

To the Chief Magistrates, Rulers, Ministers, Justices of the Peace, and other Officers; who profess Christ and Christianity, and are called by that worthy name, and great title of Christians; which is from the King of kings, and Lord of lords, Christ Jesus.

By George Fox

Site Editor's Introduction: Upon the restoration of the King Charles II, there was an armed insurrection by about 50 religious maniacs trying to establish *King Jesus* in England. The new king was insecure, the Parliament hated the Quakers, and so they used it as an excuse to destroy the Quakers by legislation. Their laws defined any religious assembly, other than the Church of England, a seditious meeting of plotters, a *Conventicle*. Punishment increased for each violation: from fine, to larger fine, to life imprisonment, to banishment from England. The other sects either converted, or met in secret. The Quakers continued to meet openly, and they met fierce persecution by mobs, soldiers, the courts, and prisons.

1. And you professing the holy scriptures of truth, and confessing to the new testament and new covenant, and the law and the prophets, which is, to love God above all, and your neighbors as yourselves, and the royal law of God, spoken of in the new testament; which is, to do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Now would not you judge and believe, that it was contrary to the royal law of God, if that the Papists, or the Presbyterians should make spoil of your goods and take away your goods out of your shops, and your very beds and working tools, your corn and your cattle, so that you have not a cow to give your family and your children milk, nor corn to make you bread; and all that because for conscience sake you cannot be of the Papists' or Presbyterians' religion? Would you say, this was according to the royal law of God, and the

- nobility of true christianity in them, to do unto all, as they would be done unto, if they should serve you so?
2. And would you say, it was according to the royal law of God, to be haled from your peaceable meeting by officers and soldiers, for serving and worshipping God in his spirit and truth, that made you; and to have your goods taken away from you through informers, to the ruin of your wives and children; and to be cast into loathsome prisons, there to be kept until some of you died; because for conscience sake you cannot be of the Papists,' Presbyterians,' or Independents' religion? Would you not say, this was contrary to the royal law of God, and to the nature and nobility of true christianity in them, that should do so to you?
 3. If the Presbyterians, Independents, or Papists, should make you pay twenty pounds a month, or two-thirds of your estates, and bring *quitam* writs against you, as is now against many hundreds of us; and cast you in prison, and spoil your goods, as ours now are; because for conscience sake you cannot join with their outward forms of religion; would you say, that this was according to the royal law of God, 'to do unto others as they would have them do unto them?' Or according to the law and the prophets, 'to love their neighbors as themselves?'
 4. If the Papists, Presbyterians, or Independents, should banish you from your wives and children, or imprison you, (as many of us are now imprisoned, and others have been banished), because you do peaceably meet together to serve and worship God, and pray to him; and they should call your peaceable meetings, seditious conventicles and riots, because you cannot for conscience sake join to any of their forms of religion? Would you not say this was contrary to the law and the prophets, 'to love their neighbors as themselves;' and to the royal law of God, 'to do unto all men, as they would have them do unto them?' And to the nobility of true christianity, in those who should do so unto you?
 5. Would not you think it very hard from the Papists, Presbyterians or Independents, if they should premunire* you, and cast your men, women, and widows into prison, (as many of us are now from their wives and children), because for conscience sake you dare not swear at all, or take any oath, because Christ and his apostles forbids it,' (Mat 5:33-37, James 55:12) though your peaceable lives and conducts have, and do show forth your allegiance to the king; and though you are willing to testify the truth in all matters and cases with yes, yes, or no, no, as Christ and the apostle commands; and as we have done, and do? Would you say, this was according to the law and prophets in them, and the royal law of God, 'to love their neighbors as themselves,' and 'to do unto all, as they would be done unto?'

*Premunire – was the penalty for failure to swear an oath of allegiance to the King of England, originally enacted to flush out Papists who had allegiance to the Pope; yet the Pope edicted lying under oath was permissible, if the lie was in the interest of the Roman sect. The law remained on the books for one hundred years and was then used by the opponents of the Quakers to persecute them for failure to swear in court or take an oath of loyalty. The penalty was: life imprisonment and confiscation of all property to the King; at the death of the person sentenced, his surviving relatives could petition the King for the return of any real property: homes and lands. Thousands of Quakers were so penalized, including George Fox and Margaret Fell.

