

**PRESIDENT J. REUBEN CLARK, JR.***First Counselor in the First Presidency*

My brethren and sisters, we come now to the opening of the closing session of the Conference. The building is again crowded to capacity with thousands on the outside who can not get in.

The Choir sang an anothem, "Lift Up Your Heads, O ye Gates" (Handel).

Elder Byron O. Colton, President of the Roosevelt Stake, offered the opening prayer.

The Choir sang "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" (Williams).

**ELDER STEPHEN L RICHARDS***Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

I should like to say a word in support of the beautification plan sponsored both by our Church and the Centennial Commission. I can scarcely think of anything more appropriate as a tribute to the Pioneers and their heroic struggle. They loved this land. It was at once their refuge, their home and their destiny. They called it Zion because that word most nearly characterized the utopia of safety, peace, progress and achievement which they sought to establish. And a real Zion it was to the thousands of sincere and ardent men and women who gathered here from many nations to find expression for the loftiest ideals and noblest purposes ever to be found in the human soul.

This country was beautiful when the Pioneers first came. It was virgin territory. The hills, the streams, the forests and the plains were lovely, just as nature always is until marred by the hand of man. It has taken nearly a century to demonstrate the natural beauty of the country which the Pioneers chose. It may be that they themselves did not realize that it was possessed of so many marvelous scenic attractions which have come in for appreciation in recent years. It is doubtful that the variety, the grandeur and the novelty of our natural scenery can be duplicated within equal space anywhere in the entire world.

## DESCRIPTION OF NEARBY BEAUTY SPOTS

I wish you would take a short trip with me. I am a lover of nature and the great outdoors, and I have taken this trip many times. I might escort you on many other beautiful excursions in our intermountain empire. I choose this one merely as a sample. We usually begin by going to Fish Lake, then on to Bryce and the Grand Canyon, back to Cedar Breaks and down to Zion. The regard that I have for these places has grown with the years until they have become dear and sacred. I must tell you what they mean to me.

I love Fish Lake for her tranquility. She nestles in the pines and quaking aspens, cool, calm and inviting. When I row a boat over her placid waters, crystal-clear, revealing the schools of trout so sophisticated as to be unafraid and untempted, a peace and contentment come over me. I feel reconciled with life. The broken harmonies are mended. My soul is calmed.

I am passionately fond of Bryce. She is a cameo of nature—not big, but big enough to have dignity. One looks down on her, but it is literally and not figuratively, for she commands esteem as well as love. I have seen her at sunrise, at sunset, and in the moonlight; and as the light and shadows play on her jeweled spires, her cathedrals, her organ, her dainty nymphs and graces, the ethereal world seems very near, the imagination runs riot with the senses, and the soul of man is transported into a realm of exquisite beauty and loveliness.

#### IMPRESSION MADE ON FRIENDS

When I first saw her I could not rest until I had taken two parties of relatives and friends in quick succession to enjoy with us the spell of her supernal beauty. I once included with my guests two dear friends, lovers of art and nature, whom, were I to mention their names, you would know. I could scarcely await the opportunity of seeing them enjoy their first vision of the canyon. They approached the rim expectantly but of course not knowing, as no one who has not seen can ever know, what awaited them. I thought there would be exclamations of delight and wonder. There were not. They just looked and as they looked, tears flowed down their cheeks like drops of rain. I'm not ashamed to say my eyes filled too. There were no words, only feeling—feeling too deep for expression.

#### GRAND CANYON, CEDAR BREAKS AND ZION PARK

The Grand Canyon is so stupendous, so colossal and overwhelming as to defy description. Into its awful caverns could all the works of man be dumped and lost. The mighty gorge is the demonstration of nature's power in changing the face of earth. How puny and insignificant it makes the strength of man appear! Humility and meekness are the burden of the message that rises from the silver ribbon of the river in its depths, up through the mists, to the reverent pilgrims who gather at this wonder of the world.

Cedar Breaks is a masterpiece in oil, a wonderful perspective extending far out on the hearth of the setting sun. The brilliant hues of her color scheme leave little to be desired in a work of art. I enjoy the approach through the wild meadows and the pines. She is usually seen in passing but she is of more than passing worth.

