

***“Truth will be Truth tho’ it sometimes prove[s]... distasteful.” A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity. (1725).***

This work of Benjamin Franklin’s revolved around his belief in “Deist, Moralised Christianity”, rejecting the “Puritan” faith of his parents.

He believed that human behaviours were predestined and controlled by natural laws but rather than one ultimate being or God having ultimate authority, there were many lesser Gods in control of all in the world. They were potentially mortal like the beings they created - traditional Christian beliefs mixed with a progressive outlook. Franklin viewed life as important and worth living when full of love and purpose rather than what one believed about a God.

The text resolved ideas surrounding the purpose of human actions: necessity; actions oftentimes not thought of or carried out for their consequence but rather for their use. To allow pleasure to take its course or prevent pain from being felt. Divinity no longer controlled human actions as they would always have the same conclusions when carried out. He firmly believed we are predestined and what existed will always exist, but its manner may change by our own choices.

Franklin’s writing mentioned *“But, (to use a Piece of common Sense) our Geese are but Geese tho’ we may think ’em Swans”* which could be interpreted to mean that what exists, will exist, in the way it exists, no matter how man believes it to exist.

Coal is coal whilst we may think it one day to be a diamond. Darkness is darkness though we may suppose there is a light. The ugly remains ugly. Good and bad remain in their own forms. The world is a sort of black and white with limited space, if any at all, for grey.

In this same reasoning, the truth will always be the truth regardless of how pleasant or distasteful it is.

Franklin’s writing for the era served as a reminder of the need for independence whilst misinformation and propaganda were rife diseases. Truth and free speech were sought. Informed action through inquiry and debate was fundamental for societal reform, and without it, humans were no more than mindless puppets working for perceived authority and the majority rather than self-preservation.

In modern society, the quote can be interpreted in many ways.

With the era it was written, it had relevance in the way of politics and Governmental (dis)order. That without a voice of one’s own the truth would never come out and society would halt in function. This was seen in the Covid-19 pandemic. Those in power issued laws that we were supposed to obey but pressing the matters recovered hidden truths: that police authorities were unaware of what rules to enforce due to constant change; government personnel, Matt Hancock and Dominic Cummings, were found to have been in breach of the rules they helped create and enforce; the Prime Minister at the time, Boris Johnson, too breached these laws and received a fine whilst many were imprisoned. The truth was that laws were made to be followed, and they proved very distasteful when people could not leave their “bubbles” for anything other than necessary shopping. Franklin’s words echoed the sentiments of the future

hundreds of years later, unbeknownst to him, of the need for freedom and transparency in society.

In regard to the Christian faith, Benjamin Franklin's work can be seen as revolutionary in the development of the religion. Not in the practical sense of establishing a new denomination of Christianity or fundamentally changing an existing one but shifting ideas and challenging the predated ideas of religion. He didn't dispute the existence of a God or His role in creating the universe but offered an alternative view. His quote held its voice as religion is truth but can be so in many forms, as seen through the different religions that many practice today but these may prove difficult for others to accept.

If one were to ask me my opinion of the significance of Franklin's quote in today's society, I would base it on feeling and feeling alone. To me, it promotes opposite ends of the same story, and that is relevant in all eras: not just the 18<sup>th</sup> century or the 21<sup>st</sup>.

I believe, this quote not only pertains to religion nor governmental function but living life itself.

*"Truth will be Truth tho' it sometimes prove[s]... distasteful."*

One would have to consider the meaning of truth, considering both its ordinary dictionary definition and its meaning in a wider context: who decides what is true? Simply put, facts are facts as they can be proven. But facts that can't be proven are considered opinions regardless of whether or not they occurred as they can't be, for example, a person brushing their teeth. My point? When it comes to the actual practice of life, truth has to be truth to one person, no matter how distasteful it is to them or another.

People will always have a different view of what the truth in a situation is as it is subjective. There are always two sides to every story. Both can be true and both can be false, and they can also be both at the same time. Lies, errors, perception, and forgetfulness all distort our truths but that doesn't take away their nature of being what happened. This brings the question of if we can't prove what happened, did it happen? And if so, can many things be true about the same experience or subject in question?

Whether the truth is the truth is all in how one believes it to be. Distaste will always exist alongside truth as not all parties involved in that truth will accept it. The truth is a complex matter as it can be both true and false, distasteful and not, all at once.

Franklin may have considered the same ideas of my own thoughts when writing his dissertation but in truth, I don't believe he did. Society has changed vastly, especially within recent years, and that truth has become a sort of myth or urban legend. It is always questionable. In the time when he wrote it, the truth wasn't ever questioned as it was decided by those in power. What was said, was believed.

His quote is as relevant in society today, perhaps just in a different avenue than when he wrote it.