

# FILLMORE WINGS STUDY PROGRAM

## THE BODY OF CHRIST

UNITY CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL LESSONS

*Series 1 Lesson 4*





Fillmore Wings Study Program

# The Body of Christ

Lesson 4

TruthUnity Ministries

<https://www.truthunity.net/wings>



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# The Body of Christ

## Lesson 4

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First Edition, December 7, 2025

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Web version, USC Annotations and original files for this lesson are available at:  
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# THE FILLMORE WINGS STUDY PROGRAM

The *The Fillmore Wings Study Program* is a TruthUnity project that is dusting off and reintroducing what was Unity's foundational study program in Metaphysics for nearly 70 years. Charles Fillmore wrote the first lesson and preached from all 18 lessons for the remainder of his life. It is the program that Eric Butterworth, Johnnie Colemon, Catherine Ponder and Ed Rabel were required to study before entering into Unity's ministry training.

These lessons propelled Unity's tremendous growth from 1909 until the mid-1970s when the concept of "distance learning" by correspondence fell out of fashion. The principles are timeless, the teaching is pristine, and the presentation is clear and direct.

The Fillmore Wings Study Program incorporates the text of the eighteen lessons as it was last published in the 1970s and is supplemented with contemporary footnotes. It also includes the Annotations—notes teachers used to grade student papers. The online version has everything in this printed volume and more, including downloadable PDFs for printing individual lessons.

We recommend supplementing this volume with the *Fillmore Study Bible New Testament*, a Bible with notes and study helps embedded along side of the text, which provides students an easy way to understand the essential metaphysical truths that Charles Fillmore and his students found in scripture. The full text is online at <https://www.truthunity.net/web> and available in printed format from our Giftshop at <https://www.truthunity.net/giftshop>.

The *Fillmore Wings Study Program* and the *Fillmore Study Bible New Testament*, provide a clear and pristine guide to Fillmore spirituality. They also provide a focus for group study, which we call Fillmore Fellowships—study groups that meet independently or in churches. If you find these materials helpful, tell a friend, meet for coffee, start a group. No credentials are needed, only a curious mind and an open heart.





# THE BODY OF CHRIST



## INTRODUCTION TO THE BODY OF CHRIST

With Lesson 4, Body of Christ, the program shifts from a focus on individual development—prayer, healing, and prosperity—to a focus on our relationship with others. This lesson establishes our spiritual freedom as members of the "Christ Consciousness" and our purpose in "restoring" humanity to its "divine perfection."

The Fillmores taught that the Body of Christ is composed of individual churches, and, in a subtle way, defined each practicing Truth student as an individual church. This is much more explicitly stated in the Annotations. What this accomplishes is also subtle—one does not need to leave their present denominational church in order to follow Fillmore teaching. The lesson spiritualizes the Body of Christ to a level where denominational differences no longer matter. You may "come to class and still go to mass."

What does matter is consciousness. Beginning with paragraph 27, the lesson describes the sacraments and symbols of the individual "church" as taking place in the human mind, not at the altar of brick-and-mortar churches. This is also a subtle spiritualization, one that shifts the effectiveness of sacraments and symbols from works of faith to works of consciousness. Baptism by water and Eucharist with bread and wine are effective only if they are received by the recipient into consciousness, not because they are blessed by a minister.

The flow of the lesson is a bit out of order, but the impact of sacraments and symbols on the human mind prepare us for our purpose and mission of "restoring" humanity. Paragraph 22 reads, "When man comes back consciously into the knowledge of what he is and what his power is as the offspring of God, he will exercise his power and dominion in wisdom and love and the whole earth will be blessed." That is to say we become a blessing to others instead of a pain in neck.



## LESSON FOR THE BODY OF CHRIST

### The Body of Christ

**? What is the "church of Christ"? What do we mean by "universal church" and "particular or individual church"?**

1. The New Testament teaching about the body of Christ has seemed mystical, but the Scriptures promise that the Spirit of Truth<sup>1</sup> will guide men into all Truth, therefore nothing is beyond the comprehension of the mind of one whose understanding is quickened by Spirit.
2. In the 12th chapter of I Corinthians Paul describes the church of Christ or the Lord's body and explains its working in this way:

For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body ... For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot would say, "Because I'm not the hand, I'm not part of the body," it is not therefore not part of the body. ... If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? ... But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body, just as he desired. If they were all one member, where would the body be? But now they are many members, but one body. The eye can't tell the hand, "I have no need for you," or again the head to the feet, "I have no need for you." No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. ... But God composed the body together, giving more abundant honor to the inferior part that there should be no division in the body ... Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.<sup>2</sup> (I Corinthians 12:12-27, WEB).

3. Christ is "the Head,<sup>3</sup> from whom all the body, being supplied and knit together through the joints and ligaments, grows with God's growth" (Colossians 2:19, WEB).
4. A physical body is defined as the total organized substance of man,<sup>4</sup> animal, or plant. Another definition given for body is, "a number of individuals spoken of collectively, usually united by some common tie, or organized for some purpose, as a legislative body, a clerical body, a cor-

porate body, or the like." We also speak of a heavy-texture cloth, closely woven, as having "body," our thought being that it shows that it is organized substance and has a certain durability or staying power; it lasts or wears well, due both to the material of which it is composed and to its being closely woven. With these definitions in mind, we are able to see something of the truth which underlies the meaning of the word *body*.

5. Paul says, "If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body" (I Cor. 15:44, ASV). The natural body, the physical organism, is organized substance in the realm of manifestation. The spiritual body is organized substance in the invisible aspect of Being, the realm of Mind and Ideas. This distinction is made of two aspects of the one omnipresent divine substance taking a concrete form tangible to man's human senses.

6. "We must learn the law of expression from the abstract to the concrete — from the formless to the formed" (Charles Fillmore Christian Healing 38).

7. The physical body of man outpictures the body-idea in Divine Mind according to man's thinking, feeling, speaking, and acting. The body-idea is the spiritual body. The manifest form, the natural body spoken of by Paul, is the expression and manifestation of the body-idea. The natural body and the spiritual body are interrelated,<sup>5</sup> interactive, and mutually dependent, being in reality one.

8. All the members of the physical body — head, heart, eye, ear, foot, hand, and the like — are necessary to the harmonious functioning of the complete organism, yet are more or less separate in action. The same thing is true of the spiritual body, both individually and universally.

9. All the ideas in Divine Mind — life, love, faith, strength, will, order, zeal, renunciation or elimination, substance, and so on — inhere in the "church of Christ," the Lord's body, as an aggregation of spiritual ideals. These are *involved* in the spiritual body and must be *evolved* by man that he may consciously know his body to be the "temple of the living God" (II Cor. 6:16), that he may consciously be the expression and manifestation of I AM,<sup>6</sup> the image-likeness of God.

10. God is Divine Mind. The activity of Divine Mind, as Absolute Good, created the Christ. In the last analysis all the universe is consciousness. The supreme consciousness which knows only oneness and perfection is divine consciousness — a body of active spiritual ideas. This consciousness of oneness and absolute good, when held by man, is called "Christ consciousness." The total of this Christ consciousness in humanity has

been called the *Church of Christ*, the church universal, the Body of Christ, the Lord's Body. It is not at all an organization in the outer realm, but is an organization of life, of love, of power, of wisdom, i.e., of divine ideas. In man it is called "Christ." The particular church, or the individual church, is the Christ consciousness in the individual. 7 The one purpose or aim that unifies this church or body both individually and universally is that of making God manifest, bringing forth into actuality the oneness and the perfection which have been an ideal. Knowing the elements or ideas of which this body is composed, and the life and the light that are weaving it closely together, we can have no doubt of its durability, its staying power.

