

The Doctrinal and Philosophical Foundations of Moral Legislation

Prophetic and Apostolic Statements on Agency, Rights, and Moral Legislation

Part 1 – Basic Concepts

Intelligence

- Our capacity to recognize the distinction between alternative options
-

Free Will (our desires and intentions)

- Our preference(s) between options
- Our commitment (\$) to a preference
- The intention we have to act or carry out our commitment (\$), before we actually act
-

Agency (our capacity to act on our desires and intentions)

The capacity to use our bodies as vehicles for carrying out the decisions we make

Having relevant and useful information about the options we have been given that help us develop a preference

God gave us ____ (#) ____ which we used to choose His plan vs Lucifer's plan. Lucifer sought to destroy our ____ (#) ____ which we received from God. Without ____ (#) ____ we would be unaccountable for our actions.

Eternal/Natural Law (truths that exist before we are given agency)

- Outside the simulation (A universal, eternal, unchanging standard)
 - The doctrines and principles that qualify God to be God
 - The laws that dictate the scope of what is possible within creation

Divine Law (duties - the way we are expected to act)

- Inside all of creation
 - A version of possibility made permanent by God (the fork path He chose)

- An emergent property of creation (physics, our way of doing “creation”)
- Fundamental and permanent to all creations across all time within the scope of our God’s creation (how to use our bodies)
- Inside our mortal simulation (commandments)
 - The rules that govern how mortal bodies should be used
 - The specific directions and obligations we have received from God for how we *must* think, speak, or act
 - The specific directions and obligations we have received from God for how we *must not* think, speak, or act

(Unalienable) Rights

A right is the God-given permission to demand a specific freedom

The explicit and implicit permissions, authority, and claims that we have *from God* (*) for how we *can* think, speak, or act appropriately without condemnation (permissions that cannot be violated God’s judgment)

Anything that is BOTH necessary and proper in order to keep all of God’s commandments

Freedom (Vested Rights)

The explicit and implicit permissions that we have *from society* for how we *can* think, speak, or act appropriately without condemnation

The responsibility that we have to act within the permissions and directions and obligations we have been given

The type of environment which provides multiple options with substantially different outcomes

The opportunity (§) to...

1. act
2. think
3. speak

...in a very specific way without fear of...

1. formal consequence
2. informal consequence

...from...

1. people
 - recognized political authority
 - authorized supervisor / employer
 - the general populous

...with...

1. proper jurisdiction
2. improper jurisdiction

Liberty

The morally sound environment in which our opportunities (§) match our permissions from God

Liberty of the Soul

The condition of maximized individual self-discipline successfully acting in a way that strengthens our capacity to use our bodies intentionally (the result of choosing correctly (*), consistently)

The talent of mastering control over our bodies so that our actions match our desires

Part 2 – Explanation

The terms “agency,” “rights,” “liberty,” and “freedom” each have very specific and unique definitions. It is clear from a thorough study of the words of the prophets and apostles that these terms are not always used in a consistent way—even by the brethren, in the same way the phrase the “kingdom of God” has been given multiple totally conflicting definitions by those providing passing reference or incomplete explanation.

Only by studying this topic over the span of dozens of talks and scriptures can the correct definitions be ascertained. Those who base their entire perspective on legislating morality on a couple quotes will surely fail to grasp the entire picture that has been clearly articulated by prophets and apostles for the past nearly 200 years.

Main Principles Taught by Prophets

1. Agency is power over our bodies, not freedom from consequence. Agency is not the *permission* to sin, but it is the *power* to sin.
2. Agency is still subject to Divine Law.
3. Our law is based on Natural Law.
4. Natural law only gives us the rights to do the things which improve, perfect, and perpetuate our lives. Nature gives us no right to do anything that tends to our destruction.
5. Natural Law IS Divine Law, which includes commandments.
6. Unalienable rights originate from Natural/Divine Law.
7. Both public and private behavior affects everyone else, even if only through bad example.

8. Indirect effect and “bad example” is even sufficient enough to warrant moral legislation.
9. Morality cannot be legislated (legislation doesn’t change hearts), but immorality must be legislated.
10. Satan’s plan was to *force us to do good*, not to punish bad behavior.
11. God’s plan of incentives is to reward good behavior *and* punish bad behavior.
12. If God truly gave us the permission to sin, then He would be unjust for ever punishing sin.
13. Freedom isn’t binary, it’s a spectrum ranging from 100% to 0%, total freedom to total oppression. The degree of freedom that we should be seeking is called liberty, “true freedom,” or the “liberty of the soul,” the point where freedom is perfectly and morally restrained and where total mastery and control over our bodies is maximized.
14. In the eyes of God’s people, freedom is a means to an end, not the end itself.

Summary

The following is a summary of the principles taught by prophets, apostles, scriptures, and philosophers throughout this book.

