

His introduction but ill accords with the caution against denunciation by the tourist, and he therefore suppresses it.

"Mr. Cook the Corresponding Secretary of the American Tract Society, has transmitted his *Report of a Western Tour of 4000 miles*, which contains some very impressive matters for the prayerful consideration of all christians; especially as the Jesuit Priests have commenced a system, by which the Western States will be deluged with their 'strong delusions.'"

Dr. TAYLOR, late bishop of Strasbourg, thus remarks under the title of

### THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SECRECY.

"Every person who will pay any attention to the history of the first ages of the Church will be struck with a point of discipline which I propose here to investigate with you, and which regards the inviolable secrecy observed by all the faithful on the sacraments, and especially on that of the altar. Jesus Christ gave it as a precept to his disciples, when he commanded them under figurative expressions, not to give that which is holy to dogs, nor to cast pearls before swine. (St. Matt. ch. vii.) When he instituted his august sacrament, he would have none but his apostles for witnesses: and we see that after his example the apostles never celebrated but in secrecy. The scripture positively remarks that they met daily in the temple, and there prolonged their prayers, but that they entered into the interior of some private house to participate of the body of the Lord; (Acts ch. ii, v. 42, 42.) for this undoubtedly is the signification of the *breaking of bread*, in the style of the new testament; the first enigmatical expression upon the Eucharist that we meet with in antiquity; an expression moreover, which, while it was well comprehended by the christians, could not be understood by the unbelievers. I know that St. Paul has spoken more openly and I have myself quoted his words; but he was writing to the Corinthians: his letter was addressed and entrusted to the discretion of the clergy of this church, who read only to the faithful those passages, which were forbidden to those who were not of the number of the faithful. We must say as much for the passage in which St. Ignatius speaks with more clearness of the Eucharist in his epistle to the inhabitants of Smyrna.

In ancient times the sacraments were designated under the general name of *mysteries*, which signifies things hidden.—They were administered in private assemblies, after sending out all those who were not initiated. Until the time of the celebration it was permitted to the catechumens, the strangers, and even the unbelievers to remain. They assisted at the prayers, and the lessons that were read from the old testament by *lectors*, from the new, by the priest or deacons. They could moreover hear the explanation of the scriptures, reserved to the bishops, sometimes, but rarely, delegated by them to a priest. In these homilies or public explanations of the scripture, the preacher was exceedingly cautious not to speak of the *mysteries*, or if his subject obliged him to make allusion to them, he did it with extreme reserve, covering the doctrine under enigmatical terms, that it might not be

understood by the catechumens or the pagans. 'We do not speak clearly of the mysteries before the catechumens, said St. Cyril of Jerusalem: but we are often constrained to use obscure expressions, in order that, making ourselves well understood by the instructed faithful, those who are not so may not receive injury from it.' (Catech. vi.) St. Ambrose says also, 'that if he had spoken of the sacraments, it would have been, not to instruct them in them, but to make a discovery of them by a kind of treachery.' (*Book on the mysteries, for the newly initiated*, ch. i. no. i.) Nothing is more common in St. Chrysostom than this manner of speaking: 'The initiated alone know it: the mystics are instructed in it. I would wish, says he again, to speak out clearly upon baptism; but I dare not on account of those who are not initiated. These persons make the explanations of these things more difficult to us, by obliging us either to speak obscurely or to discover hidden things: and notwithstanding, I will explain myself as far as I possible can, in covert and veiled terms.' (Hom. xi, on the 1st Ep. to the Corinthians.) In the other Fathers, particularly in St. Augustine, we frequently find concealments, phrases and sentences broken off and purposely obscured, on the subject of the Eucharist.

You see clearly, Sir, that this reserve never leaving them when they spoke in public, did not forsake them when they took the pen and composed works to confound heretics, pagans and Jews. If they had divulged the secret in their writings, it would have been as ridiculous as useless to be so scrupulously careful and skillfully discreet in treating the subject in their sermons. Saint Cyril of Alexandria satisfies himself with answering to the objections of Julian the Apostate against Baptism, 'that these mysteries are so profound, and so lofty, that they cannot be comprehended but by those who have faith: that therefore for fear that by discovering the mysteries to the uninitiated, he should offend Jesus Christ, who forbids holy things to be given to dogs, and pearls to be cast before swine he will not undertake to treat of the more profound parts of them.' (*Contra Julianum*, lib. vii.) And after having touched somewhat upon it, he adds that he would say much more about it, were he not afraid of being understood by the uninitiated, because, says he, people generally ridicule what they do not understand, and ignorant persons, not even being aware of the weakness of their minds, condemn what they ought most to admire. Remark the reserve they impose upon themselves in the works destined for the public. It is here expressly mentioned as well as in other fathers; and we have always a right to suppose it, even when it is not announced in express terms. The habit of precaution and silence, so general in the primitive Church, continued up to the commencement of the fifth century, when we see that Innocent I, replying even to a bishop who had consulted himself in writing upon the most mysterious part of the Eucharist. 'As for the rest, says he, which is not permitted me to write, we shall be able to speak of that by word of mouth, when you shall be here.'

