CHARLES FILLMORE--SUNDAY, AUGUST 12, 1928.

PRINCIPLES COMPARED WITH CEREMONIES


The central idea in the lesson this morning is the worship of God in Spirit and in Truth, in principle, rather than through rites and ceremonies. The early church as conceived by Paul, Barnabas and Peter was largely, and I might say almost wholly, an offshoot of the Israelites, and the religion of the Israelites was carried over into early Christianity, and it still pertains, as we know; but there was an enlargement of consciousness as to the character of God and His intentions toward the Gentiles. The Israelites thought that Jehovah had given them the truth for the Israelites, especially; that is, they were the elect people, and the Gentiles were pagans and could not be saved. But when Jesus came and declared the universality of God as Spirit and Paul and his early disciples caught the idea, it caused
dissension and separation from the old religion; it caused a break in that close corporation which they had formed, and which they were seeking to perpetuate and make themselves a little heaven of their own.

It is a difficult matter to break down old ideas, and especially religious ideas. You know that religion comes first in man's thought. It is through religious ideas that we are related to God and God being the Cause of all, it is logical to assume, and facts prove that the religious ideas in the human consciousness are the most powerful. A man will fight longer and stronger for his religion and he becomes more fanatical over it than through anything else.

So it concerns all, it is of practical importance to study this matter of religion; how it originated; how it develops, and the cause of the many sects and creeds and doctrines and why we are, many of us, still bound in the old ideas. Our prayers and the form of our prayers
and our rites and ceremonies have a very important part in our
salvation from sins and our unity with the Divine Source of our
being.

As we study the early Christian activities, we find that these
questions were of paramount importance. It was a very serious matter
whether the Gentiles who became converts of Christianity should be
given full acceptance or whether they should be considered as, in a

measure, alien unless they performed all the rites and ceremonies of
the Jews. The Gentiles didn't readily accept all of those rites and
ceremonies. They had their religion and they clung to certain of its
observances, its rites. Even the Christians, as we will find as we
study the Acts of the Apostles and the Greeks and the Romans, still made
offerings to their gods, Jupiter and Mercury. Those were gods that they
had been brought up to worship and they still paid certain tribute to
them, and it was a bone of contention at Corinth and all of these
places where Paul had started churches.

Now, this question of circumcision came up. The difference
between the Jew and the Gentile was one of circumcision. That was a
vital point, and the uncircumcised dogs were considered as lost and
despised by the Jews. It was absolutely fundamental for one, to be
saved according to the Jewish religion, to be circumcised. Even Jesus

was circumcised; and this having such importance in the original
religion of what is now Christianity, moves us to inquire into it a
little. What did it mean? Of course, in our present understanding
of Truth we don't take circumcision into our rites as part of the church
activities, and nobody seems to know just why it was dropped. The
reasoning, it seems here, was that the Gentiles should not be compelled,
unless they so desired, to conform to the rites and ceremonies of the
Jews. But this question of circumcision seems to have had such an important bearing upon salvation that it seems, in principle, to have had a place. It must have originated in a great need of some kind, or it would not have been given to those early disciples, and it may have been a lapse from the high aims and ideals of the early worshippers of God when it was eliminated from our church ritual.

We now observe baptism and we observe the Lord's Supper, and we observe a great many things that the Israelites didn't consider nearly so essential as the rite of circumcision; so as we inquire into it we find that it was a prophecy, or had the beginning in mind, at least, and in act, of some great elimination from human consciousness of sin.

Circumcision represents the cutting off of sin. It is the elimination of a certain fleshly condition; but Paul taught that circumcision in reality was of the heart; it was in spirit; that this outer symbol
was a forecast that should come to pass in the race consciousness, in spirit and in the flesh; in other words, that there had been a great departure in some department of man's life activity; that the sins of the flesh were of a certain character, and that those sins must be erased, they must be cut off. Now, nearly all these symbols had their beginning in the outer; and as we get into an understanding of the principle, we naturally drop the outer in its mere physical aspect. We have found that baptism is not altogether of water. We say people can use water if they so desire, but what does water have to do with the cleansing of the mind? It is in our minds that we are sinners. We are full of trespasses and sins in our mind, and through this mental sin there we really have in our bodies diseases and sicknesses and finally death.

