

CHURCH OF THE AIR

Columbia Broadcasting System's *Church of the Air* was presented at 7:30 a.m., Sunday, October 11, 1959. The program was as follows:

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Richard P. Condie, furnished the music for this service, with Alexander Schreiner at the organ. J. Allen Jensen 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 representatives of many faiths may address a nationwide congregation. Today's service, in connection with the Semi-Annual General Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, comes to you from the Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square, through the facilities of Station KSL in Salt Lake City, Utah. Our speaker is Richard L. Evans, a member of the Council of the Twelve of the Church. Music is by the Tabernacle Choir, directed by Richard P. Condie, with Alexander Schreiner at the organ.

With the music of Dudley Buck, the Tabernacle Choir first presents an anthem with words from an Old Testament text: "Behold! there shall be a day, when the watchman upon the mountain top shall cry aloud: 'arise, ye! get ye up unto Mount Zion, unto the Lord your God!' Be glad and rejoice! . . . I, even have redeemed thee! . . ." "Fear Not Ye, O Israel."

(The Choir sang: "Fear Not Ye, O Israel."—Buck-Griffity.)

Announcer: "The morning breaks; the shadows flee; Lo, Zion's standard is unfurled! The dawning of a brighter day, Majestic rises on the world." These words of faith and assurance by Parley P. Pratt are sung now by the Tabernacle Choir to the music of George Careless: "The morning breaks, the shadows flee."

(The Choir sang: "The Morning Breaks."—Careless.)

Announcer: We now hear on this Church of the Air Service Richard L. Evans of the Council of the Twelve of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, frequently referred to as the Mormon Church. Today's talk is titled: "The Ultimate Objective."

ELDER RICHARD L. EVANS

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

Each year on a day so designated, we recall the birth and accomplishment of Christopher Columbus, a man no doubt inspired of God to do what he did, against all ignorance, against all odds and obstacles. He is a symbol, one among many, of the difficulties men can endure if they have sufficient faith in an ultimate objective.

The heroes of history, and the lives of those less known, have proved they could endure working and waiting and great difficulty and discouragement, if there were some purpose, some hope, some reasonable assurance of the ultimate objective.

The long hard journey is not too long if "home" is at the other end. But aimlessness would give men little reason for lengthening out the effort, without some assurance, without some real and solid incentive.

Remembered are the words of Robert Browning:

"Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for?"

But his reach should know that he is reaching for something real—or his reach will weary of the reaching.

Everything has to have a reason, a purpose, an ultimate answer. And for such answers men have searched and sought: Why do we live? What are the purposes of life? Why did the Creator create? Why, indeed, were worlds brought into being?

For answer we would have to go back to the basic, literal facts of our relationship to God, who gave us the opportunity of life, and who is in fact the Father of us all.

"In the beginning," we read in sacred writ, "God created the heaven and the earth. . . ." (Genesis 1:1.)

But for answer we would have to go back before this beginning, with God's great plan and purpose: the Gospel, we have come to call it, which we heard in the heavens before time began, where we were with our Father, the Father of our spirits, and where we agreed to enter mortality to prove ourselves and learn the lessons of life, and where we were assured our Father would send his own beloved Firstborn Son to redeem us from death—that Son of whom Paul said, "God . . . hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being . . . the express image of his person, . . . when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. . . ." (Heb. 1:1-3.)

The whole intent of scripture is one of establishing our relationship with God, our Father, and with his Son, our Savior, and with the eternal plans and purposes for each and all of us, and our relationships to life—and to one another also.

And what *are* these plans and purposes? What would a loving Father want for his children? What would any father want for his children? Peace and health and happiness; learning and progress and improvement; and everlasting life, and everlasting association with those we love. What less could heaven be? What less would a Father plan or propose, for those he loves, for those whom he made "in his own image"? (Gen. 1:27.) He has declared his work and his glory "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Pearl of Great Price, Moses 1:39.) This is the ultimate objective. This is the whole purpose of the Gospel he has given.

This makes life meaningful, everlastingly so. This is the assurance that gives incentive—that gives faith in the face of all searching uncertainty. This makes life worth all the anguish, all the effort, as we make our way through the world—learning that life is for learning, that our Father sent us here for a period of proving, not to lose our way, but with a light within us to lead us, if we will be led, to our highest pos-

sibilities, with freedom and faith and with a few simple rules to keep, which we call commandments.

