

## CHAPTER III

### THE CONTEXTUAL SOLUTION – AS UNIVERSALLY INTERPRETED

Those commentators who deal with the contextual problem are universally agreed that the solution is found by equating the “mystery of godliness” (verse 16) with “the truth” (verse 15). This interpretation may be represented as follows:

The connection of thought is with the truth (ver. 15), and the words mystery of godliness are a paraphrase of that word. The church is the pillar and stay of the truth, and the truth constitutes the mystery of godliness.<sup>46</sup>

The content of the truth which the church upholds, supports, and confesses is summarized in the last verse.<sup>47</sup> Verse 16 delineates the content of “the truth” which has just been mentioned as being upheld by the church.<sup>48</sup> Such is the greatness of that truth of which the church is ‘the pillar and base’.<sup>49</sup> The saving truth which the living God’s church upholds as pillar and foundation, “is great”.<sup>50</sup>

By this interpretation, “the mystery” consists of the truth concerning Christ as expressed in the six phrases of the “hymn”, especially His incarnation. Thus verse 16 refers exclusively to Christ and applies to the church only indirectly in the sense that the church, as the pillar and ground of the truth, is responsible to uphold and support the glorious facts of the incarnate Christ.

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<sup>46</sup> Vincent, pp. 1030-31.

<sup>47</sup> Edmond D. Hiebert, First Timothy (Chicago: Moody Press, 1957), p. 73.

<sup>48</sup> Kent, Jr., p. 145.

<sup>49</sup> Harvey, p. 47.

<sup>50</sup> Lenski, p. 608.

The Church as “the pillar and base of the truth”  
as Universally Misunderstood

