

The Fellowship of the Mystery

by Raymond Golsworthy

Raymond Golsworthy's sermon emphasizes the critical importance of unity among Christians and the dangers of division within the church body.

Scripture: Acts 2:44, Acts 6:1, Acts 11:23, 1 Corinthians 1:10, 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, Galatians 3:28, Ephesians 1:22, Ephesians 3:9, Philippians 2:4

Topics: "Church Unity", "Spiritual Fellowship"

Description

Raymond Golsworthy preaches on the importance of unity in Christ Jesus, emphasizing the concept of the church as one body, all believers being baptized into this one body by the Spirit. He addresses the mystery of God's plan for unity among believers, highlighting the dangers of divisions within the church, especially the recent trend of gaps between old and young Christians. Golsworthy urges for a return to the early church's unity and fellowship, cautioning against the acceptance of divisions that weaken the church's witness and power.

Transcript

All One in Christ Jesus

"As the body is one ... so also is Christ." 1 Cor. 12:12

"By one Spirit are we all baptized (plunged) into One Body." 1 Cor. 12:13

"The church ... His body, the fulness (completing) of Him." Eph. 1: 22,23

"The fellowship of the mystery." Eph. 3:9 (AV)

INTRODUCTION

A great mystery

In the above verses, we are confronted with what the New Testament calls God's mystery, a secret previously hidden but now revealed (see Eph. 3:3-6). In a past eternity, God planned that the incarnate Son become extended into a corporate form; Saviour and saints one organism together in the power and splendour of resurrection Life; a mystery indeed, beyond all telling.

In what follows, we shall have that great mystery constantly before us, but it is particularly on our hearts to say something about the accompanying horrors of divisions, particularly recent forms of such divisions. We would ask our readers to be patient and tolerant as we touch upon the negative, but that background is necessary if we are to appreciate more fully the divine positive.

Let us think first about what we shall call:

THE PERSISTING WARFARE AGAINST CHRISTIANITY

This, of course, is a tremendous subject, one that we shall not try to deal with in any detail. Our particular concern, right now, is with what we refer to as a recent form of that great warfare.

We should not regard it as surprising that God's enemy is relentless in his hatred of Christian unity. If God has a plan, or a secret such as we mentioned above, we may be sure it will encounter hell's fury.

One church

We read with joy of those early and paradisaic days in the church's history when all that believed were together (Acts 2:44), and continued with one accord (verse 46) and in fellowship (verse 42). We should not be surprised that, very soon after, we also read that there arose a murmuring of the Greeks against the Hebrews, because ... (Acts 6:1). Since then, as history tells us, the same battle has gone on and today new converts are confused as to what kind of Christianity they should join and they cite the various denominations, divisions and groupings they have heard of! As I said, we shall not now go into the sad details, but most will be aware of the existing situation, a tragic breaking up of God's one church. Even any sincere attempt to recover lost ground becomes suspect itself, another splinter group! However, praise God, He is able to discern the true governing motive in each case! Indeed, indeed, what a battle for unity! May the dear Lord help us!

Division between young and old

As we earlier indicated, there has arisen, in recent times, a particular form of division, about which we feel we should now say something.

We refer to gaps that are now being accentuated and tolerated between old Christians and younger ones. These divisions have been brought together by the Lord into the same church, and yet as far as practical and loving fellowship is concerned, there has come a grouping up, a separating, a division, a rift; something that is bringing great spiritual loss to all concerned.

Let me say immediately, that we are not referring here to normal and understandable (and right) distinguishings. Different age groups will, hopefully, be present in any local church, with appropriate provisions being made according to the needs. When such is really present and operating, we can only praise the Lord, - and we do! But something more than that is now being accepted, and is becoming fairly well established. We hear of Young Peoples Churches existing alongside the normal gathering. The gaps are growing, and the normal interflow of Christian Fellowship is being limited, to say the least. It may begin with Childrens Church, perhaps just another form for Sunday School, but beware, the enemy is subtle and very clever. The battle of Genesis three is still going on!

