



**By President J. Reuben Clark Jr. (1871–1961)**

First Counselor in the First Presidency

## THEY OF THE LAST WAGON

*In that last wagon there was devotion and loyalty and integrity and, above and beyond everything else, faith in the Brethren and in God's power.*

I would like to say something about the last wagon in each of the long wagon trains that toiled slowly over the plains. . . .

. . . Back in the last wagon, not always could they see the Brethren way out in front, and the blue heaven was often shut out from their sight by heavy, dense clouds of the dust of the earth. Yet day after day, they of the last wagon pressed forward, worn and tired, footsore, sometimes almost disheartened, borne up by their faith that God loved them, that the restored gospel was true, and that the Lord led and directed the Brethren out in front. Sometimes, they in the last wagon glimpsed, for an instant, when faith surged strongest, the glories of a celestial world, but it seemed so far away, and the vision so quickly vanished because want and weariness and heartache and sometimes



discouragement were always pressing so near.

When the vision faded, their hearts sank. But they prayed again and pushed on, with little praise, with not too much encouragement, and never with adulation. . . . Yet in that last wagon there was devotion and loyalty and integrity and, above and beyond everything else, faith in the Brethren and in God's power and goodness. . . .

So through dust and dirt, . . . they crept along till, passing down through its portals, the valley welcomed them to rest and home. . . .

But hundreds of these stalwart souls of undoubting faith and great prowess were not yet at their journey's end.

Brother Brigham [Young] again called them to the colors of the kingdom of God and sent them to settle

the valleys, near and remote, in [the] vast mountains of refuge. So again they yoked their oxen and hitched up their teams, and . . . wended their slow way to new valleys, again trusting with implicit faith in the wisdom and divine guidance of their Moses. . . .

And thousands upon thousands of these tens of thousands, from the first till now, all the elect of God, measured to their humble calling and to their destiny as fully as Brother Brigham and the others measured to theirs, and God will so reward them. They were pioneers in word and thought and act and faith, even as were they of more exalted station. The building of this intermountain empire was not done in a corner by a select few but by this vast multitude flowing in from many nations, who came and labored and wrought, faithfully following their divinely called leaders. . . .

So to these humble but great souls, . . . I humbly render my love, my respect, my reverent homage. ■

*From an October 1947 general conference address, "To Them of the Last Wagon."*