Agency is the power that God has given us over bodies that He created, owns, and maintains with his power. We do not own our own bodies. Agency is the power to have full control over our bodies—it is *not* the license or permission to do whatever we wish with them. It is what the brethren call a “moral agency,” or a power with standards and rules attached.

Anything that God has given us *permission* to do with our bodies is called an “unalienable right,” meaning a right that cannot be taken from us without the offender coming under the judgment of God. We do not have the “right” or permission to do anything with our bodies that is wrong according to God’s law, nor do we have the right to neglect to fulfill our moral obligations. If agency truly was the permission to do anything we want to do, then He would be unjust the moment he punishes sin and He would cease to be God.

Contrary to statements made by libertarians, laws that punish wickedness promote agency, not destroy it. Anything that assists men and women in having greater control over their own bodies protects and restores agency, while anything that causes a loss of control of our bodies through addiction and vice and degradation of our bodies and minds destroys agency. True liberty and true freedom exists in developing perfect control over our bodies.

The philosophers have taught that natural law gives man the right to do anything that preserves and perfects our lives, and refuses us the right to anything that tends to damage and destroy our bodies or the life, liberty and property of others. American constitutional law finds its foundations in natural law which ties back to divine law. The philosophers have taught that because human reason is foggy and imperfect, it has been necessary for God to intervene by providing revelations that are recorded in the scriptures. The scriptures exist to correct, guide, and assist our reason and philosophy.

The scriptures teach us that Lucifer's plan was to withhold agency by manipulating our thoughts, desires, and actions. In Satan's plan, we have absolutely no control over our own bodies. We would simply be along for the ride.

If we were in the back of a car with no access to the controls and no power to influence the driver, we would be completely unaccountable for the actions of the driver. In the same way, if Satan were in total control of our bodies, we would be unaccountable for the sins or righteous actions committed by our bodies. Satan's plan would completely destroy the purpose of life and God's plan for our growth.

There are subtle but fundamental differences between God's plan and Satan's plan. Lucifer's plan was to compel righteousness by controlling our behavior. God's plan is to incentivise righteousness by punishing wickedness and rewarding obedience. In Satan's plan we have no choice or no power to act on our decisions. In God's plan we have total control over our bodies but there are very clear consequences for our actions. Rewards and punishments can hardly be called compulsion, force, or a destruction of agency.

The phrase legislating morality is a misnomer, because in reality morality or goodness cannot be forced because it comes from within. Obedience can be strongly persuaded through threats and coercion, but 'goodness' is a decision. Libertarianism says that moral legislation is ultimately ineffective in changing hearts, to which the brethren seem to agree, adding that it is only the doctrines and truths of the gospel that create a lasting change of heart. On the other hand, social conservatives are seeking to *prevent* moral deterioration by pushing sin out of the public spotlight and back into the closets. Legislating against immorality is a defensive action to protect families.

Not only do God's prophets and apostles teach that it is *not* an infringement on the unalienable right of others to create laws that protect morality, they have taught it is our *responsibility* to do exactly that. Because God hates sending his children into families and bodies that are being destroyed by wickedness, He uses his judgements to cleanse the land of wickedness. The righteous are always affected by these judgements, so they have a direct interest in preventing wickedness through the power of legislation.

Part 3 – Statements by Church Authorities

Scriptures

Galatians 5:1

1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and **be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.**

2 Nephi 2:25-29

25 Adam fell that men might be; and **men are, that they might have joy.**

26 And the Messiah cometh in the fulness of time, that he may redeem the children of men from the fall. And because that they are redeemed from the fall they have become free forever, knowing good from evil; **to act for themselves and not to be acted upon, save it be by the punishment of the law at the great and last day, according to the commandments which God hath given.**

27 Wherefore, **men are free according to the flesh;** and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself.

28 And now, my sons, I would that ye should look to the great Mediator, and hearken unto his great commandments; and be faithful unto his words, and choose eternal life, according to the will of his Holy Spirit;

29 **And not choose eternal death, according to the will of the flesh and the evil which is therein, which giveth the spirit of the devil power to captivate,** to bring you down to hell, that he may reign over you in his own kingdom.

Jarom 1:5

5 And now, behold, two hundred years had passed away, and the people of Nephi had waxed strong in the land. **They observed to keep the law of Moses** and the sabbath day holy unto the Lord. And **they profaned not; neither did they blaspheme. And the laws of the land were exceedingly strict.**

Mosiah 1:13-14

13 Yea, and moreover I say unto you, that **if this highly favored people of the Lord should fall into transgression, and become a wicked and an adulterous people, that the Lord will deliver them up, that thereby they become weak like unto their brethren; and he will no more preserve them by his matchless and marvelous power, as he has hitherto preserved our fathers.**

14 For I say unto you, that **if he had not extended his arm in the preservation of our fathers they must have fallen into the hands of the Lamanites, and become victims to their hatred.**

Mosiah 29:40

40 And they did wax strong in love towards Mosiah; yea, they did esteem him more than any other man; for they did not look upon him as a tyrant who was seeking for gain, yea, for that lucre which doth corrupt the soul; for he had not exacted riches of them, neither had he delighted in the shedding of blood; but he had established peace in the land, and he had granted unto his people that they should be delivered from **all manner of bondage**; therefore they did esteem him, yea, exceedingly, beyond measure.

