

would win the approval of the average sensual man. Nor did he take it for granted that the physicists, the biologists and the ethical thinkers had the right to pick out the plums from religious literature and reject, at their pleasure, what did not strike their fancy.

He believed and preached a full-blooded religion, strong to command, rigorous in its claims, but he did this with an open mind, with a freshness of outlook, a skill in adapting eternal truth to changing needs, a variety of phrasing, and a warmth of verbal colouring which made him one of the most distinctive preachers of his time. Few men who have carried on a ministry in the same building for a score of years can have been less likely to weary their audience. The man of science and the man of letters, as well as the man of affairs, would realize that they were listening to one who was not entirely ignorant of what was to them the chief concern of life and, by what he left unsaid as well as by his uttered word, they would know that when he spoke of religion he had the right to be heard. Others were better known, had a larger following, were more often quoted. I know of none who, in public discourse, speaking to men as one mariner to another caught in the swirling gulfs of time, could more justly or more bravely bid them be of good cheer.

Like the rest of us, he will be forgotten, since the immortality of the spoken word is brief as the summer day. But if the heart-beats of humanity mean anything at all in the sum of things, his work will remain, a contribution, however small, to that trinity of goodness, truth, and beauty which alone can outstay the everlasting night.

Author: H.H Farmer

Title: "Faith, Probability, and Immortality"

Journal: The Congregational quarterly: a journal of religious life and thought, Volume 15, 1937, pages 13-26.

"Notice: This material may be protected  
by copyright law (Title 17 U.S. Code)"

## FAITH, PROBABILITY AND IMMORTALITY.<sup>1</sup>

By Prof. H. H. FARMER, M.A., D.D.

(Westminster College, Cambridge).

IN casting about for a suitable theme for this lecture I found my mind drawn to a phrase in the foundation deed. The founder expresses his belief that lectures delivered by competent people on the subject of immortality "might give instruction, assurance, and inspiration, and remove doubt and strengthen faith". It was the collocation of doubt and its removal on the one hand and faith and its strengthening on the other which drew my attention. Why did not the founder say "remove doubt and strengthen conviction", or, since as a rule to remove doubt is *eo facto* to strengthen conviction, why did he not say simply "remove doubt" and there leave it? Why introduce this category of "faith"? What is faith in this connexion and its relation to doubt? Is it a state of mind in which there is no doubt at all, in which case why call it faith and not conviction or certainty? Or is it a state of mind which requires for its very existence an admixture of doubts, in which case, if it is faith we wish to strengthen, we had better take care not to do our work so thoroughly that we remove doubt altogether? Or is faith a state of mind which has no connexion with doubt or certainty in the ordinary sense, but is an altogether different functioning of the spirit of man whose roots are quite untouched by a merely argumentative disposal of difficulties, so that we have in fact to do two things—remove doubt and then, in addition, strengthen faith? Yet if that be so, why trouble to do the two things, why trouble to remove doubt, why not simply seek to strengthen faith? Which raises the question, what does strengthen faith in respect of a life beyond the grave?

We may put the same point another way. The rational case for immortality, as it is argued by the philosophers, never really succeeds in getting beyond a probability judgment, beyond the judgment, that is to say, that on the whole the hypothesis of the survival of the individual person after death makes more sense of our experience taken over its whole breadth than the hypothesis of its non-survival; that therefore it is reasonable to believe in it. The argument usually has two steps. First, the negative rebuttal of arguments against immortality. It is agreed that there are a number of empirical considerations, mainly connected with the close association of man's mind with a physical organism, which *prima facie* point to the impossibility of personality surviving the dissolution of the flesh, but, it is said, none of these considerations prove, on examination, to have logical finality. Wherefore, the door is left open for belief in

<sup>1</sup> The Drew Lecture; printed by permission of the Trustees.

survival as at least a possibility. Second, the positive affirmation that whilst admittedly there is no empirical evidence for even temporary survival after death, still less for that permanent survival which is what the word immortality strictly means, none the less without immortality life becomes so meaningless and frustrated that reason in the broad sense may be said to demand, and to lead us to, belief in it as a fact. The value and importance of this line of thought I would be the last to minimize, but that it cannot lead strictly to anything more than a judgment of probability, the degree of which will be differently assessed by different people, is shown by the fact that it rests on a pre-supposition which is not self-evident, namely that our values as personal beings and the ultimate values of the universe coincide with one another. There is no logical absurdity in the idea of persons perishing at death; but, so runs the argument in effect, there is teleological absurdity, that is to say, such an idea leaves our values without adequate support in the real world, which thus from our point of view becomes unreasonable. But, says the sceptic, why should not it be from that point of view unreasonable? It is at least a possibility that the universe is indifferent to our personal values, and so long as that possibility remains open, the rational case for immortality falls short of complete cogency. Immortality remains still only the "grand perhaps", a possibility at worse, a probability at best.