This is all related, of course, to a world trend, where everything that is old, (say twenty years, or ten!), is out! In most of the affairs the whole world is now saying We want the new (itself, basically, just another

mimicry, unconsciously, of God's own language and determination, all things new, in Christ!).

The new generation, in fact, now seems to have its own vocabulary, often quite confusing to the non-initiated, and, in that way, an inconsiderate offence when used in a varied company, such as the church. And there are similar demands for a new kind of music, and a new art form! All these we say, are accepted world trends; something that cannot be avoided, and part perhaps, of an inevitable evolution of the species, or its devolution!

Be all that as it may, the church, and the churches, must always beware of anything that tends to bring division or separation, amongst those who are called to live as undivided and indivisible members of the One Body of Christ. Variety, yes, but variance, never! Diversity, yes, but no divisions amongst you (1 Cor. 1:10). We cannot be too careful, or too watchful, regarding looming gaps amongst God's people.

Old treasures

I often think, as well, of the great loss that has come to our own contemporary generation, in the realm of Christian literature for instance, because we have succumbed to pressures to cut off from anything that is, they say, old. In past centuries, God has anointed gifted Bible teachers, whose choice ministry has been mercifully preserved through precious printed books. We think of men like Martin Luther, John Bunyan, C.H. Spurgeon, F.B. Meyer and others, who have left with us veritable gold mines of spiritual truth, whose writings and insights are seldom matched these days. Some of them may of course have used forbidden words like thee or thou, but the food they have to offer is incomparable. But less and less of it is being enjoyed by today's believers, because of a prevailing antipathy, or bias against anything from the past. (Thank God for the exceptions - and they are not few, perhaps even growing in number -, younger brethren, who, because of being spiritually hungry for so long, have jumped back over the wall and are now being greatly enlightened and deeply satisfied, with earlier servings of heavenly food, so much so that they feel themselves compelled to republish such priceless treasures).

But how sad to think of the great losses already sustained by so many of our brethren! Thank God, He has His own way of making good the damage!

Summing up, let us say that one generation of Christians must not allow itself to be isolated (in heart and spirit) from other generations of the same. And, most certainly, no single generation should accept gaps within itself, because of ever-changing fashions or powerful culture trends. With all regenerated people we are One Body, and we must ever cultivate the art of keeping that Unity of the Spirit in every way possible. This we shall do if we but cleave to the Lord, and do so with purpose of heart (Acts 11:23). Barnabas was the good brother who gave us that advice, and he knew that those who cleave to the Lord in that way, will inevitably find themselves cleaving to all Christ's members, of whatever generation and whatever age group, all are yours (1 Cor. 3:22). (We know there are difficulties here, but those with open minds and hearts will surely get the practical point we have in view). We might mention that rich word of Paul to the Colossians, assuring us that when we hold fast to our (mutual) Head, we shall find nourishment from Him being ministered to us all, and we shall all increase with the increase of God (Col. 2:19 and also Eph. 4:15,16). Blessed increase indeed!

We may now go on to discuss...

THE GREAT SERIOUSNESS OF DIVISIONS AMONG CHRISTIANS

We have in mind, of course, divisions that now exist amongst Christians worldwide, divisions already well established, and very seldom questioned in our times, and also divisions that, sad to say, are frequently found in local churches or fellowships. To say the least, these too, are beginning to be viewed as something inevitable, and something we have to learn to live with. More frequently, perhaps, there can be bitter and long-lasting feuds between two individual Christians, as in the case of Euodias and Syntecbe at Philippi (Phil. 4:2). All these forms of division are grievous indeed and send forth a wrong savour from the ointment of the church. (See Eccles.10:1; 2 Cor. 2:14,15). May the Lord have mercy on us!