Alma 42:13, 22*

13 Therefore, according to justice, the plan of redemption could not be brought about, only on conditions of repentance of men in this probationary state, yea, this preparatory state; for except it were for these conditions, mercy could not take effect except it should destroy the work of justice. **Now the work of justice could not be destroyed; if so, God would cease to be God.**

22 But there is a law given, and a punishment affixed, and a repentance granted; which repentance, mercy claimeth; otherwise, justice claimeth the creature and executeth the law, and the law inflicteth the punishment; if not so, the works of justice would be destroyed, and God would cease to be God.

Mormon 9:19*

19 And if there were miracles wrought then, why has God ceased to be a God of miracles and yet be an unchangeable Being? **And behold, I say unto you he changeth not; if so he would cease to be God; and he ceaseth not to be God,** and is a God of miracles.

D&C 29:34-40

34 Wherefore, verily I say unto you that **all things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal**; neither any man, nor the children of men; neither Adam, your father, whom I created.

35 Behold, **I gave unto him that he should be an agent unto himself; and I gave unto him commandment, but no temporal commandment gave I unto him, for my commandments are spiritual;** they are not natural nor temporal, neither carnal nor sensual.

36 And it came to pass that Adam, being tempted of the devil—for, behold, the devil was before Adam, for he rebelled against me, saying, **Give me thine honor, which is my power;** and also a third part of the hosts of heaven turned he away from me **because of their agency;**

37 And they were thrust down, and thus came the devil and his angels;

38 And, behold, there is a place prepared for them from the beginning, which place is hell.

39 And **it must needs be that the devil should tempt the children of men, or they could not be agents unto themselves;** for if they never should have bitter they could not know the sweet—

40 Wherefore, it came to pass that the devil tempted Adam, and he partook of the forbidden fruit and transgressed the commandment, wherein **he became subject to the will of the devil, because he yielded unto temptation.**

D&C 58:21

21 Let no man break the laws of the land, for **he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land.**

D&C 88:34

34 And again, verily I say unto you, **that which is governed by law is also preserved by law and perfected and sanctified by the same.**

D&C 101:77-80

77 According to the laws and constitution of the people, which I have suffered to be established, and should be maintained for the rights and protection of all flesh, according to just and holy principles;

78 That every man may act in doctrine and principle pertaining to futurity, **according to the moral agency which I have given unto him, that every man may be accountable for his own sins in the day of judgment.**

79 Therefore, **it is not right that any man should be in bondage one to another.**

80 And 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 134:1-7, 12

1 We believe that **governments were instituted of God** for the benefit of man; and that **he holds men accountable for their acts in relation to them, both in making laws and administering them**, for the good and safety of society.

2 We believe that no government can exist in peace, except such laws are framed and held inviolate as will secure to each individual the free exercise of conscience, the right and control of property, and the protection of life.

3 We believe that all governments necessarily require civil officers and magistrates to enforce the laws of the same; and that such as will administer the law in equity and justice should be sought for and upheld by the voice of the people if a republic, or the will of the sovereign.

4 We believe that religion is instituted of God; and that men are amenable to him, and to him only, for the exercise of it, unless their religious opinions prompt them to infringe upon the rights and liberties of others; but **we do not believe that human law has a right to interfere in prescribing rules of worship to bind the consciences of men, nor dictate forms for public or private devotion**; that the civil magistrate should **restrain crime, but never control conscience; should punish guilt, but never suppress the freedom of the soul**.

5 We believe that all men are bound to sustain and uphold the respective governments in which they reside, while protected in their inherent and inalienable rights by the laws of such governments; and that **sedition and rebellion are unbecoming every citizen thus protected, and should be punished accordingly**, and that all governments have a right to enact such laws as in their own judgments are best calculated to secure the public interest; at the same time, however, holding sacred the freedom of conscience.

6 We believe that every man should be honored in his station, rulers and magistrates as such, being placed for the protection of the innocent and the punishment of the guilty; and that to the laws all men owe respect and deference, as without them peace and harmony would be supplanted by **anarchy and terror**; human laws being instituted for the express purpose of regulating our interests as individuals and nations, between man and man; and divine laws given of heaven, prescribing rules on spiritual concerns, for faith and worship, both to be answered by man to his Maker.

7 We believe that rulers, states, and governments have a right, and are bound to enact laws for the protection of all citizens in the free exercise of their religious belief; but we do not believe that they have a right in justice to deprive citizens of this privilege, or proscribe them in their

opinions, so long as a regard and reverence are shown to the laws and such religious opinions do not justify **sedition nor conspiracy**.