Yet, and this is the point, how far short such a conclusion falls of the profound conviction of a life beyond death which has in fact manifested itself in the souls of men in the course of history. What a quiet certitude, for example, breathes through the words of Socrates in Plato's *Phaedo*! And in the New Testament the conviction that the grave has no victory is not only quiet, but also at times joyous and triumphant to a degree far surpassing anything that could attach to a "grand perhaps", to a mere probability judgment however high the degree of probability might be judged to be. And the New Testament writers, I suppose, would not hesitate to place this conviction within the realm of faith. It is a faith-certainty. We ourselves have met fine Christians grown old in what would be called the "life of faith", who have a conviction that death is but an incident in personal history so deeply assured that to equate it in any sense with the judgment that life beyond the grave is highly probable would be grotesque. What then is faith in this connexion, and what its roots in the human spirit? Is the certainty of this conviction of immortality merely the result of emotion outstripping reason and lending a false compellingness to it, which it is not intrinsically entitled to claim? Is that all faith is—a mere heightening, by feeling, of probability into apparent certainty, or is it another and deeper way of knowing the reality of our world, a way which exists in its own right and shines in its own light?

It is into the area of such questions as these that I invite your thought. I wish to maintain that faith in general is another and deeper way of knowing the world than the way of abstract philosophic reasoning which can only lead, in respect of those matters with which faith deals, to a probability conclusion; yet, because of those matters with which it deals and the part it is called upon to play in our life, faith has affinities with the probability judgment, with the result that the two are often confused with one another. I shall wish further to maintain that belief in immortality has at least one root in faith. In going into these matters we shall for a considerable part of the lecture leave the specific question of immortality on one side, coming back to it again at the end. Yet if our specific interest in the question of immortality be borne in mind, I think the general relevance to it of what we say meanwhile will be obvious before we make the application.

Suppose we begin with the philosopher Descartes, from whom the so-called modern period of scientific and philosophic thought is usually dated. In his *Discourse on Method* Descartes tells how, dissatisfied with the current teaching of the time, which he found confused, contradictory, and little more than the mere repetition of authoritarian dogmas without any attempt to verify them in the world of facts, he resolved to think things out for himself. Accordingly he laid down four principles for arriving at assured knowledge. I will not burden you with them. Suffice it to say that they were based on the model of mathematics and in effect made the final criterion of all knowledge the abstract, analytical methods with which the whole work of science since Descartes' time has made us increasingly familiar. Now comes the interesting thing. Descartes seems to have realized at once that in the actualities of daily life no man does live, or indeed could ever live, by the standards of knowledge set forth in his four analytical principles after the mathematical model just referred to. He seems to have realized that whilst you are trying to decide what is true by these methods, life has to go on, and does go on, presenting you sometimes with life and death issues, and never waiting while you reach properly certificated conclusions. So in addition to his four principles for finding truth he lays down some maxims for living. One of them is as follows:

I decided to be as firm and as resolute in my actions as I could and to follow the most doubtful opinions when I had decided on them no less constantly than if they were very certain. In this I acted as travellers who find themselves astray in some forest should do, for they ought not to wander about, turning now to one side, now to another, still less to remain in one place, but to walk as straight as they can in one direction, and not change it for trivial reasons although it were chance alone which determined their choice to begin with; for by this means if they

do not go precisely where they desire, at least they arrive in time at some place, where they will probably fare better than in the middle of the forest. And as the actions of life seldom permit of any delay, it is a very certain truth, that when it is not in our power to discern the most truthful opinions, we ought to follow the most probable. And even though we remark no more probability in these than in those, we ought nevertheless to decide upon some, and then no longer consider them doubtful in so far as they correspond to practice.

