

It is possible that before these pages are published the Government Bill may have been read a second time in the House of Commons. That is a reward which any Government may obtain by changing their minds and carrying into effect an assortment of the principles of their opponents. But it does not attract the confidence of their friends. Nor in the long-run is it politically successful to carry out as much as you can of the policy which you have opposed in order to prevent your opponents from having the opportunity of carrying out their own policy in their own way. When their turn comes, what has been already conceded, not because it was right, but because it was, on a short-sighted purview, deemed to be expedient, will be made the basis for further demands. The policy of expediency is foredoomed to disaster when it is expediency of doing a dubious act, on the plea that its character will be worse if done by someone else.

JOSEPH R. DIGGLE.

Notes on Bible Words.

NO. X.—“MYSTERY.”

THE “mysteries,” *μυστήρια*, were religious secrets confided only to the initiated. (*μυέω*, to initiate into the mysteries;¹ *μύστης*, the initiated.²)

In various places St. Paul found “mysteries” an established institution. The “great mysteries”—the most famous—were at Eleusis, which place he must have passed. (He twice uses the phrase “great mystery.”)

The essential feature of a “mystery” is this; by initiation that becomes light which was absolutely dark.

Bishop Lightfoot, on Coloss. i. 26, writes:

The Christian teacher is thus regarded as a *ιεροφάντης* . . . who initiates his disciples into the rites. [But] the Christian mysteries are freely communicated to all. . . . Thus the idea of *secrecy* or *reserve* disappears when *μυστήριον* 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.

The word denotes the revelation of what was secret; with this the idea of publication. The whole stress, says Dean Howson, is

¹ Compare Phil. iv. 12, *μεμύημαι*, I have been initiated; I possess the secret, or, in its derivative sense, “I have been fully instructed.”

² Ignat. *Ephes.* 12, *Παύλου συμμύσταί*. (See Bishop Lightfoot, vol. ii., p. 64.) St. Chrys., on John xix. 34, says, “They that are initiated know that they are regenerated by the water, and fed by the blood and flesh.”

laid on the communication of light; no reference to the fact that in all our religious knowledge much remains dark.

St. Paul is "a steward of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. iv. 1); his duty is to keep truths safe, and dispense them to all.

In Coloss. and Ephes. the one special "mystery," all through,¹ is the free admission of the Gentiles on equal terms to the privileges of the covenant. Coloss. iv. 3, *μ. τοῦ Χριστοῦ*, the truth respecting Christ. Eph. vi. 19; *μ. τοῦ εὐαγγελίου*, contained in the Gospel.

Rom. xvi. 25 and 26, purpose hidden, now revealed and made known.² 1 Cor. ii. 7.

St. Paul uses the word twenty times. It is found once in the Gospel history—"Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven."

The word is found six times in the book of Revelation: mystic or hidden sense. i. 20; xvii. 5. Cf. Dan. ii. 18, "secret"; Sept., *μυστηρίου*; Vulg., *sacramento*.

The word "mystery," like the word "sacrament" itself, at an early date became used ecclesiastically for the appointed ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper (says Dean Howson). It is interesting to find in our Prayer-Book side by side "this holy sacrament," derived from the oath of the Roman soldiers, and "these holy mysteries," derived from the secret societies of the Greeks.³

Review.

The Doctrine of the Death of Christ, in relation to the Sin of Man, the Condemnation of the Law, and the Dominion of Satan. By the Rev. NATHANIEL DIMOCK, M.A. Elliot Stock.

THE subject which Mr. Dimock, in his usual thorough way, has handled in this volume is one among the theological questions of the day which can scarcely be described as "burning," but it yields to no other in importance. Theological discussions in the sphere of Christianity vary in their weight according to their proximity to the centre of the Christian Creed. Undoubtedly the *question* of all questions which faces everyone to whom Christianity presents itself with a demand for hearty acceptance and obedience is: "What think ye of Christ?" And one part of the answer to this question, if it does not involve, will certainly very soon evolve, the further question, "What think ye of the *death* of Christ?" In this treatise we have Mr. Dimock's answer to this question, not generally, but specifically, in its threefold relation to sinful man, the holy God, and the rule of Satan. Holding, as he does, the conviction that controversy in these days is, however painful, a very sacred duty, it were to be wished that all who enter this arena should conduct themselves

¹ Excepting Eph. v. 32, "this mystery [truth about marriage] is great;" *arctissima illa conjunctio viri et mulieris*. See Ellicott. Mr. Moule paraphrases the verse thus: "This revealed mystery, the Union of Bridegroom and Bride, is great; but I say so in reference to the Bridal of redemption, to which our thought has been drawn."

² 1 Tim. iii. 9, 16, the truths which faith and godliness keep and embrace.

³ "Thoughts on the Epiphany," the CHURCHMAN, February, 1881 (vol. iii., p. 384).