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War conditions having rendered it impracticable to hold an Ordinary Meeting on January 12th, 1942, the Paper for that date was circulated to subscribers and is here published, together with the written discussion elicited.

REASON AND REVELATION.

By THE REV. PRINCIPAL H. S. CURR, M.A., B.D., B.Litt., Ph.D.

RELIGION is intercourse between God and man. That sentence is not intended as a comprehensive definition of religion. It is not intended to do more than to introduce the subject of this paper, and more especially the contention with which it commences. That is the varying emphasis on the Divine and human in the history of theological thought. There have been periods like the Reformation when the stress was laid on the Divine aspect of religion. It was regarded as God's approach to man in his unspeakable need of salvation from sin. Its truths, by whose apprehension men might be made free from the law of sin and death, were always regarded as of Divine origin. They were supernatural in character, and in thinking of them it was always necessary for the man of God to bear in mind that the thoughts and ways of God are past finding out except in so far as they are revealed by the Spirit of God. That position has never been wholly abandoned, although it has declined enormously in popularity. There have never ceased to be thinkers who address themselves to the consideration of theological problems in the consciousness that they are dealing with the wisdom of God, which often appears to be foolishness to the mind of man. There have also been periods when the opposite view of religion has been widely accepted. It is regarded as man's quest for God. The emphasis falls on the human aspect of the subject. Religious truth becomes a pearl of great price for which diligent search must be made. This attitude has become exceedingly common and popular since the acceptance of the conclusions reached by the modern critical movement with regard to the nature and authority of the Bible. When Holy Scripture ceased to be regarded as the inspired Word of God,

the way was opened for a new conception of religion to dominate the field in which the efforts of man occupied the foreground. The tide is turning again towards the older position, for the simple reason that no standpoint which fails to give God His true and proper place will fit the facts. All such theories are bound to make shipwreck sooner or later on the rocks of experience, submerged and otherwise, chiefly on the fact of sin.

The human mind is so constituted, however, that it is apt to go to extremes. Like the pendulum, it moves from one extremity of its orbit to the other. It travels as far as it can to the right only to return as far in the opposite direction to the left. As Sir Isaac Newton has said, action and reaction are equal. That is illustrated by the Barthian theology. Its tremendous emphasis falls on revealed truth as something that the mind of man can never discover unaided, and that it can but accept with deep reverence and humility. Barth and his school have rendered incomparable service up to a point by calling men to concern themselves a great deal less with what they think about God as with what God thinks about them and their salvation. Nevertheless the movement represents a tendency which it cannot for a moment be said to have followed to its logical conclusion, one which may be admirably characterised in the classic words of Tertullian, "Credo quia absurdum." Pascal said something similar when he observed that the true philosopher is the man who despises philosophy. In other words, revelation and reason are declared to be at enmity, the one warring against the other like the Spirit and the flesh in the members of the true believer. That is a particular phase of this union of opposites which is the centre and soul of piety, the life of God in the soul of man through the presence and power of God's Holy Spirit indwelling the heart by faith. Our immediate concern is with the relations of reason and revelation, another aspect of the same vast subject.

In passing, a reference may be made to the way in which the Bible holds the balance so perfectly between seeming incompatibilities. Oil and water do not mix; but oil and water are both symbols of the Holy Spirit, and in the pages of the volume, for which He is ultimately responsible, extremes of truth meet in Divine harmony.

In using such a term as "revelation," it is necessary that there be some clear notion as to its meaning. It signifies, primarily, God's self-manifestation. That takes many forms,

and it is convenient to classify these in a somewhat rough and ready way under the general headings of general and special revelation. By the former is meant such disclosures of God as may be found in the material universe, in the history of the human race, in research and reflection, and in the testimony of man's conscience. Thus the heavens declare the glory of God, and the earth showeth His handiwork. Kepler, the great astronomer, is said to have exclaimed, in reference to one of his discoveries, that he was thinking God's thoughts after Him. Again, human history is His story, as the simple saying puts it. God brought Israel from Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir. That was Amos' reading of history in the eighth century B.C. (Amos ix, 7). It is as valid and valuable to-day as it was then. Once more God guides the minds of men in the quest of truth; and in the witness of conscience His voice may be heard in man's heart, often dim and confused and misunderstood, but still present. "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord" (Provs. xx, 27).

