



J. Reuben Clark, Jr.
Statesman and Counselor
By Stephen S. Davis

Originally published in:
Counselors to the Prophets
Michael K. Winder, ed., Eborn Books (2001)

Joshua Reuben Clark, Jr. was called to serve in the First Presidency by President Heber J. Grant in 1933 and went on to serve under presidents George Albert Smith and David O. McKay. By his death in 1961, he had served in the First Presidency for twenty-eight years and six months, longer than any other man who has not been President of the Church. For generations, Church members could hardly conceive of a First Presidency without President Clark and had grown to love the

eloquence of his discourses as well as his personal warmth, humility, self-deprecating humor, and wit.

But prior to his call to the highest council of Church leadership and administration, he had already distinguished himself in the eyes of the world, serving as United States Ambassador to Mexico, Undersecretary of State, and in a host of other prominent positions in national and international affairs. Through this experience, he became a nationally renowned statesman and example of upright, Latter-day Saint living. His instruction on Church administration, the mission of Church welfare and the danger of debt, the sacrifice of the pioneers, and Church education remain guiding principles. The example he set of humility and sacrifice in church service left an indelible impression on the minds of the Saints. Decades after his death, J. Reuben Clark, Jr. remains one of the most prolifically quoted, revered, and beloved counselors to have ever served in the First Presidency.

J. Reuben Clark, Jr. was born on September 1, 1871 in Grantsville, Tooele County, Utah, thirty-three miles west of Salt Lake City. His mother, Mary Woolley Clark, was the daughter of Edwin D. Woolley, a friend of Joseph Smith and prominent bishop in Salt Lake City. A remark attributed to both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young in reference to Bishop Woolley's obstinate nature was that if he were ever to die by drowning, "look for his body upstream, for he would never go along with the current."¹ Reuben's father, Joshua R. Clark, had worked his way west through Utah as a trapper and freighter and felt drawn to the Church upon attending his first Sunday service, being baptized a month afterward.² His family would later say that Joshua had been headed to California to look for gold and found the "gold of the gospel" instead.

When Reuben was nine years old, twenty-three-year-old Heber J. Grant was called as president of the Tooele Stake, which encompassed Grantsville. President Grant had grown up in the Salt Lake Thirteenth Ward, which coincidentally was presided over by Reuben's grandfather, Bishop Woolley. As a boy, Heber had pelted Bishop Woolley's barn with baseballs in an effort to strengthen his throwing arm and improve his aim, initially giving the bishop a false impression of Heber; but the bishop soon realized Heber's potential and drive to improve himself. After

President Grant was sustained by the Clark Family and the rest of the assembled Saints of the Tooele Stake, Bishop Woolley bore his reassuring testimony that their new stake president was indeed called and chosen by the Lord.

From his youth, Reuben was an anxious learner and ambitious student. His father once related that Reuben would “rather miss his meals than to miss a day from school.”³ After completing the eighth grade, the highest grade offered at the Grantsville school, Reuben repeated it two more times. When he turned nineteen, Joshua Sr. consented to sending him to Latter-day Saints’ College in Salt Lake City. This was a wonderful opportunity for Reuben, not only because it allowed him to satisfy his thirst for knowledge, but because it brought him into contact with the College’s principal, Dr. James E. Talmage. Although not beginning his formal education until age ten only to be held back by the lack of formal educational opportunities in Grantsville, Reuben was an immediate academic success at Latter-day Saints’ College and went on to graduate from the University of Utah as class valedictorian.⁴

Dr. Talmage quickly recognized J. Reuben Clark’s penchant for scholarship and took advantage of Reuben’s skills and earnestness. Throughout his college years, Reuben worked a vigorous schedule as Dr. Talmage’s secretary, which provided money for tuition. When the First Presidency offered the position of Curator of the Deseret Museum to Dr. Talmage, they stated that if Reuben would serve as assistant curator, his service would “be credited to him the same as” a regular Church proselyting mission.⁵ Under Dr. Talmage’s tutelage, Reuben was exposed to a new world of scientific and religious study. One project in particular had a great impact on Reuben’s spiritual development. When the First Presidency called on Dr. Talmage to present a series of lectures on the Articles of Faith, Reuben devoted himself to the cause and meticulously edited and proofed his mentor’s manuscripts for publication. *The Articles of Faith*, by James E. Talmage still stands as a classic work in Church doctrine. When J. Reuben Clark married Luacine Annetta Savage, daughter of renowned Salt Lake photographer Charles R. Savage, in the Salt Lake Temple on September 14, 1898, it was only fitting that his mentor James E. Talmage perform the ceremony (Talmage was a temple sealer at the time).

