

'Truth' (pub. 14.04.13-12:53). Quote in M. Bergman & S. Paavola (Eds.), *The Commens Dictionary: Peirce's Terms in His Own Words. New Edition*. Retrieved from <http://www.commens.org/dictionary/entry/quote-letters-lady-welby-18>.

Term: Truth

Quote: Unless truth be recognized as *public*, - as that of which any person would come to be convinced if he carried his inquiry, his sincere search for immovable belief, far enough, - then there will be nothing to prevent each one of us from adopting an utterly futile belief of his own which all the rest will disbelieve. Each one will set himself up as a little prophet; that is, a little "crank," a half-witted victim of his own narrowness.

But if Truth be something public, it must mean that to the acceptance of which as a basis of conduct any person you please would ultimately come if he pursued his inquiries far enough; - yes, every rational being, however prejudiced he might be at the outset. For Truth has that compulsive nature which Pope well expressed:

The eternal years of God are her's.

But, you will say, I am setting up this very proposition as infallible truth. Not at all; it is a mere definition. I do not say that it is infallibly true that there is any belief to which a person would come if he were to carry his inquiries far enough. I only say that that alone is what I call Truth. I cannot infallibly know that there is any Truth.

Source: Peirce, C. S. (nd). *Letters to Lady Welby*. MS [R] L463.

References: SS 73

Date of 1908

Quote:

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