Special revelation begins, continues, and ends in Christ. "God, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, Whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the world; Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they" (Hebrews i, 1-4). As that great passage reminds us, God has also manifested His grace and glory in the Written Word as well as in the Living Word. The same God Who spake unto the fathers by the prophets hath spoken unto their children by His Son. But the Bible can do nothing apart from Christ. In Judaism we have a faith which is based on the Old Testament without the Divine Person to Whom the law, and the prophets, and the psalms bear such powerful witness. To put it otherwise, there is the Written Word without the Living Word, and to the Christian disciple, approaching the matter in a spirit of the deepest respect and sympathy, the result seems like a body without a soul, or a lamp without light. With that provision, however, it may be said that special revelation must be sought in the Christ and in the Bible. It is necessary to add that both are

revelations in the same way. Neither merely contains a revelation in combination with other things which cannot be so described, just as gold is found intermingled with quartz or earth. Both constitute the Word of God to man. The analogy of natural objects which owe nothing whatever to human care or aid will help us in appreciating this point. "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these" (Matthew vi, 28-29).

Regarding reason, it may be admitted at once that it is the gift of God, and a very remarkable token of the Divine favour for man, the crown of creation. One hardly feels disposed to go all the length of the Scottish philosopher, Sir William Hamilton, when he remarked that in the world there is nothing great but man, and in man there is nothing great but mind. But the words are worth quoting as a reminder of the excellence of the endowment which God has bestowed upon us in making us rational creatures. It is only meet that we should love Him with all our mind as well as with all our soul, and heart, and strength, and one expression of such love must surely be an attempt to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, even although in the long last we are constrained to confess that the love of Jesus passeth knowledge (Ephs. iii, 18-19). These words imply a good deal, and that may now be explained.

In the first place, God desires intelligent service from His creatures in so far as they are capable of rendering it. "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you" (John xv, 15). The private soldier has no authoritative information as to the plan of campaign in which he is taking a small share. He may conjecture as to its nature, but at the best he is reduced to guessing. It is far otherwise with the subordinate commanders. They are furnished with information as to what is being attempted, and the reasons for so doing. It may not be as complete or detailed as might be possible, but it is adequate to enable them to take their very responsible part in the operations. In the same way it is the good pleasure of God that man should know enough about His nature, and His designs and His methods, to enable him to be a true, if humble, yoke-fellow with his Maker. That is the justification of all that is

meant by revelation. It is intended to enable us not only to love God, but to serve Him with all our minds as well as all our hearts and souls. The superiority of such intelligent service does not call for comment. It surely speaks for itself.

That being the case, the gospel of God is offered to man in a form which cannot only be received by the heart in saving and sanctifying faith, but which also can be grasped by the understanding. A simple illustration will make that point clear. When medical treatment is sought, the advice of the physician is accepted and practised, although it be wholly incomprehensible. If the desired effect is obtained through these means, the demands of the case are satisfied. Pagan faiths sometimes bear a close resemblance to it. The worshippers do what they are bidden by their priests, making no attempt to understand what they are doing. They resemble the heroic soldiers of the Light Brigade at Balaclava during the Crimean War, when a mounted force of six hundred performed a feat of wonderful courage and wonderful stupidity in charging Russian artillery.

Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die.

Far different is the statement of Paul in writing to the Ephesians Church. "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power" (Ephesians i, 15-19). The original readers of these words were thoroughly familiar with a type of religion in which reason was at a discount. The service of God is reasonable, and, it may be added, sweetly reasonable. We are called to walk in the light even as God is in the light.

In addition, revelation lends itself to being systematised. Science is simply systematised knowledge, and the queen of sciences is admitted to be theology. Its raw material, so to speak, is revelation. Just as the geologist classifies and rationalises what may be discovered about the rocks, the botanist about the vegetable kingdom, and the biologist about the animal kingdom, in the same way the theologian reduces to logical form and order

the body of truth which has been revealed by God in His Son and in His Word. That can only be done because the material lends itself to it, and that is only what might be expected, for God is not the author of confusion but of order. He is the ultimate source of wisdom and knowledge.