11. Paul, in writing to the Colossians, speaks of the body as "the church," thus regarding the "body of Christ" and "the church" as the same. To avoid confusion it is necessary to take the word church in its true meaning, freeing the mind from concepts that have gathered about the term through the centuries of ignorance and misunderstanding that have blinded men and prevented them from discerning the Lord's body.

1. *Spirit of Truth*. The Spirit of truth is God's thought projecting into our minds, ideas that will build a spiritual consciousness like that of Jesus. The Spirit of truth watches every detail of our life, and when we by affirmation proclaim its presence, it brings new life into our body and prosperity into our affairs. (RW/Spirit) It was with the *Spirit of Truth* that Charles and Myrtle Fillmore entered into covenant on December 7, 1892.

2. *Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually*. Our bodies are fashioned after the Christ body. As each cell of our body has within it the potentialities of the whole body, so are we potential Christs, and our bodies may be raised to the universal Christ body and become fit members of it, through following the law of God as did Jesus. (Unity, May 15, 1921) This means In Spirit, all of us have the same potentialities awaiting our recognition.

3. *Christ is the Head*. The center from which the mind expresses various thoughts and ideas. (RW/head)

4. *total organized substance of man*. The body influences everything. The corporate body is the church. The inner body is the individual.

5. *The natural body and the spiritual body are interrelated*. "If the body-idea is grounded and rooted in Divine Mind, the body will be filled with a perpetual life flow that will repair all its imperfect parts and heal all its diseases" (Christian Healing 34)

6. *the expression and manifestation of I AM*. Spiritual man is I AM; mani-



fest man is I will. (Christian Healing 34) Mr. Fillmore helpfully reminds us that in our present state of consciousness, the only begotten Son (Christ) is still in the seed stage in most of us. We are still working to germinate that seed. Most of us are still far from being able to express the Christ to any degree of fullness. But right now our direction is the most important thing. (Metaphysics 1, Christ Consciousness)

7. *the individual church, is the Christ consciousness in the individual. An aggregation of spiritual ideas in individual consciousness. (MBD/church)*

## Sectarianism

### ? What is a "sect"? What causes the forming of "sects"?

12. A sect is a group of people, usually with a leader, who have separated themselves from some religious denomination because of differences of opinion, either in beliefs or in forms and ceremonies. Often those forming the sect feel that the "letter" of the Scriptures is being followed by the denomination from which they have withdrawn and that they alone have the true "spirit." On the other hand, the religious denomination from which the sect has drawn away feels that the defaulting group is in error. Other sects draw away from the established denominations only because they are expanding in thought<sup>①</sup> and find themselves bound by the old theologies. Viewed from a more impersonal vantage point, sects must be seen as a part of the expanding consciousness of those who cannot find their religious freedom within the framework of the existing religious organizations.

### ? What is the basis of real unity, and why?

13. All unity is in Spirit. This is an important truth, worthy of prayerful consideration. The benefits of unity are so generally recognized that men everywhere, in every department of life – business, social, and religious – band themselves together for mutual help. Differences appear between manmade organizations and the unity of Spirit, and these differences are manifest in results. A measure of success and benefit often seems to attend the efforts of men of the world to cooperate, even though these efforts are not based on the unity of Spirit; but there is always something lacking, and discord is ever likely to spring up until such time as men find the unity of Spirit within. Seeing this lack we look back to the cause, and find that it is fear (and sometimes selfishness), expressed through unenlightened personalities.<sup>②</sup>

14. The statement made before that all unity is in Spirit comes with greater force when it is taken in connection with this declaration: "There can be no true union in personality alone." When we find our true unity in Spirit, then every avenue of man's life can be unified.<sup>3</sup> We who seek the real unity, understanding that it is found primarily in Spirit, should stand ready to give up all limited and negative personal desires and opinions. These interfere with our entrance into the consciousness of divine unity, which should operate on every level of man's experience. The one real unity is the body of Christ, His church, the God consciousness which is spiritual unity with all good. For the privilege of entering into it we should put aside every thought, feeling, word, and act below the Christ standard.

15. In contrast to the limited personal expression of life there is the universal, the Christ expression. When Jesus talked about forsaking all for Him,<sup>4</sup> He meant simply that everything that was unlike the Christ, that was not Godlike in thought, word, or deed, should be given up for the universal Spirit of All-Good, the Christ. This is not a sacrifice but a privilege that is valued the more as it is accepted.

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1. *they are expanding in thought.* Healthy sects are focused on expanding consciousness, unhealthy sects feel "they alone have the true spirit."

2. *unenlightened personalities.* Personality is the cause of unhealthy sectarianism. Note the reference to personality in paragraphs 13-15: Unhealthy sectarianism and division is caused by fear and selfishness (15), interferes with entering into the consciousness of divine unity (16), and must be given up for the the universal Spirit of All-Good, the Christ. Personality always strives for its own success and aims for the good of the personal man, instead of the good of all men. (RW/unity)

3. *then every avenue of man's life can be unified.* Unity in Spirit leads to wholeness in humanity.

4. *forsaking all for Him.* Letting go of our judgments. See Fillmore Wings, Series 2, Lesson 11: Judgment and Justice.

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## Church Members

**? Why are the members of the "church of Christ" referred to in some translations of the Bible as a "peculiar people"?<sup>1</sup>**

16. Of the Greek words for *church*, *ekklesia* gives the clearest understanding. It means "called-out ones," and this is what the "body of Christ," His

church, consists of. The people of His church are called out of darkness into light; out of bondage into liberty; out of death into life. These "called-out ones" are referred to as a "peculiar people" in some translations of the Bible. Peter describes them as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession" (1 Peter 2:9).

### **? What is the purpose of the "church of Christ"?**

17. Today those who might come under the heading of "peculiar people" do not necessarily attempt to attract attention to themselves. Rather their "peculiarity" comes from the new ideals and standards<sup>2</sup> that they accept when they are God-possessed; when they come "out of darkness into his marvellous light" (I Pet. 2:9). They no longer pray in the old way. Their prayers are directed to the indwelling Presence of God within themselves. They learn to look first to the Great Physician, the living Christ within themselves, when they have need of healing, for themselves or others, so they turn to doctors and medicine only as guided by this indwelling Christ Spirit. They do not limit themselves to the methods of the world in obtaining supply; they seek God directly, knowing that He will open up outer channels of expression for the desired good. They are not in bondage to customs of the world but seek to live, eat, dress, with simplicity. They are "God's own possession" because they order their conversation aright, speaking of goodness and Truth, health and life, rather than of evil, sickness, and death.

### **? Explain the meaning of the word *restoration*<sup>3</sup> as used in this lesson.**

18. This "church of Christ" has a work to do. That work is the "restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from of old" (Acts 3:21). It is true that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain" (Rom. 8:22), waiting for "the revealing of the sons of God" (Rom. 8:19). The sons of God make up His church, and upon their development and revelation as members of the "body" depend the restoration and the deliverance of the whole earth from pain and suffering and sorrow.

### **? What are the two phases of growth which the members of the "church of Christ" experience?**

19. It is of the utmost importance, then, that every son be about his Father's business, diligently seeking Truth and obeying it, that he may be saved<sup>4</sup> and may be able to do his work as a member of the "body." He finds his growth proceeds along two lines:



- First, his individual development;
- Second, his relation to other members of the "body."

