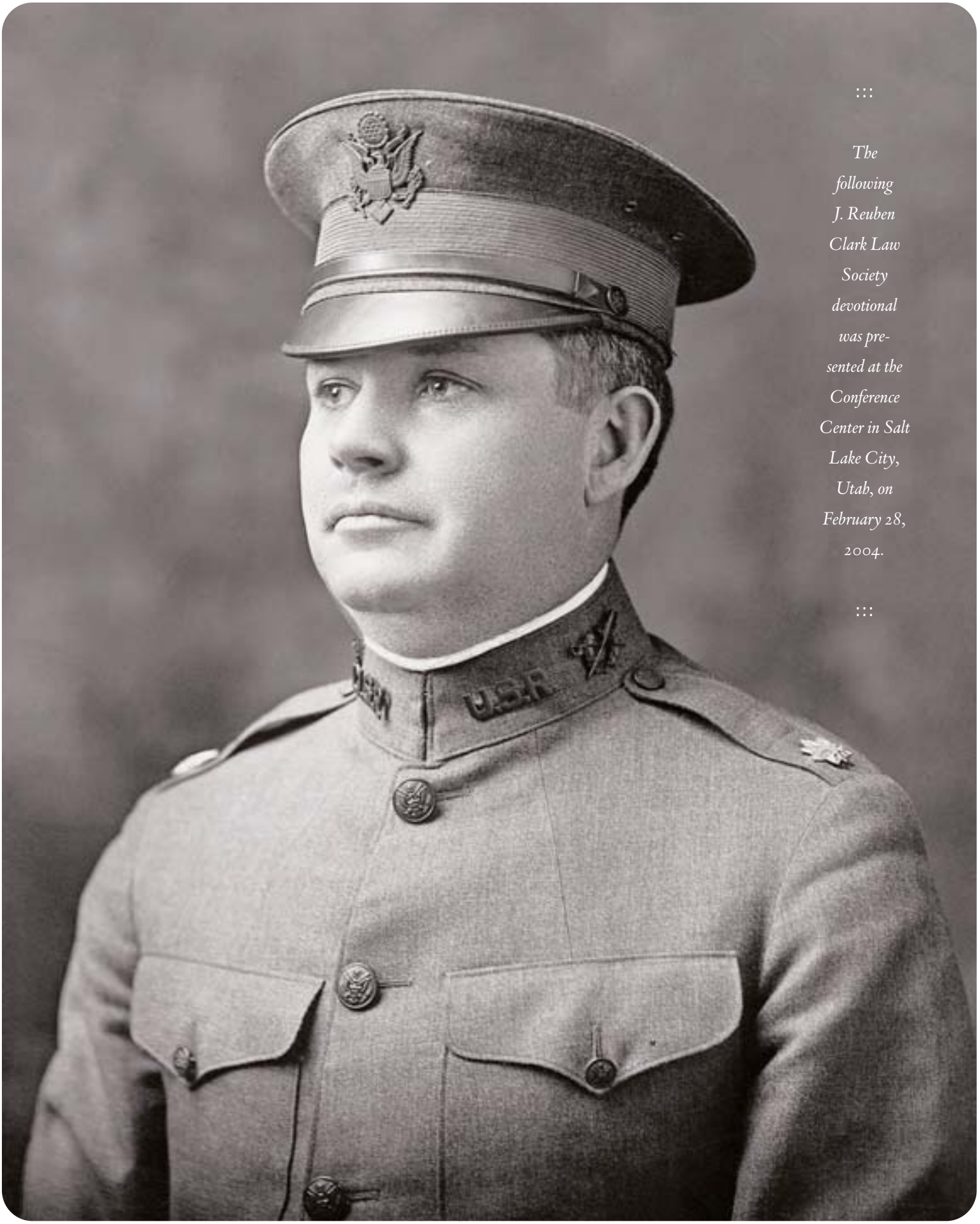
by President Boyd K. Packer ::: *Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles*

On the Shoulders of Giants



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The following J. Reuben Clark Law Society devotional was presented at the Conference Center in Salt Lake City, Utah, on February 28, 2004.

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In my hand is a two-pound English coin. Around the edge are inscribed the words "Stood on the shoulders of giants." ::: Sir Isaac Newton invented calculus and the reflective telescope, defined the laws of motion, and did an astonishing list of other things. Asked how he was able to do it all, he answered: "I stood on the shoulders of giants."[1] ::: We stand on the shoulders of a giant: President J. Reuben Clark.

Less than a month after my 37th birthday, I was sustained as a General Authority. On October 6, 1961, I was set apart in the council room by the First Presidency, and later that same day I received word, "President Clark just passed away." His ministry closed the same day that mine began.