Before that can be undertaken, reason must be satisfied with the credentials of revelation. We are bidden to prove all things and to hold fast that which is good. That is the behest of revelation, and it proves that it has nothing to fear from reason. Thus conclusive evidence can be produced that, whatever else revelation may be, it represents knowledge unattainable by the unaided mind of man. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do?; deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth and broader than the sea" (Job. xi, 17-19). "Surely there is no searching of God's understanding" (Isaiah xl, 28). "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John i, 18). Such a claim is advanced on evidence of various kinds that it may lead captive the intelligence of man as well as his will and affections. A multitude which no man can number has tested these claims and found them to be true and righteous altogether. Our present concern, however, is not with the results of investigation, but with investigation itself. That is not forbidden but encouraged, because the deeper it goes the more surely will it lead to the conclusion that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

In the process of such investigation stumbling-blocks will be met, and these of the most serious order. That observation applies both to those whose minds have been enlightened with heavenly wisdom and to all others as well. Here are two instances. There is the doctrine of the Trinity. The historic faith of the Christian Church is that God is one, and yet that He is Three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. These are not three aspects of one Divine Being, nor the manifestations of one God, nor have we here a case of Tritheism, the acknowledgment of three divinities. The Trinity is a profounder monotheism than that of Judaism or Islam. Again, the case of the Incarnation will present an insoluble problem to human reason. Here we have one Person and two natures. Jesus Christ in the days of His flesh was very God of very God and very Man of very Man.

That is an unfathomable mystery, and yet it may truly be said to be the keystone of our faith. We are called Christians because we worship Christ as God. These are not the only difficulties by any manner of means, but for these alone many who lean to their own understanding are offended in revelation, especially younger students, who live and move and have their being in an atmosphere where exact science may almost be said to reign supreme. They are sorely perplexed when they encounter revealed truths which defy rationalisation. It is the main purpose of this paper to endeavour to ease such a painful situation which must emerge only too often at the present time.

Attention may be called at once to the fact that problems of one kind and another exist in every department of human knowledge. We hear a great deal about psychology in these days and the remarkable strides which it has made, but we are as far off as ever from being able to furnish a satisfactory explanation of the relations between body and mind, between the brain and the mental process. Even more surprising still was the remark of a medical man to me that the human body still offers riddles which have not yet been read. Indeed, it may be said that in all branches of learning there are questions which not only have defied solution up to this present moment, but bid fair to be finally insoluble. Nevertheless their existence does not discourage investigation. It may be that they are tacitly accepted as inevitable in view of human life and experience. In these circumstances the mere existence of problems and mysteries in the gospel should not unduly upset us. Religion has such things in common with all the other provinces in the kingdom of knowledge. It may be that they are more numerous and more grievous, but the very fact that they are found along all the avenues of man's enquiries should go a certain distance towards reconciling us to them. Revelation has no monopoly of them by any manner of means.

Indeed, these difficulties are only what might be expected in revelation. Of its very nature it is concerned with the supernatural, and the very word reminds us that our concern is with things which transcend the ordinary run of affairs. There must be a large amount of similarity, and also a modicum of very significant differences, as this illustration will show. There are two great branches of chemistry, known as inorganic and organic. As its name implies, the one deals with inanimate matter, while the other is concerned with living things, from the

simplest and humblest to the highest and most complex. The same principles doubtless govern both ; but it stands to reason that in inorganic chemistry there are many factors to be considered which do not arise in the other section owing to the radical difference in the substances with which they deal. In the same way we must keep in view that the natural and the supernatural are very different. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah lv, 7-8). Creatures whose natural habitat is the earth, or sky, or sea, have different ways of living. In the same fashion differences between things terrestrial and things celestial are bound to appear. Revelation and reason really belong to different worlds, with all that that carries with it. Thus we are bidden to treat the Bible like any other book. There can be no question that the Bible closely resembles all other books, but it differs from them fundamentally because it stands in a class by itself as being the Divine Library, to use Jerome's phrase. Our Lord was so like His brethren that He was tempted in all points like as they were and are, yet without sin, and the difference is still immeasurable, since it stamps Him as Divine. We must never forget that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Cor. ii, 14).