1. *peculiar people*. Peculiar people is in the King James translation. It is translated as "a people for God's own possession" in the ASV and the WEB.
2. *ideals and standards*. See Methods and Ideals for Conducting Centers and Study Groups
3. *restoration*. Evidences of the birth of the Prince of Peace. A higher state of consciousness bursting full-blown upon the whole race. ... The power is abroad in the earth, and it calls to men and to nations, "Come up higher." (*Talks on Truth, The Restoration of God's Kingdom*, 124)
4. *that he may be saved*. The restitution to our spiritual birthright. Salvation is based solely on an inner overcoming, a change in consciousness. It is a cleansing of the mind, through Christ, from thoughts of evil. (RW/salvation)

## Mission and Ministry

### ? What place has thought in the restoration to divine perfection?

20. The work of restoration<sup>1</sup> begins in him; he aspires to realize *consciously* his unity with the Father and to establish his sonship; and his own progress toward the divine occupies his mind. Gradually his thoughts begin to shape themselves aright and as he acquires the true perspective, he becomes *conscious* of others who are working along the same way, having the same aspirations. He perceives his oneness with others who have consecrated themselves unto the Lord, and his sense of brotherhood becomes deepened.

21. The fact of restoration indicates that there is a reparation to be made. Man was made in the image and after the likeness of God, but he lost sight of this image and likeness and substituted the "likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3). Thus, man grew into the image that he held in his mind. It is a law that we grow to be like that which we see in mind and dwell on in our thoughts. In this regard *restoration* means, primarily, that man is to be restored to the divine image,<sup>2</sup> after the divine likeness — to the mastery and dominion that were given to him in the beginning.

### ? Explain fully the meaning of the word *blessing*.<sup>3</sup>

22. The whole earth, the whole creation, suffers because of man's loss of consciousness of his dominion. When man comes back consciously into the knowledge of what he is and what his power is as the offspring of God, he will exercise his power and dominion in wisdom and love and the whole earth will be blessed. It will have its part in the restoration even as it now shares in the sorrow and the blight of man's fall from the consciousness of his high estate. The Psalmist says, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" (Psalms 8:4). Then he goes on to recite the wonderful powers and possibilities of man, and we know that he was talking of man as the offspring of God, made in His image and after His likeness.

### **? What was Jesus' mission on earth?**

23. Jesus revealed to men the Christ within them<sup>4</sup> which would lift and restore them. He made men to see that they are the sons of God, thus taking away the burden and bondage of sin. He revealed to men God as Father, and showed them how to demonstrate their sonship. The work of spreading the truth about man falls on all as fast as they come into the light. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12); "Ye are the light of the world ... let your light shine" (Matt. 5:14, 16).

### **? What is meant by forsaking all for Christ's sake?**

24. When the Truth comes into consciousness it upsets the old errors that have become fixed in mind; for some, the immediate change is so great that it causes a mental revolution. With others the work goes on more slowly, and they may scarcely realize the changes that are being made in them. But there is no reason for being elated and no reason for being discouraged. Restitution in each individual must be complete, and no one can compare himself with another at any stage of the process. We have all lost consciousness of the divine image and we must all be restored to its likeness. We cannot hasten the restoration work except "by patience in well-doing" (Romans 2:7),<sup>5</sup> holding fast to the saving grace and power of Jesus Christ to help us on the way.

25. In the church of Christ or Lord's body, each individual has a particular work to do,<sup>6</sup> and a particular talent, described by Paul as a gift. "To each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal" (I Cor. 2:7). "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit" (I Cor. 2:4). These gifts Spirit divides "to each one severally even as he will" (I Cor. 2:11). One's gift and place as a member of the body cannot be bestowed or filled by any other man. Each one receives directly from God the place he is to fill and the work he is to do.

26. Of all the gifts, that of healing seems to be more fully desired, developed, and manifested than any of the others. There is a greater realization of its need and greater understanding of how to use it.

1. *The work of restoration.* Our part in the creative process is to express the divine ideal. When we know ourself as the perfect offspring of Divine Mind, we express perfection. When we hold the thought of ourself as sinful, and of the universe as imperfect, we express those untrue ideas and so bring into manifestation all the discords that appear. (MBD/Creation)

2. *restored to the divine image.* Charles Fillmore: About the first question the beginner asks is, "How do you do your healing, anyway? What is your system of treating?" Now the answer to that question is, that we do not "treat" people, we haven't any system of healing primarily; we simply pray that the Creator of man will *restore him to his natural condition*. God made man perfect, and there is no reason why he should not be restored to that perfection. All that we can do is to pray that that restoration may come. — May 9, 1917

3. *blessing.* "A blessing is the essence of the highest spiritual realization that we can give to another" (Dare to Believe! 28) ... in blessing we are recognizing the life of God and stirring into action all the God qualities by our "highest spiritual realization." Blessing is like the use of oil in machinery — it does away with friction and delay; it brings about order and harmony.

4. *Jesus revealed to men the Christ within them.* [How Jesus accomplished this is open to theological interpretation, but the assertion that he revealed the Christ with human beings is the foundation for claiming the Fillmore teaching is Christian.]

5. *by patience in well-doing.* To forsake is forgiveness and to be graceful is compassion.

6. *each individual has a particular work to do.* You are a chosen vessel for some purpose. And if you let go cheerfully when the time comes, without humiliation or shame or sense of failure, your tense, rigid mortal grasp on some particular form of manifestation—like healing—and "covet earnestly the best gift,"—whatever that may be in your individual case, you will do "works" in that one specific direction which will be simply marvelous in the eyes of all men. These works will be done without effort on your part because they will be God, Omnipotence, Omniscience manifesting himself through you in His own chosen direction. (Emilie Cady, *Lessons In Truth*, Spiritual Gifts)

## Sacraments and Symbols

**? Explain how baptism and the Lord's Supper are the means by which man becomes a conscious member of the "church of Christ."**

27. As no one organization of men is the "church of Christ" — because its members are everywhere — a question arises about the so-called "sacraments" that the different organizations observe. Are baptism and the Lord's Supper part of the true church? Yes, but only when practiced in the spirit and not in the letter alone. All symbols are useful, to the extent that they serve to point man to the realities for which they stand.

**? Explain why and when the use of symbols becomes unnecessary.**

28. When understanding and realization of Truth are attained, the symbol is seen in its true light. The child in the kindergarten leaves his blocks and goes on to an understanding of principles. If he persisted in keeping up his kindergarten play after he had learned the lesson of it, he would stop his development. So men arrest their growth when they continue to rely on symbols that were given to help them to understanding in their spiritual childhood. They should get hold of the reality and see beyond the symbol.

29. Water baptism is a symbol of the cleansing,① purifying work of Spirit in the consciousness of men. A cleansing of the mind from all erroneous thoughts, emotions, and beliefs precedes the descent of Truth into the consciousness, and this we term "denial." There is but one true baptism: the total immersion of the individual in the Christ Spirit. It is through the Holy Spirit baptism② that one becomes a *conscious* member of the true "church of Christ."

30. The Lord's Supper consists of two symbols — bread and wine.③ Bread represents the substance of Spirit; wine represents the life of Spirit. We are saved by the blood of Christ — that is, by His life. Jesus came to bring to the race the knowledge of abundant, omnipresent life. "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly" (John 10:10). Paul, writing to the Corinthians about the Lord's Supper, told them that because they did not discern the Lord's body, many among them were weak and sickly, holding fast to the symbol without discerning the reality, and many were asleep, or dead.

31. The mind "eats," or appropriates the Lord's body④ or the Christ substance and life, by affirming the omnipresence of substance and life, and

claiming union with it. This is the true sacrament, and the body is vitalized and renewed when the whole sacrament is partaken of. There are three phases of our discernment of the Lord's body:

- First, the recognition that it is substance and life;
- Second, discernment of the Lord's body or the Christ within ourself;
- Third, understanding that this body is made up of many *members*, or "called-out" ones.

