pillar and basement of the truth:” and  
in the Epistle of the churches of Lyons  
and Vienne, it is said of Attalus, that “he  
has become for evermore the pillar and  
basement of the Christians there.” The  
principal modern reasons for adopting this  
view have been (a) polemical—as against  
Roman Catholic infallibility of the Church,  
or (b) for uniformity of symbolism, seeing  
that in Gal. ii. 9, Rev. iii. 12, *men* are compared to pillars. On both of these I shall  
treat expressly below.—Grammatically (see  
my Greek Test.) there is no objection to  
this view.—But to the sentence itself thus  
arranged and understood, there are weighty,  
and I conceive fatal objections, arising from  
the form of the clauses in the original. In  
this case also, the words, *“and without  
controversy,”* which follow, would most  
naturally refer, not to the great deposit  
of faith in Christ which is entrusted to  
the church to keep,—but to the very  
strong and unusual expression which had  
just been used of a young minister in the  
church,—‘ and confessedly great is the dignity of the least of the ministers of Christ:  
for,’ &c. (3) The reference to THE CHURCH  
is upheld by Chrysostom, Theodoret, &c.,  
the Roman Commentators,—Luther,Calvin,  
Beza, Grotins, &c., &c. And this interpretation agrees with 2 Tim. ii. 19: see note  
there, But there is brought against it  
the objection, that there is thus introduced confusion of metaphor. The  
*church,* which was the *house* just now,  
becomes *a pillar,* a part of the *house,*  
This is not difficult to answer. The  
house contains in itself both *pillar* and  
*basement*—the pillar and the basement  
both belong to the house. Why may not  
the pillar be taken collectively ? the very  
word *church* or *congregation*, occurring  
since, has pluralized the idea—the building  
consists of the *faithful,* who are so many  
*Pillars*—why should it not in the aggregate  
e described as *the* *pillar?* The way in  
which the congregation of the faithful is  
the pillar and basement of the truth is  
admirably given by Theodoret : “He calls  
the assembly of the faithful the house and.  
church of God. These he names the pillar  
and basement of the truth. For they  
remain founded fixedly and immoveably  
on the rock, and proclaiming by their  
actions the truths of the doctrines:” viz.  
in that it is the element in which and  
medium by which the truth is conserved  
and upheld),

**16.**] **And** (follows on  
the preceding: it is indeed worth all thy  
care to conduct thyself worthily in this  
house of God—for that truth which is  
there conserved and upheld is great and  
glorious above all others, being [see below]  
none other in fact than THE LORD HIMSELF, in all His gracious manifestation  
and glorious triumph) **confessedly** (‘as is  
acknowledged on all hands’) **great is the  
mystery** (see ver. 9: that which was hidden from man until God revealed it, historically, in Redemption) **of godliness** (see  
ch. ii, 2, note: ‘of the religious life.’—In  
order to comprehend fully what follows,  
we must endeavour to realize the train of  
thought in the Apostle’s mind at the time.  
This *‘mystery’* of the life of God in man,  
is in fact the unfolding of Christ to and  
in him: the key-text to our passage being  
Col. i. 27, *“To whom God would make  
known what is the riches of the glory of  
this* MYSTERY *among the Gentiles:* WHICH  
IS, CHRIST AMONG YOU THE HOPE OF  
GLORY.” This was the thought in St. Paul’s  
mind; that the great revelation of the religious life is, CHRIST. And in accordance  
with his practice in these Epistles, written,  
as I believe, far on in his course, and after  
the figures and results of deep spiritual  
thoughts had been long familiar to him, he  
at once without explanation, or apology as  
beforetime in Col. i. 27, or expression of  
the word *Christ*, justifying the change of  
gender in the relative, joins the deep and  
latent thought with the superficial and  
obvious one, and without saying that the  
mystery *is in* *fact* Christ, passes from the  
mystery to the Person of Christ as being  
one and the same. Then, thus passing,  
he is naturally led to a summary of those  
particulars wherein Christ has been revealed as a ground for the godly recognition of His Church. And, idea of  
MYSTERY being prominent before him, he  
selects especially those events in and by  
which Christ was manifested forth—came  
forth from that secrecy in which he had  
beforetime been hidden in the counsels of  
God, and shone out to men and angels as  
the Lord of life and glory. Let me say in  
passing, that it should be noticed, in a  
question which now happily no longer