These fundamental points of difference between the supernatural and the natural—the former being the sphere of revelation and the latter that of reason—may be envisaged more clearly if it be realised that revelation may transcend reason while it does not contradict it. The difference is a fine one, and there is always the peril of making distinctions without differences. Take a simple illustration. Mathematically, the proposition that two and two make five is repugnant to reason. Psychologically, it is true that two and two make five, for men are always better or worse in association than they would be individually. The evidence of experience confirms that statement, so that it cannot be said to be irrational, but it may not be easy to furnish a sufficient explanation. In the same way the exhortation of Paul that believers should work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure (Philippians ii,

12-13), obviously outruns reasons, and yet it must be received as true and worthy of all acceptance for it is revealed truth, endorsed by religious experience in every generation from the apostles' day until this present hour. The same can be said for other phases of Christian teaching. They are heavenly mysteries indeed, yet anything but heavenly absurdities.

It will be all the easier to accept that statement if it be constantly kept in view that there is so much in revelation which approves itself to reason. Are we not warranted in maintaining that a similar claim can be made for it as a whole? There is an argument used by Gladstone in one of his essays which will elucidate that reasoning. He cites the case of a mathematical text-book containing a certain number of problems which baffle him. The others he can solve without serious difficulty. He does not on that score discard the book. He rather reflects that a solution of all the problems will yet be forthcoming, and for that reason he reserves it in hope of a full understanding. The analogy surely holds good for the seeming conflict of reason and revelation. So much of the latter can be demonstrated to partake of that Divine wisdom which is ever wiser than man that, in cases where that is impossible, we are surely justified in believing where we cannot prove. "For 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" (1 Cor. xiii, 12).

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS.

SIR CHARLES MARSTON wrote: I have read through this very interesting paper by Principal Curr, and would like to express my appreciation of it. My only criticism is that he omits to point out the extraordinary fallibility of human reason. And that it all depends upon the soundness, or otherwise, of its premises. I listened in to a broadcast by "The Brains Trust" about a week ago. One of those taking part talked glibly about a thousand million years hence, and I have heard other distinguished men say that the world was created four or five thousand million years ago. This juggling with millions of years displays the most amazing credulity. I should say that it is contrary to all reason, since we only know, imperfectly, what happened five thousand years ago.

Dr. Alexis Carrell, the great medical scientist of the Rockefeller Institute, recently stated "Nothing great has ever come of purely

intellectual processes." This also greatly diminishes the value of reason, and suggests that intuition plays a far larger part in genius than has been estimated during this past century.

Lieut.-Col. F. MOLONY wrote : Principal Curr speaks of the stumbling block presented to some minds by the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. In dealing with this we shall surely do well to stress the fact that the Scriptures always represent the three persons as working together in perfect harmony and co-operation. Greek Mythology often tells of their gods thwarting each other, and this idea has been rendered absurd by the discoveries of modern science.

We have no illustration of three persons working together perfectly, but here is one that comes near it. In every military command, beside the chief we have the Brig.- (or Maj.-) Gen. in charge of administration : and these two usually work together in complete accord. For the third we may well name the Local Auditor, because his position is so independent of the first two, so that it would seem that he could thwart them if he chose. Yet I once heard a B.G.A. say " I think myself very fortunate to have So and So as my Local Auditor." Here was a case of three persons working together perfectly, so far as officers serving under them could judge. Doubtless there were differences between the three, but they did not appear.

So why should we stumble at the belief that the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, though performing different functions, yet may well be said to make one government, or God ? More especially as the Godhead is so very high above us that we ought to expect that there will be matters connected with it which we cannot apprehend.

Major R. B. WITHERS wrote : The two methods of approach to Theology can be paralleled by the two methods of approach to Nature. There is the method which regards the world around us as " given," and which humbly seeks to learn its nature by observation and experiment ; and there is the opposite method which lays down axioms and postulates, and proudly proceeds to deduce what the universe ought to be and how everything ought to behave.

A very definite parallel exists between God's revelation of Himself in material things and His revelation of Himself in spiritual things in His Word. Each is a given entity, complete in itself. In the

Dark Ages men rejected in practice the material entity, and created in its stead the world of Scholasticism with its stationary Earth round which turned the heavens wherein celestial bodies spun in epicycles. This false system broke down when the first scientists sought to discover what *is* instead of to reason what ought to be ; but it still largely shackles Theology. A hundred years ago there were signs that the Scientific Method was at last about to be applied rigorously to the Scriptures ; and for a while real progress was made, which is still continuing here and there among unknown students and obscure congregations. Outside these (to the world) insignificant circles, the spirit prevails which pretends to seek truth by relying solely on so-called inner light, and religion, as the paper truly says, " is regarded as man's quest for God."