32. In the first phase, we realize that omnipresence, God consciousness, works in man and in the universe to bring forth the good, the divine and perfect. This is Spirit substance in which we live and move and have being, and which lives and moves and has expression in and through us.

33. The second phase applies to our own bodies. We usually see and think of them as they appear: flesh and blood. But this is not their true estate. "My little children ... I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you" (Gal. 4:19). This "form" is His body, and it is pure Spirit, substance and life. When we know this and appropriate substance and life by declaring the Christ Mind and its body of divine ideas to be ours, the body that seems material will begin to manifest the truth that it is made of finer essences than flesh and blood, and in this way it will be transformed and will become "conformed to the body of his glory" (Phil. 3:21). This is a change that comes, not by death, but by our daily feeding upon substance and life in meditation, prayer, and the silence.

34. The third phase is understanding that all those who have discerned the Christ Spirit within them<sup>5</sup> and are bringing it forth, and in addition are helping others into this knowledge of divinity in all, are also the "Christ body."

35. "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come" (I Cor. 11:26). His "second coming" has been a matter of much controversy, because the letter was read instead of the spirit. All the symbols that are given in the description of His "second coming" have a spiritual application. He comes when He is received into our consciousness<sup>6</sup> and revealed to us as our own Lord. It is only the childish state of mind that clings to the outer forms and ignores the substance that they represent.

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1. *Water baptism is a symbol of the cleansing.* Water baptism symbolizes a

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cleansing process, the letting go of error. It is the first step in the realization of Truth. It is the process of pouring into consciousness the dissolving power of the Word, which breaks up and washes away all thoughts of materiality. (MBD/baptism)

2. *Holy Spirit baptism.* The Fillmores baptized by Spirit: "Not a church or sect, but a place where the students of Jesus gain a spiritual understanding of the words of Jesus, the parables of Jesus and the rites of the church. We baptize not with water but with Spirit..." – Undated handwritten document fragment by Charles Fillmore – Unity Archives, Charles Fillmore Papers

3. *bread and wine.* God's covenant with mankind, through His perfect idea, Christ Jesus. This compact was completed through Jesus Christ's breaking the bread and blessing the cup. The bread symbolizes spiritual substance, or the body. The wine symbolizes the blood of Jesus Christ, or spiritual life. (MBD/Lords Supper)

4. *The mind "eats," or appropriates the Lord's body.* Consecration of bread and wine occurs when it is properly *appropriated* by the recipient. If our consciousness is right then a Spiritual Communion takes place. If our consciousness is low then we appropriate bread and wine. What changes things depends on you and I—the spiritual discernment of the recipient—not the spiritual discernment of the celebrant. It is you and I—our power of Understanding—that allows spiritual substance and spiritual life to be appropriated by the soul and thereby expressed to the body, bringing life and substance. (Unity, January 18, 1925: Luke 22:14-25)

5. *those who have discerned the Christ Spirit within them.* At the Last Supper, the disciples had not yet been raised to spiritual consciousness; therefore, they needed the outer representation to lead them to the inner realization of the substance and life which the bread and the wine symbolize: "This do in remembrance of me." As their faculty of spiritual discernment was raised (in their twelve powers) so was their (and our) capacity to appropriate spiritual life and spiritual substance.

6. *He comes when He is received into our consciousness.* This is Spiritual Communion.

## Redemption Of the Body

**? What relation is there between food and the redemption of the body?**

36. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). The substance and life of Spirit are appropriated and assimilated, and become a conscious part of the soul and body by holding in mind words of Truth. We should exercise great wisdom and judgment in selecting the food we eat, even as we do in selecting the thoughts and words that we allow to find place in our mind. As men become more and more quickened by Spirit and lifted up into the Christ consciousness, a change goes on in their choice of food.

37. Every degree of consciousness has its corresponding degree of vibration in the physical realm. If the flesh body becomes low in vibration, it requires the work of consciousness in continued contemplation of Truth to raise the vibrations of the body.

38. The body automatically raises the vibration of a certain quantity and a certain quality of food to a consciousness that allows assimilation by the body.<sup>①</sup> When the quantity or the quality of food is such that the automatic action of the body is not sufficient to do its work properly, body troubles follow and the consciousness must work to erase the trouble. The same energy cannot be used for two purposes at the same time. If energy did not have to be used to raise the body vibrations, it would be free to raise the mind or consciousness, and this raising of the consciousness would automatically raise the vibrations of an already normal body. The continued repetition of this cycle of rising vibrations would mean a longer span of life for the body, in which the proper food would play its part.

39. Many would have much less to overcome if they ate that which is nourishing and upbuilding. Overeating could be entirely eliminated if man would partake of food with the idea of building and vitalizing a spiritual body rather than satisfying the false appetites of a flesh body.

40. Unity considers a vegetarian diet preferable because it considers the proposition from the standpoint of love and mercy, believing that the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" (Exod. 20:13) applies not only to man but to all God's creatures.<sup>②</sup>

41. While vegetables, berries, fruits, and nuts have life, substance, and intelligence, they do not have consciousness in the same degree that ani-



mals have consciousness. Meat eating may eventually cease as man's consciousness becomes wiser and purer.<sup>3</sup> Even now the race is being educated to know that a vegetarian diet is wholesome and completely nourishing when well-balanced, and followed with wisdom and good judgment.

42. "And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb yielding seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for food" (Gen. 1:29).

43. However, abstaining from eating meat is a matter for individual guidance, according to the inner convictions. Undoubtedly the race will eventually come to use an entirely different type of food, as we grow and develop spiritually. Just to abstain from the outer act of eating meat does not guarantee spirituality. If the abstinence is the result of an inner desire and conviction, then it is a part of spiritual unfoldment. Otherwise, it should not be forced.<sup>4</sup> In regard to vegetarianism, Unity leaves the individual free to think and act from his own level of growth and unfoldment. If an individual is guided in prayer to try a vegetarian diet, he should do so.

44. The restored earth will have in it no death and no sorrow. This is the kingdom of God expressed in the earth, and its outward manifestation depends upon individual realization of the kingdom within.<sup>5</sup> The kingdom is mercy, righteousness, peace, and justice expressed by man to man and by all men toward the rest of creation. The crowning demonstration in restoration is the overcoming of death, attainment of eternal life — God manifest in the flesh.

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1. *a consciousness that allows assimilation by the body.* Annotation #4 for paragraph 31 above, referring to the *mind* eating or appropriating the Lord's body, has now shifted to the *body* eating or appropriating the food necessary for life. This answers the question "What relation is there between food and the redemption of the body?"

2. *"Thou shalt not kill" applies ... to all God's creatures.* The lesson shifts again, from wisdom to ethics.

3. *Meat eating may eventually cease as man's consciousness becomes wiser and purer.* "We believe that all life is sacred and that man should not kill nor be a party to the killing of animals for food; also the cruelty, war and wanton destruction of human life will continue as long as men kill animals for food." — Unity Magazine, April 1921, Statement of Faith.

4. *Otherwise, it should not be forced.* Ethical eating should be brought out by successive development; growth. As we unfold spiritually day by

day, Spirit reveals more and more good to us. (RW/unfoldment)

5. *its outward manifestation depends upon individual realization of the kingdom within.* The body not redeemed by ethical eating but by inward realization.

## Rest

### ? Explain the "Sabbath."

45. The "church of Christ" works; it also rests. Our Sunday is a symbol of the true Sabbath, a time when men turn away from business to seek a day of quiet and rest. The great Sabbath, the rest of God, is for all who will enter it. As Mind continually rests in action,<sup>①</sup> then man, as the Christ idea, must be forever expressing righteous activity. The Christ body does not observe days, times, and seasons, but makes every day holy to the Lord, and rests by entering into the secret place of the Most High. One seeking spiritual leading does his work impersonally and to the glory of the whole, thus lightening the great sense of burden and toil in proportion to his uplifting thought.