Let us now present three simple reasons why such divisions are so serious, and let us face up squarely to the challenge.

1. Such divisions violate the basic doctrine of the one body of Christ. We have already said much about this, so little needs to be added. God planned this Mystery in a past eternity, and He wants (and works) to see His blood-bought people enjoying and exemplifying that Oneness, under the gracious Headship of their Risen Lord.

2. Such divisions run counter the constant pleadings of the Apostle Paul. How fearlessly he rebuked the follies of the disintegrating Corinthians, and pleaded most intensely for restored unity amongst them. One verse must here suffice, and we do well to notice the comprehensive phrasing of his heartfelt plea. "I beseech you (what an intensity of longing and concern!), Brethren (what personal love for the failing ones!), by the Name of the Lord Jesus (appealing to the very highest power), that there be no divisions among you (straight to the point; no exceptions), but that ye be perfectly joined together (a positive emphasis) in the same mind" (the real answer; the mind of Christ; see Phil. 2:5). Surely that one verse (1 Cor.1:10) will be enough to make us all see the tremendous seriousness of this matter. Our third reason is based on that illuminating and heart moving...

3. Prayer of Christ Himself. This prayer is given to us in John seventeen. We shall not be able to say much about it here, except that the chapter shows that Christian Unity is the uppermost concern in our Lords present prayer ministry (See Heb. 7:25). We notice that the prayer itself (John 17) is made up of a number of different petitions; most of them mentioned only once - and then left. But this petition for His peoples oneness is repeated five times -like a refrain running throughout the prayer (see vss. 11,21,22,23). And we can say that if that was true in John 17, it is also true today as our Lord prays for us within the veil. The cry heard in Gethsemane still re-echoes in heaven - that they may be one!

Much more cries out to be said, but, for the present, we must leave it at that. The three reasons we have given will underline again the deep seriousness of any kind of division amongst God's redeemed people.

We now approach a section of our study, which may positively alarm many of us. Even the very title we shall use may seem greatly exaggerated, but we know that is not so, and we feel sure that honest and prayerful readers will soon be in agreement with us. Our appeal will simply be to God's True Word and the Word itself will do its work. Let us be quiet, and allow that Word to speak to us. We shall be considering...

THE ESSENTIALLY CRIMINAL NATURE OF DIVISIONS IN GOD'S CHURCH

Let me say that we, too, hesitated much about the usage of such strong words, but, after further prayerful thought, we were inwardly assured that our terms were quite appropriate in this case; in fact our subject revolves around what can only be regarded as the ultimate in all crimes. We tremble to say it, but, as we shall now be showing, we are dealing with something which could be called a repeat of Calvary!

Christ is not divided

The Bible makes it very plain that any dividing up, or sectionalising, of His Church is, in effect, a dividing up of Christ Himself; and not only dividing up Christ personal, but dividing up Christ corporate, or, shall we say, attempting so to do. This, of course, is a crime unthinkable, something beyond all telling. We shall discuss this awful possibility in the coming paragraphs, and we do ask for earnest and open-minded consideration of the matter and a humble and prayerful approach. May God prevent any one of us from committing, or even sanctioning, such a crime!

The most basic verse on this subject is 1 Cor. 1:13. We note that, in the preceding verse (vs. 12) Paul had been rebuking the Corinthians for forming themselves into distinct and separate groups, according to which particular leader they followed, or which preacher they preferred to listen to! Paul shows real shock and alarm that anything like that should be taking place, and exclaims: Is Christ divided?. We must carefully notice the wording here. Quite obviously, Paul is telling them that their sectarianism is tantamount to dividing the Saviour Himself up into parts - truly a very startling thought! The perceptive Greek scholar, and translator of many of the old classics, Dr. A.S. Way, renders the verse, "What, has Messiah been parted into fragments?" Again very startling, but they tell me the rendering does bring out the true force of the word: a fragmentation of the Christ of God! It is well to remember, here, that Paul himself had been asked a very similar question at the time of his conversion on the Damascus road. The shining Lord from heaven had said to him Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? The fact is that, while Paul thought he was dealing with the few Christians at Damascus, he was actually dealing with Christ Himself. Touching the members of Christ's Body was touching the Head of the body! He was virtually mishandling the whole organism; Christ and His people were one great Resurrection Life together. That, we believe, was the beginning of the whole revelation that Paul had been chosen to share with the then-emerging church - and with us all. We say it again; Christ and His born-again Christians are one Living Organism! This is God's glorious Mystery! O, praise His Name!