After teaching high school in Heber City and then back in Salt Lake at Latter-day Saints’ College and Salt Lake Business School, Reuben served as principal of the Southern Branch of the State Normal School in Cedar City. Ultimately, however, he felt frustrated as a schoolteacher and yearned for a change in career. After attempting to study law on his own, Reuben decided that he needed a formal legal education, something that was not obtainable within the confines of Great Basin Desert, and he was accepted to Columbia University Law School in New York City. Before departing for the East Coast with his wife and two daughters, he received counsel and official sanction to lead his family into “Babylon” from Church President Joseph F. Smith, who set Reuben apart on a type of mission “to be an exemplary Latter-day Saint among the gentiles of the world.”⁶ He would later remark that this was a mission from which he had never been released.

Although blessed with an incredible intellect, hard work was the price of every achievement Reuben earned. His knowledge, legal opinions, sermons, and written works were nothing but the result of laborious study, thought, and effort. At Columbia Law School, his work ethic again paid off. He earned a position as an editor on the law review and excelled in his courses. In a notoriously difficult contracts course, he fared better than one of his classmates, Franklin D. Roosevelt, who failed the class.⁷ His daughter Marianne fondly reminisced that even though her father worked or studied every night until late, his children were always a welcome interruption.⁸ His success in law school as a student, editor, and legal clerk would catapult him into the midst of international legal and political drama in service to the federal government.

In 1906, Reuben graduated from Columbia and was appointed Assistant Solicitor of the United States State Department. In this position and then as Solicitor himself, J. Reuben Clark was often confronted with critical issues of international consequence. For example, when the Mexican Revolution erupted in 1911, he was called upon to make crucial decisions and recommend courses of action to the secretary of state and President Howard Taft. Of particular concern to Solicitor Clark was the plight of the Saints who lived in Mexican colonies, who were often caught in the middle of the conflict and whose presence in Mexico was resented by the revolutionaries.⁹

When the United States entered World War I, Reuben was commissioned as a major in the Judge Advocate General Officer Reserve Corps and later asked to become Special Counsel to Judge Advocate General. Although much of his work went unheralded, Reuben earned great respect for his thorough research, analytical skills, and decisiveness.

In the early Twentieth Century, life far away from the strength of Church and family in Utah was not easy for a small family of Latter-day Saints. While in the east, Reuben and Luacine's family would grow to embrace four children, Louise (born in 1899), Marianne (born in 1901), J. Reuben Clark III (born in 1908), and Luacine (born in 1914). Although Reed Smoot, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve and U.S. Senator from Utah, held limited Sunday evening church services in his home, the Clarks were largely left to provide for their own gospel study and religious education of their children and taught the children the importance of church attendance and participation by attending services at other churches. The family traveled back to Salt Lake in the summer to visit family and attend to their children's baptisms. While Reuben's workload prevented frequent attendance at social events, guests entertained at the Clark home were often surprised at first to be greeted with lemonade instead of the more customary drinks. For all the awkward questions swirling around concerning "Mormon fanaticism," especially in Washington where the Senate was attempting to oust Senator Smoot for his membership in the Church, the Clarks maintained a quiet dignity amongst their neighbors, and, for his part, Reuben led an irreproachable standard of circumspect living to fulfill his call as "an exemplary Latter-day Saint."