1. *As Mind continually rests in action.* The seventh day means the seventh or perfect stage of one's spiritual unfoldment. Man had become so lost in the darkness of sense consciousness that he could not save himself, so a Savior came. When man lays hold of the indwelling Christ, the Savior, he is raised out of the Adam consciousness into the Christ consciousness. He then enters the seventh stage of his unfoldment, where he finds rest and peace. The Sabbath can be enjoyed at any hour. (MBD/sabbath)

## ORIGINAL ANNOTATIONS FOR THE BODY OF CHRIST

💡 Here are the *Annotations for Lesson 4, The Body of Christ*. These questions and answers were used to “grade” papers and so they represent the “correct answers.” We’ve included them in this course guide to provide a second look at what the Fillmores wanted their students and ministers to know.

### Universal Church

#### ? 1. What is the "church of Christ"? What do we mean by "universal church" and "particular or individual church"?

The "church of Christ" is a temple of God within each human being, an aggregation of spiritual ideas within the individual consciousness, the point of contact between the human and the divine. It is here that the Christ holds its never-ending service. Jehovah, appearing to Abram, said unto him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be thou perfect." — Gen. 17:1. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus of Nazareth stated, "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." — Matt. 5:48. This consciousness of perfection when held by humanity is called Christ consciousness. Each one who realizes the power, value, and enduring nature of the Christ consciousness is an individual "church of Christ." When the soul of man grasps the truth of its being and its possibility of development Godward and lives this truth, it allows the Christ within to build its church. The Christ is the activity of divine ideals that works toward perfect expression and manifestation. The "church of Christ" is established in the human consciousness by thinking Godward, that is, by thinking on the divine ideas that make up the "church of Christ." Spiritual substance is used in the structure. The church is not an outer organization but a living organism within the outer organization (body). It is a body alive and alight with the glory and beauty of Truth.

The universal "church of Christ" consists of those individuals, regardless of race, color, occupation, or place on the earth, who have awakened to the divine nature and purpose of Spirit in mankind. It is those who



are carrying out the plan universally. Such are members of the body of Christ. They are the universal "church of Christ."

Talks on Truth by Charles Fillmore, page 110:

"When the true church is revealed to his soul, all this illusion of the manifest man is dissolved. He finds that the church of Jesus Christ has to do with the world right here and now; that it is not a religion, as he has been accustomed to regard religion; that it is an organic principle in nature working along definite lines of growth in the building up of a state of consciousness for the whole human race. Thus the church of Jesus Christ is an exact science" (Talks on Truth 110).

## Sectarianism

### ? 2. What is a "sect"? What causes the forming of "sects"?

The word "sect" comes from a root word meaning "to cut." According to Webster's dictionary a "sect" is "a group having in common a leader or a distinctive doctrine or way of thinking. A school of philosophy or of philosophic opinion." From a religious standpoint, the dictionary states that a "sect" is "the believers in a particular creed, or upholders of a particular practice; especially, now, a party dissenting from an established church; a religious denomination; a separate religious organization."

Groups have drawn away from an established church because they, or a leader, feel that only the "letter" of the scriptures is being followed by the established church, rather than "the spirit" that "giveth life." On the other hand, "sects" have been formed because of some belief on the part of a leader, or a group, that when truly analyzed could be found to be itself only the "letter" based often on some outer rite or ceremony.

No matter for what reason a "sect" has been formed, it can be seen as concerned primarily with the expansion and growth of mankind to the knowledge of the Christ consciousness. Many times in history when groups have drawn away from an established church, it has caused the church to look into its own doctrines and practices to see wherein it may have erred in presenting the Truth, so this soul-searching can be the open door to the church's own expansion. On the other hand, those who have drawn away from the church, for reasons other than direct guidance from the Spirit, will through their own experiences eventually have to attain the Christ consciousness and come to see oneness rather than differences.

When we come to really know Truth, through our communion with God in the "secret place," we are free from beliefs in separation. No matter what outer religious organization we may belong to we shall know that we are "all one in Spirit" with every other seeker after God, thus part of the great "body of Christ," the "Lord's body" or universal "church of Christ."

### **? 3. What is the basis of real unity, and why?**

Unity is oneness, universality, completeness. It is union of God consciousness, universal Christ consciousness, and individual Christ consciousness brought into one complete, all-embracing oneness. This means oneness with God, with mankind, and with the universe, Unity of ideal, idea, and unity of purpose that acknowledges no division and gives no thought to separation. The church of Christ acts in a consciousness of oneness with all recognized and unrecognized factors of the universe. Unity, oneness, comes from knowing there is only one Mind, God Mind, Spirit, and only one man, Christ Jesus. In Spirit, God Mind, there is only one governing power, the Jesus Christ principle, which is the union of wisdom and love.

To attain full unity (acceptance of God as the Allness of all things), you train your mind to look upon every human being as an expression in some degree of the wisdom and love of Spirit, God Mind. In the ideal every human being is the beloved of Spirit, God Mind, no matter how unlike the ideal his present appearance may be. As an expression of Spirit, God Mind, you have the wisdom in your mind and the love in your heart that enables you to discern the divine ideal in all human beings. In thought, word, and act you are to welcome joyously that ideal and give thanks for its unfoldment, no matter how small that unfoldment may seem.

Man-made unions usually have some selfish interest to promote and are held together by rules and regulations formulated by men. These rules and regulations often prove to be fetters to members who are not in accord with them. The real unity comes from abiding in God consciousness.

## **Church Members**

### **? 4. Why are the members of the "church of Christ" referred to in some translations of the Bible as a "peculiar people"?**

Often the words "people," "race," "nation," are used as though synony-

mous terms, but there are distinctions in meaning.

"People" refers to generic man with customs and habits common to all mankind. "Race" has to do with physical characteristics; "nation" refers to a group that has established a political system of government. Our lessons relate to Biblical usage. (I Pet. 2:7-10) The only way the Bible is concerned with man is from the spiritual standpoint, man created as the image of God through which he is to prove his divinity by developing the likeness of his Creator, Jehovah. In its original significance "peculiar" meant a whole group distinguished by some mark or standard that was unlike anything possessed by other individuals of the same class. In Deut. 7:6 Jehovah told the Israelites that he had chosen them for his own possession. This makes them a peculiar people in the sense of being God-owned.

By Jehovah's act of adopting them they became a distinctive people in religious things, consecrated, set apart from races and nations everywhere, with Jehovah as their standard of life. The Israelites as assembled before God and considered as the religious element of all peoples were distinguished as the "church of God." They were not a race, neither were they a nation, but a people who individually and collectively put their dependence in God as their standard, supply, and support in all ways.

In translating the Old Testament into the Greek language, the Hebrew word which designated the Israelites as the religious element was rendered "ecclesia," which was the Greek word for "church." Both the word "ecclesia" and the word "peculiar" indicate men as coming out from under the tyranny of negative conditions as produced by negative thinking; men who through awareness of their own divinity establish God as the governing power of their life. God works in and through them, His church, to accomplish a universal good for all the earth.

## **? 5. What is the purpose of the "church of Christ"?**

The purpose of the church of Christ (consciousness) is to pass on the good news of divine sonship to every human being who may not be conscious of this truth. Man as the beloved son of God is not under law but under grace. Because man has learned many lessons — some of them very hard ones — from his various experiences, law is given the greatest prominence in his life, so much so that he forgets the gospel, the good news of his divine sonship. Even when he expresses intelligence and recognizes that so-called evil is in his life because of his non-conformity to spiritual principles, he too often believes his only way out is by personal effort alone. This erroneous concept has caused many who received the first

glimmer of light to mentally concentrate too closely on the appearance of evil in themselves and in the world and thus to lose the very thing they were seeking, the presence of God.