Truth is not to be discovered by mental theory-spinning, but by precise observation and careful experiment. This is a universal fact ; and until it is universally understood, we can make no collective advance in Theology or progress in religion. Moreover, our progress in Natural Science, being one-sided, will only lead us into ever deeper abysses of catastrophic ruin.

What is said about Barth's school is true up to a point ; but they are wrong where they suggest that revealed truth is in any way above or contrary to reason. It is not that men cannot understand it, but that they do not desire it.

Here it is that I believe the author of the paper to be treading on dangerous ground. Nobody can call simple the doctrine of the Trinity, or of the Incarnation as here described. Indeed, the latter is spoken of as " an insoluble problem to human reason." Frankly, I dissent from this judgment. State all that you can discover about these matters in a really accurate translation of the words of Scripture ; and you will find no insoluble problem and no tangled metaphysical knot. Mysteries appear only when we begin to reason about Scripture. Without these reasonings, there would be no more baffling problems, and no more ground or excuse for our unhappy divisions.

The final quotation of 1 Cor. xiii, 12, is to the point in a way which I fancy the author does not fully appreciate. The contrast is between spiritual immaturity and maturity, not this life and a future state. The immature know " in part " at the best ; but for

those who prefer to study and believe the Scriptures rather than reason about them, "that which is perfect" (literally "complete," or better, "mature") *is* come. The Corinthians were turning back to the things of immaturity, but the Apostle Paul reminded them: "Now that I have become a man, I have laid aside the things of the child." We *can* know now!

Colonel A. H. VAN STRAUBENZEE wrote: I have enjoyed reading this paper by Rev. Principal Curr very much. I dare say that most of our members know that the first mention of any subject in the Bible is a clue to its subsequent meaning. The word "Revelation" first occurs in Deut. xxix, 29—"the revealed things (belong) to us and our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law, and the secret things, which have not been, but will be revealed." We learn from this passage that *revelation* is progressive.

That the Bible is the Word of God, the late Sir Robert Anderson wrote: "The Bible is called the 'Word of God' for the same reason that Christ is called the 'Word of God.' It expresses the mind of God. But as Christ is 'Very God' and yet perfect man, so the Bible, while absolutely Divine, is yet the most human book in all the world; and as the Living Word became subject to all the infirmities of humanity, *sin excepted*, so, also, the written word is marked by all the characteristics of human writings, *error excepted*."

"The Verbal Inspiration of the Scriptures" wrote Dr. Kennedy when Regius Professor at Cambridge, "is mathematically proved past all cavil by Mr. Panin's discovery of the numeric value of its letters"; later on he says—"the spiritual proofs of verbal inspiration are overwhelming, this is final."

Both the Hebrew and Greek Testaments have no separate symbols for numbers corresponding to our figures—1, 2, 3, 4, etc. In their place they made use of the letters of the alphabet, so that each letter stands for a certain number, called the numeric value of the letter. As each word consists of letters, the numeric value of the word is the sum of the numeric values of its letters. Thus the numeric value of the name "Jesus" is 888, 8 itself being the number of resurrection.

In John xvi, 30, the disciples at the Last Supper made this confession:—"Now we are sure that Thou knowest all things and needest

not that any should question Thee ; by this we believe that Thou, camest forth from God."

It was not what He had become by virtue of His human birth but what He was by inherent right—coming forth from God, that points, not to His Nativity, but to a past eternity with the Father. In John xvii our Lord says, " I have given them the *words* which Thou gavest me."

The attack on Scripture is a sort of feint, which is a strategic movement against Christ, for it is only through the written word that we can reach the Living Word, and if we give up the one, we lose both.

The Epistle to the Hebrews teaches us that Revelation is progressive, and the most marvellous thing in the world that God has spoken to men.

Firstly, by Jehovah Himself to individual men, this covers the book of Genesis.

Secondly, by the Prophets—from the call of Moses to John the Baptist.

Thirdly, by a Son (Who spake the Father's words only) as recorded in the four Gospels.

Fourthly, by the Apostles, who heard the Son and had been associated with Him for about three years. There was no new revelation, but it was a confirming testimony to what the Son had taught, and was verified by wonderful signs, tongues, and miracles, even the raising of dead people—all of which foreshadowed the Kingdom to be set up on earth in the Millennial Age. These signs ceased after Acts xxviii. This period is recorded in the Acts, General Epistles, and earlier Pauline Epistles.