The mention of his name polishes the windows of my memory. I see clearly and feel deeply the memory of this great man. Now you must not assume that I suppose that I compare in stature with him. I am, with you, one of many who stood on his shoulders.

My close personal contacts with President Clark were very few. I heard him speak many times. I stood in awe of him.

I was in his office once and remember very clearly how he looked and what he said. I sat next to him at the dinner when he gave his address entitled "Reflective Speculation."[2] And there were other times.

THE QUESTION

Now I have a question for you of the J. Reuben Clark Law Society. I quote President George Albert Smith, the second of the three Presidents to whom J. Reuben Clark served as a counselor.

President Smith said:

A number of years ago I was seriously ill; in fact, I think everyone gave me up but my wife. With my family I went to St. George, Utah, to see if it would improve my health. We went as far as we could by train, and then continued the journey in a wagon, in the bottom of which a bed had been made for me.

In St. George we arranged for a tent for my health and comfort, with a built-in floor raised about a foot above the ground, and we could roll up the south side of the tent to make the sunshine and fresh air available. I became so weak as to be scarcely able to move. It was a slow and exhausting effort for me even to turn over in bed.

One day, under these conditions, I lost consciousness of my surroundings and thought I had passed to the Other Side. I found myself standing with my back to a large and beautiful lake, facing a great forest of trees. There was no one in sight, and there was no boat upon the lake or any other visible means to indicate how I might have arrived there. I realized, or seemed to realize, that I had finished my work in mortality and had gone home. I began to look around, to see if I could not find someone. There was no evidence of anyone living there, just those great, beautiful trees in front of me and the wonderful lake behind me.

I began to explore, and soon I found a trail through the woods which seemed to have been used very little, and which was almost obscured by grass. I followed this trail, and after I had walked for some time and had traveled a considerable distance through the forest, I saw a man coming towards me. I became aware that he was a very large man, and I hurried my steps to reach him, because I recognized him as my grandfather. In mortality he weighed over three hundred pounds, so you may know he was a large man. I remember how happy I was to see him coming. I had been given his name [George Albert Smith] and had always been proud of it.

When Grandfather came within a few feet of me, he stopped. His stopping was an invitation for me to stop. Then . . . he looked at me very earnestly and said:

"I would like to know what you have done with my name?"

Everything I had ever done passed before me as though it were a flying picture on a screen—everything I had done. Quickly this vivid retrospect came down to the very time I was standing there. My whole life had passed before me. I smiled and looked at my grandfather and said:

"I have never done anything with your name of which you need be ashamed."

He stepped forward and took me in his arms, and as he did so, I became conscious again of my earthly surroundings. My pillow was as wet as though water had been poured on it—wet with tears of gratitude that I could answer unashamed.[3]

The question is: What are you doing with the name of President J. Reuben Clark?

President Clark's service was divided into two equal parts: twenty-eight years in law and government and twenty-eight years as counselor in the First Presidency.

President Clark grew up as a farm boy in tiny Grantsville. At age eleven he could plow with a team of horses. If the weather was too cold for others to go, he would walk to the evening sacrament meeting alone.

In a large family he learned to work. He had a father and a mother of pioneer virtue and integrity. His father wrote in his journal, "I went down between the barley and wheat in the old ditch, and knelt down and prayed and dedicated the grain that we have sown and asked the blessings of the Lord upon it; this I do every year with everything that I plant."[4]

Another local boy, Heber J. Grant, knew him well. These two farm boys would meet again.

With an elementary school education and at the urging of his father, President Clark moved to Salt Lake City to go to college. Dr. James E. Talmage was his mentor. When he went east to school, Dr. Talmage said, "He possessed the brightest mind ever to leave Utah."[5]

He married Luacine Savage. They became parents of three daughters and one son. From 1898 to 1903 he was teacher and administrator in Heber and in Cedar City.

Before leaving to study law, he called on President Joseph F. Smith. President Smith cautioned him about the field of law and set him apart on a mission to be an exemplary Latter-day Saint.

Years earlier another young man wanted to go east to study law. James Henry Moyle, father of President Henry D. Moyle, met with President John Taylor. President Taylor said he was "opposed to any of our young men going away to study law. It is a dangerous profession."

His counselor George Q. Cannon persuaded President Taylor that "Brother Joseph had to engage lawyers. So [did] Brother Brigham."

President Taylor agreed then that it would be all right for Brother Moyle to go, and then he spoke of "the pitfalls into which the young man might slip unless he [was] careful." He gave him a blessing, from which I quote:

Introduction by Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Presidency of the Seventy

To be candid, my assignment this evening is superfluous—President Boyd K. Packer needs no introduction. Still, I am grateful for the opportunity to speak about him given his influence for good in my life. He is quick to deflect praise or recognition, but this once I intend to impose upon him.