12 We believe it just to preach the gospel to the nations of the earth, and warn the righteous to save themselves from the corruption of the world; but **we do not believe it right to interfere with bond-servants, neither preach the gospel to, nor baptize them contrary to the will and wish of their masters, nor to meddle with or influence them in the least to cause them to be dissatisfied with their situations in this life, thereby jeopardizing the lives of men; such interference we believe to be unlawful and unjust, and dangerous to the peace of every government allowing human beings to be held in servitude.**

Moses 4:3

3 Wherefore, because that **Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him**, and also, that I should give unto him mine own power; by the power of mine Only Begotten, I caused that he should be cast down...

Church Statements, Publications, Early Church History

Petition from Austin Cowles and Sylvester B. Stoddard, circa 14 May 1842

"A Bill praying that all Brothels or houses of Ill Fame Erected or Continued in the City of Nauvoo Be prohibited and By Law Declared a public Nuisance

Austin Cowles
Sylvester B Stoddard

"refd to Committee of Muncpl laws, who reported in favor of Bill, which was Passed into an Ordinance May 14th 1842."

Nauvoo Ordinance, 10 August 1844—A

"An Ordinance concerning brothels and disorderly characters

"Sec 1. Be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Nauvoo, that **all brothels or houses of ill fame erected or being in the City of Nauvoo, be and the same hereby are henceforth prohibited and by law declared public nuisances, and that the owners or keepers of such houses be fined in a sum of not less than fifty, nor more than two thousand five hundred dollars, and imprisoned for six months for each offence of one days continuance of such establishment, and that any person frequenting such establishment (except on lawful business) shall be fined in any sum of not less than fifty, nor more than five hundred dollars, and six months imprisonment for each offence; and further, that for every act of adultery or fornication, which can be proved, the parties shall be imprisoned six months**

and fined each in the sum of not less than fifty nor more than two thousand five hundred dollars, and that the individuals own acknowledgment shall be considered sufficient evidence in the case.

“Sec. 2. Be it ordained that the ordinance concerning brothels, and disorderly characters passed May 14. 1842, be, and the same is hereby repealed.

“Sec 3. Be it further ordained that this ordinance shall take effect, from and after its passage...

“Passed augt. 10th. 1844

“Geo. W. Harris Prest. pro. tem.

“Willard Richards Recorder”

(*** Joseph Smith Papers)

Nauvoo City Council Minutes

“29 December 1843 • Friday

Special Session, Dec 29, 1843, 4 oclock P. M.

“Names of members called, Prayer by William W Phelps minutes of last council read and approved,

“Capt. Jonathan Dunham & 40 policemen— were sworn into office, **to support the constitution of the U. S. & the State of Illinois and obey the ordinance of this city and the Mayor according to the best of their ability**,— by Counseller W. W. Phelps Clerk of the Mayors Court.— Names of police called by Capt Dunham

“A. George W. Harris admonishd the police to do their duty....

(*** Nauvoo City Council Rough Minute Book, November 1842–January 1844)

“Keep a strict account of the time you serve as Policemen. **Have the ordinances of the city always in your possession and study them, and ferret out all grog shops, gambling houses, brothels; and disorderly conduct, and if a transgressor resists, cuff his ears. If any one lifts a weapon or presents a pistol at you take his life if need be to preserve your own, but enforce the ordinances, and preserve the peace of the city, or take care of your own lives...**

(*** History, 1838–1856, volume E-1 [1 July 1843–30 April 1844], page 1835)

New Era

“True freedom, as For the Strength of Youth teaches, comes when we use our agency to choose obedience. Loss of freedom, as Danny learned, comes from choosing disobedience.

“While you are free to choose your course of action, you are not free to choose the consequences. Whether for good or bad, consequences follow as a natural result of the choices you make.”

“Agents unto Ourselves

“Because the scriptures teach that we are ‘free to choose,’ ‘free to act,’ and free to do things ‘of [our] own free will’ (2 Nephi 2:27; 10:23; D&C 58:27; see also Helaman 14:30), we often use the term ‘free agency.’

“But did you know that the phrase ‘free agency’ does not appear in the scriptures? Instead, the scriptures teach ‘that **every man may act in doctrine and principle ... according to the moral agency which I have given unto him, that every man may be accountable for his own sins**’ (D&C 101:78).

“Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught: **‘The word agency appears [in scriptures] either by itself or with the modifier moral. ... When we use the term moral agency, we are appropriately emphasizing the accountability that is an essential part of the divine gift of agency.** We are moral beings and agents unto ourselves, free to choose but also responsible for our choices.’

“President Packer adds, ‘Agency is defined in the scriptures as ‘moral agency,’ which means that we can choose between good and evil.’ This God-given gift means we are ‘free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose **captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil**’ (2 Nephi 2:27).

“Satan’s War against Agency

“Because moral agency plays an important role in the plan of salvation, Satan sought to destroy it in the premortal world. He was cast out for his rebellion and now seeks ‘to deceive and to blind men, and **to lead them captive at his will**’ (Moses 4:3–4).