And as to keeping these commandments, we have our choice—our free agency, as it has come to be called. How could it be otherwise? How could we grow without it? Who can learn to make decisions if someone else always does the deciding? As we have to learn to let our children learn much for themselves (after we have given them all the counsel we reasonably can), so our Father in heaven has sent us here with freedom to decide for ourselves. And to help us to decide, he has given us standards, advice, laws, rules. And they are not arbitrary, unrealistic rules, but are simply counsel from a loving Father, who knows us, who knows our nature. It is not his purpose that his children should be unhappy. No father intends to have his children unhappy. And for this reason he has given us commandments for our health and happiness, and peace and progress and quiet conscience.

In a remarkable commencement address, some months before he left this life, Mr. Cecil B. DeMille made this moving observation concerning freedom, and the purpose of life, and the keeping of the commandments:

"We are too inclined to think of law as something merely restrictive," he said, "something hemming us in. We sometimes think of law as the opposite of liberty. But that is a false conception. That is not the way that God's inspired prophets and lawgivers looked upon the law. Law has a twofold purpose. It is meant to govern. It is also meant to educate. . . ."

"God does not contradict himself. He did not create man and then, as an afterthought, impose upon him a set of arbitrary, irritating, restrictive rules. He made man free—and then gave him the commandments to keep him free.

"We cannot break the Ten Commandments. We can only break ourselves against them—or else, by keeping them, rise through them to the fulness of freedom under God. God means us to be free. With divine daring, he gave us the power of choice." (Excerpts from the Commencement Address at Brigham Young University, May 31, 1957.)

In our own day and dispensation, the

Lord has restated the law of cause and effect, with these words: "There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated." (Doctrine & Covenants 130:20-21.)

The commandments are not old-fashioned, out-dated, or merely man-made. They apply to our own as to other ages. And whenever we do anything basically against them, we pay a price—not because someone has said so, but because we are what we are, and because we are irrevocably affected by the very laws of life. No matter what someone says, and no matter who would set them aside, there are still heartaches and heartbreaks and inescapable consequences for those who lie and cheat and bear false witness; for those who are immoral and unfaithful to loved ones; for those who abuse themselves physically, who indulge appetites, who acquire harmful habits; for those who set aside sure and safe standards, who are coarse in conduct, and run contrary to the commandments, to the basic laws of life.

To find peace—the peace within, the peace that passeth understanding—men must live in honesty, honoring each other, honoring obligations, working willingly, loving and cherishing loved ones, serving and considering others, with patience, with virtue, with faith and forbearance, with the assurance that life is for learning, for serving, for repenting, and improving. And God be thanked for the blessed principle of repenting and improving, which is a way that is open to us all.

There is a Kingdom, and there is a King. And there are requirements for citizenship in the Kingdom—commandments, laws, ordinances, and obligations, and what is required of us for peace in this world, and exaltation in the world to come, is to follow him and keep his commandments.

We would witness this day that the Lord God lives, and that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, his Divine and only Begotten Son, did redeem us from death, and even now is our advocate with the Father, and sits by his Father's side, and

that the fulness of the Gospel is again on earth with power and authority to administer in its saving and exalting ordinances.

There is this certainty of assurance also; that he is willing to reveal his mind and will to us today, to guide us, to hear and answer prayer, to open his arms to the prayerful and repentant, even as he has done in other days.

And against the tension and trouble of our time—against injustice, threats, and force and fear; want and worry; discouragement and despondency; unfaithfulness and duplicity; and much of misunderstanding, and much of inhumanity from man to man—against all this there is the blessed assurance of the glorious ultimate objective: of salvation for all, as offered by our Savior, and of exaltation for those who will work at it and win it; of justice, of compensation, of the ultimate defeat of evil; of peace and of progress and health and happiness, of everlasting life with sweet reunion with loved ones.

And this day we would plead with all men, the searching and the sorrowing, the sick, the discouraged, those burdened with sin and unquiet conscience; those who feel lost and lonely, and those who have lost those they love—to all we would plead: take courage and faith and assurance, according to the promises and purposes of Him who is the Father of us all, who is mindful of us all.

By walking in his ways and keeping his commandments, God grant that all of us together may move on to the glorious ultimate objective that is offered all of us—to the highest opportunities of everlasting life, with our loved ones with us, always, and forever, in Jesus' name. Amen.

(The Choir sang: "How Great the Wisdom and the Love."—McIntyre.)

Announcer: The Tabernacle Choir has recalled a sacramental song by Eliza R. Snow with the music of Thomas McIntyre: "How great the wisdom and the Love that filled the courts on high, And sent the Savior from above to suffer bleed and die."

And now, the Tabernacle Choir closes with the words of Helen A. Dickinson, sung in a worshipful setting by D. F. E.