

The Truth

Third Series – Sermon Twenty-Eight

Original by George MacDonald

Paraphrase by Dale R. Howie



Here in the sermon "The Truth," MacDonald seeks to awaken us to a mystery. A mystery which can only be seen through the childlike heart of His children. I know of no one, including myself, whose Jesus is too big! Jesus says He is Truth. What does He mean by this? One certainty I know is that it will not be found from ink on paper.

MacDonald grew up like most of us, with religion presented as doctrinal facts. His was the tightly worded statements of the *Westminster Catechism* of Scottish Calvinism. This sovereign, all-powerful, and all-knowing God who loved only the chosen few and whose glory was revealed in the eternal torment of the many. This God presented as an abstract deity who was distant, uncaring, and unapproachable was unacceptable to his childlike heart.

Yet the world of nature and the love and devotion of his father called to him to imagine more. *"Forever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God."* (Romans 1:20 NLT).

Here at the end of his life, he reveals what he has learned of Truth, the good Father whom he has met in the face of the Son!

Outline

What is Truth? - Concerning a man himself, it is a matter of truth. He is either honest or a liar.

Poet vs. Scientist - The facts of the flower are the botany concerning it. The truth of the flower is to know why it was made, who made it, and its message to us.

God's Science - God's science is not the backward look of the scientist, but His thought moving forward in time and space.

I Am The Truth - To know Jesus as the Truth is to know Him intimately, face-to-face.

Becoming a True Person - All of this matters because it is the first step in our becoming, becoming our genuine and individual part of humanity.

Human Relationships - It is only in this harmony when the truth of our being is the way of our being that we can relate to the rest of creation.

Jesus is Truth - Jesus is the realization of the Divine selflessness expressed in full flower!

John 14:6 NAS

"I am the Truth."

What is Truth?

When a man speaks from his five senses about truth, he regards it as the ground of something historically and scientifically proven as fact. Or, if he allows for a higher revelation, one with no proof from the senses, he feels no obligation to seek it out. He disregards whatever appeal it makes to his higher nature because it does not fall within his human senses. **According to Jesus, however, truth is more than facts, more than its relationship to information or people, far more than lofty ideas and philosophical concepts about the meaning of being and life, will, and action. He says, "I am Truth."**

I desire to help those that I can to understand more what is meant by the truth. My desire is not for the sake of definition or a logical distinction, but that when we hear Jesus say, "*I am Truth*," the right idea comes to mind. That is that truth will be neither a meaningless term nor a vague or false notion of what He meant. When Jesus says He is truth, it would be good to know what He means by the idea He identifies with Himself.

First, we must understand that He does not mean something purely intellectual, a statement simply said. Next, He reveals something vital. It is so essential that everything is related to it; it includes everything else that claims that name. So, let's search for truth using a gently ascending stair.

First, if a thing is true, the words that express it as so is the truth. This fact in itself may be of no value, and our knowledge of it of no consequence either. Most facts and the truth concerning them are unimportant. For instance, it is not important whether I took one side of the street or the other on this morning's walk. There may be someone to whom it may be significant which one I took, but it is insignificant in and of itself. Therefore, it would be incorrect if I said, "It is a truth that I walked on the sunny side." This statement would be a fact, not a truth.

If someone questioned the correctness of the statement, we would still be on the ground of fact or not. However, if we ask whether it is true or false, we are now dealing with the person's honesty and are in an altogether different context. It still may not matter which side of the street I was on or whether I believed what I claimed, but it is essential to my honesty. Concerning the statement, it is a matter of fact. Concerning the man himself, it is a matter of truth. He is either honest or a liar. So, there are facts and truth and lies possible about them both. When the Pharisees said, "Corban," they lied against the truth that a man must honor his father and mother.

Next, let us move on from the facts that seem casual to unchangeable ones, which we call laws. These laws are understood at once to be more significant and their honesty more critical. It is a small matter that my water froze this morning, but it is more important that water always freezes at thirty-two degrees Fahrenheit. We rise a step here in the nature of the facts. Are we then in the region of truths? Is it a truth that water freezes at thirty-two degrees? I think not. There is no underlying principle involved here in this changeless fact. The word truth is kept for higher things. Some believe such facts are the highest things that can be known. They use them as the strongest term they can for the highest thing they know and call the facts of nature, truths. But to me, it seems that however high you raise your facts, however wide you make your laws, such as the law of freezing, you have not risen higher than the statement that such and such is an invariable fact. Call it law if you will, a law of nature if you choose that is always so, but it is not a truth. **It cannot be a truth until we catch sight of the reason for its existence, its relationship to mind and intent, yes to its self-existence.**