President Packer's experience and achievements are extensive. He was born September 10, 1924, in Brigham City, Utah, the 10th of 11 children of Ira Wight Packer and Emma Jensen. Following high school, he achieved a coveted goal when two days before his 20th birthday, he graduated from advanced pilot school and received his silver wings as a military pilot. He served in the Pacific Theater during World War II.

After the war he learned the name of Donna Edith Smith when she was crowned Brigham City Peach Queen. His judgment was as good then as now, and he soon got acquainted. They married in 1947, and in the ensuing years have become the parents of 10 children and, at the moment, grandparents of 59 and great-grandparents of 26.

President Packer attended Weber College and received bachelor and master of science degrees from Utah State University and a doctorate in educational administration from Brigham Young University. He has since become the recipient of honorary doctorates from Brigham Young, Utah State, and Weber State universities. He served as supervisor of Seminaries and Institutes for the Church and as a member of the administrative council and of the board of trustees of Brigham Young University.

Beyond his achievements and recognitions in the academic world, President Packer has had extensive experience in government and corporate roles. As a young man he served as a city councilman in his native Brigham City. In more recent years he has been a member of advisory committees to the governor of Utah and to both the Interior and Defense departments of the United States. He has served on the board of directors of Zions Bank and the Bank of Utah and as chairman of the board of four insurance companies, including Beneficial Life.

On September 30, 1961, at age 37, President Packer was sustained as an Assistant to the Twelve. Sister Packer learned of the call when she heard his name presented in general conference as she listened at home on the radio. She was 33 and the mother of eight. While an Assistant to the Twelve, President Packer served as president of the New England States Mission, covering the northeastern United States and much of eastern Canada. Then, at April conference in 1970, he was sustained as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He has been the Acting President of that Quorum since June 1994.

This life summary, incomplete as it is, bespeaks a man of substantial accomplishment but only begins to reveal the depth of the man. Nor will this introduction achieve that goal—the time is far too short. What I can do is briefly add to this recitation of facts something of the flavor of this remarkable life.

Those who have a chance to spend any time around President Packer are treated to a wonderful sense of humor. Apparently this has been a trait of his since youth. His biographer tells of a triple date with high school girlfriends in Brigham City. Boyd (as he was then known) and two friends were driving to the Packer garage after they had taken their dates home. Passing the Brigham City Tabernacle, they saw Carl Josephson parked in his police car. One of the boys leaned out and made a convincing imitation of a siren. It was illegal for private cars to have sirens, so Officer Josephson came after the boys with his lights flashing. When they stopped, he inquired, "All right, fellows, where's the siren." Boyd's quick reply: "We just took her home."

Sister Packer has been willing to indulge that wry wit as, for example, when President Packer returned from an assignment in Idaho years ago and reported, "While I was up in Idaho, I found a rope." "That's nice," she replied, a little puzzled. Then he added, "There was a horse tied to the other end of it." That led to construction of a corral and much delight on the part of the children (see Lucile C. Tate, *Boyd K. Packer—A Watchman on the Tower* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995], 42, 122).

President Packer is an accomplished artist, an avocation he has pursued since youth, not for public acknowledgment but for the benefit of family and friends and as a door to spiritual insight and understanding. Although it has been a private pursuit, we have lately prevailed upon him to permit an exhibit of his exceptional wood carvings and paintings. The exhibit is now on display at the Museum of Church History and Art and was featured in February's issue of the *Ensign*.

Excellence in teaching is something for which President Packer is universally recognized. The desire to be a teacher came to him early in life, and it has been a passion ever since. Elder A. Theodore Tuttle, who could appreciate President Packer's skill as a teacher perhaps better than anyone, once commented: "He has the capacity to translate an ethereal verbal concept to an understandable activity in everyday life. . . . You will soon discover that what is explained so clearly and obviously was neither clear nor obvious before he explained it" (Boyd K. Packer, *Teach Ye Diligently* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1975], ix–x).

President Packer's commitment to teaching as a profession, however, has always been subordinated to and guided by his devotion to the Lord. He has observed a tendency in many members of the Church who have studied and joined the learned professions to begin to judge the Church, its doctrine, organization, and history by the principles of their own profession—that is, to measure the Church with the principles of one's profession as the standard. He has said: "In my mind it ought to be the other way around. A member of the Church ought always . . . to judge the professions of men against the revealed word of the Lord" (letter to the First Presidency, 24 October 1974, quoted in *Boyd K. Packer—A Watchman on the Tower*, 244).