The mental law of cause and effect says: Life is a battle; one must labor for all that he requires.

The gospel or the good news of the grace of God says: Life is a joyous experience, an opportunity to express God.

The mental law of cause and effect says: When trouble comes into man's life he must bear it patiently.

The gospel or good news says: You have the ability to respond to the love of God and to assert your dominion over all adverse states of consciousness.

**? 6. Explain the meaning of the word "restoration" as used in this lesson.**

Man is created in the image of God. In his unenlightened efforts to manifest the image he failed to produce the likeness of God. Man was created a spiritual being; he was placed in an ideal environment, made dependent on God for the revelation of needed knowledge. By turning away from God, man became unconscious of himself as a spiritual being and only conscious of himself as a physical man dependent on knowledge gained from an external world through his five senses.

Restoration here means the process by which man comes again to his original inheritance, the high position that he had in the beginning, conscious of the omnipresence of God and of himself as a spiritual being. Every cell in his body must be regenerated and resurrected. All peoples on the earth must be freed from false beliefs in sickness, sin, poverty, and death. "The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose." — Isa. 35:1.

As all creation suffered through man's "falling short," so through man's restoration to God consciousness all creation will be brought again to its original perfection.

**? 7. What are the two phases of growth which the members of the "church of Christ" experience?**

There is first the growth which entitles the individual to membership in

the church of Christ. This is followed by his developing an understanding of the universal church of Christ and finding the place he is to fill in it.

First, the individual becomes conscious of his birthright as a spiritual being. A desire for further revelations of Truth is aroused. He begins to take the necessary steps to promote his own regeneration. He feels the necessity of cleansing his mind and heart of the beliefs and habits that heretofore controlled his life. He seeks Spirit within his own being for illumination and guidance, willingly and courageously acting on further revelations received. His obedience to the divine plan as it is revealed to him brings increased enlightenment. His conception of God, of himself, of humanity, and of the entire universe undergoes a change. He sees the universality of the one life; he sees the place he should fill in the divine plan for the good of all life.

Secondly, his understanding of life deepens and broadens. His love for mankind grows. He begins to note the effect that his feelings, thoughts, words, actions, and reactions have on those about him. He desires to be of service to his brothers by showing the practicability of the redeeming power of the forgiving love of Jesus Christ. He wants others to know how the grace of God frees each and every one and restores to him the power and dominion over his world with which he was vested at his creation.

In this way each individual member of the Christ body must pass from the belief in bondage to acceptance of freedom; from human limitation to divine understanding; from the belief in death to acceptance of eternal life here and now." "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren." — I John 3:14.

## Mission and Ministry

### ? 8. What place has thought in the restoration to divine perfection?

Man lost consciousness of his divine origin through the misapplication of his causative power, thought. Ideas are the cause of all that is. A man is as limited as his beliefs; as free as his beliefs accord with Spirit. Man is a conscious thinker. To attain a consciousness of divine perfection he first must have a clear mental image of what divine perfection is. Divine perfection is God; therefore in his thinking man should contemplate God. What is God like? Man fell short of manifesting perfection by beholding an imperfect image (pattern) of himself, and now to be restored, he must carry an image of God in his mind and in his heart. Our whole life is



an outpicturing of our mental conception of what God is. Our thoughts, our concepts concerning God are the most important ones we can have. Divine perfection cannot be restored without a pattern, so we image in consciousness our conception of what God is, where God is, and what He is like. As we catch the true vision and meditate on it, our homeward journey begins. The more man desires, visions, thinks, contemplates that which is like God, the more nearly perfect will be his manifestations. Man "falls" every time he lets himself consciously think of anything less than the ideal and the perfect.

### **? 9. Explain fully the meaning of the word "blessing."**

"A blessing is the essence of the highest spiritual realization that we can give to another" - (Dare to Believe! 28). A real blessing is of God; it appears in the consciousness of man as a divine idea, such as love, life, power, faith, protection and so forth, that his heart would pour out to others. It takes feeling as well as thinking to produce substantial results.

The word "bless" comes from an Anglo-Saxon word that signifies "blood" which in turn represents life; the blood in ancient times was considered so sacred that it was on the "blood" that men would take an oath... Thus in blessing we are recognizing the life of God and stirring into action all the God qualities by our "highest spiritual realization." Blessing is like the use of oil in machinery — it does away with friction and delay; it brings about order and harmony. Blessing, however, is not confined to others. We may bless our minds as channels for the expression of God's ideas; we may bless our bodies as temples of God to manifest His life, strength, vitality; we may bless our affairs with the love, understanding, peace, harmony that are part of our divine inheritance as sons of God.

Man's power to bless is unlimited. It may reach to the ends of the earth and beyond to all the universes created by our Father-Mother God — into infinity itself. But this far-reaching, unlimited power to bless is dependent upon man's recognition of himself as a son of God endowed with this power of blessing. We may bless with peace and be brought together in love and understanding.

When we regard all life as sacred because it is an expression of Spirit, and every form of creation as part of God's divine plan, then we are exercising our power to bless, with the power and dominion given to us as sons of God.

### **? 10. What was Jesus' mission on earth?**

Jesus overcame "the world," man's system of beliefs in sin, sickness, poverty, and death. He overcame "the flesh," that which believes in the physical, mental, and moral weakness and frailty of man due to the biological body with its appetites and passions. He overcame "the devil," the thoughts of fear, separation, selfishness, and unlikeness to God which the human family has accepted for ages. He erased the man-made mental laws that humanity has set up, substituting for them the grace of God, God's wondrous love for man. Everything that He claimed for Himself, He said, belonged equally to every man. He taught by His word, His works, His life, that man is free, not subject to man-made laws. Jesus is the great Way Shower.

God as substance has always been present in man's soul and body, but the power of God's presence cannot be released until man becomes consciously one and the same as God in nature and in disposition. The law of life is the law of love. Jesus said, "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." — John 10:10. According to the Emphatic Diaglott the correct rendering is, "I came, that they may have life, and may have abundance."

Jesus showed mankind by His example how man may come into a conscious understanding of his birthright as a son of God. God is the Father-Mind; the kingdom of God is within man. Through often turning his consciousness to God consciousness, man can become established in ever-present good. Jesus showed the use of the power of God by the transfiguration of His body in the presence of some of His disciples. He also proved this power by resurrecting His body from the grave. He redeemed mankind through leading it out of darkness into the light of understanding. All men may become consciously one with God through entering into God consciousness, which in this lesson is called the "church of Christ" or the "Lord's body."

## **? 11. What is meant by forsaking all for Christ's sake?**

"So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." — Luke 14:33. In the King James Authorized Version of the Bible, the word "forsaketh" is used instead of "renounceth." Renounce means to "give up, abandon, or resign." Forsake means to renounce something dear to one, to quit or leave entirely; to desert.

We must remember that when Jesus Christ spoke these words, He spoke from the consciousness of the Christ, I AM, and He meant that each one of us who would be a disciple (follower) must give up all in consciousness that is likely to interfere with our living the Christ life, expressing

the Christ Spirit, manifesting the Christ nature and character.

If we are to become the Christ in expression and manifestation, we must forsake all error thoughts (false beliefs), inharmonious feelings that we have about ourselves, God, and man; we must renounce all consciousness that would in the least degree deny the archetypal spiritual pattern for universal man, Jesus Christ. Man must withdraw his attention from the without and center it within his own being, and through affirmations begin to consciously see his body as spiritual substance manifesting the perfect body-idea. Man's body will then be the perfect vehicle for God consciousness or Christ consciousness.