So, finally, tell us why it must be so, and you state the truth. When we come to understand that law is such because it embodies an eternal thought, seen by us as a fact of the being of God, these facts are alone truths. Then the law is to us the embodiment of truth. The law of God's nature is a way He would have us think of Him. It is a necessary truth of "all" beings. When a law of Nature helps us see it, we say, I understand why it is. It is just like God. Then it has risen, not to the height of truth itself, but to the truth of its own nature, namely, a revelation of the character, nature, and will in God. It is an image of something in God, a word that tells a fact about God, and therefore is nearer being called a truth than anything below it.

I believe that every fact in nature is a revelation of God. They are what they are because God is what He is. I suspect that all of these facts make impressions on us so that we learn about God unconsciously. Indeed, we cannot understand its truth except we find the soul of it in the Divine. However, from our first moments in the world, nature is a means of revelation about God to us, His nature seen, by which we come to know the things unseen.

How could we imagine what we can of God without the heavens over our heads, as a visible expanse of formless infinity! What idea of the Divine could we have without the sky? The truth of the sky is what exposes to our senses the God that reveals Himself to our eyes.

Poet vs. Scientist

These revelations are in a consciousness far above what is commonly claimed by science. Disclosures that are only open to the child's heart in men and women. A place in which the poet is in his element, where he can draw their truths out. Things as they are, and not as science perceives them, these are the revelations of God to His children.

For this reason, secular science cannot discover God. This science works in reverse by undoing the woven tapestry of God's creation. It works with its back to Him and always leaves Him out more and more. Therefore leaves His intent and purpose in creation behind. It is always going farther and farther away from the point where His work culminates in revelation. Doubtless, they make some small intellectual approach to Him, but it will only see His back at best. Secular science will never find the face of God. In contrast, those who would reach His heart will also find the wellspring of His science.

Analysis alone is the study of death, not life. It discovers a little of the way God walked to His purposes, but His intentions are left behind and forgotten in the discovery.

I must make myself clear. I do not say that all people of science do so intentionally, but the very process of their work is a leaving of God's ends behind. It is a tracing back of His footsteps, too often without appreciating why His feet took those steps. To rise from the view of His perfect work is a swifter and higher ascent. If we discover why God worked, then we would be finding God Himself. But even then, we would not be learning the best and most profound things of God, for His means are not as magnificent as His ends!

Ask a person of mere science what the truth of a flower is? He will dissect it and show you its parts, explain how it works, and how each piece serves the flower's whole. He will tell you what changes occur through scientific cultivation, where it originated, where it can live, how climates affect it, and how insects affect its varieties and many more facts about it.

Ask the poet the same question, and he will say, "Why, the flower itself, the perfection of it and what it says to those who have ears to hear." The truth of the flower is not the facts about it, as accurate as they can be, but the shining, glowing, gladdening, and the patient thing that it is enthroned on a stalk, the compeller of smiles and tears from the child to the prophet.

The secular scientist laughs at this because they are only observers and do not understand what it means. They are not like the poet and child who care as little for their laughter as do the birds of God. The children of the world always mock the children of God, both in the church and out. Those who mock them who have sharp eyes and ears but dull hearts. The children who hold love as the only good in the world understand and smile at the world's children and have no need for their thoughts. In the higher state, love is leading them, and they will exceed the people of science. They have a relationship with the divine, the root of science, whose purpose is God's. How will we profit from knowing everything and lose life's joy, the awareness of well-being which alone gives value to knowledge?

God's Science

In God's science, the flower exists for its relation to His children. If we understand its purpose, accept our common Fatherhood, and cherish the flower, we know the heart of science. This relationship alone provides the means and ways for our search for the divine idea of the flower. George says, "The idea of God is the flower." His idea is not the botany of the flower. Its botany is but an approach to its ways and means—the canvas, colors, and brushes in relation to its image in the painter's mind. Mere intellect can never discover that which owes it's being to the divine heart. **At best, intelligence has an unrealistic and humble relationship to that which is born in the heart. "The idea of God," I repeat, "is the flower." He thought of it, invented its connections, created it as a gift to Himself and the eyes and hearts of His children.**

When we see how flowers are universally loved and how they have a place in the history of the world. A place which we are a long way from understanding and which secular science could not and cannot understand or even be able to comprehend their glory.

