

To make clear the fact that we obtain knowledge by reasoning, we have only to show that by reasoning a correct conception is created with assurance that it is correct. It is evident that if the known conceptions, from which the new conception is formed, be separately correct, the conception formed as unitedly contained in them must be correct; and as we are assured that everything in the original conceptions is correct, we are assured that everything in the conceptions exactly formed in accordance with them is correct. Thus, in reasoning, not only is a correct conception formed of a thing, but also assurance that it is correct; and these are what constitute knowledge.

Here perhaps it is scarcely necessary to reiterate the fact, as noted before, that a conception can never really be created (or new) as contained in only one original conception, as it would be simply a reproduction; also, the same thing may be said of it if created as separately contained in two or more known original conceptions; because this also would be a mere reproduction of the separate original conceptions. To be a new conception at all, it must be created as unitedly contained in two or more original conceptions. The conception, then, has originality of its own.

As some examples now of reasoning, let us adduce the following:—

Thus, I remember (1) that this British pensioner served at the battle of Waterloo; and (2) that Wellington was the British commanding general at Waterloo. Then forming a conception of this soldier's relation to Wellington, as contained in these two remembrances or facts, I conceive and know that this pensioner has served under Wellington.

Again, I remember (1) that I gave John twenty-one shillings for a hat; and (2) that twenty-one shillings are a guinea. I then conceive that the hat cost a guinea; and from this, and the remembrance that Somerville's hat cost the same price as my own, I conceive and know that Somerville's hat cost a guinea.

In cases like these, I first conceive from two known conceptions, and then from the newly created conception, and the other known conceptions, one at a time, continue to conceive till I know all that is wanted.

Instead, however, of comparing only two conceptions at a time, we may compare three or four, when the original conceptions are simple enough to permit our creating a conception from all at once. Thus (1) this animal chews the cud; (2) it has cloven hoofs; (3) an animal having both these characteristics was accounted clean by the Jewish law: therefore, this animal is clean according to Jewish law.

We need care no more for putting our conceptions in syllogistic form than is conformable to sound philosophic principles.

Reasoning and perception are often so intimately mixed up together in the acquisition of knowledge that it requires close watching to mark the part each performs in the process; and this, too, may be the case in perception by the senses. Thus, for example:—

I see a round objective appearance before my face.

1. Fact known by perception I know then that this appearance exists.

I touch it with my fingers and get the sensation of resistance.

2. Fact known by perception I know then that this appearance gives the touch of resistance.

3. Fact known in memory I remember that whatever exists and gives the touch of resistance is material.

Therefore by creating a conception as unitedly contained in these three facts—

4. Fact obtained by reasoning from the other three. I conceive and know that this appearance is material.

1. Fact known by perception I perceived in my first look at it, that it was round and before my face.

5. Fact obtained by reasoning from 1 and 4. Therefore this material is round and before my face.

6. Fact obtained by perception I put my fingers to it again, and get the sensation of hardness and sphericity (I can take the latter, however, with the educated eye).

7. Fact obtained by reasoning from 5 and 6. Therefore this material before my face is a round, hard ball.

8. Fact obtained by perception I split it into two and perceive by either sight or touch that it is hollow.

9. Fact obtained by reasoning from 7 and 8. Therefore the known conception obtained by all this process is that this material before my face is a round, hard, hollow ball.