solomon saith, 'As the roaring lion, and the raging bear, so is a wicked ruler over the poor people [Prov 28:15].' And therefore with the spirit of God keep down the wicked spirit in you, and then you will keep down the roaring lion and the raging bear, with the spirit of meekness, and patience, and wisdom, and understanding. Prov. xxviii. 15.

And the apostle says, 'Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil [Rom 13:3].' Therefore both rulers and ruled must be out of the evil works. And the rulers cannot be a terror to evil works, if they live in them themselves. Therefore all ought to live in the power of God, which brings them out of the evil to do that which is good; and then they will be an honour to God, and a praise one to another, both ruler and ruled.

Now the Lord said unto Moses, 'Judges and officers shalt thou make in all thy gates, (so they were not to be made in corners,) which the Lord giveth thee in all the tribes; and they shall judge the people with just judgment. (Mark! just judgment.) Thou shalt not wrest judgment, thou shalt not respect persons; thou shalt take no gift. For the gift blindeth the eyes of the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous [Deut 16:18f]. Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of the poor in any case. Keep thee far from a false matter. The innocent and righteous slay thou not; for I will not justify the wicked [Exo 23:6f]. That which is altogether just, shalt thou follow, that thou mayst live and inherit the land which the Lord thy God hath given thee [Deut 16:20]' Now a people following and doing that which is not just, is the cause they do not live and inherit the land. Deut. xvi. 18, 19, 20. Exod. xxiii. 6. And therefore do that which is just, that you may inherit Christ and your spiritual land. 'Thou shalt not oppress a stranger, seeing you were strangers; nor vex the widows and fatherless [Exo 22:21f].' And the Lord saith, 'You shall be holy men unto me [Exo 22:31].' Again, the Lord says, 'Thou shalt not raise a false report, &c. Put not thy hand with the wicked to an unrighteous witness. Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause, to decline after many, to wrest judgment [Exo 23:1f].' Exod. xxiii. 1, 2.

Again, the Lord saith, 'Ye shall not do unrighteousness in judgment; thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty. But in righteousness thou shalt judge thy neighbour [Lev 19:15].' Levit. xix. 15. And Deut. i. 16, 17. and Josh. vii. 24. 'I charged your judges,' (says Moses,) 'saying, Hear the causes between your brethren, judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him [Deut 1:16].' So let all the strangers that are with you have righteous judgment, as well as those among yourselves. And again he saith, 'Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great. You shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's [Deut 1:17].' So long as ye judge righteously.

And therefore, now, friends, my desire is, that you all may be kept in the power and spirit of God and Christ in humility, and in that you will have a sense of all things, that whatever you act, it may be done in the spirit and power of Jesus Christ, to the praise of God the Father, who is over all, from everlasting to everlasting, who beholds and sees all your words and actions; that you may behold and see with his spirit, his and his son's divine majesty among you. Amen.

G. F.

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