After resigning from the State Department in 1913 following the election of Woodrow Wilson, J. Reuben Clark turned his attention to the practice of law. His family returned to Utah, and he opened law offices in Washington, D.C., New York City, and Salt Lake and specialized in international and corporate law. One of his first major clients was the Japanese government, who enlisted his services to combat anti-Japanese discrimination in California. Japanese citizens had been subject to segregation laws, and a new statute reinforced discrimination by prohibiting Japanese aliens from purchasing land in the state.¹⁰ Officials in the Japanese government were so impressed with

Reuben's efforts on their behalf that they extended an offer for him to become their permanent counsel in Tokyo and reside in the Imperial Palace. It was a tempting offer for the financially worried father. So much so, in fact, that he consulted President Joseph F. Smith about the matter, just as he had done when making his decision to leave Utah for the East. This time, however, President Smith counseled Reuben not to go and conveyed that the Lord had a work for him to do and that it was not in Japan. Elder Heber J. Grant, who would issue the call to Reuben to serve as his counselor, had opened the Japanese mission some ten years earlier. Reuben turned down the offer, but over twenty-five years later, the actions of the Far East country caused him anguish when his son-in-law, Captain Mervyn J. Bennion of the U.S.S. West Virginia, was killed in the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. But for all of Reuben's success as an international lawyer of great renown, his intense workload, the strains of managing multiple offices, and the unfulfilled promises of some clients to fully compensate him for his hard work prompted him to close his Washington and New York offices in 1922 and bid farewell to his life among the national and world leaders to return to his home in Utah.

Reuben, Luacine, and the children's well-deserved respite from public life in the east, however, was short-lived. In Salt Lake, Reuben had gained a reputation as a statesman, and when he returned, he was barraged with speaking invitations and suggestions that he run for office. Although a campaign to nominate him for U.S. Senator failed, he was wanted back in Washington. But Reuben was content to be where he was and fastidiously applied the research and analytical skills he had honed in through years of legal training to his Church calling as a Sunday School teacher. In June of 1925, he was appointed to the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association Board, and the following October delivered a talk on KSL radio on "Divine Authority and Latter-day Saints," which was enthusiastically praised by President Grant.¹¹ The Prophet would later invite Reuben to speak at the October 1930 general conference, introducing him with the words, "all Utahns are proud of the honor that has come to one of our citizens."¹²

In 1926, J. Reuben Clark was called back into government service as tensions with Mexico flared. His past experience in Mexican affairs as Solicitor

and his talent for diplomacy were sorely needed, and the president appointed him to the U.S.-Mexico Mixed Claims Commission. The Commission, established by treaty in 1924 to settle monetary disputes between the two countries, was thought to be the best means of avoiding war with Mexico, and its actions grabbed newspaper headlines across the country.¹³ Other positions of national prominence followed, such as appointments to Special Counsel for the United States before the American-British Claim Arbitration and Agent for the United States on the U.S.-Mexico General and Special Claims commissions.¹⁴ Later, Reuben took a position as personal legal advisor to U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Dwight Morrow, who had been impressed with Solicitor Clark's work in the State Department.¹⁵ In Mexico, Reuben continued to pursue his gospel study in his spare time, concentrating again on his interest in the mission of the Savior. After ordering twenty volumes of biblical reference materials, he began a study that formed the foundation of his book *Our Lord of the Gospels*, which would be published in 1954.¹⁶

In 1928, he was called back to Washington to serve as Undersecretary of State to Secretary of State Frank Kellogg in the Coolidge Administration. As undersecretary, he would enjoy a level of personal accomplishment and recognition heretofore unknown, but tensions within the State Department made the job tense and tedious. Soon after he installed as undersecretary, Secretary Kellogg left for an extended trip to Paris to negotiate and sign the Kellogg-Briand peace pact, a treaty declaring aggressive war unlawful.¹⁷ In the Secretary's absence, J. Reuben Clark assumed the role as acting Secretary of State, and like his former days at the State Department, was called upon to make critical decisions regarding international emergencies and would recommend courses of action to the president.

When Secretary Kellogg returned after the successful signing of the peace pact, he assigned Undersecretary Clark the task of securing its ratification in the Senate. A possible roadblock to ratification was a concern over the treaty's possible effect on the Monroe Doctrine, and in particular, the 1905 Roosevelt Corollary to the Doctrine, which declared that the United States would intervene in any Latin American crisis that provoked European intervention.¹⁸ In anticipation of such concerns arising in the Senate, Kellogg

requested that Reuben research and report on how the Monroe Doctrine had developed over time and what it was intended to accomplish. This question had also been on the minds of many prominent scholars and politicians at the time. Reuben, in setting out merely to fulfill the assignment given him, managed to compose a report that would become perhaps his crowning achievement at the State Department. Completed in just over two months, his inauspiciously titled *Memorandum on the Monroe Doctrine* was an astounding, 238-page treatise exploring every nuance of America's philosophy of Western Hemispherical guardianship. The "Clark Memorandum," which was published as an official State Department document and partially reprinted in textbooks for years, was hailed by national leaders and the press as a brilliant interpretation of the obscure but consequential principle and earned J. Reuben Clark the prestige that he had so often deferred to others who had taken credit for his work.

