

into the Church of God ; yet still (and I am happy to be confirmed in my view by the opinion of Olshausen and others of the soundest commentators) it is not the fact of such extension of the Gospel, in distinction from its previous concealment, that constitutes the mystery—it is the thing revealed—it is the Gospel itself, “the wisdom of God in a mystery,” the great purpose of saving sinners by the humiliation and death of God’s Son—a purpose alike wondrous in the eye of the enlightened Jew and Gentile, for the manifold wisdom of God which it unfolds, and as bringing into manifestation a love that passeth knowledge. Such an interpretation Tholuck, avoiding the rashness with which some other critics have attached to the term the one exclusive signification, includes in his definition:—what is inaccessible to reason, or being only known by revelation, transcends the comprehension of reason in the mode of the fact. The judicious Olshausen sees, in what the Apostle calls mystery, the wondrous truth revealed—not merely the revelation, though called the mystery “among the Gentiles,” because its appearance among them was the sharpest contrast to the “deep shade” (of their moral condition.) Our argument, briefly, in favor of a larger meaning is this : If the mere fact of the extension of the Gospel were the distinguishing mystery, how is it that the ancient Scriptures are so full and clear upon the matter, that when Paul demands “Did not Israel know ?” he answers the question by saying, that the prediction of the accession of the Gentiles was not only as old as Isaiah, but as David and as Moses, pervading the Psalms and Prophecies throughout; that in Christ’s name the Gentiles should trust, and by a strange people Israel should be provoked to jealousy? No doubt to the Jewish mind at large, the very fact of the extension of the Gospel was a thing hidden, so that a special revelation was necessary to reconcile to it even an Apostle. But Paul in those animated references to the secrets of Divine wisdom, is not surely giving such importance to the bigotry of the Hebrew ; he is looking higher. It is not the newness of the revelation ; it is the strangeness of the matter revealed. Accordingly you find him insisting on the contrast between the wisdom of man and God ; the indisposition, not of the Jewish mind alone, but of the natural mind, to give ready entertainment to this evolution of Divine counsels. And then see in the passage before us how he looks to the intrinsic quality of the gospel message. He speaks of the “glory,” nay “the riches of the glory of this mystery,” “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Not among you ; but, as he elsewhere says, Christ dwells in the heart by faith ; nor can it be made intelligible how Christ among them merely could give the hope of glory. Nor needed the Apostle so earnestly to say elsewhere, “Examine yourselves, whether Christ be in you.” Lastly, he brings the mystery to be identified with Christ himself “whom we preach.”

If there be any allusion, as some think, to the heathen mysteries, those things which, by distinction, were communicated to the initiated, then the Apostle here intimates that there is no distinction in Christ’s school as to right of access—all may be the initiated here—“warning every man and teaching every man.” In pleasing harmony this with the saying of the Master, “to the poor the Gospel is preached.”

The preacher then took up the words “Christ in you,” and comparing them with other expressions showing the value of Christ to the believer and the dignity of the latter in view of the relations existing between himself and the Saviour, exhibited the transcendently glorious nature of the union which they declare. This union is not merely moral, relative, forensic, but real, personal, spiritual. Time would not permit him to dwell on the riches of the glory of this mystery. But oh, how marvellous ! Passing by all other illustrations, how shall we bring out the meaning ? How shall our largest stretch of mental apprehension reach the full import of Christ in us, and we in Christ, even as He is in the Father, and the Father in Him ? How exalted above man’s position even in primeval innocence, is the position of redeemed man ! If we have lost the integrity of the first Adam, we have got the perfection of the second.