

ADDRESS OF WELCOME

1928

Charles Fillmore

This is the first gathering by way of a conference of the movement called "Unity." I feel that you are a unit in your spiritual understanding of the object of this gathering. I should like very much to grasp every one of you by the hand and look into your personal problems; spiritually, I do. Spiritually, we are one, and spiritually, all our problems are answered, every problem is solved, if we know the truth of Spirit.

We here have for nearly forty years been studying some of the attributes of Spirit. I was going to say that we have been studying Spirit, but that is a very broad statement. Spirit is that absolute something at which we arrive after we have studied its attributes.

In this gathering, in the study of spiritual things, we shall be drawn closer together, and we shall feel that spiritual unity, which is really the object of this conference: an understanding of one another as spiritual beings and our relation to our spiritual source.

Unity as a religion does not claim to have discovered anything new. We have simply gathered and unified all that is good in many religions. We do not claim that we have discovered any new truths, nor that we have had any special revelation of Truth. There is truth in every religion. It is my privilege to take Truth from any source, put it into my religion, and make it fundamental as a rule of action in my life. That is what Unity students do.

Thirty eight years ago, Mrs. Fillmore and I began this Unity work — and it was a very small beginning. We had studied various religions but were not satisfied to accept any of them wholly. We said: "There are so many religions. Let us go ahead for ourselves; let us do what we think is best and ask God to be with us and lead us and guide us."

We began our work in one little room downtown, and it has grown gradually. We have studied many "isms", many cults. People of every religion under the sun claim that we either belong to them or have borrowed the best part of our teaching from them. We have borrowed the best from all religions. That is the reason why we are Unity. The name "Unity" was revealed to us by Spirit. One day in one of our little meetings (I do not think we had more than a dozen in attendance), it was given to me like a flash: "Your name is Unity." Then and there we adopted the name "Unity." Before that, we had called ourselves: "Practical Christians," "New Thinkers." In fact, we had called ourselves any old thing. We had just wandered about in the wilderness of "isms". When we had adopted a definite name, a plan of work began to unfold and we saw the great possibilities of "Unity." We were wobbly until the name "Unity"

came, and that seemed to be the crystallizing idea in our minds. We found that we could group under the name "Unity" all the different cults that we had thought out and worked out. In this way, we established the fundamentals of the doctrine called "Unity."

When we took the unifying idea that all religions are essentially good, that all have some truth in them, we began to see that all came from one source, one great Truth. That idea in itself began to open to us new vistas of Truth, and we saw where they all fitted into what was taught in primitive Christianity.

As fast as we worked out an idea and had logically adopted it, our attention was in some way called to the same teaching in the Bible. In this way, we found that we were being guided by a higher power. The more we looked for this spiritual guidance, the more definite it became. Often, when the inner urge to do a certain thing came to us and we were not sure that it was the right thing to do, the matter would clear up in a symbolical dream. Again, it would be a waking vision, or a voice from the heavens that indicated the right way. Thus, we found that we were being educated in spiritual ways as were the children of Israel, and as were the early followers of Jesus Christ. When Solomon wanted to know how to guide the Israelites wisely, he did not consult worldly authorities, but he went to Gideon, the "great high place," where Jehovah "appeared to Solomon in a dream by night;" and God said, "Ask, what shall I give thee?"

We studied Christian Science. Christian Science, to my mind, is a most wonderful interpretation of Christianity. But Christian Science segregated itself and became a church. We are not desiring to join another church, but to find the truth in all churches. We were also classed as New Thought people, Mental Scientists, Theosophists, and so on, but none of these sufficiently emphasized the higher attributes of man, and we avoided any close affiliation with them. We were called Theosophists because we adopted reincarnation as a fact of human experience. But reincarnation has no place in the experiences of sons of God. Death is the penalty of broken law. Reincarnation merely gives the soul a chance to keep on living. When we have learned how to live without dying, reincarnation will become one of the atrophied functions of the soul.

We are also called spiritualists because we teach the fact that the soul does not cease to exist at the death of the body, but continues to live in the mental realm, closely affiliated with what it loved in the body. Spiritualism only proves the fact that life in the soul is continuous, that dying to this body consciousness is not dying to the whole man. Life continues, but Spiritualism does not prove immortality of life, does not demonstrate that we can live forever and ever. We want proof that man can live continually. That proof can only be found in continuous living in the body. Spiritualism gives us a partial revelation of the condition

of souls between incarnations, but it does not prove eternal life. Neither does Spiritualism answer the many problems of man's origin and existence.

To attain eternal life, we must destroy all thought of dying and enter into the consciousness of eternal life here and now. "If a man keep my word, he shall never see death." That is what Jesus taught: the unification of all the different truths, all the different ideas about life, into one omnipresent life. That is really what we are teaching. We are also proclaiming what the Bible teaches from Genesis to Revelation, that death is the wages of sin. After much study of other religions, we found that Christianity is the only religion given to men that teaches immortality of the body, and that Jesus is the only man who demonstrated it satisfactorily.

Unity is not a sect, not a separation of people into an exclusive group of know-it-alls. Unity is the Truth that is taught in all religions, simplified and systematized so that anyone can understand and apply it.