This then is the position: we cannot run life on the basis of real knowledge, as defined by the four analytic principles; therefore, we must run it on what? On the basis of probability, Descartes says, and he quite clearly regards the probability judgment as a makeshift, a sort of guess or hypothesis, an inferior, incomplete knowledge, which may or may not later pass over into real knowledge, and on which we meanwhile act for prudential reasons with a confidence which we do not really feel. But is that the only alternative? Surely in view of the way in which we do as a matter of fact conduct our lives in the real world of daily affairs it is necessary to go a little deeper. Doubtless situations do sometimes arise in which, in default of soundly based knowledge, we have to make a rough estimate of probabilities and act accordingly in the full awareness that we are taking a chance—hoping for the best and prepared for the worst—and without any of the feeling of certitude in our mind, however much we may act as though we had. A good enough example is Descartes' own illustration of the man lost in the forest. But there are many other situations, situations which are much more the very stuff and marrow of our daily existence, in which, though we lack, and necessarily lack, exact knowledge according to Descartes' standards—for such exact knowledge is in the nature of things quite unattainable—none the less we act not by an estimate of chances but by a species of intuitive grasp of the meaning of the situation in relation to our own personal history and of the way in which, therefore, we must walk. Such an intuitive grasp lays holds of the future with a confidence quite different from the artificial confidence of Descartes' wanderer in the forest; yet it is as little able to forecast in detail the outcome of the adventure or in any way to justify itself on the basis of scientific principles of knowledge. Perhaps the best illustration of this lies within the sphere of personal relationships. In proportion as friendship to one another is realized by two persons their knowledge of one another and trust in one another in any common situation become less and less capable of being brought under a methodology of knowledge of the type indicated by Descartes' four principles; indeed any attempt to do so would destroy the whole relationship. Yet the relationship does not for that reason pass into the other sphere indicated by Descartes—the sphere where, having to act in one way

or another, you act boldly on the most probable hypothesis. Nothing could be more inimical to the growth of friendship, or destructive of it, on the one hand to want to have your confidence in the other man continually certificated and guaranteed by carefully devised cross-examinations and experimental tests, or, on the other hand, in default of that, to give the impression that your trust in him is merely a decision, forced on you by necessity, to take a risk on a more or less high probability. In neither case is it genuine trust in the other man.

Descartes, then, overlooked this other mode of apprehension, or if he did not altogether overlook it, he too lightly assimilated it to the sphere of the rational estimate of chances. Suppose we call this other mode, anticipating a little what is yet to come, "faith" or belief, what the Germans call "*glauben*". We may then perhaps say that Descartes set a fashion which has since been followed by far too many inquirers, especially those whose thought is of a positivistic type, the fashion, namely, of regarding "faith" as a sort of inferior substitute for real knowledge, an inferior substitute of the order of a guess or hypothesis or probability judgment forced upon us by the necessity of acting before knowledge can be obtained. Something of this mistake appears even in the far-seeing Butler. Butler points out how much we have to guide our lives by an estimate of probabilities; well, he says in effect, we must expect the same to hold in the sphere of religion and morals. He makes, however, a significant qualification in respect of this sphere, for he sets at the heart of it the absolute authority and supremacy of conscience, not perceiving apparently that by so doing he has taken the whole thing out of the sphere of the pure probability judgment altogether. Where then has he put it? Not in the sphere of complete knowledge, for he rightly insists that such knowledge is not given to us in this world, and that it would be very bad for us if it were. He does not seem to have perceived that there is a third sphere which has at one and the same time something of the luminous certainty of final knowledge and something of the uncertainty that attaches to the probability judgment, yet which is neither of these.

In more recent times we might cite Leuba, the very able American psychologist who is in so many ways typical of the laboratory-trained American mind; for him all belief is of the same order in respect of its relation to knowledge—whether it be religious belief or what the scientist calls a working hypothesis, it is an incomplete and problematical substitute for, and anticipation of, real knowledge, which real knowledge he identifies with that which is reached through substantially the same methods as Descartes first sketched out so many centuries before. Yet if Leuba ran his life strictly according to such a theory of knowledge, it is doubtful if he would make, or keep, a single friend. The state

of confusion in which many minds are in relation to this point is further illustrated by the well-meant endeavours which we have more than once heard speakers make to bring religion on the one hand closer to science by assimilating religious faith to the projection of scientific hypotheses, so that belief in God or immortality becomes merely a testing out, or embracing, of the nobler hypothesis, and on the other hand to the instinct after risk and adventure—perhaps we should say the gambling instinct—which is in humanity, so that religion becomes a betting your life that there is a God in circumstances where you are forced to make a bet one way or the other. The fact that such statements find such ready response in our minds shows that they are not altogether wide of the mark; yet none I suppose has ever felt that they are quite on the mark. They cry out for further examination and more careful statement.