See the children! Watch when they find one of their silent and motionless brothers with God's clothing upon it and God's thought in its face. Watch for the smile that breaks out between them with divine understanding! See his mother's face when he gives it to her. Here she is no closer to understanding it than he! It is no old memory that brings those tears to her eyes. Yet, powerful in their own way are flowers, far above others things inferior to them. **The flower is God's thought, unrecognized as such, holding communion with her. She weeps with an incomprehensible delight. It is only a daisy! Only a primrose! Only a lily of the field! But here in front of her is no mere fact, no law of nature. Here is a truth of nature, the truth of a flower, a perfect thought from the heart of God, a truth of God!** It is not an intellectual fact but a divine truth, merely a tiny revelation of the movement of His creative soul! Who but a Father could think of flowers for His little ones?

I Am The Truth

We are here now on the ground in which the Lord's words are at home, "I am the truth." Here I will take a subject to illustrate this particular point. "What, I ask, is the truth of water?" Is it that it is formed of hydrogen and oxygen? Is it by naming its parts that the chemist thinks he now possesses the understanding of it? These facts will not affect my illustration of water. His new language will probably be as outdated as my own is now. Is it for the sake of the fact that hydrogen and oxygen combined to form water that the precious thing exists? Are oxygen and hydrogen the divine idea of water? Or, has God put them together so that we can break them apart and find them out? He allows His children to pull His toys apart, but was that why they are made? We would be unenvied children for whom our disgraced father would make toys for such an end! A teacher might see this as the best use for a toy, but not a father!

Find what in the make-up of the two gases make them suited and capable to be so honored to form such a lovely thing as water, and you will give us more than a revelation of water. That is, namely, about the God who made oxygen and hydrogen. For there is no water in oxygen, no water in hydrogen, but there is water, bubbling fresh, from the imagination of the living God. Water rushing from the glacier under His great white throne. The very thought of it awes one with an elemental joy no renowned philosopher could analyze. This water is that which dances, sings, and quenches our thirst.

This water is the very substance for which the woman of Samaria made her prayers to Jesus. This miracle whose sheer wetness delights our bodies with its embrace. This living liquid which I would have flowing through my room, babbling over my desk. Water is itself its own truth and therein a truth of God. Let those of us who love the Maker become thirsty and drink of the brook along our way. Then we will lift our hearts, not to the Maker of oxygen and hydrogen, but to the inventor of thirst and quenching! So, through this encounter, we can experience a little of God!

If this revelation does not convert the unbeliever, let him return to his science and its dry husks. They will make him thirsty in time. Let him try to explain the joy of thirst and water by his analysis and scientific elements. Instead, let him go to the hillside and let the brook sing to him until he loves its

sound. He will find himself nearer to the fountain of truth than he will ever lead his half-comprehending followers. He will draw from the brook the joyful tears of water and worship Him who made the heavens, earth, seas, and all the fountains of water.

So, the truth of a thing is its blossom: the reason for which it was made and the highest step in its rejoicing. The truth of a man's imagination is the power to recognize the truth of a thing. The truth is anything God has made and its glory, whether it be the sky, a flower, or the human face divine, until we see the glory of God in it and behold with a true imagination the truth of God.

Becoming a True Person

We have seen that when a truth comes into contact with us, instead of reflecting it in our intellect as if it were outside of us, we encounter it as a being in us of action. At this moment, it affects our sense of faithfulness, and it becomes of far more noble importance. The question of truth enters on higher ground and looks out from a loftier window. A fact has no value in itself because it at once raises the issue of choice, the crucial choice of being faithful concerning the fact.

When the truth of something is recognized by a person, the heart, summit, and crown of it, we approach the source of the truth, God Himself. We become more of what we are meant to be. In the strength of the truth received, we are now touching a before unseen universe. But higher still with this insight will they be raised in their response of faithfulness. We begin by this faithfulness to be a truer person.

A person may delight in the vision and glory of truth and not be himself true, one whose image is weak but desires to see farther. A genuine person does what they see as far as they see it. If a person knows what is and says it is not, their knowledge does not make them any less of a liar. The person who recognizes the truth of human relationships and neglects the duty involved is not genuine. Nor the one who knows the laws of nature and does not respond to them. And the more he teaches them to others, the less a true person he is. Also, he may obey them all and be the most unfaithful of men because of the higher and more intimate duties he neglects. The one who takes good care of himself and not of his brothers and sisters is a hypocrite!