It is gratifying that Sister Donna Packer is also with us this evening. President Packer has been heard to say with some frequency, "Without Donna, I am nothing" and "Donna is perfect." To say he draws strength from her is most certainly an understatement. His great ambition is to be good—a good husband, a good father and grandfather, a good teacher, a good son of his Heavenly Father. In that aspiration President Packer has had the benefit of parents who were truly good; but no other human influence in his life equals that of Donna, who embodies what it means to be good.

President Packer is a man tutored, tested, and seasoned in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose disciple and witness he is. He labors in the Spirit. He waits upon the Lord. He is a seer; therefore, in the words of the scripture, "he becometh a great benefit to his fellow beings" (Mosiah 8:18).

Given the audience, I would like to conclude this introduction by noting a legal proceeding in President Packer's experience that few have heard about. Some years ago he was served with a complaint in a civil action. His codefendant was Elder Bruce R. McConkie. The plaintiff alleged that Elder Packer's and Elder McConkie's general conference sermons had ruined her marriage. When the complaint was filed, Elder McConkie had already been dead some years. Of course, nothing came of the action, but President Packer has always wondered whether Elder McConkie was ever served with the complaint and, if so, how. I don't know the answer either, but with you I am grateful that President Packer has answered the "summons" to appear here this evening. President Packer, would you please take the stand.

As thou hast had in thine heart a desire to go forth to study law . . . , we say unto thee that this is a dangerous profession, one that leads many people down to destruction; . . . abstain from corruption and bribery and covetousness, and from arguing falsely and on false principles, maintaining only the things that can be honorably sustained by honorable men; . . .

We set thee apart . . . to go forth as thou hast desired to study and become acquainted with all the principles of law and equity; [then there is a big "if" in the blessing] *if thou wilt abstain from chicanery and from fraud and from covetousness, and* [another "if"] *if thou wilt cleave to the truth, God will bless thee.*

He was promised by President Taylor that if he would do these things, he would "grow up in virtue, in intelligence, power and wisdom, and stand as a mighty man among the House of Israel, and be a defender of the rights and liberties and immunities of the people of God."

And this promise: "But if thou doest not these things, thou wilt go down and wither away."[6]

In 1903 President Clark took his family to New York City to attend the Columbia University School of Law. In 1906 he graduated head of his class with an LLB degree. Shortly after he was appointed as Department of State Assistant Solicitor, and he published his classic "Memorandum on the Right to Protect Citizens in Foreign Countries by Landing Forces." (Does that not sound familiar today?)

While living in Washington, D.C., he was appointed as an assistant professor of law at George Washington University.

He opened law offices in Washington, D.C., in New York City, and in Salt Lake City, where he specialized in international and municipal law.

A staunch Republican, he became influential in both Utah and national politics.

They tried more than once to draft him to run for the United States Senate. There was also an effort made to draft him as a candidate for the presidency of the United States until he firmly refused.

During World War I President Clark served as a major on duty with the U.S. Attorney General's office. He helped prepare the original Selective Service regulations. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal.

President Calvin Coolidge appointed him as Under Secretary of State in 1928. He then published his "Memorandum on the Monroe Doctrine." Even his critics praised it as a "monument of erudition," a "masterly treatise."[7]

The title of your society's semiannual publication is *The Clark Memorandum*.

CALL TO THE FIRST PRESIDENCY

In 1930 J. Reuben Clark was named as U.S. Ambassador to Mexico. Two and a half years later he was called by letter as second counselor to President Heber J. Grant.

General conference had come and gone, and a vacancy in the First Presidency was not filled. A senior Apostle told me that two members of the Twelve waited upon President Grant and said, "We see you did not fill the vacancy in the Presidency."

President Grant replied, "I know the man the Lord wants me to have, and he is not ready yet." Pointing his cane at each of them, he said, "I know that feeling when it comes. I had it when I called you! And I had it when I called you!"

"When that cane pointed at me," one of them told me, "I felt as if I had been electrocuted."

It was nearly a year before President Clark was able to come to Church headquarters. During the first fifteen months he was away for five months in Washington, D.C., or abroad on-call for the President of the United States.

In October 1933 J. Reuben Clark Jr. was honored at a dinner in Beverly Hills, California. Telegrams of tribute arrived—also one letter from Will Rogers, philosopher and humorist, perhaps the best-known American of his time. Will Rogers apologized for the letter but said, "I have more to say than I am able to pay for [in a telegram]."

John Nance Garner, the vice president of the United States, was there, of whom Rogers said in his letter, "He . . . deserves [better work] than he's got."

Rogers then spoke in admiration of J. Reuben Clark and closed, "So, God Bless Reuben Clark, and make him a Democrat, or Republican as necessity demands! [signed] Will."[8]

President Clark came to the First Presidency virtually unknown in the Church. He had held no administrative positions, even on the local level.