It is not difficult to see in a preliminary way the reason for both the plausibility and the inadequacy of thus assimilating faith to the probability judgment, to the projection of a hypothesis. It is plausible because faith is in one sense a running in advance of what is as yet actually and fully realized; it is a grasping of the future along with the present in one system of meaning and value; being the future it still has something of the unpredictability, the fluidity, the capacity for surprise which only disappear when the future has passed into the fixed finalities of the past. It is on the other hand inadequate in that faith, paradoxical though it sound, in the midst of its uncertainty, its incapacity to demonstrate that which is not yet fully realized experience, is none the less quite sure. It has its own quality of certitude in the here and now. It is the blending of these two opposites, certainty and an experimental adventuring into the unknown, a going out not knowing whither you are going and yet in another sense knowing well enough whither you are going (one thinks of Paul's words in another but not altogether unrelated connexion: "as unknown and yet well known") that makes faith the peculiarly creative thing it has been in human experience.

Now the question inevitably arises what is the status of this type of response to the world in respect of truth; is it a genuine and trustworthy source of knowledge of the real? Obviously we cannot regard it as infallible, as exempt from the error which infects all our human apprehensions. Yet equally obviously we cannot hope to demonstrate in the case of any particular instance of faith-judgment by reasons extraneous to it that it is as true and trustworthy as it seems to the one making it; first because faith-judgments arise precisely where that sort of demonstration is impossible, and second because in any case no purely rational argument can reach more than a probability conclusion as to the future, and even then the degree of probability will be differently assessed according as you do or do not feel under a prior compulsion to make the faith-judgment in

question. It seems to me that there are only two things to be done when the question of the reliability of the faith-judgment is raised. The first is to consider whether in general this type of response to our world has been and is central and fundamental and creative in the whole experience of the race in all its stages; if that should prove to be the case, then it becomes very difficult to entertain the idea that it is not an organ of real knowledge, except indeed at the price of a pretty deep-going scepticism. The second is to try to uncover the internal conditions which govern the faith-judgment; it is at least possible that this will afford some guidance as to when a true faith-judgment is being made as distinct from one which is a mere projection on to the external world of our clamorous desires.

Taking up each point in turn:

(1) First we point out how basic, indispensable, creative in all experience this type of response has been and is. We might do this in three ways:

A. In the first place we might insist on the critical importance of faith as a factor in evolution generally, along the lines with which James Ward made us familiar in his *Realm of Ends*. "And now", says Ward,

if we take a wider sweep and glance back at the history of the organic world, describing it analogically in terms of experience rather than in the language of biology, the parable will not be un instructive. We shall find that almost every step forward in the progress of life could be formulated as an act of faith—an act not warranted by knowledge—on the part of the pioneer that made it. There was little, for example, in all that the wisest fish could know, to justify the belief that there was more scope for existence on the earth than in the water, or to show that persistent endeavours to live on land would issue in the transformation of his swimming bladders into lungs. And before a bird had cleaved the air there was surely little, in all that the most daring of saurian speculators could see or surmise concerning the untrodden element, to warrant him in risking his neck in order to soar; although when he did try, his forelimbs were transformed to wings at length, so the biologists inform us, and his dim prevision of a bird became incarnate in himself. So put, these instances will seem largely fanciful. . . . Still they serve to bring out the one fact, that when we regard the development of living forms as a continuous whole, we are forced to recognize as immanent and operative throughout it, a sort of unscientific trustfulness that from the first seems to have been engrained in all living things. This trustfulness is comparable to the faith of Abraham, who, "when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed and went out not knowing whither he went".

"In keeping with all this", Ward says in another passage,



is the place of faith on the higher plane of religion where we contrast it with intellectual sight: it is like a new sense that brings us face to face with the unseen world. Here as everywhere—in its highest as well as in its lowest form—faith is striving and striving faith. The whole conscious being is concerned: there is not merely the cognition of what is, there is also an appreciation of what it is worth, a sense of the promise and potency of further good that it may enfold; there is a yearning to realize this; and there is finally the active endeavour that such feeling prompts.