Returning now to that grave matter of the divisions at Corinth, and to the question with which the same Paul confronted them, what do we have? Paul is just showing them that, by their smug partisan behaviour, they were virtually dividing Christ. We must carefully note what Paul does not say, Is the church divided?, but, right to the point, "Is (the corporate) Christ divided?" ; or to use Dr. Ways rendering, "What, has Messiah been parted into fragments?". That, indeed, was the unimaginable tragedy that was unfolding at Corinth, as they allowed themselves to be parted into separate groupings. In its inmost essence, that is what it amounted to. They were dismembering the Christ of God. We may need to modify the dark picture to some extent, but, even in its mildest form, we are left with a picture of deep criminality, and, if we have ever encouraged divisions amongst God's incorporated people, we have pierced the inmost feelings of the heart of God.

There is a similar verse in the epistle to the Hebrews, something which sends a similar shudder through the heart of any sensitive Christian. The writer speaks of those who, (in quite a different way) were crucifying in themselves the Son of God afresh, and putting Him to an open shame (Heb. 6:6). It is not our task, right now, to discuss the details of that situation, but we would say that we all need to take into serious consideration what our own simple actions, attitudes and decisions amount to when viewed from a more spiritual viewpoint, or seen by the eye of God, or felt in the heart of God.

An interesting fact may now be an appropriate way of closing of this section of our study. The original word which Paul uses for divided in 1 Cor. 1:13 (Is Christ divided?) is a derivative of the word used in the

Gospels for the cruel parting of our Saviours garments at Calvary. Luke, for instance, tells us that, they parted His raiment, and cast lots (Luke 23:34). It would therefore be quite right to say that what those rough Roman soldiers were doing on that Hill, is what those divisive Christians were doing at Corinth, when they maintained their various allegiances and preferences -not so very long after Calvary. They were dividing the very person of Christ Himself. May God ever spare us from such an unspeakable crime! As we said before, God sees the Saviour and the saints as one unit; let us ever maintain that unity, and not even appear to fragment it. To secure such a testimony will involve some cost, but the Lord will help us through.

As a final observation on this point, may I say the following. There could be some who insist that you cannot divide the body of Christ; so why be so concerned? While we also greatly rejoice in the indivisibility of the actual Reality, we most certainly can divide that which is called of God to represent that Reality, here in this world, and to depict it! (See 1 Cor. 12:27.) Paul rejoiced in the heavenly Reality, but no one was more grieved than he by the divisions he was witnessing on earth! We could say, too, that if that present perfection in Heaven were intended to be our sole concern, then why are there so many exhortations in the Bible regarding a corresponding witness here below? The Holy Spirit is clearly concerned with both aspects of the Truth; and so should we be! We do trust that this further observation may be a help.

THE WAY TOWARDS A WORTHY WITNESS IN THIS MATTER

Up until now, it has been necessary to major on the seriousness of divisions amongst God's people, and we have done so against the background of God's great thought regarding His church. He sees it, and He has made it, as one organism in union with the Exalted Christ. He has, moreover, infused Christ's own Life deep into the hearts and spirits of all believers, whether they realise it or not. Praise God -He is there! Some ought now be saying: Yes, indeed, I begin to see this Great Mystery (Eph. 5:32) and I need to be helped into this new basis for my Christian living. We would therefore make a few practical suggestions for any such eager ones.