6. And would the bishops and priests believe, that it was according to the royal law of God, and according to the law and the prophets, for the Papists, Presbyterians, or Independents to excommunicate them, and cast them into prison, and there to keep them until they die, (as several of us have been so kept, and many are now in prison), because for conscience sake you cannot join to the Papists,' Presbyterians,' or Independents' forms of religion? Would you say this [persecution] is 'to love their neighbors as themselves,' and 'to do unto others, as they would have others do unto them;' and that it was according to the nature and nobility of true christianity in them, that should do so unto you?

And now I do in humility desire you to consider, did Christ and his apostles ever force any to be of his true religion and worship; and if that they would not [conform], then to give forth orders to take away their goods, and their very beds, and their corn which would make them bread, their cattle which should help to maintain them, and their cows which should give them milk, their clothes they should wear to keep them warm, and their tools they should work with to earn their living? On the contrary did not Christ exhort christians to love one another, and to love enemies? And the apostle says, *overcome evil with good*. And Christ told the Jews, what the substance was of the law and the prophets: 'to love God above all, and their neighbor as themselves.' And should not all, that go by the name of Christians, and profess that great title of christianity, from Christ Jesus the lamb of God, show forth the nobility of true christianity, and his lamb-like nature; and not 'one christian to tear another to pieces,' and 'spoil his goods, and cast him into prison,' because he cannot for conscience sake receive and join to one another's form of religion; seeing that Christ rebuked his disciples, 'that would have had fire come down from heaven, to consume those who would not receive him;' and told them, 'they did not know what spirit they were of, and that he came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.' Should not all true christians have the mind of Christ?

Do you think, that God accepts the *sacrifice* or offerings demanded by a state-enforced religion, to save themselves from prison, and from spoil of their goods, when all that is contrary to their tender conscience? Were not the offerings and sacrifices to be free-will offerings to the Lord in the time of the law? And in the gospel day of the new covenant and testament, are not the offerings and sacrifices of the Lord spiritual? And can any man force and compel the spirit of God to that offering and sacrifice? For does not the apostle say to the christians, 'You are a royal priesthood, offering up spiritual sacrifices to God by Jesus Christ?' And after Christ was ascended, did ever the apostles, bishops, or elders give any orders to excommunicate, spoil goods, and cast any into prison, there to be kept until death, (as many of us have been), such as could not conform to their religion?

And therefore I desire you in the fear of the Lord, and in his gentle, holy wisdom, (which is easy to be entreated), to consider these things, and us, who are under great sufferings, imprisonment, and spoiling of goods; whether this is according to the royal law of God, and his prophets, which is, 'to love their neighbors as themselves,' and to do unto all, as they would be done unto; or whether this is according to the nature of the lamb, Christ Jesus, and the nobility of true christianity? What if the Presbyterians, Independents, or Papists should do the same to you, because of your tender consciences, and for your worship and serving of God, and your not joining with them? Would that be a good thing in them, and according to the royal law of God, 'to do unto you, as they would not have others do unto them;' and whether you would say, it was according to the lamb-like nature of Christ, and according to true christianity?

So I aks that you would weigh these things with the spirit of God, and the balance of the sanctuary; and measure them with the line and rule of righteousness, according to the scriptures of truth.

From him that desires the good and happiness of the king and kingdom, and all the king's subjects in it, in this life, and his and their eternal welfare in the life and world which is everlasting; and does pray for kings, princes, governors, and magistrates, that we may lead and live a holy, peaceable, and quiet life in all godliness under them: for magistrates are for a praise of those who do well.

George Fox

London, the 17th of the 9th month, 1684

POSTSCRIPT

Where do you ever read, that the Jews, when they had conquered any nation or kingdom, did by the law force them to the Jewish religion, or to be circumcised?