A person may be a poet, aware of the highest truth of all things and the beauty that is the final cause of its existence. And may draw as a consequence an idea of the creative loveliness that thought it out. One who would not lie, steal, or slander, and yet not be a genuine person, in as much as the essentials of a trustworthy person are not their aim. This person has not come to the flower of their being nor attained the truth of their existence. They have not seen the created Idea of themselves and pursued that idea. There are relations closer than the facts around them. Clearer than the facts that bring their Maker closer to them. Those who fails to see or seeing fails to acknowledge or acknowledging fails to fulfill.

Humanity is human only in doing the truth. A perfect person only in doing the highest truths. People who are realizing their relationship with their Origin. However, they have relationships with their fellowman, infinitely closer than anything else around them and clearer to most of us than our relationship with God. Others are nearer to us that we may take them as our first steps and rise still higher. Our human relationships make up a large part of our being. They are essential to our very existence and originate from the same truth of our origin as beings. That is about our relationships of thought to thought, being to being, and duty to duty. The very nature of our being depends upon or is

one with these relations. They are truths of our being, and we are genuine persons as we fulfill them. Fulfilling them perfectly, we in ourselves become a truth, a living truth!

We are designed to understand duty first, more than we can love it. In doing the truth, we choose and are enabled to love it, reveal it, and make loving duty possible. Then obligation ceases to show itself as duty and appears as it indeed is, as absolute truths, essential realities, and eternal delights.

The man is a true man who freely embraces his duties. He is a perfect man who does not even remember or think of them as duties at all. Duty to Jesus was doing His Father's will, which He loved in all its lower and higher forms. In this doing, He fulfilled all righteousness. One who would do the truth by impulse would be a holy animal, not a true man. Relations, truths, and duties beyond our doing are shown to us so that we would choose them and become a sons and daughters of God. Herein lies the whole victorious tale and the glory that is to be revealed!

Human Relationships

The facts of human relations, then, are truths indeed and essential. *"Everyone who hates his brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life remaining in him."* The one who lives for pleasure and is not a laborer in the fields of duty but thinks of himself as an island is living a lie instead of being what he was created to be. He lives as if he were an animal, but with one difference. Even though he seems to be sinking, he is designed to rise. Therefore, the healing work of God, even in the miseries he complains about that are hard and unfair, is designed to draw him to truth, enabling him to become his true Self and become a truth of God.

So suppose, at this point in my progressive presentation, that someone did everything required of him. He fulfills all his responsibilities to his neighbors, of which I have claimed, and was a faithful man, at least to them. He would still feel that something was lacking in him, lacking in his essential well-being. Like a wildflower, he would think that he had not yet blossomed and was unaware of what his flower was to be. It is to this point that Jesus addresses the rich young ruler with, *"If you would be perfect."* This person would feel that their existence had not yet been made right. That is that the truth of his being and nature was not yet the way of his being. He would continue unfulfilled.

The cause of this dissatisfaction is that the deepest, closest, and strongest relations had not become true in him, had not yet become a truth of him. He is not yet himself, had not ripened into the divine idea of himself, which alone could satisfy him. The child who has a child's heart who does not yet know they have a Father still misses Him with his whole being, even if not yet consciously. Even if the process is just beginning, it would bring patience and hope enough for trust in the coming flower. When the bud arrives, the human plant begins rejoicing in the glory yet to be revealed as an inheritor with the saints in Light. With uplifted stem and forward-leaning bud, we anticipate the time when this lily in God's field will know itself alive, with God himself as its environment, heart, and life. Pointing to the time they and God will be one and all that God loves will be theirs. But again, I stray from my progression.

The highest truth to the intellect, the abstract truth, is the relation in which man stands to the source of his being. Who stands with our will before the Will that created our choice. It stands in our love to the Love that empowers our love and our intellect enlightened by the Light that illuminates us all. Suppose we encounter these things as just areas of thought, as ideas to be analyzed and arranged correctly and in proper relation. He treats them as facts and not truths. He is no better and probably

much worse for his encounter with them. He would know only a little and be untrue to all that is worthy of his faithfulness.