I AM is God's name for Himself; His acknowledgment of Himself as Being. I AM is the identity of God as Creator and Cause of all that is.

I AM is man's name for himself; his acknowledgment of himself as a spiritual being. I AM is the perfect Law of man's being. I AM is the identity of man as a co-worker with God in sustaining all that God creates and makes as His visible and invisible presence in creation. Man acknowledges his identity as the Son of God by his use of I AM in connection with his thoughts, feelings, words, actions and reactions.

By forsaking all for Christ's sake, man loses nothing, but gains everything. True unity with God, man, and all good is thus realized and proved as a continuous and continual demonstration.

## **? 12. Explain the meaning of "spiritual gift."**

A gift is something voluntarily bestowed without expectation of compensation. When we speak of a "spiritual gift" we usually mean some quality, talent, or mental faculty to which man has awakened and of which he is now making use in order to better conditions for himself and for all creation. We may become aware of God through one or more of the qualities of Being thus only partially identifying ourselves with Him. When man becomes conscious of such a quality, talent, or faculty, it is, so to speak, "given" to him. Through use the gift is brought to life and light.

The supreme gift of God to every human being is that I AM identity. Identity here means: the same living being that God is; the same character as God; the unchangeable nature of God as perfect good. I AM is the name (Nature) of God as given to Moses to show that perfect good is alive everywhere.

I AM is the nucleus, like a seed idea of God Himself, that is living in every

human being. Around this identity his desires, feelings, and thoughts must gather in continuous activity until he enters into God consciousness in all parts of his being, spirit, soul, body. He is then a "life-giving spirit."  
— I Cor. 15:45.

The universal Christ body is those of humanity who have awakened to their divinity and are carrying out the regenerative process of redeeming their natures of all that is unlike God. Each member of the Christ body relates himself to the whole by voluntarily using the special talent he has unfolded, not only for himself but for the benefit of all.

Thus he recognizes the Fatherhood of God and establishes the brotherhood of man. There is an infinite number of members, each of whom is expressing the God nature in a variety of ways. There are no great, no small. No matter what his standing is in man's world, one member is no more important than any other member of the body. There are no superiors and no inferiors. Consciousness of eternal life is attained by each member of the Christ body, as he unfolds within himself the character of God; when he is manifesting the likeness of God.

## Sacraments and Symbols

### **? 13. Explain how baptism and the Lord's Supper are the means by which man becomes a conscious member of the "church of Christ."**

Baptism and the Lord's Supper can be the means by which man becomes a conscious member of the "church of Christ" only if these sacraments are observed in the Spirit instead of the "letter." The "church of Christ" is an inner consciousness of God's Presence that must develop within the outer organism, (the form or the body). What we read in the scriptures regarding the "church" is to be applied to the invisible spiritual body as it goes through the process of regenerating and redeeming the biological flesh body.

The outer rites and ceremonies of church organizations are symbols that lose their true significance if more attention is given to the symbol than to that which the symbol represents. All symbols are good when rightly used, and when they emphasize the reality they represent. Every word we utter, everything we see in the outer world of manifestation, is a symbol. Mankind has had need of the rites and ceremonies of the organized churches as symbols of devotion to and worship of God. We are, however, learning that the value lies beyond the outer act; it lies in the soul's own contact with Spirit through prayer. Only in this way can the Lord's

Supper or baptism become valuable to the individual in awakening him to his place in the "church of Christ."

Denial corresponds to water baptism. Affirmation corresponds to Holy Spirit baptism — "Receive ye the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22). Affirmation also corresponds to the eating of the "bread" and the drinking of the "wine" of the Lord's Supper. However, both denial and affirmation yield their full meaning for us only as we remember the inner activity back of the words.

#### **? 14. What does water baptism symbolize?**

Water baptism symbolizes the cleansing and purifying process that must take place in those who are living in error consciousness. Humanity as a whole, traveling the evolutionary path, has filled its consciousness with pure and impure elements. Each experience through which the human being passes becomes embodied in accordance with the way he reacts to it. The natural man is prone to cling to the memory of his adversities, and in so doing multiply and increase the imperfect and the untrue in his being. Since subconscious action builds the body in accordance with what is settled in it as a belief, the body becomes the great burden bearer. In consciousness there is no vacuum; therefore the old must be dissolved in order that the newer and better may replace it. Water baptism typifies the dissolving of error consciousness through a process of denial. Water baptism symbolizes man's willingness to cleanse his human consciousness in order to enter into the Christ consciousness.

#### **? 15. Explain the symbols of the Lord's Supper.**

The truth taught is that man is saved, freed from his troubles and shortcoming, through appropriating the substance (bread) and life (wine) of Spirit. Questioned when teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum, Jesus declared, "I am the living bread which came down out of heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; yea and the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world." — John 6:51. Jesus is here referring not to His personal self but to that I AM as the bread of life.

The symbols used in the Lord's Supper are bread and wine. Bread is sometimes called "the staff of life," that which is substantial in food, that which gives solidity to the diet. Metaphysically it represents the substance of God in which inhere perfect elements or ideas necessary for spiritual growth. Wine is a stimulant which enlivens the action of the physical heart and the blood. Metaphysically it symbolizes the quickening power of Spirit circulating through every cell of the physical body,



vitalizing and sustaining it. The Christ body, comprising both substance and life, is intelligently appropriated by the individual through affirmation, meditation, and contemplation, the Silence and in action. We "eat" when we appropriate God ideas with our understanding. We "drink" when we accept them through faith in God. The process of physical eating had its counterpart in the Eucharist. The Word, which is the bread of life, is

1. Received in the head (mind), as food is received in the mouth.
2. Analyzed intellectually, as food is masticated in the mouth.
3. Dropped from the head to the heart, in the same way that food is swallowed into the stomach.
4. Contemplated in the heart, as food is slowly digested in the stomach.
5. Established in the consciousness in the same way that food is assimilated and incorporated into blood, bone, muscle, and tissue. "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).

**? 16. Explain why and when the use of symbols becomes unnecessary.**

The true purpose of religious symbols is to help the individual become consciously acquainted with God. A symbol is useful when it directs the attention to the reality (divine idea) behind it. When one depends on symbols rather than on the truth to which they point, he is missing the full blessing which the symbol represents. When we speak of "eating" and "drinking" the body and blood of Christ, we refer to the mind's appropriation and assimilation of the substance (bread) and life (wine) of God. When a person contemplates substance and life he comes into an intelligent understanding of his true nature and manifests eternal life here and now.

Rightly understood, symbols make us aware of the divine ideas they represent. We must then go beyond the symbols themselves into the realm of God ideas in order to lay hold of this "spiritual food" for the soul.

When a symbol is used literally as though it had power of itself, it does not fulfill its true purpose. When used thoughtlessly a symbol has no spiritual meaning to the individual. When used with understanding, symbols help to strengthen one's faith in the ideas of life, substance, love, power and so forth.

Only as each one is guided by God can he know when outer religious symbols will be of value to him at any particular stage of his soul unfoldment; also when he has no further need for them. To use with understanding flowers, candles, bread, wine, water in religious ceremonies tends to lift the person to a state of consciousness where God may reveal His Presence to him.

**? 17. How do we reach the consciousness where we discern the Lord's body?**

Discernment of the Lord's body (the glorious body of light) is the fundamental step toward attaining consciousness of eternal life here and now in the body. To arrive at discernment of the Lord's body, we pass through three stages of developments.