Or that they cast them into prison, if they would not join with them in their divine service? Though Christ said, "they compassed sea and land to make proselytes;" yet where do you read, they made them by force, or they became proselytes to save their goods, or keep themselves out of prison? And you read in Genesis, 'that Abraham and Isaac lived in Gera, in king Abimelech's country;' yet you do not read that the king forced them to his religion; but they had their liberty to serve and worship God. And also in Genesis, 'when Abraham went down into Egypt, and Jacob and his family after him;' you do not read, that king Pharaoh forced either Abraham, or Jacob and his family to his religion, while they lived there. And the Turks, when they conquer any nation or people, or take captives, we do not hear that they force them to their religion. For our Friends, (the people called Quakers), in Algiers, that are taken captives by the Turks, have their liberty peaceably to meet together, to serve and worship God there without disturbance. And therefore those who bear that great and worthy name of Christians, from Christ Jesus, and profess the holy scriptures of truth, and the royal law of God, which is, 'to do unto others, as they would have them to do unto them,' should show forth the nobility of true christianity, and the nature of the lamb, Christ, which is far above all Turks and heathens.

George Fox

Mat 5:7. 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.'

Mat 9:13. Christ said, 'Learn what that means, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.'

An exhortation to all people, to pureness, cleanness, and holiness, and faithfulness to the Lord.

Here you may see who they are that dwell with everlasting burnings, and in God's tabernacle and holy mountain, and who not. By G. F.

David said, 'Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place?' David answers, and said, 'He that has clean hands, and a pure heart; who has not lift up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully; he shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation; and this is the generation of those who seek the Lord.' Psalm 24:3-6. So here is a generation of clean hands, and a pure heart that ascend into the hill of the Lord, and stand in his holy place.

And Isaiah said, 'Who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?' And Isaiah answers his questions, and said, 'He that walks righteously, and speaks uprightly; he that despises the gain of oppression, that shakes his hands from holding of bribes; that stops his ears

from hearing of blood, and shuts his eyes from seeing of evil; he shall dwell on high, his place of defense shall be the fortress of rocks; bread shall be given him, his water shall be sure; your eyes shall see the king in his beauty, &c. and your eyes shall see a tabernacle that shall not be taken down, not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed,' Isa 33:14-17,20.

Here you may see who they are that can dwell with devouring fire, and everlasting burnings, and yet shall not be burned nor devoured.

David said, 'Lord, who shall abide in your tabernacle? And who shall dwell in your holy hill?' David answers his questions, and said, 'He that walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart. He that backbites not with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his neighbor; in whose eyes a vile person is condemned, but he honors those who fear the Lord. He that takes not a reward against the innocent; he that does these things shall never be removed, but shall abide in the tabernacle of the Lord, and dwell in his holy hill.' Psalm 15. 'But the ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind drives away; therefore the ungodly shall not stand in judgment, (namely, righteous judgment), and sinners shall not stand in the congregation of the righteous.' Psalm 1:4-5.

'The mountain of the house of the Lord, shall be established above all the mountains, and exalted above all the hills;' and does not the Lord here teach his people his righteous and holy ways and paths to walk in? as in Isa 2, Micah 4. And the stone that smote the great image of gold, of silver, of brass, and iron, and clay, that they became like chaff of the summer threshing floors, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote this great image, became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. Dan 2:35.

Is not this stone, that becomes a great mountain, that fills the whole earth, Christ Jesus? And so through him the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of Christ.

Here you may see this stone, or mountain that fills the whole earth, will dash to pieces, and grind to powder all that is not of its holy and pure nature, and with its holy divine nature fill the whole earth.

The Lord said, 'They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain.' Isaiah 11:9. And is not this holy mountain Christ, who destroys the devil and his works, the destroyer? 'And those who take hold of my covenant, said the Lord, even them will I bring to my holy mountain,' Isa. 56:6-7, 2:2.

'And he that puts his trust in me,' said the Lord, 'shall inherit my holy mountain.' Isa 57:13. 'For thus said the high and lofty One, that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.' Isa 57:15. Therefore is it not good to wait upon the Lord, and trust in him?