But, when you choose to call a soul, spirit, or whatever the old man himself is, that is not his body. This person will sooner or later become aware that he needs someone greater, whom he can obey and follow, in whom he can rest, and whom he can seek deliverance from what in himself is despicable, disappointing, and unworthy of even his own interest. When he becomes aware of his opposition, he recognizes this part of himself that we sometimes call the old man, the flesh, the lower nature, or the evil self. This part he acknowledges as part of himself where God is not. Then, the man is on the ground of truth and beginning to become true in himself.

It would not be long within this recognition before we discovered there was no strife in us because God is there. And we are faithful to what we are designed to be and in right relationship to the whole. So whatever we call ourselves, the old man would now fulfill its part in harmony, intruding upon nothing and subject to the rule of the higher life.

When we submit to this higher power that can account for us, to whom we are known, we become confident as a child whose Father is leading us by the hand to the joyful heights of truth, knowing that where he is wrong, the Father is right and will set him free. He is the good One who knows where we have come from and where we are going. One who knows what we love and hate, where we went wrong and can set us right, who longs to put us right, making us creatures who can look up to God without shadows of doubt, anxiety, or fear.

When we feel our whole being embraced in this Fatherhood, then we are bursting into our flower. Then the truth of our being, the eternal fact at the root of our new name, and our fundamental idea and nature born first in God and responsive to God, our origin, begins to be revealed. Then our true nature comes into harmony with itself. This obedience to the will of Him who is the cause of our being. The God that is righteousness, love, and truth. We stand at the height of our being and know ourselves as divine. Here we begin to feel free, as a child of God!

When we are with our whole nature, loving and willing the truth, we are a live truth. This live truth does not originate in ourselves, but it is seen and pursued. Jesus Christ is the originating truth, the embracing, visible, and living truth in all relationships. He is true. He is the live Truth. His Truth, chosen and willed in Himself, is the flower of his sonship expressed by His absolute obedience to His Father. "The obedient Jesus is Jesus the Truth."

Jesus The Truth

Jesus is faithful and the root of all truth and the author of it in us. Our very being, however far from true humanity that is, the undeveloped Christ in us and our likeness to Him, is the truth of a man, even as the perfect meaning of a flower is the truth of a flower. Everyone, according to the Divine idea of them, must come to the reality of that idea. And under every creation of Christ is Christ Himself. The truth of every man is the perfected Christ in him. As Jesus is the blossom of humanity, so the flower of everyone is Christ perfected in him.

The life-giving force at work in humanity is Jesus Christ. He is the root, the power, and the perfecter of our individuality. The stronger the pure will of the man is to be true, the freer and more active his

choice. The more defined our identity, the more the man and all that he is, is Christ's! Without Him, we could not be. Being alone, we could not become capable of truth. Being capable of truth, we could never love it. Loving and desiring it, we could not achieve it. Nothing but the presence of the creating Truth and the responding soul could make us go on hoping until we finally forget ourselves and keep an open house for God to come and go.

Jesus gives us the will to choose and the power to exercise it, and the help needed to complete it, whatever the need may be. We must will the truth, and for that, the Lord is waiting for the victory of his Father in the heart of His child. In this relationship alone, can the Father see the struggle of His own soul and be satisfied. The work is His, but we must take our willing share. When the blossom blooms, the more it is ours, the more it is His, and it becomes the highest expression of its creation in the Father. And the blossom is preeminently through the Son. He is the one who wills what is right, like His Father of his own free will. The groaning and travailing, the blossom and its joy, are the Father's, Son's, and ours. The choice, the power to will, may be created, but its willingness is birthed! Because God wills first, we will also.

When I am consciously and willingly in the hands of Him who called us to live, think, and struggle, I am glad. Then I have returned to Him in perfect obedience and am moving forward, breathing the breath of God Himself. Then I am free because I am true, which defines oneness with the Father. Freedom knowing itself to be free.

When a person is true, they would be happy anywhere, even in hell, because they are right with their Source and right with themselves. To be right with God is to be right with the universe. One with the power, love, and will of our mighty Father, the cherisher of joy, the lord of laughter, the origin of all glory, all hope, and who loves everything. He hates nothing but selfishness which has no place in His Kingdom.

Jesus Christ is the Lord of Life! His Life is the Light of men! His light mirrored in them changes them into His image, the Truth, and so the Truth, who is the Son, makes them free!

CLIFFNOTES WITH ORIGINAL MACDONALD QUOTES

What is Truth

According to the word of the man, however, truth means more than fact, more than relation of facts or persons, more than loftiest abstraction of metaphysical entity—means being and life, will and action; for he says, 'I am the truth.'