Dr. J. W. Oman, in an article which appeared many years ago in the *Journal of Theological Studies* in criticism of Otto's *Idea of the Holy*, has substantially the same thought as Ward. Otto makes the central thing in religion to be what he calls a sense of a divine *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*. But, suggests his critic, this is none other than the sense of a great, strange environment which calls to the living creature as that in which it is to find a fuller and more satisfactory life and yet at the same time scares him a bit because it is as yet unknown and unexplored. It is a *mysterium tremendum*, frightening, yet also *fascinans*, fascinating, drawing him to trust himself to it. Some dim sense of the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* may go down, Oman suggests, taking over substantially Ward's thought,

as low as the first living creature that ventured, in any conscious way upon the unknown, the reptile, let us say, that ventured out upon the land, a creature of enormous significance for all higher evolution. Would it not be with a sense of a tremendous mysterious, in which yet the creature hoped to find its own?

B. In the second place we might, following up Ward's hint, insist on the centrality of the faith-judgment in the whole religious awareness of mankind. We might here find it useful to take note, as Otto does in his book translated recently into English under the misleading title of *The Philosophy of Religion*, of the work of the two German thinkers, Jacobi and Fries, sometimes referred to as the faith-philosophers, though I confess I know little of their work at first hand. Jacobi first—and Fries after him—were profoundly dissatisfied with Kant's doctrine that belief in God could have no other basis for the reflective man than as what he called a postulate of the practical reason. He felt, and rightly felt, that the religious man's awareness and certitude of God are more direct, immediate, profound than Kant's doctrine really accounted for. He was driven therefore to go deeper and to uncover a primordial religious response in the soul of man to his world in what he called "*Ahnung*." It is a difficult word to translate. In its ordinary usage it means "presentiment", the obscure prevision of some coming event not based on clear grounds and merely felt. Perhaps we might describe it in some such

terms as these: an awareness of an overshadowing reality which is not perceptible to the sense nor demonstrable by logical inference from anything given through the senses nor as yet expressible in precise terms, but which is known with an inescapable certitude to be somehow the basis and the source of all that has been experienced and will even yet be more fully experienced of all that is sublime and beautiful and good and intelligible in man's world. It is faith-awareness of God. These are dull, abstract terms in which to express it. A much finer expression of the essential religious form of *Ahnung* or faith is in Santayana's lovely sonnet:

O world thou choosest not the better part I  
It is not wisdom to be only wise  
And on the inward vision close the eyes  
But it is wisdom to believe the heart.  
Columbus found a world and had no chart,  
Save one that faith deciphered in the skies;  
To trust the soul's invincible surmise  
Was all his science, and his only art.

Faith is the soul's invincible surmise. Both words are important. It is surmise, not in the sense of a bare hypothesis, a mere probability judgment, for otherwise it would not be invincible, but in the sense of leaping beyond, without any loss of certitude, what is immediately given or is as yet fully explored and possessed. Yet an even better expression is in the familiar words of *Heb. 11*:

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are made are not made out of things which do appear. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

C. In the third place, we might insist on the centrality of faith in the three great cultural activities of man, science, morality, and art. This is much too large a subject to allow of more than one or two hints, but if there were time I should wish to seek to maintain that all these functions of man's spirit, if you consider them at their highest moments of absorbed and dedicated and creative activity, seem to have within them something of this faith or *Ahnung*, this awareness of an environment which is utterly real and yet which is not yet fully realized, which we rest upon in our activity yet do not fully possess, which offers us, and indeed invites us, to launch out upon infinite and inexhaustible possibilities of exploration and achievement.

Concerning science I will content myself with quoting the words of so careful and accurate a thinker as Dr. Tennant. At the end of a long and exhaustive discussion he concludes with the words:

We have established in the case of science what was long ago discerned in the sphere of religion and theology: that faith and hope are more fundamental than the knowledge which is to vanish away. Whether as scientific knowers or as religious believers we must be content to feel that we are greater than we know; to recognize that it is trust of some such feeling as this, that in all our knowledge, such as it is, and in all our reason (whatever that be) has prompted and guided our intellectual search; that the superficial successes of the reason which is in fact everywhere baffled in its quest for final knowledge about the world, is the substantiation of things hoped for; while if it be the evidencing of things not seen, that evidencing is in the last resort a matter of psychological certitude, not of logical certainty.

