

the vibrations which are the conditions of light; the tympanum which collects the vibrations which are the conditions of sound; the muscles which adjust these and other instruments of sensation to the precise performance of their work; the nerves which convey to and fro molecular movements of the most incomprehensible significance and efficacy. Of all these it is, I understand, more and more evident, as science advances, that they are perceptible, but do not perceive. Ear, hand, eye, and nerves are alike machinery—mere machinery for transmitting the movement of atoms to certain nervous centres—ascertained localities which (it is proper to observe in passing), though small relatively to ourselves and our powers of investigation, may—since size is entirely relative—be *absolutely* large enough to contain little words in themselves.

Here the investigation of things perceptible is stopped, abruptly and completely. Our inquiries into the size, composition, and movement of particles, have been pushed, for the present at any rate, as far as they will go. But at this point we come across a field of phenomena to which the attributes of atoms, size, movement, and physical composition are wholly inapplicable—the phenomena of sensation or animal life.

Science informs me that the movements of these perceptible atoms within my body bear a correspondence, strange, subtle, and precise, to the sensations of which I, as a percipient, am conscious; a correspondence (it is again proper to observe in passing) which extends not only to perceptions, as in sight or hearing, but to reflection and volition, as in sleep and drunkenness. The relation is not one of similarity. The vibrations of a white, black, or grey pulp are not in any sensible way similar to the perception of colour or sound, or the imagination of a noble act. There is no visible—may I not say no conceivable?—reason why one should depend on the other. Motion and sensation interact, but they do not overlap. There is no homogeneity between them. They stand apart. Physical science conducts us to the brink of the chasm which separates them, and by so doing only shows us its depth.

I return then to the question, What am I? My own habits of mind and logical methods certainly require me to believe that I am something—something percipient—but I am perceptible? I find no reason for supposing it. I believe myself to be surrounded by things percipient. Are they perceptible? Not to my knowledge. Their existence is to me a matter of inference from their perceptible appendages. Them—their very selves—I certainly cannot perceive. As far as I can understand things perceptible, I detect in them no quality—no capacity for any quality like that of percipiency, which, with its homogeneous faculties, intellect, affections, and so on, is the basis of my own nature. Physical science, while it develops the relation, seems absolutely to emphasise and illuminate the ineradicable difference between the motions of a material and the sensations of a living being. Of the attributes of a percipient we have, each for himself, profound and immediate experience. Of the attributes of the perceptible we have, I suppose, distinct scientific conceptions. Our notions of the one and our notions of the other appear to attach to a different order of being.

It appears therefore to me that there is no reason to believe, and much reason for not believing, that the percipient is perceptible under our present conditions of existence, or indeed under any conditions that our present faculties enable us to imagine.

And this is my case, which of course covers the whole animal creation. Perception must be an attribute of something, and there is reason for believing that this something is imperceptible. This is what I mean when I say that I have, or more properly that I am, a soul or spirit, or rather it is the point on which I join issue with those who say that I am not.

I am not, as Mr. Harrison seems to suppose, running about in search of a 'cause.' I am inquiring into the nature of a being, and that being myself. I am sure I am something. I am certainly not the mere tangible structure of atoms which I affect, and by which I am affected after a wonderful fashion. In reflecting on the nature of my own operations I find nothing to suggest that my own being is subject to the same class of physical laws as the objects from which my sensations are derived, and I conclude that I am not subject to those laws. The most substantial objection to this conclusion is conveyed, I conceive, in a sentence of Mr. Harrison's: 'To talk to us of mind, feeling, and will continuing their functions in the absence of physical organs and visible organisms, is to use language which, to us at least, is pure nonsense.'

It is probably to those who talk thus that Mr. Harrison refers when he says that argument is useless. And in point of fact I have no answer but to call his notions anthropomorphic, and to charge him with want of a certain kind of imagination. By imagination we commonly mean the creative faculty which enables a man to give a palpable shape to what he believes or thinks possible: and this, I do not doubt, Mr. Harrison possesses in a high degree. But there is another kind of imagination which enables a man to embrace the idea of a possibility to which no such palpable shape can be given, or rather of a world of possibilities beyond the range of his experience or the grasp of his faculties; as Mr. John Mill embraced the idea of a possible world in which the connection of cause and effect should not exist. The want of this necessary though dangerous faculty makes a man the victim of vivid impressions, and disables him from believing what his impressions do not enable him to realise. Questions respecting metaphysical possibility turn much on the presence, or absence, or exaggeration of this kind of imagination. And when one man has said 'I can conceive it possible,' and another has said 'I cannot,' it is certainly difficult to get any farther.

To me it is not in the slightest degree difficult to conceive the possible existence of a being capable of love and knowledge without the physical organs through which human beings derive their knowledge, nor in supposing myself to be such a being. Indeed I seem actually to exercise such a capacity (however I got it) when I shut my eyes and try to think out a moral or mathematical puzzle. If it is true that a particular corner of my brain is concerned in the matter, I accept the fact not as a self-evident truth (which would seem to be Mr. Harrison's position), but as a curious discovery of the anatomists. But having said this I have said everything, and as Mr. Harrison must suppose that I deceive myself, so I suppose that in his case the imagination which founds itself on experience is so active and vivid as to cloud or dwarf the imagination which proceeds beyond or beside experience.