He kept things very plain and simple. The president of Equitable Life once sent him a speech. President Clark replied, "A lot of it was over my head [trying to understand it], but I sort of held my breath and struggled to the top. . . . I accept your conclusions whether or not I fully understand the reasons, and I congratulate you on another fine speech."[9]

I can imagine President Clark in his library with words scattered about on his desk. I see him discarding the longer ones and then picking up a word and fitting it into a sentence and then replacing it with one easier to understand. From words he made sentences, often very long ones, fastening them together into paragraphs and bundling them together into his inspired sermons.

HIS REVERENCE FOR THE LORD

One way or another his writing and his speaking had a common theme. It was

Counterclockwise from left: Birth home of J. Reuben Clark Jr., Grantsville, Utah, built by his father in 1869–70; Clark's home at 80 D Street in Salt Lake City when he lived there; that home as it appears today.

there when he first spoke in church at age eleven. Like Nephi, "[he talked] of Christ, [he rejoiced] in Christ, [he preached] of Christ, [he prophesied] of Christ, and [he wrote] according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins" (2 Nephi 25:26).

His classic books *Our Lord of the Gospels*[10] and *Behold the Lamb of God*[11] are examples.

His "The Charted Course of the Church in Education,"[12] prepared by assignment from the First Presidency, is an enduring classic akin to scripture.

I give you two examples from his sermons. To the priesthood he spoke of the burden of debt:

Interest never sleeps nor sickens nor dies; it never goes to the hospital; it works on Sundays and holidays; it never takes a vacation; it never visits nor travels; it takes no pleasure; it is never laid off work nor discharged from employment; it never works on reduced hours. . . . Once in debt, interest is your companion every minute of the day and night; you cannot shun it or slip away from it; you cannot dismiss it; it yields neither to entreaties, demands, or orders; and whenever you get in its way or cross its course or fail to meet its demands, it crushes you.[13]

From his classic address "They of the Last Wagon" given in 1947, the centennial of the arrival of the Pioneers:

Morning came when from out [of] *that last wagon floated the la-la of the newborn babe, and mother love made a shrine, and Father bowed in reverence before it. But the train must move on. So out into the dust and dirt the last wagon moved again, swaying and jolting, while Mother eased as best she could each pain-giving jolt so no harm might be done her, that she might be strong to feed the little one, bone of her bone, flesh of her flesh. Who will dare to say that angels did not cluster round and guard her and ease her rude bed, for she had given another choice spirit its mortal body that it might work out its God-given destiny?*[14]

President Clark's mother was one of those so born in 1848.

CRITICISM

To President Clark criticism seemed to be an inescapable accompaniment of the doing of righteousness. He once wrote:

It seems sometimes as if the darkness that surrounds us is all but impenetrable. I can see on all sides the signs of one great evil master mind working for the overturning of our civilization, the destruction of religion, the reduction of men to the status of animals. This mind is working here and there and everywhere.[15]

President Clark spoke of the Pioneer leaders and in so doing described himself:

Upright men they were, and fearless, unmindful of what men thought or said of them, if they were in their line of duty. Calumny, slander, derision, scorn left them unmoved, if they were treading the straight and narrow way. Uncaring they were of men's blame and censure, if the Lord approved them. Unswayed they were by the praise of men, to wander from the path of truth. Endowed by the spirit of discernment, they [knew] *when kind words were mere courtesy, and when they betokened honest interest. They moved neither to the right nor to the left from the path of truth to court the good favor of men.*[16]

INTELLECTUAL VISION

President Harold B. Lee said of President Clark:

In the universal sweep of his great intellectual vision he had few equals and perhaps no superiors. He once said of his grandfather on his maternal line, Bishop Edwin D. Woolley: "He was so eloquent in political discourse that even his enemies came out to hear him." So it has been with this grandson of Bishop Woolley [referring to President Clark]. *Even those who violently disagree with his views* [and there were many] *are intrigued by his eloquence, his forthrightness, pure logic, and penetrating insight into the center and core of whatever subjects he undertakes to expound.*[17]

It was said of Bishop Woolley that if he should drown in a river, they would look upstream for the body.

President Spencer Woolley Kimball was a cousin of President Clark. When President Kimball would be very resolute (a kinder word than *stubborn*), one of the Brethren would say, "Well, he's a Woolley."

A young university student of political science once spoke to Elder Lee about the student's vigorous disagreement with President Clark's lecture "Our Dwindling Sovereignty" at the University of Utah. Elder Lee's response was, "Yes, I suppose it would be difficult for a pigmy to get the viewpoint of a giant. When I go to hear [a] world authority . . . , I go to learn and not to criticize."[18]

OTHER GIANTS

There are other giants of the law upon whose shoulders I have stood—Presidents Marion G. Romney, Henry D. Moyle, Howard W. Hunter, and James E. Faust.