After all of these I come to Zion. Zion the lofty, the majestic where you look up instead of down. In its major concept it is not a poem, although there are a thousand poems in its sequestered nooks, its lovely trees, shrubs and wild flowers, its lacy vines and

clinging mosses, its mists, its mirror pool, its delicate and gorgeous colors and its myriad charms. Rather it is a sermon—inspiring, exalting, lifting man from the baser things in life to the nobler.

Like all worthy things it is well guarded. The Watchman and the Sentinel stand in the gateway and the Three Patriarchs solemnly scrutinize all who enter. When within, however, the friendly Twin Brothers and gracious Lady Mountain beckon on with hospitality and good cheer. The pilgrim is at home in the leafy valley. He may pursue his quest without hindrance or disturbance, except perhaps for the commotion of his thoughts and his feelings as he ponders this marvel of God's handiwork.

#### AN AWE-INSPIRING SYMBOL

I have looked diligently to find some one thing—some symbol that would epitomize the meaning of it all. I think that I found it many years ago. It is not El Gubernador,—the Great White Throne, that rears its lofty crested peak high into the blue of heaven, as many might suppose it to be. It is not Cable Mountain, nor the Ledge of the Weeping Rock, nor even Angel's Landing, significant as that may be. It is not the Temple of Sinawava, much as I love to worship in that peerless cathedral whose floor is the verdant valley with river running through, whose walls are chiseled mile-high by the Master Sculptor and whose arch is the blue of the firmament.

It is a mountain slightly more modest perhaps than some of these. I wish it might have had the name I wanted it to have—it is called Red Arch Mountain. There is an arch, it is true, and it is red. But they who named it could not have seen what made the arch or they would have proclaimed it Sinai, the Mountain of the Lord, for out of the face of this imposing cliff, a tablet of stone of vast proportions has been taken, perfectly hewn. In my fancy I have always seen that massive tablet inscribed by the finger of God, broken loose by the fierce lightning and resounding thunder and cast to the mighty Moses and by that Prophet proclaimed in sonorous and piercing voice down through all the ages of man. When I stand in awe before this portentous symbol wrought without hands in the everlasting hills I seem to hear as in their primeval freshness the great commandments of Jehovah:

Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.  
 Thou shalt not steal.  
 Thou shalt not commit adultery.  
 Thou shalt not kill.  
 Thou shalt not covet.  
 Thou shalt not bear false witness.  
 Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.  
 Honor thy father and thy mother, that it may go well with thee in  
 the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

#### IMPROVEMENTS NOTED

What a strange paradox it seems that civilization should be

unbeautiful. To the lover of nature, every landscape, even the desert and waste places, has charm and attraction until man digs a hole, builds a shack, erects a telegraph pole or a smokestack. But civilization need not and should not be ugly. Man's construction can beautify rather than deface nature if there is the will, the energy and the art to make it so.

Even commercial and industrial structures and appliances can be made good looking. It is noticeable that railroad stations, once grimy and unsightly affairs, are now frequently embellished with bits of lawn, shrubs, flowers, trees and sometimes with pleasing architecture in elaborate settings. Factories, power houses and other plants, once bare and forbidding, are now covered with vines set in pleasant landscapes, with adequate exposure to light, air and sunshine. These transformations in the commercial world give warrant to the hope that some day we shall have beauty in business and that it will be a disgrace for any enterprise to be conducted in ugly surroundings.

The chief consideration and the problems, however, in this beautification program probably lie with homes, churches, schools and other public properties. In the interest of competition business institutions may be pretty well relied upon to go forward with artistic improvements, but what can be relied upon to move the home owners, the church goers and the school patrons to do their part in this worthy endeavor?

#### COOPERATION NECESSARY

I believe that nothing but a wholesome, individual and community pride will accomplish the task. To stimulate that pride it is necessary to understand and appreciate the real values involved. I wish I could say something to enhance that understanding and appreciation.

I revert to the first item which I mentioned,—we live in a remarkably beautiful country. Our scenery is now being exploited. It is true that in the main this is done for commercial reasons but nevertheless all the people are beneficiaries of the wide advertising and the increased tourist travel which such exploitation brings. From a purely monetary standpoint, it is the poorest kind of business to spoil the landscape that we are trying so hard to sell. Every dirty, unkept, unpainted, and shabby home; every unsightly outbuilding; every old corral and fallen fence; every scraggly dead tree; every barren and forbidding school house and church and courthouse with broken windows, curled shingles and other evidences of neglect; every littered and weedy vacant lot, street and highway is a definite liability against the credit asset of this productive tourist traffic we are striving so hard to get. Chambers of Commerce, civic clubs and other agencies engaged in its promotion need, more than anything else, cooperation in the items I have mentioned. I wish I could pledge that support for every home and community in this

state and also for every home and community in which our people dwell.