First, we discern the one omnipotent Spirit working as consciousness in and through all living forms. We know that Spirit always works for good, for God consciousness, for perfection in form and in nature.

Secondly, we discern that we have our place in the Lord's body; that it works in and through us. We are intelligence substance and life, having part in the expression and manifestation of the one life. As this concept of oneness and perfection grows, it begins to show forth in our physical organism. We lose the thought of our body as being flesh, blood, and bones; we behold it as the habitation of Spirit. Spirit builds in accordance with the thought we hold in mind; by the process previously outlined, the body takes on life and light. We must form a structure harmonious and orderly for the use of this finer substance and life, which is infinitely more subtle and vital than we have heretofore recognized. This essence is given form by thought; by spiritual thoughts it is built into an eternal dwelling place for the Holy Spirit. The overcoming of death is not a casting off of the present body but a purification of each cell contained in it so that the whole becomes finer and finer. It passes from human consciousness into the Christ consciousness.

Thirdly, as we see ourselves with this higher vision, so also by it do we see others. We awaken to the real meaning of brotherhood. We see how we are all bound together in an unbreakable bond, one life flowing through us, one intelligence guiding us, and the whole of redeemed humanity woven together in the one substance of love.

## Redemption Of the Body

### ? 18. What relation is there between food and the redemption of the body?

Food has much to do with the redemption of the body. We eat to live, not live to eat. It is a scientific fact that the heavier and grosser foods slow up the digestive and eliminative processes. They also dull the action of the brain through which the conscious thinker must express himself. We lessen our ability to feel the uplifting power of Spirit by any practice that slows down the vital processes of the physical body. As the body has no initiative of its own, it lives in darkness unless the soul makes it actively conscious of the light, life, and love of Spirit. For the body to fulfill its purpose as a perfect instrument through which the conscious thinker may achieve the redemptive process that makes him consciously one with God, to attain the consciousness of eternal life here and now, man can wisely partake of only such foods as will increase efficiency. We know that behind everything in the manifest world is the idea that causes form. Eating the form, we are appropriating and making one with us the ideas that caused the form. If we appreciate the life and substance of Spirit we shall intelligently eat that which is vital, living, sustaining, and regenerating.

Life, light, and love are closely associated with the Word of God, for it is through our desires, feelings, thoughts, words, actions and reactions that we give form to the substance of God. The longing we have for better things and greater attainments is the effect of the soul's effort to lift the body to a higher level of intelligence in order that it, the soul, may progress onward and upward.

## Rest

### ? 19. Explain the "Sabbath."

The word sabbath means "restoration, completion, perfection, oneness, rest." The true Sabbath is conscious atonement with Spirit within and around us. The Sabbath is first mentioned in Gen. 2:2-3, "And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made." The plans were finished in God consciousness, and the creative principle rested within the soul of man as His image, taking it for granted that the creations would come forth into expression and manifestation in due season. Then follows the pause, the rest, after which the Son moves into the expression

and manifestation of the divine potentialities inherent within Him.

All manifest life is carried on in cycles. This corresponds to the periodic method in which Spirit works; there is the inflow, the pause (rest), then the outflow into expression and manifestation. With manifest man the Sabbath is a pause in the midst of his outer activity. In the pause he realizes that Spirit is working in and through him to accomplish its purpose. Man prays (speaks the Word) and then rests in perfect faith knowing that the law of God is bringing into manifest form the perfect result.

Even as God rests in the soul of man, so does man rest in God consciousness, knowing that all is well and that the Father is doing His perfect work. Every day is a Sabbath day if at some time during that period we turn away from our interests in the outer and seek Spirit within us for rest and refreshment. "In returning and rest shall ye be saved." — Isa. 30:15. Eventually the Sabbath is that eternal rest which comes to regenerated man when all that is unlike the Christ has been denied, and man awakes in the likeness of God.

## RECOMMENDED READING

- ✍ Charles Fillmore, *Unity Church Universal*. Unity, May 1924, pages 438-9. Charles Fillmore's announcement of the founding of a universal church based on Unity teaching.
- ✍ James W. Teener's 1939 *Dissertation on Unity*, Chapter 4, *Unity Becomes a Sect*. Commentary from an independent but fair external critic of Unity.
- ✍ Unity Correspondence School *Methods and Ideals for Conducting Centers and Study Groups* A six-part guide for study groups.
- ✍ Unity Worldwide Ministries, *A Look at the History of Unity Worldwide Ministries*. This video was released in February 2024 by the Board of Unity Worldwide Ministries. It explicitly asks “Is Unity a denomination?” It is an important video, at least from a learning perspective.





# APPENDIX

## CONTRIBUTORS

✿ The following people have contributed to The Fillmore Wings Program in some significant way. This collaboration project is managed by TruthUnity Ministries, which is the publisher of The Fillmore Study Program materials. In time the Fillmore Wings Study Program will become a free-standing ministry with its own board, Editorial staff and peer-review committee.



Cora Alexander, LUT. Teacher, Educational Consultant, Content Editor.



Rev. Mark Hicks. General Editor, Teacher, Publisher.

## ANTICIPATED SCHEDULE

**What is the Vision for the Fillmore Wings Study Program?** the Fillmore Wings Study Program is a series of lessons that cover Series One and Series Two of the Unity Correspondence Course over a two-year period.

The Fillmore Wings Study Program is designed so that the eighteen lessons are covered in six three-month sessions over a two-year period. Each three-month session will cover three lessons, one per month. Here is an anticipated schedule.

The Fillmore Wings Study Program Schedule

Session	Materials	Topics
Sept, Oct, Nov	Lessons 1-3	The Silence, Healing, Prosperity
Jan, Feb, Mar	Lessons 4-6	Body of Christ, Overcoming, Demonstration
May, June, July	Lessons 7-9	God, Christ, Man
Sept, Oct, Nov	Lessons 10-12	Thoughts, Affirmations, The Word
Jan, Feb, Mar	Lessons 13-15	Prayer, Faith, Imagination
May, June, July	Lessons 16-18	Will & Understanding, Judgment, Love



# THE BODY OF CHRIST

## UNITY CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL LESSONS

### Series 1 Lesson 4

The Unity Correspondence School Lessons were Unity's SEE program for nearly 70 years. Charles Fillmore wrote the first lesson and preached from all 18 lessons for the remainder of his life. It is the program that Eric Butterworth, Johnnie Coleman, Catherine Ponder and Ed Rabel were required to study before entering into Unity's ministry training.

For nearly sixty-five years the lessons provided truth principles to laypeople and trained them for ministry. The lessons in the course propelled Unity's tremendous growth from 1909, when Charles Fillmore wrote the first lesson, until the mid-1970s when the concept of "distance learning" by correspondence fell out of fashion. The principles are timeless, the teaching is pristine, and the presentation is clear and direct.

Fillmore Wings is three things. First, it is a collaboration of scholars and students who study, meet, discuss the original lessons, and develop commentary and footnotes appropriate for

present-day understanding and language. We anticipate a 2-3 year timeframe for the development of commentary and footnoting.

Second, Fillmore Wings is also the content developed by the scholars and students. The most current version of each of the 18 courses is freely accessible online on TruthUnity. Downloadable PDF files for self printing is also provided. At some point the entire collection of 18 lessons, annotations, commentary and footnotes will be printed in a single, printed volume.

Third, Fillmore Wings is an online study program in development. Our scholars will eventually offer distance-learning based on our present-day understanding of the original course content. We do not anticipate offering any credit, certification or credentialing, but we will proclaim that students who complete the learning program will have earned the designation "Fillmore Wings."



## FILLMORE WINGS STUDY PROGRAM

<https://www.truthunity.net/wings>