(Ad Decentium Eugubinum episcopum,) Hear now in what manner the Abbe Fleury draws out in few words this discipline of secrecy with his usual accuracy and precision. 'It was customary to keep the sacraments concealed, not only from the unbelievers, but also from the catechumens: and they not only did not celebrate them in their presence, but they dared not even relate to them what passed in them, nor speak even of the nature of the sacrament. They wrote still less about them; and if, in a public discourse, or in a writing which might fall in profane hands, they were obliged to speak of the Eucharist or of some other mystery they did it in obscure and enigmatical terms.

But how then, will you ask me, did the faithful come to the knowledge of them? and what were the occasions on which the bishops openly explained to them the doctrine of the mysteries? When the catechumens had been sufficiently proved and appeared worthy to receive baptism, the favour of which they persevered in soliciting, for it was only conferred upon those who asked for it, they were collected together at the baptismal font, on the eve of Easter or Pentecost, solemn and splendid nights, generally set apart for the regeneration of adults. It was here before their immersion in the sacred water the bishop, explained to them openly and fully the necessity and the effects of the first of the sacraments. On coming out of the baptismal waters they were conducted, clothed in a white robe, to the assembled faithful whose number they were from henceforth to augment: the bishop then ascending the pulpit, and drawing away the veil which till then had concealed the mysteries from them, brought them to light before the neophytes; and the instructions upon the institution, upon the nature and effects of the Eucharist, upon the sentiments of lively faith, of piety and love which the participation of these august mysteries required of them, were continued every day of the first week. Such was the general practice of the Churches up to the fifth age, as many monuments of those primitive times testify and suppose.

However true and conformable this historical account may be with all we know of antiquity, it has nevertheless been contradicted by Protestants, particularly by Calvinistic teachers. This I must not conceal from you. They have pretended, and you will soon be struck with astonishment at it, that this discipline of secrecy and reserve upon the mysteries, far from coming down from the apostles, was unknown to the three first ages, and only dates its origin from the fourth. These gentlemen have found it suitable and convenient enough to suppose, that the pagans of the three first ages were perfectly acquainted with the doctrine of the Church on the Eucharist, in order to display with greater plausibility a pretended unanswerable objection against the Catholic dogma. But what they have invented against the truth, has never been able nor ever will be able to stand examination. The principle they here suppose is evidently contrary to facts, and even to good sense. In effect, how could these gentlemen, with their well known sagacity and talents, imagine, and how can they have the hardihood to attempt to persuade others, that what was generally known during the three first ages, ceased all

at once to be known in the fourth? That all the bishops and all the members of every christian society should then have formed the project, and have been able to accomplish it, to remove away in a day from every thing that was not christian, the belief of the Eucharist, which the day before was unknown to no one! Did ever any one think of attempting to conceal from the world what for centuries had been known over all the earth? If it be a folly to attempt it, it is a less supportable folly to suppose that such a thing was ever undertaken, and above all, undertaken with success? The secrecy so religiously observed in the fourth age, demonstrates therefore, from this single fact, that it must have been equally observed in anterior times, and up to the days of the apostles. It is very true that the fourth age, abounding more in monuments of every kind, furnishes us with many more proofs of the discipline of secrecy, than the three first, which were unceasingly agitated by persecutions. Prayer and good works were then the great occupation, and they had less leisure for writing, when every moment they were expecting to be called forth to answer for their faith, and seal it with their blood.

But, sir, if the three first ages offer us fewer direct proofs than the succeeding one, they present indirect proofs, which perhaps have still more weight, and which, I doubt not, will excite in you still more interest and admiration for those heroic periods of christianity. In fact, tell me, I pray, if the apostles and their disciples had made no mystery of the Eucharist, if in the three first ages, jews and pagans, unbelievers and catechumens, had known the doctrine and practice of it, would people have ever dreamed of forging, with regard to the celebration of this sacrament, the atrocious calumnies, of which undoubtedly you have heard? Would they have succeeded in gaining credit for them in the world? in raising up all nations against the christian name? in making these nations demand the punishment and death of the christians, whom they abhorred on account of the erroneous notions they had formed of them, as abominable monsters, unworthy to see the day? Ferocious men had invented these horrors; men probably deceived had circulated them. They ran therefore through the provinces of the empire, every where admonishing the world to guard against a new sect of people, who, under the mask of exterior virtues, gave themselves up, in the secrecy of their mysteries, to the most shameful acts of cruelty and debauchery; who slaughtered, as they confidently asserted, a *new born infant, covered with flour*, preserved the blood to drink, or to dip their bread therein, roasted their palpitating victim, then divided its limbs among them for a repast, and terminated this horrid feast by casting a bit before a dog, which being tied to the lamps, overturned and extinguished them by leaping upon its booty; that then men, women, fathers and daughters, mothers and sons were all confusedly and indiscriminately jumbled together in the dark. Do not these imputations, framed and accredited upon uncertain and confused notions of the body and blood, of which they had heard that the christians participated, do they not, I say, show, on the one hand the ignorance universally existing among the people, and on the other the impensurable secrecy observed by the christians,