Now this is the business side of the question. I want to present another aspect of equal if not superior importance. Some of you may remember an old play which was popular on the boards many years ago. It was called "Ingomar, the Barbarian." There was a scene in this play between the barbarian and Parthenia, the fair maiden whom he had come to love. The girl is picking flowers and Ingomar, wondering at her interest in them, asks her, "What is their use?" Rather startled at such a question, the maiden answers, "Why, they're beautiful! That's their use."

#### LOVE OF BEAUTY INNATE

I think perhaps this gives a good idea of the esthetic and pure love of the beautiful. I believe that all people are by nature endowed with something of this love in their hearts, and it needs but cultivation and encouragement to develop into one of the loveliest aspects of living. Almost all are sensitive to color, to form and symmetry, so that good architecture and good landscaping with trees, flowers, shrubs and lawns have a very appreciable effect, even though sometimes unconsciously, upon all persons.

The love of home is one of the great virtues of the race and undoubtedly the beauty of home has done much to stimulate that love. Fortunately it is not necessary to be rich or learned to have a love of beauty. Very humble folk often have true artistic appreciation. I once knew an old lady who spent many hours scrubbing a long board walk leading from her house to some outbuildings. I asked her why she did it. "Oh, I don't know," she said, "but it seems to me the outside should be as clean as the inside." It's very fortunate that it doesn't take much money to indulge esthetic tastes, particularly in the care of a home. Cleanliness and neatness are the chief requirements and personal energy, ambition and pride can supply these. The humblest cottage can be a lovely place, a haven of refuge and a constant delight if it is but kept neat and tidy and clean.

I think of all implements that make for homely beauty there is none that compares with the broom and the rake. Well swept floors and porches and well raked yards never yet failed to bring their thrill of satisfaction and pride.

Next in importance to a neat yard is a green and colorful one. Any house, great or small, attains its real attraction and beauty in a setting which nature, with a little human effort, provides. What a pity it is not to take advantage of this kindly provision of nature when it costs so little and means so much. I'm grateful that out in our country relatively few families, and especially the children, are required to live in apartments and tenement houses without surrounding grounds. As I have driven through the streets of New York and the bigger cities and seen the little tots struggling to make their play dreams come true, out on the hard, unyielding pavement, with-

out a spear of green or a flower or a tree, I have felt that I would like to pick up every child and bring it to a cottage where it could dig its fingers and toes into mother earth, not encrusted with an impenetrable shell.

#### AN APPEAL FOR BEAUTIFUL HOME SURROUNDINGS

What a marvelous boon is mother earth! How abundantly she yields of her hidden chemicals and nutriments to make the verdure and the vegetation that gladdens and supports the race. My brothers and sisters,—countrymen of these mountain valleys, I fear we scarcely appreciate the inestimable privilege that we have to live on the soil. Oh, for just a little labor and not much money to make the soil that we have taken from nature's domain and enclosed around our houses, beautiful and attractive!

I have said this much about esthetic considerations in the hope of encouraging our home people to make the most of their opportunities. If every man and woman who lives in a home would embellish it to the best of his ability I should feel little concerned about public buildings and property. There would be such pride engendered by these home-loving people that they would not permit the meeting house and the school house to suffer in comparison with their homes.

Here a little cooperation will bring the desired results. The contribution of a few hours of labor with perhaps a little cash will landscape the meeting house and transform it from a bleak and barren structure into a beautiful and inviting edifice nestled among trees, shrubs and lawns. The same may be said of the school house except that the school authorities are chiefly responsible and their responsibility for an ill-kept, forbidding and ugly school house is not so much to the town or community whose civic pride is hurt, as to the children, the boys and girls, who all through their lives will carry the impressions of ugliness which their surroundings inflict upon them.

The converse of what I have said is also true, namely, that beautifully landscaped and attractive churches, schools and other public buildings will do much to stimulate better care of homes and all private property. In fact, nothing can be done to stir and encourage the esthetic sense in any aspect of our surroundings and our living without promoting generally a more beautiful world.