The saintly Abraham Lincoln said that "lawyers should discourage litigation. Persuade [your] clients to compromise. The lawyer who is a peacemaker can become a good man. There will be business enough. . . . Never stir up litigation. If you do, a worse man can scarcely be found."[19]

John K. Edmunds had a distinguished legal career. He served as a stake president in Chicago. David M. Kennedy, later secretary of the treasury, was his counselor. Brother Edmunds later served as president of the Salt Lake Temple.

"I know the man

the Lord wants me to have, and he is not ready yet."

He told me that a widow once came to him for help on a property matter. When he completed the papers and gave them to her, she asked, "How much do I owe you?"

He looked at her and said, "Why don't you pay me what you think it's worth."

Relieved, she got out her coin purse and produced a quarter and put it in his hand.

He told me, "I looked at the quarter and looked at her. Then I got out my coin purse and gave her ten cents change."

Only a wicked lawyer would take advantage of a widow or orphans or anyone else.

In Liberty Jail, Erastus Snow, who probably could not afford legal counsel, asked Joseph Smith what he should do:

Brother Joseph told him to plead his own case.

"But," said Brother Snow, "I do not understand the law."

Brother Joseph asked him if he did not understand justice; he thought he did.

"Well," said Brother Joseph, "go and plead for justice as hard as you can, and quote Blackstone and other authors now and then, and they will take it all for law.[20]

A CHARGE

Those giants I named, like you, had something that I do not have—a degree in law. With this credential comes obligation.

You who hold the priesthood must be exemplars above reproach.

And I charge each of you lawyers and judges and put you on alert: These are days of great spiritual danger for this people. The world is spiraling downward at an ever-quickening pace. I am sorry to tell you that it will not get better.

I know of nothing in the history of the Church or in the history of the world to compare with our present circumstances. Nothing happened in Sodom and Gomorrah which exceeds the wickedness and depravity which surrounds us now.

Satan uses every intrigue to disrupt the family. The sacred relationship between man and woman, husband and wife, through which mortal bodies are conceived and life is passed from one generation to the next generation, is being showered with filth.

Profanity, vulgarity, blasphemy, and pornography are broadcast into the homes and minds of the innocent. Unspeakable wickedness, perversion, and abuse—not even exempting little children—once hidden in dark places, now seeks protection from courts and judges.

The Lord needs you who are trained in the law. You can do for this people what others cannot do. We should not need to go beyond the members of the Church to find superior legal counsel.

A CAUTION

Now I caution you, as President John Taylor warned James Moyle and as Joseph Smith warned Stephen A. Douglas at the pinnacle of his political triumph, "If ever you turn your hand against . . . the Latter-day Saints, you will feel the weight of the hand of Almighty upon you."[21]

We must look to you for legal counsel. You have, or should have, the spirit of discernment. It was given you when you had conferred upon you the gift of the Holy Ghost.

You must locate where the snares are hidden and help guide our footsteps around them.

MORALLY MIXED-UP WORLD

You face a much different world than did President Clark. The sins of Sodom and Gomorrah were localized. They are now spread across the world, wherever the Church is. The first line of defense—the home—is crumbling. Surely you can see what the adversary is about.

THE PROPHETS HAVE WARNED

We are now exactly where the prophets warned we would be.

Paul prophesied word by word and phrase by phrase, describing things exactly as they are now. I will quote from Paul's prophecy and check the words that fit our society:

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

For men shall be lovers of their own selves—Check!
covetous—Check!
boasters—Check!
proud—Check!
blasphemers—Check!
disobedient to parents—Check! Check!
unthankful—Check!
unholy—Check!
Without natural affection—Check! Check!
trucebreakers—Check!
false accusers—Check!
incontinent—Check!
fierce—Check!
despisers of those that are good—Check!
Traitors—Check!
heady—Check!
highminded—Check!
lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God—Check! Check!

Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,

Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. (2 Timothy 3:1–7; emphasis added)

Recently Judge Robert H. Bork said:

Judicial invention of new and previously unheard-of rights accelerated over the past half-century and has now reached warp speed. It is not just Grutter's permission to discriminate against white males and Lawrence's creation of a right to homosexual sodomy. The Court has created rights to televised sexual acts and computer-simulated child pornography and, in direct contradiction of the historical evidence, has continued its almost frenzied hostility to religion. . . .