Concerning such as eat up God's people like bread, and such as make idols and images, and worship them, are without the true understanding, and are fools that hate knowledge; and such as go into adultery and uncleanness, are void of the wisdom of God, and true understanding; and God's fury is upon all such as do not call upon his name.

David said, 'Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge, who eat up my people as they eat bread?' Psalm 14:4. Here the workers of iniquity, as they eat bread, they eat up God's people; that is, they devour them. Are not these devourers men-eaters?

And again in Psalm 53:4, the Lord said, 'The workers of iniquity eat up my people like bread. But God did give his people corn from heaven, and man did eat angels food.' Psalm 78:24-25. And David said, 'The wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.' Psalm 27:2.

Here you may see these wicked men-eaters, and enemies of the righteous, stumbled and fell, when they came to eat up the flesh of the righteous; so they fell short of their devouring prey. Psalm 27:2.

Solomon said, 'Whoever commits adultery with a woman, lacks understanding; he that does it, destroys his own soul; a wound and a dishonor shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away.' Pro 6:32-33. 'And those who lack understanding, the wicked woman draws in; but he knows not that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the chambers of hell.' Pro 19:16-29.

And therefore Job said, 'The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.' Job 28:28. And Solomon said, 'He that is slow to wrath, is of a great understanding; but he that is hasty of spirit, exalts folly.' Prov 14:29. 'And understanding is a well-spring of life to him that has it.' Prov 16:22. 'But the man that wanders out of the way of understanding, shall remain in the congregation of the dead.' Prov 21:16. 'Evil men do not understand judgment.' Prov 28:5. 'And the strange woman deceives the simple ones, and the youth, who are void of understanding; her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.' Prov 7:7,27. And therefore it is good to keep and walk in the

spirit of understanding, by which you may depart from evil, and keep out of the snare of the whore, and the congregation of the dead.

And the Lord said concerning the Jews who rebelled against his spirit, 'My people are foolish, they have not known me, they are drunken children, they have no understanding, they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.' Jer 4:22. Is not this the condition of many Christians, as well as the Jews?

The prophet said, 'Pour out your wrath upon the heathen who do not know you, and upon the families who do not call upon your name; for they have eaten up Jacob, and devoured him, and consumed him, and have made his habitation desolate.' Jer 10:25. Must not God's fury come upon these men-eaters, that eat Jacob the beloved of God, and devoured him, and made his habitation desolate? And David said, 'Pour out your wrath upon the heathen that have not known you, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon your name; for they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling place.' Psalm 79:6-7. God's fury will be poured upon such that devour the righteous, and lay waste his dwelling place.

And you may see in Jer 51, 'those who are founders of graven images, or molten images,' are brutish by their knowledge, 'which are the works of error, and shall perish.' And the Lord said, 'A drought is upon her waters, namely Babylon, and they shall be dried up, for it is a land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols.' Jer 50:38. Upon such God brings droughts and famine, who disobey and forsake the living God, and dote upon their idols and images which they make. 'And the Lord frustrates the tokens of liars, and makes the diviners mad, and turns wise men backward, and makes their knowledge foolish.' And has not this been seen and fulfilled? Isa 44:25. And the Lord said, 'They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their hearts on their iniquity, and there shall be like priest like people, and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them for their doings.' Hosea 4:8-9. And the Lord said to Daniel, 'The wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.' Daniel 12:10. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the secrets of the Lord are with those who fear him, and the Lord takes care for those who fear him, as in Exod 1:21. Therefore it is good to live in the fear of the Lord, which you must if you would know his secrets.

The cause of drought, and barrenness, famine and plagues, for disobeying the Lord, and grieving his Spirit.

The cause of drought, barrenness, and famine. 'The Lord turns rivers into a wilderness, and the water-springs into dry ground, and turns a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of those who dwell in it.' Psalm 107:33-34. Mark, it is for the wickedness of those who dwell in it.

