

tion of mystery, he is very far from excepting against it himself, or endeavouring to accommodate it to the views of his disciples. It is true, that the mystery, on which he principally insists, is the participation of the Gentiles in the privileges of the Gospel; and this mystery he describes as one which had been kept secret, but was at length made manifest. But he speaks also of mysteries, which were still hidden and unexplained. Such is the mysterious change, which shall take place at the resurrection: Behold! I shew you a mystery; we shall not sleep, but we shall be changed*. The union of Christ with his Church was equally impenetrable: This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and his Church†. The mystery of godliness‡ is also declared to be confessedly, incontrovertibly great.—What then is this mystery? It is a manifestation in the flesh: but is it a strange or incredible thing, that a man should be seen among men, be baptised, converse with his companions, and that his doctrines should be propagated and embraced? This was the case with the Apostles themselves, and was so far from being a confessedly great mystery, that it was no mystery in any conceivable sense of the word.

It may nevertheless be conceded, that the mysteries, which God hath revealed, and which are contained in the Scriptures, may be multiplied by false expositions of the faith, and that simple truths may be rendered intricate and perplexed, through the perverseness of men, in aspiring to wisdom beyond that which is written, and vainly attempting to explain, what is in its nature inexplicable. It may be important, therefore, to fix a standard of distinction between real and fictitious mysteries, between the sublime infinities of divine revelation, and the mere perplexities of injudicious interpreters. If mysteries, however superior, are not contrary to reason or to sense; if they are described as mysteries, and the rejection of them is denounced as heresy, and imputed to unbecoming motives; if the evidence on which they rest is sufficient to establish their authenticity, and they are not deduced from a single text, but from many texts agreeing with the general tenour of the Scripture, and concurring in one consistent truth, they may be pronounced true, and of divine original. Let these rules be applied to the doctrine of substantiation, by a compari-

* 1 Cor. xv. 51.

† Ephes. v. 32.

‡ 1 Tim. iii. 16.