

ELDER OSCAR A. KIRKHAM
Of the First Council of the Seventy

I humbly pray that the spirit of the Lord will be with me that I may be blessed as I fill this serious task.

I rejoice this happy morning to know that people have been trailing for hours up the mountainside of Mt. Tamalpais and Mt. Rubideaux and many other places for Easter services. Yes, all across America crosses have been raised and people have gone or are going to renew their faith in the Lord that fear may leave their hearts and that joy may enter there.

I am happy that America is a Christian country although we hear much about its sin and misgivings.

THE SPIRIT OF EASTER BRINGS REJOICING

I hope and pray that this happy Easter morning into the heart of General George C. Marshall, our Secretary of State, will come a renewed faith in God. I hope that he will have the courage of a great pioneer in a new world to hold fast to what he said last week: When Germany's problem is solved, it will be of the people and by the people and for the people. These are not his exact words, but what he said were the words of a man representing a free people.

I rejoice in the spirit of Easter. It was faith that rolled back the stone to let the Savior come into the garden. It is faith that will roll back the stone across the path of the human race and let the spirit of the Son of Man come again. Fear will vanish as we cultivate faith in our hearts and lives.

I rejoice in the glorious centennial celebration that is before us. May I say there are other pioneer bands standing now on eastern hills that overlook this valley and a thousand others. It is the youth of America, and they are ready to go forward into the valley of their dreams and do great and good things. May we, the leadership of this Church, have faith in them and give them the opportunity to come forward with their glorious faith and strength. They are waiting for it. They are anxious for the responsibility of it.

AN INCIDENT AT THE TEMPLE AT MESA

Two years ago at the temple at Mesa, Arizona, I was with about a thousand of our young people. From the temple wall we had a glorious Easter morning service. The orchestra played; the chorus sang; it was lovely; and then I walked around the temple wall. As I passed one corner, I saw over behind a tall pine tree a young man embracing a young lady and kissing her. It was one of those embarrassing things that we sometimes see in life, and yet we confess we are somewhat interested. I started hurriedly to go away, and the young man motioned to me to come. I went over to him, and he

said, "Brother Kirkham, we are not at all ashamed of what you saw. I just asked this young lady to be my wife, and when you looked, she had said, 'Yes,' and I was sealing the bargain." "Well," I said, "I hope you are coming back here again." "Yes," he said, "that was part of what we had talked about."

Back to the temple of God! Yes, that was the desire of their hearts. Let us have more faith in them, not fear, but faith in them.

THE CENTENNIAL A YEAR OF MISSIONARY OPPORTUNITY

I have looked forward to the happy day that is now here—our centennial celebration. I love a parade. I love to hear a band playing. I love to see banners flying. I love to see great monuments unveiled. These are lovely things to see and hear. When I was in Mexico City recently and stood on the crowded streets watching the parade when President Aleman was made president of that great republic, there were many things going on in the streets; but the great things were happening on the sidewalk. I did not see Mexico as the military units went by displaying their pride, but around and about me on the sidewalk was the real story of Mexico; and so it will be with us. The people that come will be listening to the story on the sidewalk as well as enjoying what they see in parade. This is a great year of missionary service for us—a great year for the pioneer spirit. I saw it in my mind's eye yesterday, so beautifully exemplified when President Smith, at our great priesthood meeting last night, told the Boy Scout that had given his seat to an adult, "Now you may come up and sit with us." Yes, that was the spirit of his father and his grandfather. He was only carrying on. No spoken words were more glorious than that.

When President Clark made the appeal again, as he has done before, to "be one," I saw a united band coming into this valley. They were one.

President McKay last night after the priesthood meeting called together the bishops and the presidents of stakes of some of these near-by stakes. He was recruiting for our great pageant to be held in this tabernacle. It has been difficult to get men, but it wasn't difficult when President McKay stood before them recruiting two hundred that will participate. Every hand went up when the people heard the voice of the president. I thought I saw Brigham Young recruiting the Mormon Battalion.

When our friends come to our homes as President Smith said, "Open your doors in hospitality." They will forget much of the glamor of the street and the highways, but they will see the pioneers in what we do.

May there be children there to play with them. May there be family prayer held unafraid. Let the children pray. When they lift the photo from the mantle and say, "Does this happen to be your son?" may you have the high privilege of saying, "Yes, he's our

ambassador. He's out in the world preaching the gospel." Then when they leave your home, the memory of these things will linger with them when all else is forgotten.

God help us to remember that this is a missionary year; and in honoring those that went before, we shall courageously and with faith-destroying fear give to these visitors the hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ by our humble living. I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER JOSEPH F. MERRILL

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

Brethren and sisters, listeners here and elsewhere:

JOSEPH SMITH'S FIRST VISION

Mormonism, as the world generally calls the religious faith taught by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is noted for many characteristic teachings, one of which is that Joseph Smith was divinely called, beginning with a most wonderful and glorious vision. Relative to this matter a basic and fundamental question that every member of the Church may rightfully ask, as well as every honest investigator, is "Did Joseph Smith really see God?"

As I view it, this is perhaps the most natural and logical question that can be asked concerning the origin of Mormonism. It is one that might well challenge the attention of every person who believes in God and in life beyond the grave, whether he is a Mormon or non-Mormon.

All informed Latter-day Saints know the story of the first vision as related by Joseph Smith. He was a member of a sincerely religious family but belonged to no church. Though he was only fourteen years old at the time, this fact of non-church membership worried him. As a means of helping him to solve his problem, he read the Bible with deep interest, for he wanted to know which of the contending churches was the right one to join. He therefore resolved to heed the injunction of James (James 1:5, 6) and so went into the woods and prayed that God would give him wisdom that he might know what to do. In answer to the boy's simple prayer, he related that he was enveloped in a pillar of brilliant light which descended from above. Looking up he beheld two personages standing above him whose brightness and glory defied all description. One of them, calling him by name and pointing to the other said, "This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!" and then Joseph heard the voice of Jesus Christ, the Son, and received instructions from him.

Thus, according to his story, Joseph Smith, the fourteen-year-old lad, saw the Father and the Son and heard their voices. So far as the records indicate, this was the most glorious vision ever given to mortal man. Never before had both Father and Son appeared simulta-