In these and other judgments, the Court is shrinking the area of self-government without any legitimate authority to do so, in the Constitution or elsewhere. In the process it is revising the moral and cultural life of the nation.[22]

Once, with other members of a city council, we met in the office of the city

President J. Reuben Clark Jr. visits with Presidents Heber J. Grant and David O. McKay. Clark served as a counselor to each, as well as to President George Albert Smith.

President Clark in his library at 80 D Street in Salt Lake City.

attorney. He pointed to a wall with law books and said, "Gentlemen, they are just like a violin. I can play any tune on them you are willing to pay for." I thought there was something not right about that.

The Lord Himself, strongly condemning the lawyers, scribes, and Pharisees, said: "Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers" (Luke 11:46).

From the writings of the Prophet Alma:

These lawyers were learned in all the arts and cunning of the people; . . .

[The lawyers] *began to question Amulek, that thereby they might make him cross his words, or contradict the words which he should speak. . . .*

They knew not that Amulek could know of their designs. . . . He perceived their thoughts, and he said unto them: O ye wicked and perverse generation, ye lawyers and hypocrites, for ye are laying the foundations of the devil; for ye are laying traps and snares to catch the holy ones of God. . . .

And now behold, I say unto you, that the foundation of the destruction of this people is beginning to be laid by the unrighteousness of your lawyers and your judges. (Alma 10:15–17, 27)

Nephi, son of Helaman, described what happened when the Gadiantons took over the lawyers and the judges: "Condemning the righteous because of their righteousness; letting the guilty and the wicked go unpunished because of their money" (Helaman 7:5).

You have heard of the courageous lawyer who, having been fined fifty dollars for contempt of court, replied, "It is an honest debt, Your Honor, and I shall gladly pay it."

Lawyers and judges and even the sacred institution of the jury are being tarnished. When one considers some of the high-profile verdicts, one could believe this conversation:

Judge: "Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, have you reached your verdict?"

Jury: "We have, Your Honor. We find the defendant innocent by reason of insanity."

Judge: "What? All twelve of you?"

When Moroni was translating the twenty-four gold plates, he interrupted his narrative to speak directly to us in our day. He told of the Gadiantons and their bands (in our day we would call them *gangs):*

Wherefore, O ye Gentiles [that is us*], it is wisdom in God that these things should be shown unto you, that thereby ye may repent of your sins, and suffer not that these murderous combinations shall get above you, . . .*

[He then warned us in unmistakable plainness]: *Wherefore, the Lord commandeth you, when ye shall see these things come among you that ye shall awake to a sense of your awful situation, because of this secret combination which shall be among you; . . .*

Wherefore, I, Moroni, am commanded to write these things that evil may be done away, and that the time may come that Satan may have no power upon the hearts of the children of men, but that they may be persuaded to do good continually, that they may come unto the fountain of all righteousness and be saved. (Ether 8:23–24, 26)

When the Saints in Missouri were suffering great persecutions, the Lord said that the Constitution of the United States was given

that every man may act in doctrine and principle pertaining to futurity, according to the moral agency which I have given unto him. [Notice that it does not say *free agency*, it says *moral agency.* The agency we have is a moral agency.] . . .

For this purpose have I established the Constitution of this land, by the hands of wise men whom I raised up unto this very purpose, and redeemed the land by the shedding of blood. (D&C 101:78, 80; emphasis added)

The present major political debate centers on values and morals and the Constitution.

There occurs from time to time reference to the Constitution hanging by a thread. President Brigham Young said:

The general Constitution of our country is good, and a wholesome government could be framed upon it; for it was dictated by the invisible operations of the Almighty. . . .

Will the Constitution be destroyed? No. It will be held inviolate by this people; and as Joseph Smith said "the time will come when the destiny of this nation will hang upon a single thread, and at this critical juncture, this people will step forth and save it from the threatened destruction." It will be so.[23]

I do not know when that day will come or how it will come to pass. I feel sure that when it does come to pass, among those who will step forward from among this people will be men who hold the Holy Priesthood and who carry as credentials a bachelor or doctor of law degree. And women, also, of honor. And there will be judges as well.

Others from the world outside the Church will come, as Colonel Thomas Kane did, and bring with them their knowledge of the law to protect this people.

We may one day stand alone, but we will not change or lower our standards or change our course.

WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH HIS NAME?

Near the end of his life, President Clark spoke at a dinner at Brigham Young University. I sat next to him. We steadied him as he made his way slowly and laboriously down the steps to his car and drove away into the night. That was the last time I saw him.

The funeral of President J. Reuben Clark Jr. was the first General Authority funeral I attended. South Temple was blocked off between State Street and West Temple. The General Authorities assembled in front of the Church Administration Building. There were thirty-eight of us then. With measured steps, we followed the hearse down the center of the street.

