

Life After Death

"WE do wrong to preoccupy ourselves with the question of survival after death in some other place, or upon some other plane, of which we can know nothing, instead of devoting ourselves exclusively to the interests and duties of our life in this world and upon this plane, of which we are as certain as we can be of anything."

Contentious? Well, no doubt it was meant to be. It's the opening affirmation of Professor Arnold Wall in a talk, *The Basis of Man's Belief in Future Life*, which 3YC will broadcast at 8.5 p.m. on Wednesday, January 30. This talk is the first of four which will be heard from this station on Wednesdays at about the same time.

Naturally, Professor Wall isn't allowed to have everything his own way, though listeners will find that he knocks up an impressive score. He discusses the nature and origin of the belief and its implications and states his view on why men wish to believe in personal immortality. He ends with some observations on the effects of belief—and the effects of non-belief.

Other-Worldliness

Archdeacon L. G. Whitehead is Professor Wall's first opponent. He maintains that if we devote ourselves exclusively to the duties and interests of our life in this world, our whole culture will sink to a lower level. "I believe," he says, "that there can be no wholesome this-worldliness unless it is accompanied by other-worldliness—the recognition that man is a stranger and pilgrim on earth and that his true fatherland is elsewhere." Archdeacon Whitehead concedes that if we try to imagine what the "other world" is like we can picture it only in terms of this. But he doesn't admit that what a human being can imagine is the limit of the real.

A. C. Brassington and Father T. A. Johnston, S.J., take sides in the second round of the debate. Mr. Brassington declares that there is no scientific evidence for survival after death, and that faith as such involves a leap in the dark. His conclusion is: "Guesses about a life hereafter should not be dignified with the word faith. Dogmatic assertion about an after life should be subjected to scientific scrutiny. I submit to you that the answer is not proved."

Immortal Soul

Asked to state the rational basis for belief in immortality without drawing on the evidence from revelation, Father Johnston argues that man has a soul with activities independent of matter. It is therefore itself independent of matter. Not dependent of matter for its existence, it has within itself no seeds of decay and will live for ever.

Personal immortality has long been a subject for lively discussion of which, so far, there is little sign of an end. A recent vigorous attack on the belief was made by Fred Hoyle in his BBC talks on *The Nature of the Universe*. Mr. Hoyle thought he would not be wise to decide on more than 300 years' life with his present physical and mental equipment if he had the choice, and declared: "What the Christians offer me is an eternity of frustration." Archdeacon Whitehead has something to say about Mr. Hoyle in his contribution to this new series.

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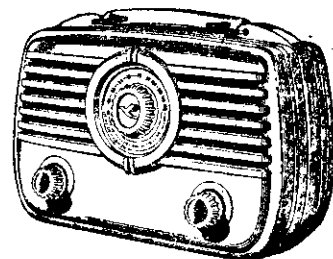
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