And at once we may premise that he can mean nothing merely intellectual, such as may be set forth and left there; he means something vital, so vital that the whole of its necessary relations are subject to it, so vital that it includes everything else which, in any lower plane, may go or have gone by the same name. Let us endeavour to arrive at his meaning by a gently ascending stair.

A thing being so, the word that says it is so, is the truth.

Let us go up now from the region of facts that seem casual, to those facts that are invariable, by us unchangeable, which therefore involve what we call law.

It cannot be to us a truth until we descry the reason of its existence, its relation to mind and intent, yea to self-existence.

Tell us why it must be so, and you state a truth. When we come to see that a law is such, because it is the embodiment of a certain eternal thought, beheld by us in it, a fact of the being of God, the facts of which alone are truths, then indeed it will be to us, not a law merely, but an embodied truth.

Poet vs. Scientist

We are here in a region far above that commonly claimed for science, open only to the heart of the child and the childlike man and woman—a region in which the poet is among his own things, and to which he has often to go to fetch them. For things as they are, not as science deals with them, are the revelation of God to his children.

Ask the poet what is the truth of the flower, and he will answer: 'Why, the flower itself, the perfect flower, and what it cannot help saying to him who has ears to hear it.' The truth of the flower is, not the facts about it, be they correct as ideal science itself, but the shining, glowing, gladdening, patient thing throned on its stalk—the compeller of smile and tear from child and prophet.

God's Science

The relation of the intellect to that which is born of the heart is an unreal except it be a humble one. The idea of God, I repeat, is the flower. He thought it; invented its means; sent it, a gift of himself, to the eyes and hearts of his children.

flowers; it is God's thought, unrecognized as such, holding communion with her. She weeps with a delight inexplicable. It is only a daisy! only a primrose! only a pheasant-eye-narcissus! only a lily of the field! only a snowdrop! only a sweet-pea! only a brave yellow crocus! But here to her is no mere fact; here is no law of nature; here is a truth of nature, the truth of a flower—a perfect thought from the heart of God—a truth of God!

I Am The Truth

We are nigh the region now in which the Lord's word is at home—'I am the truth.' I will take an illustrative instance altogether to my mind and special purpose. What, I ask, is the truth of water? Is it that it is formed of hydrogen and oxygen?—That the chemist has now another mode of stating the fact of water, will not affect my illustration. His new mode will probably be one day yet more antiquated than mine is now.—Is it for the sake of the fact that hydrogen and oxygen combined form water, that the precious thing exists? Is oxygen-and-hydrogen the divine idea of water? Or has God put the two together only that man might separate and find them out? He allows his child to pull his toys to pieces; but were they made that he might pull them to pieces? He were a child not to be envied for whom his

inglorious father would make toys to such an end! A school-examiner might see therein the best use of a toy, but not a father!

Find for us what in the constitution of the two gases makes them fit and capable to be thus honoured in forming the lovely thing, and you will give us a revelation about more than water, namely about the God who made oxygen and hydrogen. There is no water in oxygen, no water in hydrogen: it comes bubbling fresh from the imagination of the living God, rushing from under the great white throne of the glacier. The very thought of it makes one gasp with an elemental joy no metaphysician can analyse. The water itself, that dances, and sings, and slakes the wonderful thirst—symbol and picture of that draught for which the woman of Samaria made her prayer to Jesus—this lovely thing itself, whose very wetness is a delight to every inch of the human body in its embrace—this live thing which, if I might, I would have running through my room, yea, babbling along my table—this water is its own self its own truth, and is therein a truth of God. Let him who would know the love of the maker, become sorely athirst, and drink of the brook by the way—then lift up his heart—not at that moment to the maker of oxygen and hydrogen, but to the inventor and mediator of thirst and water, that man might foresee a little of what his soul may find in God.

If he become not then as a hart panting for the water-brooks, let him go back to his science and its husks: they will at last make him thirsty as the victim in the dust-tower of the Persian. As well may a man think to describe the joy of drinking by giving thirst and water for its analysis, as imagine he has revealed anything about water by resolving it into its scientific elements. Let a man go to the hillside and let the brook sing to him till he loves it, and he will find himself far nearer the fountain of truth than the triumphal car of the chemist will ever lead the shouting crew of his half-comprehending followers. He will draw from the brook the water of joyous tears, 'and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.'