Mr. Harrison's own theory I do not quite understand. He derides the idea, though he does not absolutely deny the possibility, of an immaterial entity which

feels. And he appears to be sensible of the difficulty of supposing that atoms of matter which assume the form of a grey pulp can feel. He holds accordingly, as I understand, that feeling, and all that follows from it, are the results of an 'organism.'

If he had used the word 'organisation,' I should have concluded unhesitatingly that he was the victim of the Anglican confusion which I have above noticed, and that, in his own mind, he escapes the alternative difficulties of the case by the common expedient of shifting, as occasion required, from one sense of that word to the other. If pressed by the difficulty of imagining sensation not resident in any specific sensitive thing, the word organisation would supply to his mind the idea of a thing, a sensitive aggregate of organised atoms. If, on the contrary, pressed by the difficulty of supposing that these atoms, one or all, thought, the word would shift its meaning and present the aspect not of an aggregate bulk, but of orderly arrangement—not of a thing, or collection of things, but of a state of things.

But the word 'organism' is generally taken to indicate a thing organised. And the choice of that word would seem to indicate that he ascribed the spiritual acts (so to call them) which constitute life to the aggregate bulk of the atoms organised or the appropriate part of them. But this he elsewhere seems to disclaim. 'The philosophy which treats man as man simply affirms that *man* loves, thinks, acts, not that ganglia, or the sinews, or any organ of man loves, and thinks, and acts.' Yes, but we recur to the question, what is man? If the ganglia do not think, what is it that does? Mr. Harrison, as I understand, answers that it is a *consensus* of faculties, an harmonious system of parts, and he denounces an attempt to introduce into this collocation of parts or faculties an underlying entity or being which shall possess those faculties or employ those parts. It is then not after all to a being or aggregate of beings, but to a relation or condition of beings, that will and thought and love belong. If this is Mr. Harrison's meaning, I certainly agree with him that it is indeed impossible to compose a difference between two disputants, of whom one holds, and the other denies, that a condition can think. If my opponent does not admit this to be an absurdity, I do not pretend to drive him any further.

With regard to immortality, I have nothing material to add to what has been said by those who have preceded me. I agree with Professor Huxley that the natural world supplies nothing which can be called evidence of a future life. Believing in God, I see in the constitution of the world which He has made, and in the yearnings and aspirations of that spiritual nature which He has given to man, much that commends to my belief the revelation of a future life which I believe Him to have made. But it is in virtue of His clear promise, not in virtue of these doubtful intimations, that I rely on the prospect of a future life. Believing that He is the author of that moral insight which in its ruder forms controls the multitude and its higher inspires the saint, I revere those great men who were able to forecast this great announcement, but I cannot and do not care to reduce that forecast to any logical process, or base it on any conclusive reasoning. Rather I admire their power of divination the more on account of the narrowness of their logical data. For myself I believe because I am told.

But whether the doctrine of immortality be true or false, I protest, with Mr. Hutton, against the attempt to substitute for what at any rate is a substantial idea, something which can hardly be called even a shadow or echo of it.

The Christian conception of the world is this. It is a world of moral as of physical waste. Much seed is sown which will not ripen, but some is sown that will. This planet is a seat, among other things, of present goodness and happiness. And this our goodness and happiness, like our crime and misery, propagate or fail to propagate themselves during our lives and after our deaths. But, apart from these earthly consequences, which are much to us and all to the Positivist, the little fragment of the universe on which we appear and disappear is, we believe, a nursery for something greater. The capacities for love and knowledge which in some of us attain a certain development here, we must all feel to be capable, with greater opportunities, of an infinitely greater development; and Christians believe that such a development is in fact reserved for those who, in this short time of apprenticeship, take the proper steps for approaching it.

This conception of a glorious and increasing company into which the best of men are continually to be gathered to be associated with each other (to say no more) in all that can make existence happy and noble, may be a dream, and Mr. Harrison may be right in calling it so. In deriding it he cannot be right. 'The eternity of the tabor' he calls it! Has he never felt, or at any rate is he not able to conceive, a thrill of pleasure at a sympathetic interchange of look, or word, or touch with a fellow-creature kind and noble and brilliant, and engaged in the exhibition of those qualities of heart and intellect which make beings with whom this interchange of sympathy is warm and perpetual. Intensify it. Increase indefinitely the excellence of one of those beings, the wonderful and attractive character of his operations, our own capacities of of our mental grasp, the vividness of our conception, the breadth and firmness of our mental grasp, the sharp vigour of our admiration; and to exclude satiety, to our companions are infinitely varied—a supposition for which the size of the known and unknown universe affords indefinite scope—or otherwise suppose if we were better than we are (*μεταβολή πάντων γλυκύτατον διὰ πονηρίαν τινά*), or as it would do, I suppose, if we had no memory of the immediate past. Imagine all this as the very least that may be hoped, if our own powers of conception are as slight in respect to the nature of what is to be as our bodies are in relation to the physical universe. And remember that if practical duties are necessary for the perfection of life, the universe is not so small but that in some intelligences whom He has thus formed and exalted.

All this, I repeat, may be a dream, but to characterise it as 'the eternity of the tabor' shows surely a feebleness of conception or carelessness of representation as a rival conception the fact that some of our good deeds will have indefinite consequences—to call this scanty and fading chain of effects, which we shall be as a 'posthumous activity,' 'an eternity of spiritual influence,' and a 'life beyond