“Satan wants us to make choices that limit our freedom, lead to bad habits and addictions, and leave us powerless to resist his temptations. The beauty of the gospel is that it makes us aware of our choices and the consequences of those choices. **Wise use of agency keeps our choices open and improves our ability to choose correctly.**

“The Savior’s Example

“When the plan of salvation was presented in the Grand Council in Heaven, the Savior showed us how to use our moral agency correctly. He said, ‘Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever’ (Moses 4:2). Because He was willing to do the will of the Father then and later in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross (see Matthew 26:39; Luke 22:42), Jesus paid the price for our bad choices and provided a way for us to be forgiven through repentance.

“If we follow the Savior’s example, instead of saying, ‘I do what I want,’ we will declare, ‘I do what the Father wants.’ **Using our moral agency this way will bring us freedom and happiness.**

(Michael R. Morris, “Free Agency or Moral Agency?”, New Era, October 2014)

Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor, Hyrum Smith, Willard Richards, Daniel H. Wells, Lyman Wight, & Orson Spencer

“Meeting of City Council as above, Opened by Prayer. Names of the City Council called, Minutes of the last three Meetings were read & approved of— Several Petitions were presented, read, & referred to the respective Committees.

“The Committee of Municipal Laws Reported upon, & Recommended the Adoption of the Petition that all Brothels or Houses of ill Fame Erected or continued in the City of Nauvoo be prohibited, and by Law declared a public Nuisance....

“...Genl. Joseph Smith spoke at length, & wished for an ordinance to remedy the existing Evil.

“Genl. Hyrum Smith spoke to considerable length to the same effect.

“Alderman Orson Spencer spoke in strong Terms in accordance with the Remarks made by the Members who spoke before him....

“...Colr Brigham Young spoke at length in Support of the Bill. Colr. Lyman Wight also spoke in Support, & at length....

“...Genl H. Smith again spoke, & amongst other things agst. Night Suppers, night Parties & Balls, & c. &c...

“...Colr. John Taylor took the Floor, & spoke in support of the Bill. Colr. Willard Richards also spoke in approbation of the Bill.

"Aldmn. **Daniel H. Wells** spoke in **support**, & wishes Bill amended, by **leaving the Penalty without limitation**, the Bill was amended, Rules dispensed with, & Bill read 2nd. time, the Usual Rules were gone through & the Bill passed.— Title,— 'An Ordinance Concerning Brothels & disorderly Characters.

("Minutes, 14 May 1842," p. 25, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed December 31, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minutes-14-may-1842/1>)

First Presidency Letter (1886)*

"There are now in the city some six Brothels, forty Tap Rooms, a number of Gambling Houses, Pool Tables, and other disreputable concerns, all run by non-Mormons.

"But for the presence of those who are constantly making war upon us, **our city would be free from the contaminating influences of houses of prostitution, gambling houses, dram shops and other such death-dealing concerns, and the taxes would be greatly reduced.** But, as it is, the 'Mormons' are found to pay a liberal tax in support of the laws against the lawlessness of their non-tax paying enemies. Every other town, city and county in the Territory, and all the jails and the Utah penitentiary, show even a much cleaner record in favor of the 'Mormons' than the foregoing exhibit portrays."

(*** Epistle to Saints in General Conference, March 1886)

First Presidency Statement

First Presidency Calls for Fight
Against Pornography, Obscenity

The First Presidency of the Church has called upon church members and "all right-thinking people to join in a concerted movement to fight pornography" and obscenity. Their statement, issued February 19, 1966, is as follows:

The circulation of pornographic pictures, books, magazines, and films in nearly every community has now reached an alarming stage.

Its detrimental effect upon standards of morality is becoming so serious that all thoughtful people must unite to combat it.

Financially interested persons, claiming "the right to sell whatever the public will buy," merchandise their questionable wares with no regard for the consequences.

The sale of unclean printed matter, the showing of salacious films, the presentation of objectionable TV programs, and the dissemination of immoral material through other means have become so offensive that decent citizenry can no longer remain silent.

Even the sanctity of the home is invaded as direct-by-mail merchants thrust their debasing products upon boys and girls, many of tender years, whose names they subtly obtain for their nefarious purposes.

These merchants seem to have no concern for the morals of the people, nor for the well-being of the communities at large which invariably must suffer through the crime and corruption that always result from a lowering of standards of decency.

We are unalterably opposed to sexual immorality and to all manner of obscenity. We proclaim in the strongest terms possible against the evil and wicked designs of men who would betray virtuous manhood and womanhood, enticing them to thoughts and actions leading to vice, the lowering of standards of clean living, and the breaking up of the home.

We call upon the members of the Church and all other right-thinking people to join in a concerted movement to fight pornography wherever it may be found, whether in books and magazines, on the screen, or in materials sent through the post office.