The solemn procession moved through the south gate of Temple Square and around to the northwest door of the Tabernacle. There we formed an honor guard, half on each side of the door, and stood at attention while the casket bearing President Clark and his family passed between us.

I ask you who belong to the J. Reuben Clark Law Society, What *will* you do with his name? It is very certain that one day you will be accountable to President Clark.

And it is equally certain that you members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will be accountable for what you have done with the Lord's name.

I wonder if you who are now lawyers or you who are students of the law know how much you are needed as defenders of the faith. Be willing to give of your time and of your means and your expertise to the building up of the Church and the kingdom of God and the establishment of Zion, which we are under covenant to do—not just to the Church as an institution, but to members and ordinary people who need your professional protection.

ANOTHER TESTIMONIAL DINNER

I told you about the dinner honoring J. Reuben Clark in Beverly Hills, California. There was another dinner held at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York City. It was a tribute to President J. Reuben Clark on his retirement from the board of the Equitable Life Assurance Society. Elder Harold B. Lee was there to succeed him on the board.

Elder Lee told me that prior to the event President Clark called him to his hotel room. He found President Clark sitting, leaning on his cane, pensive and unusually nervous. He wanted to inspect Brother Lee's formal dress to see that his cummerbund was just right.

Imagine those assembled, the great men of the world—cabinet ministers, leaders in business and government—all of different faiths. President Clark and Elder Lee were the only two members of the Church present.

President Clark began his valedictory by addressing them as "my brethren." He taught them about the Lord Jesus Christ and concluded with his fervent testimony.

I conclude with my fervent testimony and invoke a blessing upon you who are lawyers and judges and who have great power to defend this people.

I invoke the blessings of our Heavenly Father upon you in your studies, in your practice, and more particularly in your home and in your family, that the Spirit of the Lord and the spirit of righteousness will be with you.

I pray that you can take justice and mercy and find a balance in them and fix them firmly with absolute integrity, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Sir Isaac Newton, letter to Robert Hooke, Feb. 1676.
2. J. Reuben Clark Jr., "Reflective Speculation," address given at Seminary and Institute Teachers Summer Session, 21 June 1954.
3. *Sharing the Gospel with Others*, Preston Nibley, comp. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1948], 110-12.
4. Journal of Joshua Clark, vol. 12, 25 Mar. 1886.
5. Harold B. Lee, "President J. Reuben Clark, Jr.: An Appreciation on His Ninetieth Birthday," *Improvement Era*, Sept. 1961, 632.
6. Gordon B. Hinckley, *James Henry Moyle: The Story of a Distinguished American and an Honored Churchman* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1951], 130–33.
7. David H. Yarn Jr., "Biographical Sketch of J. Reuben Clark, Jr.," *BYU Studies*, 13 (spring 1973), 240.
8. Will Rogers to "Mr. Toastmaster," 13 Oct. 1933.
9. J. Reuben Clark Jr. to Thomas I. Parkinson, 11 July 1947, fd 16, box 376, J. Reuben Clark Papers.
10. J. Reuben Clark Jr., *Our Lord of the Gospels: A Harmony of the Gospels* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954].
11. J. Reuben Clark, Jr., *Behold the Lamb of God*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1991].
12. *The Charted Course of the Church in Education*, rev. ed. [pamphlet, 1994; item 32709].
13. J. Reuben Clark Jr. in *Conference Report*, Apr. 1938:103.
14. J. Reuben Clark Jr., "They of the Last Wagon," *Improvement Era*, Nov. 1947, 705.
15. J. Reuben Clark Jr. in *Conference Report*, Oct. 1935, 92.
16. J. Reuben Clark Jr., "They of the Last Wagon," *Improvement Era*, Nov. 1947, 747–48.
17. Harold B. Lee, "President J. Reuben Clark, Jr.: An Appreciation on His Ninetieth Birthday," *Improvement Era*, Sept. 1961, 632.
18. Harold B. Lee, "President J. Reuben Clark, Jr.: An Appreciation on His Ninetieth Birthday," *Improvement Era*, Sept. 1961, 632.
19. Abraham Lincoln, notes for a law lecture, 1 July 1850.
20. *History of the Church*, 3:258.
21. *History of the Church*, 5:394.
22. "Has the Supreme Court Gone Too Far?" *Commentary*, vol. 116, no. 3 [Oct. 2003], 25–48.
23. Brigham Young in *Journal History*, 4 July 1854.

PHOTO CREDITS

Page 2: Mementos from the desk of J. Reuben Clark, the J. Reuben Clark Collection, courtesy of L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. Pages 3, 6, 8, and 10: Photographs courtesy of L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. Pages 2, 4, and 7: Photographs by Bradley Slade.