What is the great seat of sin in the body that disintegrates the
cell life and finally results in sin? The medical world is searching for that, but the religious world has always attributed it to something connected with sex; that sexual sin was the first sin of man; that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was in some way connected with generation, and so it is; and that is the reason that the Jews had given to them this forecast of an eliminating process, that out of that inner life should come a purer life, a life that should cleanse and purify the whole man; cleanse first from his inner thought, and then that inner life flow—the sin or the lack of understanding of the law of life, the law of generation—and that is really what sexual sin is. The generative life in man has been polluted through lack of understanding of the issues of life.

John, in Revelations, says that he was shown a great river of life, clear as crystal, flowing out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, and
that on each side of this river of life grew the tree of life bearing
twelve manner of fruits, and that twelve manner of fruits was for the
healing of the nations. That, in a measure, is all symbology; and yet
as we search our inner consciousness, as we go into our minds and bodies,
we find that there really is a river of life; that the nerve fluid
flowing throughout the body is a great river having its center in the
generative organs in the body of man. But we have studied outer condi-
tions; we have looked to the external, until we have separated ourselves
from this inner consciousness of the great life flow. So the connection
with this life is the circump-sensation—the most subtle of all the
beasts of the field—and it is so attractive that man becomes lost in
sensation and he does not know that through sensation without under-
standing its import, he is polluting this great river of life, the life
fluids in the organism. And this pollution goes all through the system
and expresses itself in every one of the senses, in all the faculties
in the whole organism. Now, this is to be eliminated; and Jesus Christ,
we are told, was, in a measure, the fulfillment of that elimination.
We do not have any record of His ever having had anything to do with
the sex side. He didn't teach it, except in symbols. He cast seven
devils out of Mary Magdalene. It is very evident, from her character,
that those were sexual devils. They were wrong concepts of life. Sex

is not evil, but it is man's ignorant use of sex that produces wrong
conditions. Through our ignorance of sex, through our lack of spiritual
understanding, we are causing that great river of life proceeding out
of the throne of God to be polluted; that is all.

How shall we eliminate this? By cutting off sense desire and by
replacing that with spiritual understanding; the understanding that all
life and all activity come from the one divine Fountain, and that that
Fountain is pure, it is holy; and through a mental denial of sex and the sensations of sex and the affirmation that God is Spirit and that the Spirit of God and the life of God enters into everything—"Do all things unto the Lord"—we shall go through, in our minds, and even in our bodies, circumcision. The old, sensual concept shall be absolutely eliminated and we shall come into a new consciousness, a new understanding of what life means; what the foundation of life is in our body. The thought about life tinctures that life activity. If we pollute the river of life in our bodies through our thoughts, if you have thought your life activity, that your sex nature is sensual, that it is impure, that it is sinful, you can throw that kind of thought right into this sensitive, receptive thing in the body fluids—there are many names for it. It is the circulating substance through the nerves that connects us both with the flesh and with the inner, spiritual activity. It is
really difficult to describe these things in terms that we can understand physiologically; but as you take up the power of the Spirit in your meditations, in your prayer, you will find that you get action on your body through contact with a finer essence. You might say that it is part of the body. It has been transmuted through spiritual activity into a purer radiation, where you think about yourself as a spiritual being, throwing all your attention on to the spiritual side instead of on to the physical; and this is the secret that Jehovah gave to us.

But we didn't understand it altogether; we thought that it was a mere physical ceremony that consisted of the rite of our relation—our relation as the chosen people—that if we observed all these rites and ceremonies God would accept us. But we found that performing all these rites and ceremonies didn't save us from death and from sickness; consequently it must be that all that is not the fulfillment of the law.
What is the fulfillment of the law? It is mental first; the understanding of the unity between God and man's body, and then the affirmation in Spirit and in Truth of our identity, worshipping God in Spirit and in Truth, and let the pagans, the Gentiles, the Samaritans and the Jews appear really one in Spirit. That is fundamental; and that we, as individuals, are unified with the type because of our being; that we must make this union stronger, make us one, as Jesus said, with the Father.

"It is not I, but the Father within me, doeth the works." So we, as Unity people, dedicate ourselves and all that we are to this unity of God between mind and body, the identity between the man and the identity in Spirit. God in me, exercising dominion over every function, over every activity, and that there is no separation. My consciousness does not allow me to separate my body and the functions of my body from God. It is of God. God is Spirit, in you all, through you all, and above you all.