Overall, J. Reuben Clark found that being undersecretary of state in a State Department presided over by Frank Kellogg was not as appealing as his earlier work in Mexico. President Coolidge was not terribly fond with Kellogg's management of the State Department and once even remarked that he would have much preferred J. Reuben Clark as secretary of state over Kellogg.¹⁹ When Dwight Morrow resigned as ambassador to serve in the U.S. Senate, J. Reuben Clark was recommended as his replacement. President Herbert Hoover appointed Undersecretary Clark as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States to Mexico on October 3, 1930. The Mexican ambassadorship was a key post in U.S. foreign relations and earned him instant prestige. For J. Reuben Clark, it was a fulfillment of his highest aspirations and dreams, and it would help a misunderstood church gain national and international acceptance and even respect.

J. Reuben Clark's ambassadorship would last until February 1933. His farewell address to the president and people of Mexico poignantly expressed his love for them: "To no one could come a greater honor than the assurance you give me of the sympathy and affection of the Mexican people. To possess a place in the hearts of a people is the most priceless heritage that can come to any man, however high may be his degree and however lowly may be his station." His tenure as

ambassador was a wonderful, yet self-sacrificing opportunity that he relished and would miss.

Following the death of Heber J. Grant's second counselor Charles W. Nibley in December 1931, President Grant wrote to Ambassador Clark to extend a call to serve as his new second counselor.

President Grant's first counselor and cousin Anthony W. Ivins doubted whether a man of Ambassador Clark's international prominence would accept the call and forsake what he had worked so hard to achieve. President Grant went forward notwithstanding, and soon a letter from the Church president arrived at the American Embassy in Mexico City. Ambassador Clark wrote a humble response, stating that while he never aspired to Church leadership, "it is for the Lord to say how and where I shall serve.... I know, at least in part, my own shortcomings and unworthiness. I appreciate the honor the call brings to me."

President Grant's desire to have Reuben as his counselor was so great that he held the position in the First Presidency vacant for over a year until Reuben was able to resign from his ambassadorship and resolve necessary government matters. President Clark was sustained as second counselor to President Heber J. Grant on April 6, 1933.²⁰ He was the last man to be called as a counselor in the First Presidency without first being ordained an apostle and, having held the priesthood office of seventy, was ordained a high priest (Thorpe B. Isaacson, an assistant to the Twelve, would later be called as an assistant counselor to President David O. McKay). Prior to his call to the First Presidency, he had not been a general authority and had never served in a stake presidency or bishopric. But his talent, spiritual preparedness and gospel study, and professional experience enabled him to quickly adapt to and succeed in his new role.

He immediately strove to relieve President Grant of some of the unessential administrative duties he placed upon himself that became a source of fatigue. One day, President Grant arrived at his office in the Church Administration Building to find his desk completely cleared of the piles of mail and stacks of paperwork that had been awaiting his attention. To President Grant's delight, his counselor had taken the work upon himself, leaving a note reading, "Brother Grant, this is your desk, J.R.C."²¹

J. Reuben Clark quickly became regarded as an "elder statesman" of the Church.²² In addition to speaking at meetings and conferences of the Church, he addressed numerous local and national organizations, and his remarks were often reprinted and widely distributed. President Grant had been active in business throughout his life and encouraged his new second counselor to continue to take advantage of business and governmental opportunities whenever possible. The interests of the Church would be best served, he believed, by President Clark continuing to be involved in leadership endeavors outside the Church.²³

A week after joining the First Presidency, President Clark was asked to fill a position on the board of directors of the Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States headquartered in New York. Soon afterward, he was summoned to the White House by President Franklin D. Roosevelt who asked him to be a delegate to the Pan-American Conference at Montevideo, Uruguay. President Grant gave his enthusiastic approval to both of these proposals, and President Clark felt duty-bound to again serve his country when it needed him.