We also urge legislators and civil authorities in every state and community to do all in their power to curb this pernicious evil.

Local as well as federal processes may be required to stem this tide, and yet such action will come only if an aroused electorate makes its feelings known.

It seems incredible that elected officials can be so far misled as to suppose that they are acting in the public interest when they allow this debasing condition to continue.

Minorities seeking to make financial gain at the expense of a silent majority should not be permitted to bring widespread tragedy upon others for want of a strong expression in defense of decency.

Every father and mother should be aroused to the danger,

and should demand an immediate termination of this flagrant vice.

The First Presidency,
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
***April 1966

With all the crime, changing of population from rural to urban, loosened morals, pornographic movies and literature, etc., we must stand firm in the cause of right. How can persons for selfish reasons be hypocrites enough to urge the opening or widening of the liquor laws when they know that where consumption of liquor is greatly increased, there is a similar increase in multitudes of social problems?

How can a newspaper which records the highway accidents, the deaths, the health problems, and broken homes as a result of drinking advocate making liquor more easily available in order to attract more tourists and industry? The cost to communities and individuals far outweighs any benefits.

The American Council on Alcohol Problems passed a resolution which states: "While we share the concern of a majority of our citizens about the dangers in the use of marijuana, we are firmly convinced that alcohol remains the number one drug problem in America and that its damage to life, limb and the welfare of our people is vastly greater."

We must be equally concerned about the use of drugs that destroy lives and bring crushing misery, not only to users

but to those around them. But hypocrisy in the lives of adults has a serious influence on our young people who are turning to this form of protest. What we are trying to say is that the kids are affected by the hypocrisy of those who accept the cocktail hour and other evil practices and yet get hysterical because the kids have found other ways to imitate their parents' behavior. The kids will pay attention only when the adults set the proper example.

As great as our responsibility is through legislation or other means to prevent our young citizens from falling prey to those intent on their becoming victims of these evil habits, we cannot minimize our responsibility to help rehabilitate those who have succumbed. How can we call ourselves Christians and say we love our neighbor — who is anyone in need of help — and fail to work with others who are endeavoring to set up facilities to assist alcoholics, drug-users, or parolees from our prisons? Yet there are those who would actually hamper such efforts because they object to having such facilities in their midst. These unfortunate people need our help. Surely we must be prepared to be the good Samaritan and help wherever possible.

Self-discipline was- never easy. I do not doubt that it is more difficult today. We live in a sex-saturated world. Notwithstanding the conclusions of a government commission, which I am happy to say has been widely repudiated, I am convinced that many of our

youth, and many older but no less gullible, are victims of the persuasive elements with which they are surrounded — the pornographic literature which has become a \$500 million a year business in this country alone, seductive movies that excite and give sanction to promiscuity, dress standards

that invite familiarity, judicial decisions that destroy legal restraint, parents who often unwittingly push the children they love toward situations they later regret.

A wise writer has observed that "a new religion is emerging throughout the world, a religion in which the body is the supreme object of worship to the exclusion of all other aspects of existence.

"The pursuit of its pleasures has grown into a cult ... for its ritual no efforts are spared.

"We have bartered holiness for convenience, . . . wisdom for information, joy for pleasure, tradition for fashion." (Abraham Heschel, *The Insecurity of Freedom*, p. 200.)

Nakedness has become the hallmark of much public entertainment. It reaches beyond this into the realm of sadistic perversion. As one seasoned New York critic remarked, "It's not only the nudity; it's the crudity."

Can there be any reasonable doubt that in sowing the wind of pornog-

raphy, we are reaping the whirlwind of decay?

We need to read more history. Nations and civilizations have flowered, then died, poisoned by their own moral sickness. As one commentator has remarked, Rome perished when the Goths poured over its walls. But it was "not that the walls were low. It was that Rome itself was low." (Jenkin Lloyd Jones, U. S. News & World Report, May 26, 1962, p. 90.)

No nation, no civilization can long endure without strength in the homes of its people. That strength derives from the integrity of those who establish those homes.

No family can have peace, no home can be free from storms of adversity unless that family and that home are built on foundations of morality, fidelity, and mutual respect. There cannot be peace where there is not trust; there cannot be freedom where there is not loyalty. The warm sunlight of love will not rise out of a swamp of immorality.

The Contributor*

"The state, as we view it in its organized condition, consists of all classes without regard to beliefs or even morality of conduct, and its authority in a federal or a republican form of government, that which is derived from the people over which the government extends. Such a government can be no more perfect than the source of its authority. The combined wisdom of man in the highest development of humanity has not been able to offer perfection either in law or administration to its subjects.

"The church, established upon the revelations of God, and by His authority, must have precedence over all other organizations affecting the welfare of humanity. All other governments can have no legitimate object or purpose but to aid and assist man in

keeping the divine law; and to encourage and even coerce obedience to laws in unison with the divine law, but in no case to hinder, much less to prohibit the keeping of any divine law, ordinance, or precept. These facts accepted it is not difficult to determine the duties devolving upon state governments and their rights in relation to their subjects.