Students of Unity do not find it necessary to sever their church affiliations. The church needs the vitalization which this renaissance of primitive Christianity gives it. Every member of the church needs a larger comprehension of that life-giving proclamation of Jesus: "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." Unity does not teach there is a theoretical heaven in the skies to which people go after they die. It teaches what Jesus taught, that the kingdom of the heavens is within man, and that kingdom is related intimately to man's thoughts and acts here in this environment. Jesus taught Peter that, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Many of you have come from Unity centers or branch schools, and you are teaching just what we are teaching here. We are gathered here for the purpose of unifying, intensifying and spiritually vitalizing Christianity in Unity. We want a better and purer Truth to go out to the world under the name of Unity. To accomplish this end, we must be unified and energized by Spirit; we must have a better understanding of the character of Spirit; we must know the fundamentals of Being and express those fundamentals with fervor, power, zeal. We must better understand ourselves. We must realize that right now we have a Spirit, that we have a wonderful spiritual mechanism called the body, the expression of Spirit. We must know how to use wisely those innate spiritual powers with which the infinite mind has endowed us.

How shall we get this wisdom and power? We shall get it first through meditating, through understanding that we live, move and have our being in a universal mind principle; then through recognizing that this great universal mind is seeking expression through us and that we determine the extent of that expression. He who reckons ex-

istence without God lives in a godless world. He who thinks God, manifests God -becomes God-like, himself.

We are gathered here to get a better understanding of the science and the law governing the demonstrations of the principles of Christianity. Our innate sense of justice repudiates the claim that God is an arbitrary dictator who rewards his friends with gifts of healing or other miracle-working abilities. We know that law rules everywhere, and that it is the understanding of superlaws that makes supermen. Christianity points to the heavens of the mind as the source of the superlaws. Those of you who have followed Jesus have proved that there is a kingdom of mind out of which marvelous powers come to those who seek and find that kingdom. Doubtless you have, through your meditation, your prayers, and the light that has come to you, received light that we have not received. We are gathered here for the purpose of informing and teaching and instructing each other. We have no human leader, no temporal head of this work. There is only one head — the Lord Jesus Christ. We know that Jesus Christ demonstrated and entered into the Kingdom of God, and in entering that Kingdom he preserved his body alive. He did not allow his body to perish. He was the fulfillment of all the prophecies that the last great enemy to be overcome was death. "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" Jesus Christ was victorious over death. He is the only leader worth considering.

"But," you say, "Jesus Christ is gone." I assure you that He has not gone. He is in our midst today. He has been seen again and again standing on this platform, and we absolutely know that He is in the fourth dimension, that He has a body. He has the same body that you would have if you reconstructed your body as He reconstructed His. I tell you that Jesus Christ is in our midst and that Jesus Christ is the head of the Unity work, the head of a greater work that is to fill the land. I sometimes think that your new work is like the image that King Belshazzar saw. That image has a head of gold, a breast and arms of silver, a belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, but feet of clay.

I do not know but what this Unity move-

ment, with all other religious movements in their outer manifestations, is symbolic of the image that will eventually be smashed by the rock carved out of the mountain. That rock is Christ.

This gathering at Unity is for the interchange of spiritual light; not solar light, but light of mind. You are the light of the world when you enter into the understanding of omnipresent Spirit with its illuminating power. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." We are here gathered together in the name of Jesus Christ. Jesus is here in His personal body raised to the fourth dimension or plane of reality.

We should bear in mind that Jesus did not submit His body to the consequences of death or corruption. On the contrary, He infused into His body the energy of Spirit until it became so charged with vitality that the death of the carnal consciousness on the cross did not extend to His body. Jesus' demonstration over death is of tremendous importance to every one of us. He, by that demonstration, opened the way to physical immortality for all of us. But we must accept the eternal life of the body as a vital truth of existence. Jesus so accepted it. He said, "I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days." He did that very thing, and His call to us is: "Follow me."

body is not the lifeless astral form of those who have died in negation, but is alive with dynamic energy and aglow with a supernatural light. Many of you will see Jesus before this Conference is over. All may see Him who have faith in and identify their minds with the omnipresent spiritual light which is radiating from His soul and body.

We welcome you as brothers and sisters of one family, with God, the Father, at the head. God "hath made of one blood all nations of men." In Spirit, we are one, and it is our work to make that Unity a fact in all the relations which men have established in the world. One of the problems set before this congregation is the demonstration of unity among all people, regardless of race, color, religion; common and equal distribution of those things which come from our mother earth is still the goal of all just people.

We are gathered together in the Lord to be healed and illumined by Spirit, and we shall not fail in either aim if we diligently pray and if we obediently receive the baptism of Spirit, through the Lord, Jesus Christ. We see not separation in color, race, in sect, in creed, in anything. We are one in Spirit. We are demonstrating that fact just as closely as possible. You are not here to receive only, but to give as well. "Give, and it shall be given unto you." Giving and receiving go hand in hand, and we expect you, every one of you, to have some message for us. You have a message that will help someone. We are merely cooperating with you in this Conference, and we shall ask you all to remember, while you are here, while you are communing with us, that you are part of this unity, and an important part. Remember that the Spirit of the Lord is leading you, is inspiring you, is dwelling within you.

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