Following October general conference in 1933, President Roosevelt again tapped President Clark, this time to serve on the newly formed Foreign Bondholders' Protective Council. As the Great Depression ravaged the world's economies, a billion dollars in U.S. citizen-owned foreign bonds had fallen into default. President Clark was asked to lead the Council's effort in recovering money on the defaulted bonds, first as General Counsel and then as Council President.²⁴

Throughout the 1930s, the Utah Republican Party attempted to draft him as their nominee for U.S. Senator, whether he asked for the nomination or not, to which he cordially refused; and the owner of the Los Angeles Times even suggested that he run for president.²⁵ Over the following twenty-eight years, J. Reuben Clark would serve both the Church and his country whenever asked but would never accept any position without first consulting and receiving the endorsement of his superior. Loyalty to Church and country and personal sacrifice were paramount in his life, for "to him it mattered little whether he was being praised or criticized; it mattered much, however, whether his course was right and true."²⁶

J. Reuben Clark was sustained as first counselor in the First Presidency and as an apostle on October 6, 1934, following the death of President Ivins. He would be ordained to the office of apostle a week later on October 11, 1934. Elder David O. McKay was sustained as second counselor.

At this time, members of the Church and the entire country were struggling to cope with the hardships of the Great Depression. In 1933, President Clark began urging his brethren to change the welfare policy of the Church, which directed members to seek assistance from the government before the Church, and adopt many of the innovative techniques instituted by President Harold B. Lee of the Salt Lake Pioneer Stake to aid the Saints, such as employment coordination, operation of a farm and cannery, and the organization of jobs for stake members to refurbish and sell a Utah company's unsold, defective products.²⁷ In 1935, President Grant presented a new "Church Security" program, renamed "Welfare Plan" in 1938, which encouraged industry and personal responsibility and enabled the Saints to turn to the Church instead of relying on the demoralizing system of government dependence.²⁸

The Welfare Plan would centralize the Church's efforts and grow to include a "Beautification Program," Church farms, Deseret Industries, and a Bishop's Central Storehouse.²⁹ To a special meeting of stake presidents on October 2, 1936, President Clark would capture the goal of Church welfare: "The real long term objective of the Welfare Plan is the building of character in the members of the Church, givers and receivers, rescuing all that is finest deep down inside of them, and bring to flower and fruitage the latent richness of the spirit which after all is the mission and purpose and reason for being of this Church." To this day, President Clark's counsel remains the guiding principle of Church welfare and the credo of its welfare missionaries.

As the Depression dragged on, President Clark counseled the Saints to avoid enslavement to debt. "Let us avoid debt as we would avoid the plague," he urged the Saints in April conference 1937.³⁰ "Let us straightly and strictly live within our incomes...and again clothe ourselves with these proved and sterling virtues—honesty, truthfulness, chastity, sobriety, temperance, industry and

thrift."³¹ He made sure that the Church set the example by cutting costs as it grew and, among other measures, proposed that multiple wards begin sharing the same meetinghouse. In an admonition still repeated today, President Clark warned that debt is dangerous because: "Interest never sleeps nor sickens nor dies; it never goes to the hospital; it works on Sundays and holidays...it never has short crops or droughts...it has no love, no sympathy.... Once in debt, interest is your companion every minute of the day and night...and whenever you get in its way or cross its course or fail to meet its demands, it crushes you."³²

In 1940, President Clark initiated a project to transmit sessions of conference to additional assembly halls via closed circuit radio. In February 1940, President Grant would suffer a stroke that left the left side of his body paralyzed and would eventually lead to his virtual incapacitation. Soon afterward, President McKay fell seriously ill, and by necessity, President Clark took hold of the reigns of Church administration, although he always kept his president and fellow counselor appraised and consulted with them prior to making any major decision. As the Church continued to grow, he grew concerned that many of the Saints could not attend general conference because of limited seating. In February 1941, he and President McKay proposed to President Grant that assistants to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles be called to offer some relief to the Twelve, particularly the more junior members who were shouldering extra burdens due to the ill health of the senior members.³³ After approval by President Grant and the Quorum of the Twelve, the first five Assistants to the Twelve were sustained on April 6, 1941.