#### DUTY OF MAN TO BEAUTIFY THE EARTH

I will turn your attention to another aspect of this subject with which I will conclude. I am sure that beauty is intimately associated with pure religion. I believe that our Father in Heaven is a God of order and of beauty. I doubt if any rational being ever entertained a concept of God, that is, as a personal Being, except in surroundings of beauty and exquisite loveliness. We so envisage heaven.

We as a church believe and so declare that in the end the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory. When this is

done it will be beautiful and glorious beyond finite conception. This being our doctrine, do you think it becoming in God's children to deface the earth while we sojourn here? Being the stewards and custodians of the resources which are committed to us, have we not an obligation to use them, preserve them and return them in the best possible condition of which our circumstances will permit? I think upon reflection you will say that we have such an obligation and that it is very definitely our task to make God's footstool as beautiful as we may. For "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof," and the righteous "and their generations shall inherit the earth from generation to generation forever and forever."

What a delightful abode for men this good earth could be if men would but make it so! If neighbors all had flower gardens and gossip centered around daffodils, lilacs and petunias, there would be far more kindness and sympathy in the world. Even the thorns of roses do not irritate men's souls.

You will find that the unfortunate young men who today fill our prisons and other houses of detention do not come from pretty cottages with vines growing over the door, carefully trained by patient, tender mothers and you will find that the proud and haughty and arrogant of the world are not the true product of the soil. It is no misstatement that "the meek shall inherit the earth," for it is only they who truly acknowledge and worship the Master Giver.

Need I say more to persuade us that every consideration,—business, esthetic and religious,—constrains our people to take the lead in this worthy cause of beautifying the land? I understand that expert advice will be made available in the laying out of grounds, in planting and in other features calculated to reach the objectives of the program. With this aid our efforts will be successful if only our interest and our energy are sufficient.

#### A GREAT LEADER MENTIONED

What if our great and wise pioneer leader, Brigham Young, should return on the hundredth anniversary of his entrance into this the Salt Lake Valley? How it would please him and thrill his noble soul to find the cities, the towns and villages which he planned so well and strove so diligently and courageously to found, all in the bloom of midsummer, with farms and fields laden with maturing crops, with pastures and hills dotted with flocks and herds, with factories, business blocks, public buildings, schools and churches reflecting a vast development in enterprise, culture and religion which he so earnestly advocated; and then too, most thrilling of all, if he could find thousands of contented homes, nestled in the shade of myriads of trees, growing out of lawns, shrubs and fragrant flowers, all neat and clean, the habitation of an honest, thrifty, God-loving, joyous people, and all this in the desert valleys which he first saw, now transformed and beautified by the enterprise and the idealism

of the generations that followed him! Surely the cup of his gratitude would be running over.

Why may it not be so? What more worthy and fitting tribute could we offer to those patient, devoted men and women whose courage, whose intelligence and whose labor have bequeathed to us the priceless heritage we now enjoy?

God grant that our love, our gratitude and our veneration may find tangible expression in beauty—beauty of life and surroundings, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

### MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT HEBER J. GRANT

*President Clark:* We are pleased and I am sure we shall be enlightened by a message which has just come from President Heber J. Grant, which I shall read:

Los Angeles, April 7, 1940

Presidents J. Reuben Clark, Jr., and David O. McKay,  
Care Mormon Conference, Salt Lake Tabernacle,  
Salt Lake City, Utah.

I cannot adequately express the joy that came from listening in on this morning's session of Conference. It came through wonderfully clear and was a spiritual feast in which many friends here joined. I was especially pleased that President McKay was able to speak with such ease. I am looking forward with great anticipation to this afternoon's session in which I shall join with you in spirit. I am feeling fine today and improving some every day. Please convey again to the Saints my love and blessings.

HEBER J. GRANT.

### BISHOP LEGRAND RICHARDS

*Presiding Bishop of the Church*

More than anything else this day, my brethren and sisters, I feel grateful to the Lord for membership in this great Church. It has been a wonderful privilege to associate with President Grant, President Clark, and President McKay in the weekly meetings that we have been privileged to hold with them as members of the Presiding Bishopric. To me they are indeed prophets of God. I love and respect the members of the Quorum of the Twelve likewise, and the Seven Presidents of Seventy. I am grateful to the Lord for my Counselors because they are truly men of God. I am grateful for all you who are here representing the great body of the Church, these General Boards, the Mission Presidents, Stake Presidents, and their associates, the Bishops, these Patriarchs, and all who are putting forth their energies for the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God in the earth.