“It is said there must be no union between church and state, but this is in one sense a false statement not consistent with the facts. False theories entertained lead to false conclusions. **The state is a community invested with authority to compel right and justice to be done. The fact that there are men in all communities who will not voluntarily perform either their personal or social duties, who will both disregard and violate the rights of others, makes the state a necessity.** It has within its jurisdiction all these individual members who constitute the church, and each of whom belongs to the community. **There must of necessity be a union of interests, which should in all consistency demand a concert of action, all tending to the development, culture and perfection of the human soul, which never can be attained without a knowledge of that higher law, so productive of intelligence, civilization and religion. It then becomes the duty of the state to encourage the highest possible development of its subjects, in their appreciation and discernment of right and wrong, rewarding the right and punishing the wrongdoer as determined by the highest law revealed to man.**

“No state has a right to enforce a law contrary to God’s law so long as its subjects recognize Him in their faith and acts as the Creator and moral governor of this universe. He has created man subject to law, clothed him with rights, and laid upon him duties. He must obey God’s laws and discharge his duties, or suffer penalties if he does not. If all men obeyed the laws of the divine government, no other government would be necessary. The object of all earthly governments would be attained under the divine government. There would be no wrongs to right, no duty to enforce, no rights to forcibly defend; the recognition of every right, the performance of every duty would be universal, no rights violated, no wrongs committed.

“Rights and duties do exist independent of the state; they are rights and duties coming from God. The state must recognize these rights and duties, must maintain the one and enforce the other. Right and justice as determined by divine law, are derived from God. The admission of a God in morality implies all this and nothing less than this. St. Paul recognizes all civil authority as being ordained of God; **all authority having a legal standpoint as coming from Him must therefore exist by divine appointment and for a specific purpose.** The state is not absolute or arbitrary. **Its duty is to protect men in the enjoyment of those inalienable rights with which God has clothed them to enable each to perform his whole duty.** The state is under law as well as the individuals of which it is composed. **There is a law higher than the state, the law of God, by which it must be governed if it will continue legitimate.** This illustrates the correct view of what is called the higher law, and this law the state, can no more violate than individuals. **If God has laid certain duties on individuals, on the family, on the community, these duties must be performed, nor can**

the state interfere to prevent their being discharged; if it could, then through its action all of God's laws might be got rid of and humanity be freed from duty to God. **If the law of God says 'thou shalt not steal', 'thou shalt not commit murder'; the state must declare the same things; it cannot enact that man shall steal and murder; it must not legislate in opposition to divine law. So in relation to all of man's duties, and this morality involved by keeping or not keeping the law given for man's moral regeneration and perfection.**

"Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness were declared by the Constitution our fathers framed to be among the inalienable rights of men. This pursuit of happiness demands liberty of conscience, without which no man's moral or spiritual nature can be developed. Any infringement upon the right of conscience is followed with the penalty of unhappiness and misery. The state can pass no law, nor require any act of its citizens, that shall deprive them of any liberty of conscience. It was in view of this important fact that the amendment to the Constitution was so framed as to prohibit any action on the part of Congress that should prevent the free exercise of conscience in all matters of religious faith. **This right and liberty of conscience is a God given right to enable man to perform his duty to God. The state cannot perform that duty for him, nor legally restrain him from doing all that His God requires. This he must do or forfeit God's favor. God's law to man is 'Multiply and replenish the earth;' and He reveals the laws and ordinances by which it shall be done. The state has no right to enact that it shall not be done, or that it may be done in any other way than that which He has ordained. The duties and rights between husband and wife cannot be lawfully changed or impaired; no civil power can create in either the right to violate marital duties which are established by the divine law.**"

(The Contributor, Volume 5, 1884)

A Parents Guide

"The most fundamental responsibility you have as a righteous parent is to bless your children. You create conditions and circumstances, opportunities and privileges, that will encourage the spiritual success of your children. This, of course, is also what God does for his children....

"...You must not only provide the law of the Lord to your children, you must help them keep on the correct course. Counseling them in love when you see that they are straying from the Lord's laws will help them exercise their agency with understanding. The use of agency includes the consequences resulting from our decisions. Correcting a child—'reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost' (D&C 121:43) and then showing an increase of love toward the child—is an opportunity to teach the great principle of repentance. An understanding of repentance increases a child's appreciation for Christ and initiates awareness of the justice and mercy of God. It also helps parents strive to judge the acts of their children righteously and justly. This means not only teaching the law and

reproving when the law is broken, but offering mercy and forgiveness when your children repent and try to do better.”

(A Parents Guide, Chapter 1: Intimacy and the Purposes of Earthly Families, 1985)

Quotes from Church Leaders

M. Russell Ballard*

“To remove religious influence from public policy simply because some are uncomfortable with any degree of moral restraint is like the passenger on a sinking ship who removes his life jacket because it is restrictive and uncomfortable.