When George Albert Smith became President of the Church after Heber J. Grant passed away, J. Reuben Clark and David O. McKay were again sustained as first and second counselor, respectively, on May 21, 1945. Elder Spencer W. Kimball, then a junior member of the Quorum of the Twelve paid particular attention to the way Presidents Clark and McKay handled the transition in Church leadership. When they were again sustained to their position in the First Presidency, Elder Kimball remarked: "Such humility!!! Such power!!! Such honor!!! ...It is the work of the Lord. These are truly great and inspired and 'called' men of God who have been leading the Church through the declining days and months of Pres. Grant's presidency."³⁴ Consequently, the

Relief Society General Presidency had just been reorganized at April conference with Belle S. Spafford as president and President Clark's daughter, Marianne Clark Sharp, as first counselor.

President Clark commemorated the centennial of the pioneers' arrival in the Salt Lake Valley with an eloquent sermon he entitled "Tribute to Pioneers" at the October 1947 general conference. It was renamed "To Them of the Last Wagon" when reprinted in pamphlet form, because it spoke so magnificently of the sacrifice and humility of the common pioneer:

Through the dust and dirt, dirt and dust...they crept along till, passing down through its portals, the valley welcomed them to rest and home.... That evening was the last of their trek, the mightiest trek that history records since Israel's flight from Egypt, and as the sun sank below the mountain peaks of the west and the eastern crags were bathed in an amethyst glow that was a living light, while the western mountainsides were clothed in shadows of the rich blue of the deep sea, they of the last wagon, and of the wagon before them, and of the one before that, and so to the very front wagon of the train, these all sank to their knees in the joy of their souls, thanking God that at last they were in Zion.³⁵

In his address, he sought to challenge the near worship of the prominent pioneer leaders to the detriment of those who sacrificed without glory and to teach the Saints that there was no salvation in ancestry alone.³⁶

In living our lives let us never forget that the deeds of our fathers and mothers are theirs, not ours; that their works cannot be counted to our glory...that we must rise by our own labor, and that labor failing we shall fall. We may claim no honor, no reward, no respect, nor special position or recognition, no credit because of what our fathers were or what they wrought. We stand upon our own feet in our own shoes. There is no aristocracy of birth in this Church.³⁷

In January 1948, perhaps in an effort to expand upon the work he had done so many years ago for

Dr. Talmage on *The Articles of Faith*, President Clark began a series of radio addresses featuring different aspects of Church doctrine along the theme, "On the Way to Immortality and Eternal Life" on KSL Radio.³⁸ The lectures, at times, resembled a debate between LDS and Catholic beliefs in that the Bishop of the Salt Lake Roman Catholic Diocese was at the same time delivering Sunday radio messages on KSL.³⁹ President Clark's lectures would later be published as the first half of his book of the same title.

J. Reuben Clark and David O. McKay became reacquainted during their service in the Church having known each other as students at the University of Utah. They would go on to serve a total of twenty-seven years together in the First Presidency, longer than any two other men.⁴⁰ Upon President Smith's death on April 4, 1951, David O. McKay became the senior living apostle. As April general conference began, President McKay had not yet announced to his brethren how the First Presidency would be reorganized. Finally, on April 8, President McKay called a meeting of the Quorum of the Twelve and announced that after prayerful consideration, he was calling Stephen L. Richards as first counselor and J. Reuben Clark as second counselor. This, he explained, was appropriate to reflect their relative seniority as apostles. He then asked President Clark to present their names for the Church's sustaining vote the next day.

When President Clark announced the new presidency to the assembled Saints, an audible gasp filled the Tabernacle, yet he proceeded without hesitancy or the slightest inflection in his voice. Many assumed he had simply made a mistake when he read his name second.⁴¹

After a brief explanation of the change by President McKay, President Clark was asked to speak. In beginning his brief remarks, he bore his testimony of the Savior and of President McKay as a prophet of God. President Clark then uttered what has since become a near legendary pronouncement: "In the service of the Lord, it is not where you serve but how. In the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, one takes the place to which one is duly called, which place one neither seeks nor declines."⁴² Elder Spencer W. Kimball later recorded that President Clark "did more in his perfect reactions perhaps to establish in the minds of this people the true spirit of subjection

of the individual to the good of the work, more than could be done in thousands of sermons.”⁴³ President Clark would later be called as first counselor to President McKay upon the death of President Richards in June 1959.