Concerning the moral life, it is sufficient perhaps to call to mind the radical distinction we all draw between action determined by genuinely moral considerations and action determined merely by considerations of prudence or expediency. The difference rests on the fact that into the former there enters the element of faith, the readiness to launch out on the path indicated by righteousness, no matter how appalling it may be, damning the consequences, whereas into the latter there enters no such element, the definition of expediency as a principle of action being precisely that all consequences are calculated so far as may be and that path that promises to be the easiest is chosen. Of course the worst opportunist cannot foresee all consequences of his acts and sometimes has to bank on a chance and risk the results, but how different his damning of the consequences is from that of the high-minded man; the one is a mere gambler's fling on the probabilities, the other has that quiet confidence in it, in spite of all the unknown possibilities ahead, which is characteristic of all faith. Indeed, in one sense he doesn't damn the consequences at all, he knows they will be all right; yet in another sense he does. They are unknown, yet well known. It is faith, and men of such faith have been the organs of all the moral progress of the race.

As for art I speak with diffidence, for I cannot claim to know what goes on in the artist's mind at the highest and most absorbed moment of creative activity. But I very much suspect that here also there is *Ahnung* or faith, there is the sense of an ideal world of beauty which is real, utterly real out there in the beyond calling to us to go out and seek it at any cost, yet which we do not and perhaps cannot fully possess. This is the very nerve of the artistic enterprise at its best, to be ever seeking to grasp that which in its infinity is beyond our grasping, to make real that which none the less we know to be already real enough to justify any cost of search.

O world invisible, we view thee,  
O world intangible, we touch thee,  
O world unknowable, we know thee,  
Inapprehensible, we clutch thee.

Or in the words of Keats's "Ode on the Grecian Urn," which surely express with delicate allusiveness the same thought:

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard  
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;  
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,  
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone.  
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave  
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;  
Bold lover, never, never canst thou kiss,  
Though winning near the goal—yet do not grieve;  
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss  
For ever wilt thou love and she be fair.

When old age shall this generation waste  
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe  
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou sayest,  
Beauty is truth, truth beauty—that is all  
Ye know on earth, and need to know.

Or, as we might say, beauty is reality, though never realized, reality beauty.

(2) Turning now to our second question, namely that of the internal conditions which govern the faith-judgment, it seems clear that, as Ward suggests in the passage already quoted, it is in some sense or other a function of the whole personality of man as it seeks to realize fully its own highest life. To repeat Ward's words:

The whole conscious being is concerned; there is not merely the cognition of what is, there is also an apprehension of what it is worth, the sense of the promise and potency of further good that it may enfold; there is a yearning to realize this; and there is finally the active endeavour that such feeling prompts.

This is why faith is so fundamental and underlies in the way we have suggested all our major activities, and yet is so elusively difficult to isolate and to state in rational terms. The personality grows by faith, because by faith it grasps in advance the larger world in which it will find fulfilment. Inasmuch as this fulfilment is still ahead, and the world which will make it possible is therefore not yet fully realized—"it doth not yet appear what we shall be"—the faith-judgment has something of the quality of the probable, the untested, the unverified, so that to the intellect functioning abstractly it is always theoretically conceivable that the whole thing is illusion; on the other hand, inasmuch as the faith-judgment is rooted in the deepest, most fundamental, most inclusive urge of the whole personal being, namely, its urge towards its own fulfilment, it can take on the quality of the profoundest certitude which rises above and defies all the doubts and demurrers that the merely theoretical intellect can raise. This in a sense is but to repeat Pascal's dictum that the heart has reasons of which the head knows nothing; but the value of our line of thought,

if it has any, is that it insists that by heart we mean not merely emotion or sentimentality as against sound thought, but something deeper than both and holding all together in an organic unity of the whole person; we mean also something basic to our whole dealing with the world so that if we could in an act of ultimate scepticism consistently doubt its veracity and trustworthiness, the very life impulse within us would dry up.