1. Do not try to get into Christ. If you are born again you are already there! The trouble is you did not realise it, and because of lack of vision you were countenancing so many old ideas which were robbing you of the true blessedness of your new position (See 1 Cor. 1:30).
2. Take grace from the Lord to put off that old man (Adam and Adamic ways) and to put on the New Man (Christ and His thoughts).
3. Let the decision to change garments be something very definite; perhaps a solemn heart-ceremony between you and the Lord; like a joyous I will at a marriage! (see Rom. 7:4).
4. Learn a new habit of definitely referring all your inward needs to your New Source of Supply - Christ your Living Head. (See Col. 2:19; Phil. 4:19; John 1:16). As each new need arises, you could look up and say, audibly: Yes, I take that, too, from Christ; and that, and that!
5. Actually treat your fellow-believers as fellow-members of Christ (whatever may be their view); not just as Christians, or even as brothers and sisters; something far deeper now; part of the Organism! The Lord will surely help us to do just that and He will be glorified.

6. Do not set about starting a new group according to your new vision. Tell out your vision and pray. Christ must be author and finisher. He might have much to teach you where you are. Just obey his movings and His timings. Best of all ...

7. Cleave to the Lord himself, not just to some new understanding that has come to you (Acts 11:23; Col. 1:18)! Nothing must ever compete with a heart-attachment to Christ Himself.

Those, we say, are just suggestions, and intended to be treated as such. If it all sounds too difficult, just forget it, and only walk on quietly with the Lord. This matter is very much in His hands, and He will perfect that which concerns us (psalm 138:8). He wants our Christian lives to be an unmixed joy to us, and He plans to make them such (see Acts 16:25).

TWO MAIN PRINCIPLES

Before we close, we would like to mention what we believe are the two main principles bound up with a full enjoyment of all that we have been talking about.

Revelation

The first of these is revelation. By this we mean the in-shining into the heart, of Light from heaven. We are not thinking here of sensational dreams or visions, but the quiet entrance of new light on heavenly things; in this case the dawning upon us of the fact and reality of a corporate Christ. (This usually brings with it both a Hallelujah and a horror. The horror that we had ever had a thought of sectionalising such an eternally- conceived, and eternity-bound organism; how foolish, how childish, -and how sinful!)

Such revelation usually comes to us from God's Word, - personally read, or expounded to us through one of God's seers, but it is always something that brings us to the dust, as it did with Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road. However, -what a marvel- I have been made one Life with the Risen and Exalted Second Man! All that He has and is, is there to be shared by me! God has again opened my eyes (psalm 119:18); the entrance of His Word has given Light, and understanding to the simple! (psalm 119:130)

In my own case, the Light was confirmed to me while standing at the departure pier at Southampton (UK) when a great ocean liner was about to leave. Passengers and friends had said their goodbyes at the quayside, and the passengers then had to climb up the gangway and go on board. Once aboard, most of them went higher still to a point not so crowded, but from which they could still look down on their waiting (and grieving?) friends. Most of them then produced from their pockets reel after reel of coloured paper streamers and, holding one end themselves, threw the residue down to their waiting friends, who were able to catch them and thus retain some contact with their travelling friends. Soon the whole side of the ship was gaily festooned by hundreds of such fluttering paper ribbons; quite a sight but familiar probably to most of us. But what an unexpected place for a divine revelation! Yet the Lord was quietly saying to me: Your Saviour thus went up on high, to the very Throne of Glory; then from above, He sent down his risen and exalted Life, sharing it with His waiting friends below, and thus establishing an everlasting and ever-unbreakable union with Himself; like a Vine and its branches! You are in that organism with all your fellow believers and that forever. And all that He has, He is now sharing-out with you!

I thank God that today I see it still more clearly, and just as simply; The life-bond is there; not a flimsy colour-tape, but Christ's own Life sent down to me from above. And all my brethren are holding Him too and there is an equal bond with all of them. That is the church to which I belong and I know no other. All

this went through my mind there at the quayside. Again we say, what a strange place for a divine revelation of that magnitude! Praise God!

Crucifixion

The second principle I have in mind is that of crucifixion; an accepted crucifixion with Christ and an inworking of it by the Lord. Those who would live by the New Resources must obviously abandon the old. That whole realm of Adam, in fact, is now crucified to us and we to it. That means that the old divisions have gone too; we are Jew and Greek no more, East and West no more. For us all derives from Christ and all is heavenly. And we find too, that all those old gaps and distances have gone, and likewise those old favourite labels we may have gloried in! We are left with the blessedness of Psalm 133; brethren dwelling together in unity, one organism together, and Christ Head over us all. All these are resurrection enrichments, the results of crucifixion emptyings. However, we would say blest emptyings and blest enrichments!

As for those old labels, I know all too well how difficult it can be to be parted from them, until we have seen the Heavenly Vision. So we may say perhaps, that there is a cost, if we dare to give it such an exalted name!

Reverting for a moment to that picture of the ship and the coloured streamers, it occurs to me now that, more than likely, some of those who caught the streamers may have needed to empty their hands of other things, in order to catch the tapes and to hold on to them; perhaps a favourite walking-stick, or a treasured hand-bag and contents! Appropriating the outpoured Life of the Risen and Exalted Christ does carry a cost (?) for us all. But what gains will be ours; Life-union with our Great Heavenly Friend; the highly exalted Lord of All! Henceforth we are to be enriched by Him in all things (1 Cor.1:5).

We also mentioned Psalm 133 and that beautiful picture of brethren dwelling together in unity, the happy result, we said, of being willing to pay the price. There can be little doubt that that small Psalm (just three verses) is the most beautiful Old Testament picture of New Testament Christian unity, with God Himself commanding the associated blessing, life for evermore. Or, we could say, a livingness that never ends. We have to remark: what a simple prerequisite -brethren in unity, and yet, what a sublime result, vitality that lasts! That, certainly, is something most desirable, as most of us will agree!

The rest of this tiny Psalm suggests that that whole enviable situation can be likened to two things; the anointing oil that flowed down from Aarons head to the very skirts of his garments, and the dew that drifts in from lofty Mount Hermon and then descends upon the (lower) mountains of Zion. It is interesting to note that, in both cases, it was something coming from above; the oil and the dew. That certainly throws light on the secret of Christian Unity today. The oil reminds us of The Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:2), while the dew makes us think of the beautiful freshness from heaven that came to the waiting disciples once that oil came down! Much more could be said, but we simply say now, what a precious little Psalm, and what insights into what was then a far of day.

We trust you will forgive this temporary diversion, but we return now to our theme. We have been speaking of what we believe are the two main principles bound up with a practical enjoyment of true spiritual oneness with our Christian brethren, namely revelation and crucifixion. In other words, we see the divine plan, and then we pay the needed price for being in it. However, both of these are made possible by the grace of God. May He help us and hold us, and bring us right in! And all for His glory!

CONCLUSION

As we now come to a conclusion of this message, we find it on our hearts to re-echo a few of the more salient points that we have sought to make; possibly amplifying them a little as the Lord leads us. Those thoughts, or emphases, are these:

1. Regarding the great importance of this subject and the shame of tolerated divisions amongst born-again Christians - who alone make up God's church! - we need to remember the solemn statement of Christ in Mark 3:24: ... a Kingdom (or a city, or a house) divided against itself ... cannot stand. That, we believe, is something that applies to local gatherings of God's people. To allow ourselves to be sectionalised is, to say the least, a great loss of spiritual power and value to the Lord. It is interesting to note that God's church is referred to as a kingdom, a city and a house (Math. 12:25). While the ultimate reality of these cannot be divided, the present local representation of them most certainly can, and we may be quite sure Satan will do his best to bring that about! We may manage to keep up appearances, but great spiritual loss is inevitable. Even Gamaliel (a pious Pharisee) realised that what is ... of men ... will come to nought, but if it be of God, you cannot overthrow it. (Acts 5:34,38,39)

Also, it is well to note that the decline and fall of Old Testament Israel was brought about by two things: idolatry, (diverted worship) and then division (forfeited unity).