J. Reuben Clark died October 6, 1961 at age ninety. President Thomas S. Monson once remarked: “the biographies, plaudits and honors relating to the life of President J. Reuben Clark do not begin to capture his warmth of personality, his depth of compassion and his keen sense of humor.”⁴⁴

In his own written testimony, J. Reuben Clark re-expressed a theme of his gospel study and teachings:

God declared his work and his glory are to “bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man”—a resurrected being, each in the image of God himself, with eternal progress before him.... How blessed are we to have this never dimming, always glowing hope, and the eternal knowledge that belong to us, to comfort us and to urge us on through life, that we may add to God’s declared work and glory by gaining for ourselves, and for all believers and doers, the priceless destiny of immortality and eternal life.⁴⁵

J. Reuben Clark became a great man, seasoned by experience and dutiful service, because he strove to become better than he was and to act circumspectly before the Lord. He lived his life without guile and as a witness of Jesus Christ. Of his friend whom he grew to love, respect, and admire over many years, President Marion G. Romney said, “I am convinced that it was his repeated and continual striving to overcome, coupled with his constant willingness to be forthright and decisive even at great cost, that made J. Reuben Clark one of the great and noble men of our time.”⁴⁶

Stephen S. Davis, a great-grandson of J. Reuben Clark, Jr., is an attorney residing in St. Louis, Missouri.

Notes:

1. See Fox, Frank W. 1980. *J. Reuben Clark: The Public Years*. Provo: BYU Press, p.5.
2. Fox, p.4.
3. Journal of Joshua R. Clark in Quinn, D. Michael. 1983. *J. Reuben Clark: The Church Years*, Provo: BYU Press, p.7 (1983).
4. See Yarn, David H., Jr. "Biographical Sketch of J. Reuben Clark, Jr.," *BYU Studies* 13:3:235 (Spring 1973).
5. Letter from J. Reuben Clark to Joshua R. Clark, in Yarn, David, H., Jr., *Young Reuben: The Early Life of J. Reuben Clark, Jr.* Provo: BYU Press, p.60.
6. Quinn, p.13.
7. Fox, p.36.
8. Quinn, p.19.
9. Fox, pp.174-75.
10. Fox, p.346.
11. Fox, p.444.
12. Quinn, p.36.
13. Fox, p.452.
14. Yarn, *Biographical Sketch*, p.240.
15. Yarn, *Biographical Sketch*, p.240.
16. Fox, p.444.
17. Fox, p.505.
18. Fox, p.514.
19. Fox, p.504.
20. Yarn, *Young Reuben*, p.137.
21. Quinn, p.73.
22. Quinn, p.56.
23. Quinn, p.55.
24. Quinn, p.58.
25. Quinn, p.82.
26. Quinn, p.ix.
27. Quinn, p.257.
28. Yarn, *Selected Papers*, p.14.
29. Quinn, pp.266-67.
30. Yarn, *Selected Papers*, p.167.
31. Yarn, *Selected Papers*, p.167.
32. Yarn, *Selected Papers*, p.193.
33. Quinn, p.87.
34. Journal of Spencer W. Kimball, May 18, 1945, in Quinn, p.94.
35. "To Them of the Last Wagon," in Yarn, David H., Jr., ed. 1984. *J. Reuben Clark: Selected Papers On Religion, Education, and Youth*. Provo: BYU Press, pp.71-72, reprinted in *Ensign* magazine (July 1997).
36. Quinn, p.103.
37. "To Them of the Last Wagon," in Yarn, *Selected Papers*, p.73.
38. Quinn, p.105.
39. Quinn, pp.105-06.
40. Quinn, p.114.
41. Quinn, pp.122-23.
42. Yarn, *Selected Papers*, p.76.
43. Quinn, p.124.
44. Thomas S. Monson, letter to Janice Stewart.
45. Copy of signed testimony of J. Reuben Clark, Jr., in possession of the author.
46. Fox, p.xii.