“Religion represents society’s conscience, and must speak out when government chooses a course that is contrary to the laws of God.

“I believe [Washington] would have been troubled to see a time when citizens are forbidden to pray in public meetings; when people claim that 'you can't legislate morality,' as if any law ever passed did not have at its heart some notion of right and wrong; when churches are called intruders when they speak out against public policy that is contrary to the commandments of God; when many people reject the correcting influence of churches if it infringes on daily living; when religion is accepted as a social organization but not as an integral part of national culture; when people bristle if representatives of churches speak in any forum except from the pulpit.

“Indeed, some people now claim that the Founding Fathers’ worst fear in connection with religion has been realized; that we have, in fact, a state-sponsored religion in America today. This new religion, adopted by many, does not have an identifiable name, but it operates just like a church. It exists in the form of doctrines and beliefs, where morality is whatever a person wants it to be, and where freedom is derived from the ideas of man and not the laws of God. Many people adhere to this concept of morality with religious zeal and fervor, and courts and legislatures tend to support it.

“We see a sad reality of contemporary life when many of the same people who defend the right of a pornographer to distribute exploitive films and photos would deny freedom of expression to people of faith because of an alleged fear of what might happen from religious influence on government or public meetings.”

(“Religion in a Free Society”, Provo Freedom Festival, 5 July 1992)

Ezra Taft Benson

“The central issue in the premortal council was: Shall the children of God have untrammelled agency to choose the course they should follow, whether good or evil, or shall they be coerced and forced to be obedient? Christ and all who followed him stood for the former proposition—freedom of choice; Satan stood for the latter—coercion and force. The war that began in heaven over this issue is not yet over. The conflict continues on the battlefield of mortality. And one of Lucifer’s primary strategies has been to restrict our agency through the power of earthly governments.”

(“The Constitution: A Heavenly Banner”, 16 September 1986 ***)

Ezra Taft Benson*

“Only a moral and religious people deserve or will defend their freedom.

“Edmund Burke stated it well when he said:

‘Men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites—in proportion as their love of justice is above their rapacity;—in proportion as their soundness and sobriety of understanding is above their vanity and presumption;—in proportion as they are more disposed to listen to the counsels of the wise and good, in preference to the flattery of knaves. Society cannot exist, unless a controlling power upon the will and appetite is placed somewhere; and the less of it there is within, the more there must be without. It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters.’”

(America’s Challenge. God, Family, Country: Our Three Great Loyalties, 1974)

Ezra Taft Benson*

“President Ezra Taft Benson wrote: ‘Not only should we seek humble, worthy, courageous leadership, but we should measure all proposals having to do with our national or local welfare by four standards:

‘First, is the proposal, the policy or the idea being promoted, right as measured by the Gospel of Jesus Christ? ...

‘Second, is it right as measured by the Lord’s standard of constitutional government? ... The Lord’s standard is a safe guide.

‘Third, ... is it right as measured by the counsel of the living oracles of God? ...

'Fourth, what will be the effect upon the morale and the character of the people if this or that policy is adopted?' (In Our Prophets and Principles, pp. 69–70.)"

(D&C Institute Manual, Section 134: Earthly Governments and Laws)

Ezra Taft Benson*

"If we do not accept the existence of a Supreme Being; that God is the source of moral law, what more do we have to offer than Marx?..."

"Freedom is an eternal, God-given principle."

(Delivered to the International Freedoms Conference, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, October 26, 1979)

Ezra Taft Benson*

"You must keep your honor. You cannot yet speak officially for the country, but you can become informed. You can speak your mind. **You may think you can do little about the national economy or the actions of our government and the moral weakness all about us, but we must all remember that the Lord has placed great responsibilities upon the elders of Israel in the preservation of our Constitution.**"

(Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson 622; from an address given at a Young Adult Fireside, Logan, UT, 11 Feb 1979)

Ezra Taft Benson*

"No people can maintain freedom unless their political institutions are founded upon faith in God and belief in the existence of moral law. God has endowed, men with certain inalienable rights, and no legislature and no majority, however great, may morally limit or destroy these....

"...Great nations are never conquered from outside unless they are rotten inside. Our greatest national problem today is erosion, not the erosion of the soil, but erosion of the national morality – erosion of traditional enforcement of law and order.

"Theodore Roosevelt said:

'The things that will destroy America are prosperity at any price, peace at any price, safety first instead of duty first, and love of soft living and the get-rich-quick theory of life.' (Quoted in *The Red Carpet*, p. 315.)

"In this blessed land we have exalted security, comfort, and ease above freedom. If we dwelled at length on the many things that are disturbing in the life of America today, we might well become discouraged. I mention only a few of the reported startling evidences of **our national illness, our moral erosion.**

"There is a **decline of U.S. morals and moral fiber**, a turning to pleasure and away from hard work and high standards of the past....

"...The present shocking situation was summed up succinctly by J. