

## CHAPTER I

### THE BACKGROUND OF THE UNITY MOVEMENT

#### The Founders

Kansas Cityans delight to call their community the "Heart of America." In 1891 a real estate promoter, but recently converted to religion, announced that he had found there a "peculiar psychic atmosphere,"<sup>1</sup> which would make the area a center of great spiritual force. Prophet Joseph Smith, a generation removed, had suggested that Jesus Christ would shortly set up his reign just east of the city, and many of Smith's followers were gathered at the proposed temple site. It was also reported that Mrs. Eddy had discerned a "soul quality"<sup>2</sup> in that place which would eventuate in the most extensive Christian Science work on the earth. Unity School of Christianity was conceived under this remarkable influence. It has rewarded the community by carrying the name of Kansas City around the globe.

#### PART I

### THE HISTORY OF THE UNITY MOVEMENT

Unity School of Christianity is the product of the combined genius of Charles and Myrtle Fillmore. A short sketch of their lives will give some insight into the origin and growth of the movement. Charles Sherlock Fillmore (he has never used the middle name) was born on a Chippewa Indian Reservation on Sauk River near St. Cloud, Minnesota, August 28, 1854. His father, of English descent, originated at Buffalo, New York. He received only a common school education and had

<sup>1</sup>Charles Fillmore, "A Divine Center," Christian Science Thought, II (Jan., 1901), 8.