

had it so pleased God, external objects might have been perceived by us, independent of sensation altogether. The dependence of the knowledge of a relation upon the knowledge of the things correlated is so far from being arbitrary, that even Divine power could not work an impossibility of giving us the former save on condition of the latter.

It cannot have escaped the notice of our readers, that perception must, on the doctrine expounded, have for its condition, not only sensation, but a plurality of sensations, because the perception of our organism (which enters into all perceptive consciousness, even into that of the extra-organic world,) is the consciousness which we have of the mutual outness of organic affections locally external to one another, and therefore plural. These affections do not indeed constitute sensation, but sensation consists in the recognition of them; so that perception can take place only where sensation is recognising a plurality of objects. Sir W. Hamilton not only holds this, but maintains that sensation itself supposes plurality in the object or objects of its apprehension. Let us quote his own words: "The second," (that is, the second condition of sensitive perception, in either of its forms; attention having been named as the first,) "is *plurality, alteration, difference*, on the part of the perceived object "or objects, and a recognition thereof on the part of the perceiving "subject." However technical a sound these words may have in uninitiated ears, (Sir William is partial to esoteric phraseology,) the thing meant may, without much difficulty, be understood. Were the organism of our body without affections capable of being discriminated as plural, it would in fact be devoid of affections altogether; for what are affections except alterations or differences? If, therefore, sensation be the recognition of affections in the organism, it follows that where there is no alteration or plurality, there can be no sensation: as Hobbes has pointedly expressed it, "*sentire semper "idem, et non sentire, ad idem recidunt.*" But indeed it is not in sensitive perception alone, that alteration is held to be an indispensable condition, but in every other exercise of consciousness likewise; and this, it may be remarked, is a grand fundamental principle on which Sir W. Hamilton relies, in seeking to refute those theorists in the highest region of thought, who claim for man a knowledge of the Unconditioned. The Unconditioned, including the Infinite and the Absolute, does not exist under characters of plurality or difference, and therefore, (Sir William argues) cannot be apprehended by human consciousness. Without, however, attempting to soar to such sublime speculations at present, but keeping to the *terra firma* of our