Fifthly, by the Spirit of Truth as promised by the Son in John xvi, 12-15 ; given to us through the pen of Paul, in the prison Epistles—Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and those of Timothy, Titus, and Philemon.

The " great secret " of the Mystical Body of Christ is revealed to us, based upon the facts of Christ's crucifixion, burial, resurrection and ascension.

We find ourselves to-day living in this section, having had revealed to us the " all truth of God," which had been hid in God,

but now as in Ephesians iii, 9, stands revealed, called the Dispensation of the Mystery "hid in the ages past in God, who created all things, in order that now, unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenlies, might be made known through the Church (as an object lesson to them) the manifold wisdom of God."

I believe the words quoted in the lecture from Ephesians iii, 19, "to apprehend, with all the Saints, *what the breadth, and length and depth, and height* (of it), and to know the love of the Christ, which passeth knowledge (so) that ye be filled unto all the fulness of God," refer to this "Mystical Body."

The meaning of I Cor. ii, 14, is surely that the natural mind and affections of man are not under the influence of the Holy Spirit (man being incurably evil) but at the end of the chapter it is written we have "Christ's mind"—which we receive from believing the *written word* of God, and acting on this we work or live out our own salvation (from all the things which oppose us) with (reverential) fear, and trembling (at the thought of seeing God face to face) for it is God who worketh in you, both to will and achieve (it) for His good pleasure.

Sixthly, by His servant John, the Apocalypse—yet future.

Seventhly, Future, as in Psalms l. 4, 5.

I will conclude with Romans xii, 1—"I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your spiritual (reasonable) service."

MR. W. F. SPANNER, R.C.N.C., wrote: The writer has read this lucid paper with pleasure and profit. The subject is a most timely one on which to focus attention. Nearly the whole of Europe is writhing beneath a savage tyranny almost unparalleled in the history of the human race. The Nazi government has given the full weight of its official approval to the hideous barbarities daily perpetrated in all the occupied countries. It has never hesitated to use the foulest and most depraved methods as instruments of national policy. It has ruthlessly trampled down subject peoples with the most ferocious cruelty. It has shown no respect for any law—human or Divine. We may well ask how this stupendous flood of iniquity has come to be let loose. There are many who will

agree with the writer that this frightful eruption of evil is the fruit very largely of the destructive criticism of the Bible which has been rampant in Germany for the last hundred years. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God, and where the Word of God has been riddled by destructive criticism the foundation upon which faith rests has been undermined.

Since the last great war a generation has grown up in Germany robbed of its faith in God, the God of the Old Testament and of the New, the God who spake in old time by the prophets, and who hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, even the God whose gracious plan of redemption is revealed to us in Holy Writ. The Christian youth of Germany have been left miserably equipped to withstand the fierce assaults of the pagan philosophy of race preached by the Nazis. Could this philosophy ever have triumphed if the Christian ministry had faithfully obeyed the apostolic command to "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the Saints"?

This colossal tragedy is appalling to contemplate, but it is greatly to be feared that the same deadly influences which have wrecked Germany are powerfully at work in our own land to-day. It is sad to learn from the author's paper of the many, especially younger, students who are offended in revelation. It is to be devoutly hoped that all who exercise the sacred office of the ministry will earnestly endeavour to "prove all things and hold fast that which is good." If this be done, the writer does not doubt that (to use another's words) the Old Book, whose pages have been sealed so long with the seals of prejudice and unbelief, will be rediscovered, and will set the world aflame, and show men and women, whoever they may be, the way by which they can come into communion with the living God.

AUTHOR'S REPLY.

I find myself in cordial agreement with much that is stated in the foregoing comments and criticisms on my paper. The additions made strengthen and enlarge the scope of what was originally written. I find myself unable to follow Major Withers in his observations, although these may serve as a corrective to any excess of emphasis on my part. While I concur in all that he has got to say on the true approach and method in elucidating the secrets of nature and grace alike, I still feel that the use of these will only

reveal more deeply and clearly the mystery in which so much must ever be enshrouded until every riddle is solved in Christ Jesus and by Christ Jesus. The natural world is a much more puzzling place to the modern scientist than to the mediaeval schoolmen. In the same fashion the New Testament not only solved the problems of the Old but did so by revealing new wonders which are as incomprehensible to unaided reason as they are clear and plain to humble faith.