

All men admit and act upon the value of Truth. Even those who practically disregard its obligations, pay to Truth an implicit homage; for they plainly manifest that it is only wicked selfishness which leads them to violate it.

*Truth in sentiment* is the agreement of our conceptions or belief, with the real nature and circumstances of the things which are the objects of those conceptions: and *conventional Truth* is the agreement of the signs by which we express our conceptions, with the conceptions themselves.

That our conceptions may be thus in accordance with the reality of things, is to be secured by the due consideration of Evidence: and we believe that God, the Fountain of all truth and goodness, has furnished us with *means* for the obtaining of evidence, *sufficient* for a rational satisfaction, upon all objects which it concerns us to know.

*All truth must be consistent.* Let the objects contemplated be never so different in their nature, and remote from each other in the connexions of their occurrence; the facts concerning them cannot but be in mutual agreement; for to say that one fact is contradictory to another, is to say a manifest absurdity. But our conception of a fact may fail of being in accordance with the reality; from the variety of causes which, we are aware, are the sources of frequent error among mortals, and of which the chief are, the not being possessed of adequate means for acquiring the knowledge requisite as the basis of our deductions; or the want of giving due attention to the means which we do possess for acquiring the necessary data; or a want of correct habitude of mind in drawing our conclusions. If we have done our best and fail, we have not forfeited moral truth; we are sincere, though mistaken: but, if we have not done our best, we cannot be blameless. For the consequences of our indifference,