This being so, the inference seems to me to be permissible that in proportion as the personality is at least moving along the lines of its true development so its faith-judgments will tend to be both sounder and more certain; on the other hand, in proportion as the personality is, as we should say, off the lines, seeking false values, internally divided and frustrated and incoherent, so its faith-judgments will be intermittent, mixed with phantasy and error and subject to destructive scepticisms and doubts. This is not a logical inference, but it seems a probable one, and there is much in experience to support it. It seems reasonable to suppose that an awareness which is in some sense the personality acting as a whole must depend for its quality on the extent to which the personality is whole or at least is moving and growing along lines which will lead to its true fulfilment.

Now the application of all this to the subject of immortality, to which thus at long last we come, is obvious enough. Belief that there is something beyond death is, of course, one of the most widespread of human beliefs. Many different explanations have been offered of this fact, dream-experiences of primitive man, inability to contemplate one's own extinction, the natural extension and growth of the idea of the soul, the desire for a better time than this world affords most of us, and so on. It is not necessary to deny that these factors may have entered in, but I for one, when I set this belief in the context of the facts we have been sketching in this paper, and when I seek to grasp its roots in my own soul and in the soul of infinitely more sensitive people than myself, cannot avoid the conclusion that something deeper is involved. The belief that there is a world beyond death has somewhere at the heart of it the sort of faith-intuition of which we have been speaking: it is a laying hold in advance, however dimly and with however little of definite concepts and images, of a real environment which in another sense is not yet realized: it is a grasping on the part of man, especially at moments of crisis in his destiny, of the unfulfilled significance of his own being and of the certainty of its not remaining thus for ever unfulfilled. This thought seems to find expression in Mr. Charles Morgan's last novel, *Sparkenbroke*, in which death and poetry and love are linked together under the single idea of fulfilment, and I am glad to cite the author, if I have rightly understood a somewhat obscure book, in support of my thesis. But whereas Mr. Morgan makes that kind of conviction characteristic of a highly sensitive artistic nature, I would

wish to find place for it, albeit in a much more dim and intermittent and inarticulate form, in the life of more ordinary and commonplace and coarse-grained men and women.

Yet, on the other hand, undoubtedly there is no belief of like importance which, if it do not flicker out altogether, can become so feeble, so intermittent, so liable to paralysing doubts, so little directive and formative of the whole tone and quality of the life, so easily turned to puerile and even corrupt phantasy. Why should there be a Drew lecture on immortality in this country, an Ingersoll lecture on the same subject in the States, and not on say the love of God or the atonement? All this dubiety cannot, it seems to me, be due simply to the fact of the impenetrability of death, to the fact that if belief in a beyond be a faith-judgment it is in the nature of the case and necessarily a faith-judgment which has never yet been verified in any experience to which we have access. The beyond, whatever it be, is that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller has returned. There is, I would suggest, a deeper reason, along the lines already indicated, namely a fundamental disorganization of human personality, a lack of wholeness and integration around right values, not indeed always sufficient to destroy the faith-awareness of a larger world beyond death, though it may even do that, but sufficient to cloud, confuse, weaken, misdirect, again and again inhibit it in countless different ways. Here I would wish to drop quite frankly into the categories of specifically Christian experience and theology and talk about sin, though I should hate to argue about a term. That our human nature is deeply and disastrously out of gear, internally divided and disintegrated, unwholesome in the literal sense of the term, I take to be a manifest fact. Wherefore if the faith-judgment be a function of the whole being, and if conviction of a life beyond death be of the order of faith-judgment, then man's sinful state is bound profoundly to affect the latter. From this point of view we might see a new meaning in St. Paul's statement that the sting of death is sin. It is the sting of death because amongst its other effects it injures the soul's power to grasp and to be grasped by, to have the *Ahnung* or faith-awareness of, that which lies beyond death, that which is as yet unknown and yet so well-known that one can commit oneself to it in confidence and peace.

