

is correct: and he cannot be otherwise than convinced of both. Perception is, in fact, the one grand inlet of self-evident truth: because everything truly perceived is self-evident.

The perceptive powers of the mind are directed to two different fields of vision—to outside phenomena, and also to internal acts and states of the mind itself. The mind is thus made conscious of all that is transpiring in the outside world, and also of all that is going on within itself, whether in doing, feeling, or wishing.

That the senses do not cheat in the act of perception, by making false presentations of external objects, will be evident on a little inspection. What they do say may be easily proved to be correct; and we can never be led astray by them, unless we assume them to imply more than they do. To a mind glancing at the subject superficially, there might appear to be something uncertain or deceitful in the method of presenting external objects through the medium of objective physical sensation, but this uncertainty will instantly be dispelled on a closer examination. For instance, in the sensation of sight, why do I see an object which appears to be outside of me, while I know it to be really within me? In the first place, if nature had intended to cheat me here, she would never have given me a chance to know that these seemingly outside appearances were really within me; and, secondly, the real use of these sense appearances is not to present themselves and their whereabouts to my attention, but only the objects outside of me and their whereabouts; and while not obtruding themselves obstructively as a medium, they just shew enough of themselves to shew me that they exist.

Taking the sensation of sight as an illustrative example of the senses in general, the presentation which appears before the mind is reflective, precisely as a mirror, wherein we look and see a reflected object appearing to be somewhere else. The object actually seen is in the mirror before our face, but the object reflectively seen is somewhere else, either in the room or outside. The perfect mirror itself is barely, or rather not seen at all; and this is what it should be as a perfect medium of reflection. Sense presentations, then, are merely perfect mirrors, wherein we see reflected objects; and the reason why they are so is that they cannot be otherwise in order to do their particular work. Sense is a medium, and all perfect mediums must be perfect reflectors, otherwise they obtrude their own identity, so as to completely hide what they are intended to reflect. Lastly, to these things add the fact, that without the use and assistance of mediums, perception or knowledge of the outside world would be an impossibility. To see a mountain, a tree, or a lake, man would have to take each of these objects alternately, and put it into his brain in cognitive contact with his mind. This, all will agree, were it even possible, would be a tiresome and a tedious process.

Perception without a medium would be equivalent to making a man shut up in a house see objects outside without a window, or to making our perceptive minds touch the sun, moon, stars, and other distant objects, without being omnipresent.

A conception in the mind is precisely like a sensation, in being reflective. My mind looks in reality at the conception, but thinks only of the object it reflects; it thinks only of one thing.

Now, that the senses make no false representations of eternal things may easily be proved by the evidence of one another; and it is impossible that we can be deceived by them, unless we assume them to say something which they do not. For example, in the sensation of sight, in a bed of colour, I perceive an object which appears in that sphere in space, which I call outside of me. That it is really outside of me is confirmed by the fact that I can put my hand towards it. My hand and it are both in the same place.

If I imagine that this object represented is merely colour, I go beyond the testimony of sight. I also assume more than I am entitled to if I conclude the object to have that colour in darkness. I then put forth my hand and touch it. I see my hand go against it; and the sensation of resistance coming by touch shews me that it has material existence. Then, it is not a mere colour appearance only, but substantial matter—matter as I know it, and not a conjectural something never in my experience. I also see that it is of a large size, and occupies certain relations of position in regard to other objects. This I also confirm by touch. The appearance has also square sides; and still looking around it, I perceive that it has six sides, all alike. It is a cube in appearance. By touch, feeling the corners, etc., the sensations I receive from it convince me that it is so in fact. I take a tool and chip the outside. By the sensation of resistance in touch I perceive it is hard. I chip it all through in like manner, and finding no vacuity, I know that it is solid, not a shell. I take it in my hands and weigh it; from the sense of resistance in lifting, I find it heavy. The brilliant fracture appearance is that which I perceive in iron alone. As the sensation of weight, which it gives me, also agrees with that of iron, therefore I conclude that it is iron.

We might go on multiplying examples of this process, but they are not necessary. The whole process is a succession of perceptions through sensation; and we go on joining together the conceptions or ideas obtained by the separate perceptions, until we have formed them into one whole conception in our minds, corresponding to the original from which they came.