

CHURCH OF THE AIR

Columbia Broadcasting Company's *Church of the Air* was presented at 8:00 a.m., Sunday, April 8, 1956. The program was as follows:

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of J. Spencer Cornwall, furnished the music for this service, with Alexander Schreiner at the organ. Richard L. Evans was the announcer.

Music: Organ and humming choir: "Sweet is the Work."

Announcer: The *Church of the Air* is presented by CBS Radio so that clergymen of many faiths may speak to a nationwide congregation. Today's program, in connection with the Annual General Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, comes to you transcribed from the Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square, through the facilities of Station KSL in Salt Lake City, Utah. Our speaker is Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, President of the Council of Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Music is by the Tabernacle Choir directed by J. Spencer Cornwall, with Alexander Schreiner at the organ.

The Tabernacle Choir opens this

service today with two hymn melodies by George Careless: the first, with words by John Jaques: "Softly Beams the Sacred Dawning. . . . Swiftly flee the clouds of darkness, Speedily the mists retire; Nature's universal blackness is consumed by heav'nly fire."

And the second with the words of Eliza R. Snow: "Though Deep'ning Trials Thro' Your Way, Press on, ye Saints of God! Ere long the resurrection day will spread its life and truth abroad. Lift up your hearts in praise to God; Let your rejoicing never cease; Though tribulations rage abroad, Christ says, 'In me ye shall have peace.'"

(The Choir sang: "Softly Beams the Sacred Dawning," — Careless; and "Though Deep'ning Trials."—Careless.)

Announcer: We shall now hear on this *Church of the Air* service President Joseph Fielding Smith, Author, Church Historian and President of the Council of Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. President Smith has titled today's talk: "Significance of the Atonement."

PRESIDENT JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

AT THIS season of the year the attention of Christians everywhere is centered on the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is well that it is so; for this is the most important event that ever occurred in our fallen world. When Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden of Eden, there was no death. It was by the violation of a commandment that brought mortality and death upon them. The Lord said to them:

"... Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Genesis 2:16, 17.)

After they had eaten the Lord cursed the ground for their sakes and said:

"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou

eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." (Genesis 3:19.)

This mortal death we have inherited, and it is decreed that every soul shall die. However, it is not the purpose of the Lord that this condition shall endure forever. Justice demanded that the broken law should be repaired. Death was not to gain the victory. Mankind were not to be forced to partake of everlasting destruction from which there could be no relief. Knowing what Adam would do, the Lord has prepared the way for man's escape from this awful fate. To bring this restoration it was necessary that there could be an infinite atonement that would repair the broken law. It would have been Adam's place to pay the penalty

for his transgression; but Adam had placed himself beyond the power by which such an atonement could come. Death had gained a victory over him and likewise over his posterity.

Therefore it became necessary that one who was without sin and free from the power of death, and yet with the power to die, should come to make the sacrifice and redeem mankind from the grave and likewise grant them power of remission of their sins. To fulfill this mission the Son of God was chosen and sent into the world to pay the debt. Peter bears record of this where-in he declared:

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversations received by tradition from your fathers: But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot;

"Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these times for you." (1 Peter 1:18-20.)

Likewise the angel revealed to John in his glorious vision:

"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Rev. 13:8.)

Paul, in writing to the Church in Corinth taught the atonement of Jesus Christ and the redemption from the grave. Said he:

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and became the first fruits of them that slept.

"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

"But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom of God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

"For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

"For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.

"And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." (1 Cor. 15:19-38.)

Jesus proclaimed himself to be the "resurrection and the life," (John 11:25) and to the Jews he said:

"For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. * * *

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you. The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

"For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

"And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

"Marvel not at this: For the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

"And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (John 5:21, 24-29.)

Again he said to the Jews:

"Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Matt. 20:28.)

There is not a more beautiful saying in the Bible than these words of Jesus:

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up;

"That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world, that

he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

"For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

"But he that doeth truth cometh to the light that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." (John 3:14-21.)

The atonement by which men are redeemed, was made by one without blemish and without spot. He had to be one who had life in himself, and therefore all power over death. No mortal man could make the atonement. Moreover, the atonement had to be made by the shedding of blood, for blood is the vitalizing force of the mortal body. Therefore the Lord said to ancient Israel:

"And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth my manner of blood: I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among the people.

"For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." (Lev. 17:10-11.)

In Hebrews it is also written:

"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission." (Hebrews 9:22.)

The Scriptures are replete with passages teaching us that there could be no remission of sins without the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ. He, when with his apostles at the feast of the last Passover, broke and blessed bread and gave it to them to eat; like-

wise he blessed the wine and gave it to them to drink, saying:

"For this is my blood of the testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matt. 26:28.)

Again to his disciples he said:

"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

"As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep. * * *

"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again.

"No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." (John 10:14, 15, 17, 18.)

We learn then from these passages that the atonement is universal in its application. And every creature will benefit by it. First, there is a universal redemption from death. It is unconditional. The children of Adam had no agency in the transgression of their first parents, therefore they are not required to exercise any agency in their redemption from its penalty. They are redeemed from death, without faith, repentance, baptism, or any other act, either of mind or of body. These are the dead who have broken the covenants, violated the commandments and who loved darkness rather than light.

The other salvation is that which is given to the righteous, those who confess repentance and a willingness to obey the commandments of God. These are they of whom the Savior spoke, who have "everlasting life," and shall not come into condemnation; but have "passed from death unto life," which life is to dwell in eternal glory.

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works.

"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works." (Rev. 20:12-13.)