And you may see those who disobeyed the Lord and forsook him, and because of the wickedness of their doings, the Lord will smite such with consumptions, and fevers, and blotches, and blastings, and mildews, until they perish. 'I will,' said the Lord, 'smite them with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart, and the locust, and the worms shall consume and devour their fruits; and the heavens that are over your head shall be as brass, and the earth that is under you shall be iron. And the Lord will make the rain of your land powder and dust; and will smite you with the blotches of Egypt, and with the emiroeds, scab, and itch that can not be healed.' And this is the portion of those who disobey the Lord, and forsake him, as in Deut 28:15-68, you may see more at large, and how the curse follows the wicked and disobedient, in city and field, and upon themselves and their flocks, and the fruits of their lands, yes, the plagues and the judgments that he poured upon Egypt, he pours upon those who disobey him, and grieve and rebel against his spirit.

And the Lord sent the prophet Gad unto David, when he caused Joab to number the people, and said unto him, 'Shall seven years of famine come upon the land, or will you flee three months before your enemies, while they pursue you, or that there be three days pestilence in your land.' 2 Sam 24:9-13. And did not this action of David bring death and destruction of seventy thousand of the Jews, through David's hearkening to the temptation of Satan, as in 1 Chron 21:1, but David repented, and the Lord staid the hand of the destroying angel, that Jerusalem was not destroyed?

And did not the Lord call for a famine, and it came upon the land seven years? (as in 2 Kings 8:1). And was not this because of their wickedness?

And in Jer 11:22, does not the Lord there punish Judah for idolatry, and said, 'that his sons and daughters should die by famine.' And in Jer 14:12, there the Lord said to the Jews that disobeyed him, 'When they fast I will not hear them, nor accept their offerings;' but said, 'I will consume them by famine, and by pestilence.' And likewise you may see in Jer 15, how the Lord said concerning the rebellious and disobedient Jews; and for the wickedness of Manasseh he threatened them with death, captivity, and famine. And likewise you may see in Jer 18:21, how the Lord threatens famine and judgments against the Jews for their revolting from the Lord; and in Jer 44:13, see how the Lord threatens the disobedient by famine and pestilence. And the Lord threatens his plagues and judgments concerning Babylon, and said, 'A drought is upon the waters, and they shall be dried up; for it is a land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols.' Jer 50:38. And therefore let all that disobey the Lord, and make graven images, and idols, and worship them, beware of these judgments. And Ezekiel, he declares the judgments upon Jerusalem for their rebelling against God, how that they should die and be consumed with famine and pestilence, in Ezek 5:12. And likewise in Ezek 6, you may see the judgments upon Israel for

their idolatry; the Lord said, he would 'pour his fury upon them, and they should die by pestilence and famine.' And the Lord said, he would 'leave a few of the Jews that should escape from the pestilence and famine, and that these Jews that escaped might declare their own abominations among the heathen.' Ezek 12:16. And in Isaiah 14, you may see how the Lord threatened the Assyrians with famine and pestilence. 'Thus said the Lord, because of mine house that is waste, yes, every man runs to his own house, therefore the heaven over you is staid from dew, and the earth is staid from her fruit; and I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground brings forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labor of their hands.' Haggai 1:10-11.

Here you may see the reason of the judgments of God, because people mind their own houses, and business, and wills, more than the Lord's.

And did not the three years' famine and six months come upon the children of Israel, because of their turning from the Lord, and rebelling against his law and spirit in the days of wicked Ahab and Jezebel, who set up their idolatry, and persecuted and killed the Lord's people? And did not the Lord shut up heaven, that they had no rain nor dew for three years and six months in the land of Israel? Luke 4:25, 1 Kings 17:1.

And you may see in Rev 18, what plagues, and famine, and judgments the Lord pours upon the false church, mystery Babylon, the great whore, that has whored from the spirit of Christ, and killed the Lord's prophets, and drunk the blood of the saints and martyrs, who sat as a queen; but plagues, and judgments, and famine, and destruction is their end, with the dragon, beast, and false prophets, and their followers. And therefore let all be warned that rebel against the spirit of God, and so turn from the Lord into sin and wickedness, such cannot expect to escape these plagues and judgments, that God and his prophets, Christ and his apostles, have pronounced against them in the holy scriptures of truth.