

THE VISION

(1679, text from 1831 version, as adjusted in 2007)

Dear friends,
With my love to you in the holy peaceable truth
that never changes,
nor admits of evil,
but makes all free
that receive it
and that behave well with it,
and is over all the clouds without rain
and wells without water
and trees without fruit.

From the truth flows justice,
equity, righteousness and godliness,
mercy and tenderness,
that brings the human heart, mind, soul and spirit
to the infinite and
incomprehensible God.

From truth a love flows
to all creation,
a love that moves all to come
to the knowledge of the truth,
as it bends every one to their utmost ability
to serve God and his truth
and to make it widely known.

Truth brings their minds out of the sinful earth,
which makes them brittle
and changeable and uncertain,
for truth doth not change,
neither doth it touch with
that which does change.

As to unity, truth makes all
like itself
that do obey it,
and universal, to live out of
narrowness and self,
and thus deny it.

So truth brings all into oneness
and answers the good principle
of God in all people,
and brings all into humility
and the fear of the Lord,
which is the beginning of wisdom.

Truth brings all to have a care
of God's glory
and his honor,
and watches over all those proficient in it
for their good,
to keep within its bounds
and behave as to its order.
Whilst they that are out of truth
are lead into great disorder
since in them there is no truth.
The truth makes all children
free in God's care,
and in truth they do reign over him.

Thanks, glory and honor
to the Lord God of truth
and over all for ever.
Amen,

The Lord, who is the God of all peace and order, alone protects and preserves his people with his eternal power, for the devil's power is not eternal; it had a beginning and must have an ending, for the eternal power limits that devourer and destroyer. And therefore, friends, patience must be exercised in the truth; and keep to the word of forgiveness in the light which is love, which word was before the world was, and abides and endures for ever, and it will keep Friends over and out of all the snares of the world and its temptations.

So with my love in the seed of life that reigns over all, and in it may the Lord God Almighty preserve and keep you all to his glory. Amen.

G.F.

From **Truth of the Heart, an anthology of George Fox**, selected & annotated by Rex Ambler, Quaker Books, Friends House, Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ, September 2001, pp. 138-142. Slight emendations made by Ted Church, November 2007, and also adjustments made in some English-English spellings to be in American-English.

The whole of Epistle 358 (1679), *Works of George Fox* (New Foundation Publication, George Fox Fund, State College, Pennsylvania, 1991, reprint of the 1831 edition in eight large volumes), 8:165. [The annotators have] versified the text to bring out the poetic structure of [George Fox's] writing here, or more likely, of his spoken delivery. On the 'incantatory style' of George Fox, which enhanced his 'fluency in spontaneous oral composition', see Richard Baumann, *Let your words be few; symbolism of speaking and silence among seventeenth-century Quakers*, Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 75-78.

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