

The queries put above can now be more clearly formulated as follows: Leaving out the æsthetical problem with which we are not immediately concerned, we may ask the question—What means exist for the individual or collective human mind to acquire clearness in matters of Morality and in matters of Religion? that is, as to the content of the moral law and as to matters of faith.

In order to answer this question we may consider the means by which external objects acquire their Reality in our estimation.

One of the principal attributes of external objects is that they offer what we term resistance to our free and unchecked bodily movements. Solidity and substantiality are attributes which we attach to such clusters of bodily sensations as resist our unchecked or free movements. The earliest of these checks to our primordial restlessness are the presence and the action of another person or persons. But after having learnt that experience is checked in its immediate surroundings, the infant mind soon learns to attribute resistance to lifeless things also, and gradually to all those clusters of sensations which form the coherent system or order of the outer world. But here arises a marked distinction: the encounter with lifeless things may result in unpleasant or painful feelings, but the encounter with persons may contain also feelings of a different kind, which are not immediately traceable to bodily encounter, but arise in our minds by mere contemplation or awareness of a personal presence. Thus the smile or frown of a mother may give rise in us to feelings of joy and pleasure or of disappointment and sorrow.