The division came through none other than Solomon's son, Rehoboam, who sought advice from two opposing camps -older and younger. Thus, the majority of his nation vigorously revolted under Jeroboam, making two nations out of one, something far more serious than the two camps (already operating it seems!) that Rehoboam had consulted. (See 1 Kings 12:6-15). It was a case of two existing and accepted camps leading two different antagonistic and warring nations: a sad and tragic division indeed!

How remarkable it is that Paul who, by natural birth, was also ... an Israelite (Rom. 11:1), later, when his eyes were opened to God's new creation, should powerfully teach his converts that there is (now) no Jew nor Greek, ... for ye are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28) and that this Christ was gradually being formed in them - Jews and Gentiles no more. What a reconciling from above of two totally irreconcilables! This was God's eternally conceived masterpiece!

Peter, like Paul equally an Israelite by nature, once he was born again (1 Pet. 1:25), wrote to his scattered friends (Ch. 1:1), telling them that their calling, now, was to show forth the praises of Him, who had made them a new holy nation in Christ (Ch. 2:9). Here is that same all-renewing plan of God. And notice that everything now is in the singular, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people. No divisions here; all one in Christ Jesus.

2. Then, as for those growing distances or gaps between old and young, we have to say, also, that it is a glaring example of the church weakly succumbing to world mastery and control. It was the whole world-system that first introduced the trend, and then imposed it on God's unsuspecting people. That was a complete reversal of God's order (Deut. 28:13) and it reminds us of the upside-down situation depicted in Eccles.10:7; a real shame for God's people, and a great dishonour for the Lord Himself.

We suggested, too, that there is another form of separation or division that each successive generation needs to guard against. We referred to literature gaps that are made when one generation of believers fails to take advantage of anointed works produced by gifted teachers of a previous generation, simply because they are not the latest.

3. Our final word must be a further re-echoing of those two important principles essential to our manifestation of real Christian oneness; the way in to the real experience and the true testimony. These, we said, are revelation and crucifixion (bound up, of course, with resurrection). We must ask the Lord to shine His Mystery into our hearts, for it is only when that Vision grips us that we shall be able to pay the inevitable price for its implementation. But God is a God who loves to reveal secrets (Dan. 2: 28,29,47). And it is good to remember, too, that the secret of the Lord is with them that fear (reverence) Him (psalm 25:14 AV). May God help us to bow down before Him in wonder love and praise, and to stay thus in all situations and under all circumstances.

As for that second principle, crucifixion, that also is an essential part of the way. Once we have seen the Mystery, God works it into us by way of the Cross. If we are to live in this new realm of an organic oneness with Christ and all His members, a deep death and burial must pass over all that is only old and Adamic. Much of that we might have prized very highly before, but, if it is old, it must go to the Cross. We remember how Paul had boasted about his old national standing, religious standing, etc., but once he saw Christ, he rightly counted all old things as loss (See Phil. 2:4-7). Revelation was certainly followed by a crucifixion in his case, and he had to be led into Damascus like a blind beggar. But that was the beginning of Paul the apostle, living and serving in union with his Risen Lord. To some people, (specially those who have been religious leaders) it may appear costly to be parted from that which, after all, is only Adamic, only me, but that is the way if we are to have a new life and ministry in the realm of Christ - All in all. But what indescribable benefits--the fellowship of the mystery.

One body by the Cross Eph. 2:1b

No divisions amongst you 1 Cor. 1:10

And all that believed were together Acts 2:44

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