The truth of a thing, then, is the blossom of it, the thing it is made for, the topmost stone set on with rejoicing; truth in a man's imagination is the power to recognize this truth of a thing; and wherever, in anything that God has made, in the glory of it, be it sky or flower or human face, we see the glory of God, there a true imagination is beholding a truth of God. And now we must advance to a yet higher plane.

Becoming a True Person

A man may delight in the vision and glory of a truth, and not himself be true. The man whose vision is weak, but who, as far as he sees, and desirous to see farther, does the thing he sees, is a true man.

A man may be a poet, aware of the highest truth of a thing, of that beauty which is the final cause of its existence; he may draw thence a notion of the creative loveliness that thought it out; he may be a man who would not tell a lie, or steal, or slander—and yet he may not be a true man, inasmuch as the essentials of manhood are not his aim: having nowise come to the flower of his own being, nowise, in his higher degree, attained the truth of a thing—namely, that for which he exists, the creational notion of him—neither is he striving after the same. There are relations closer than those of the facts around him, plainer than those that seem to bring the maker nigh to him, which he is failing to see, or seeing fails to acknowledge, or acknowledging fails to fulfil.

The man is a true man who chooses duty; he is a perfect man who at length never thinks of duty, who forgets the name of it. The duty of Jesus was the doing in lower forms than the perfect that which he loved perfectly, and did perfectly in the highest forms also. Thus he fulfilled all righteousness. One who went to the truth by mere impulse, would be a holy animal, not a true man. Relations, truths, duties, are shown to the man away beyond him, that he may choose them, and be a child of God, choosing righteousness like him. Hence the whole sad victorious human tale, and the glory to be revealed!

Human Relationships

But suppose, for the sake of my progressive unfolding, that a man did everything required of him—fulfilled all the relations to his fellows of which I have been speaking, was toward them at least, a true man; he would yet feel, doubtless would feel it the more, that something was lacking to him—lacking to his necessary well-being. Like a live flower, he would feel that he had not yet blossomed, and could not tell what the blossom ought to be. In this direction the words of the Lord point, when he says to the youth, 'If thou wouldst be perfect.' The man whom I suppose, would feel that his existence was not yet justified to itself, that the truth of his being and nature was not yet revealed to his consciousness. He would remain unsatisfied;

The highest truth to the intellect, the abstract truth, is the relation in which man stands to the source of his being—his will to the will whence it became a will, his love to the love that kindled his power to love, his intellect to the intellect that lighted his. If a man deal with these things only as things to be dealt with, as objects of thought, as ideas to be analysed and arranged in their due order and right relation, he treats them as facts and not as truths, and is no better, probably much the worse, for his converse with them, for he knows in a measure, and is false to all that is most worthy of his faithfulness. When the man feels his whole being in the embrace of self-responsible paternity—then the man is bursting into his flower; then the truth of his being, the eternal fact at the root of his new name, his real nature, his idea—born in God at first, and responsive to the truth, the being of God, his origin—begins to show itself; then his nature is almost in harmony with itself. For, obeying the will that is the cause of his being, the cause of that which demands of itself to be true, and that will being righteousness and love and truth, he begins to stand on the apex of his being, to know himself divine. He begins to feel himself free.

Jesus is Truth

He is true and the root of all truth and development of truth in men. Their very being, however far from the true human, is the undeveloped Christ in them, and his likeness to Christ is the truth of a man, even as the perfect meaning of a flower is the truth of a flower. Every man, according to the divine idea of him, must come to the truth of that idea; and under every form of Christ is the Christ. The truth of every man, I say, is the perfected Christ in him. As Christ is the blossom of humanity, so the blossom of every man is the Christ perfected in him.

He gives us the will wherewith to will, and the power to use it, and the help needed to supplement the power, whatever in any case the need may be; but we ourselves must will the truth, and for that the Lord is waiting, for the victory of God his father in the heart of his child. In this alone can he see of the travail of his soul, in this alone be satisfied. The work is his, but we must take our willing share. When the blossom breaks forth in us, the more it is ours the more it is his, for the highest creation of the Father, and that pre-eminently through the Son, is the being that can, like the Father and the Son, of his

own self will what is right. The groaning and travailing, the blossom and the joy, are the Father's and the Son's and ours. The will, the power of willing, may be created, but the willing is begotten. Because God wills first, man wills also.