

icient reason, when we assert and prove the reasonableness of believing the testimony of God, as the revealer of truths which "pass man's understanding." At the last meeting of our Diocesan Synod (an assembly little suited, under existing circumstances at least, for the calm and fair discussion of theological questions, questions which, moreover, as I conceive, lie altogether beyond its province), the authority of Dr. Lightfoot was alleged for the scriptural signification of the word "mystery," and I am under the impression that the meaning of that learned and excellent writer was by no means fully and accurately communicated to the audience. I quote, therefore, that part of his note on Colossians i. 26, which is pertinent to the subject. After stating that the term is borrowed from the ancient [heathen] mysteries, Dr. Lightfoot says, "There is this difference however; that, whereas the heathen mysteries were strictly confined to a narrow circle, the Christian mysteries are freely communicated to all. . . . Thus the idea of *secrecy* or *reserve* disappears when the word is adopted into the Christian vocabulary by St. Paul, and the word signifies simply 'a truth which was once hidden but now is revealed' 'a truth which, without special revelation, would have been unknown.' Of the nature of the truth itself the word says nothing. It may be transcendental, incomprehensible, mystical, mysterious, in the modern sense of the term (1 Cor. xv. 51; Eph. v. 32); but this idea is quite accidental, and must be gathered from the special circumstances of the case, for it cannot be inferred from the word itself." To all this I heartily subscribe; but all this is entirely beside the purpose for which Dr. Lightfoot's authority was alleged. The word "mystery" in the New Testament is used, as he states, not of truths still hidden, but of truths revealed; but these truths evidently divide themselves into two great classes; those which, being revealed, lie within the province of human reasoning, and cannot be said to have anything mysterious involved in them; and again those which, although revealed, are revealed to the eye of faith rather than of reason, and are received, not because they are evident to human sense or understanding, but because they are attested by the witness of God. To the first class may be referred, by way of example, the free admission of the Gentile to the privileges of the covenant on equal terms with the Jew; this was a mystery hidden from the pre-Christian ages; not anticipated by any expectation on the part of the Jewish Church; revealed, on the contrary, in contradiction to its cherished prejudices; yet, being revealed, it became a simple historical fact, patent to ordinary apprehension, and made evident by the Divine gifts richly bestowed upon the Gentile converts. To the second class must be referred generally the great objects of Christian faith and hope, which the gracious revelation of God by no means divested of their essentially mysterious character. I will refer only to those to which Dr. Lightfoot himself directs us; the change "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," of the saints who

shall be found alive at the Lord's coming, (1 Cor. xv. 51); and again, the mystical union between Christ and His Church, typified by the marriage union, (Eph. v. 32). These Dr. Lightfoot cites as instances of mysteries which are, though revealed, "transcendental, incomprehensible, mystical, mysterious, in the modern sense of the term," and he must be indeed a bold man who would dissent from his judgment. And, if the union between Christ and His Church is thus mystical or mysterious, is it to be expected that the means whereby that union is first formed, or afterwards perpetuated, should be less mysterious? Is it no mystery, "in the modern sense of the term," which St. Paul declares when he says, "The cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread, which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. x. 16.) And thus, while we fully concede that the term "mystery" as employed in the New Testament, signifies simply a truth revealed by God, without, in itself, defining that truth as a mysterious thing; yet we contend that the language of the New Testament respecting our union with Christ, and the means whereby that union is to be sought, fully justifies the Christian Church in giving, as she has done from very early times, the name of "mysteries" to the Christian sacraments.

For our present purpose, however, the question is much narrower than this; we are not concerned to enquire whether the Christian Church, or our own branch of it, is justified in giving this name to the sacraments generally, or to the Lord's Supper in particular, but whether the Church of England has actually done so. For my object is to repeat, as I may best do it, the call of Dr. Hook to "union on the Principles of the English Reformation." I believe, then, that any English churchman, diligently studying the book of Common Prayer, may convince himself that the Church to which he belongs does give her sanction to the application of this term, not only to the Holy Communion as a whole, but also to the "Bread and Wine, which the Lord hath commanded to be received." In the first exhortation in the Communion office these words occur, "My duty is to exhort you in the mean season to consider the dignity of that holy *mystery*, and the great peril of the unworthy receiving thereof." The italics are my own, and the latter word italicised would seem to imply that the holy *mystery* spoken of, is that which is received: had the word been used in a wider sense, to signify the Communion as a whole, the great peril of an unworthy approach thereunto would more probably have been insisted on. Again, in the exhortation said at the time of the celebration, we find these words, "So shall ye be meet partakers of those holy mysteries." Where again the word "partakers" would seem to point to the meaning of the word "mysteries" above adopted, though I do not deny that it may admit of being here understood to extend to the whole service. Again, in the second prayer in the Post Communion office we find

these words, "we heartily thank thee, for that Thou dost vouchsafe to feed us, who have duly received these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ." Here, as in the first instance, there can be no doubt that the holy mysteries are the Bread and Wine. Our Church then not merely affirms that the Holy Sacrament is a mystery, but also affirms that the elements are "holy mysteries," and thus gives her full protection and approval to her obedient children, if they affirm—rather than "hint" that there is an "ineffable mystery" associated with the "bread and wine which her Lord hath commanded to be received."

Let me entreat all who call themselves members of the Church of England, to consider well the words of their spiritual mother to which I have called attention. Are they prepared to disown them as being unwise and untrue? If not, can they be just—can they be charitable—in consenting to brand their fellow-members with disloyalty, for using the Church's own words in the Church's sense? It is, beyond all doubt, the belief of our Church that there is a "great mystery," an "ineffable mystery," in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. I believe that we may safely conclude that she regards that mystery to lie in the communication of the wondrous blessing for which she first prays and afterwards faithfully gives thanks; of the wondrous blessing, whereby "we, receiving God's creatures of bread and wine, are made partakers of Christ's most blessed Body and Blood." Surely there is a mystery here, and the Church calls the earthly elements "holy mysteries," because they are, by our Lord's "holy institution," made the means of conveying to us the heavenly blessing—"the inward spiritual grace." The contention of the Church of England cannot possibly be directed against those who reverently confess a mystery which she herself confesses; let none, then, who are numbered among her children, do her violence by condemning those who adopt her language. The contention of the Church of England is directed alike against those who deny this mystery, and against those who would grossly and presumptuously explain it: let our contention in like manner be directed only against those who would thus explain it or no less presumptuously explain it away; let us for Christ's sake and for the Church's sake, learn to distinguish thoughtfully and solicitously, between her friends and her enemies; between her children and aliens; and to say of her, from day to day, with a fuller intelligence, and with a deeper affection, "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

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WE earnestly recommend to the careful perusal of all churchmen in the Diocese of Toronto, the painfully interesting report of the Committee of the above Fund, just published in the Journal of Synod.