And in particular this concerns the question of personal, individual immortality, for sin is indissolubly bound up with the personal world, our relations to and responsibilities for and to persons, the divine person and human persons. I am impressed by the fact that so many in these days, unable apparently to escape the deep *Ahnung* of the soul that there is a beyond of death, affirm some sort of immortality, but they cannot rise to the conviction of personal immortality; they speak rather in philosophical terms of the imperishability of values, or in mystical terms of the absorption of the soul into the eternal being,

or in semi-biological terms of the immortality of the race. There are doubtless many contributory causes for this, but one cause at least I am minded to think is that there is a blindness and mal-adjustment to what is the fundamental and basic fact of human existence, namely that God has set us in a dimension of personal relations with one another and with Himself, a blindness and mal-adjustment due to what I do not hesitate to call sin. To gain a living conviction of the immortality of persons, which is proof against and triumphant over every contrary consideration, one must be at least beginning to see the world of persons for what it is; and to be rightly related to it one must be beginning at least to have wholeness in that sphere. One must in short be lifted out of the isolation and self-centredness of sin into that which we call love, meaning by love not that sentimental and partial gush of feeling which is often only egotism disguised, but the love of which the New Testament speaks, the love which arises out of the vision of the love of God to men in Jesus Christ. Here as elsewhere it is the cleansing of the inner life which is the indispensable thing. This is doubtless not the only sense in which it may be said that Christ brought life and immortality to light, but it is one sense and a very fundamental one. The founder of this lecture spoke of strengthening faith; a lecture can do very little to that end. It can only perhaps point to that which can alone in any final way strengthen faith, if faith be in any sense, as we have maintained, something far more deeply assured than a mere banking on a high probability, namely the cleansing of sin and the setting of us in right relation to persons. There is, therefore, perhaps a deeper meaning than some of us have realized in the fact that Paul's great disquisition on love, which is what we mean by right personal relations, should have passed at the end so naturally into the thought of the fuller life which lies in the beyond: Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, love; but the greatest of these is love—greatest because for one thing only as we enter into that sort of world of personal relationships which love means can faith and its insights be set free within us and remain undefeated in face of all the challenges of this confused and troubled and sinful world.

## REVIEW OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CHINA.

By WILLIAM BAND, M.Sc.  
(Yenching University, Peiping).

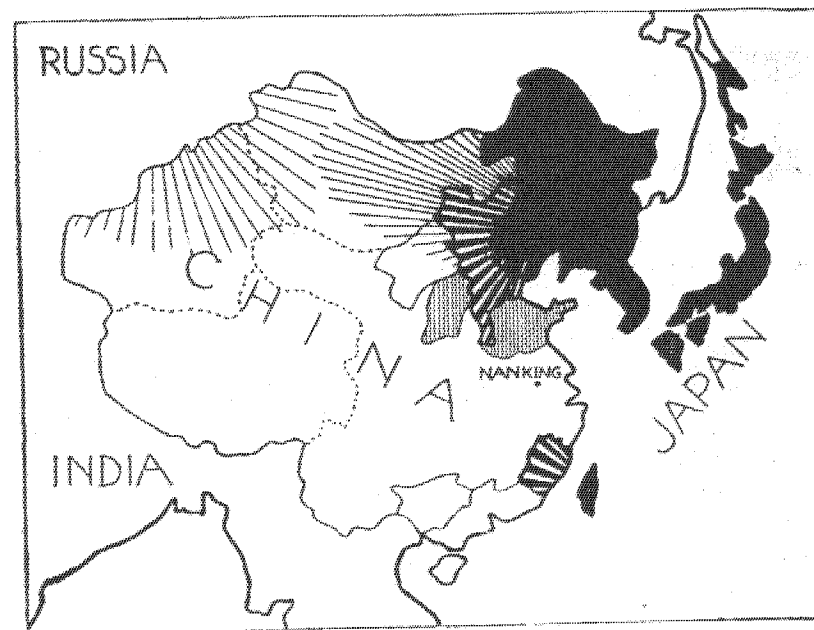


DIAGRAM SHOWING JAPAN'S ADVANCE INTO CHINA.

Regions entirely under Japanese domination—black.  
Regions under pro-Japanese elements, with part Japanese control—heavy radial lines.  
Regions of Japanese intrigue for further expansion—light radial lines.  
Autonomous regions unfavourable to Japan—light vertical lines.  
Light radial lines have also been inserted to suggest Russian influence in Sinkiang and Mongolia.

In this brief review we discuss under separate sub-titles the various episodes which have attracted the world's news readers during the last few months. We also summarize some of the less publicized activity which has been going on behind the screen, in which those of us who live out here find a great deal more significance.

It might be as well to glance at a map, and recall that China is a nation comparable in area and population with Europe. The population of China is three times that of the United States of America. The journey from Peiping to Canton is about the same length as that from London to Moscow. Each of the eighteen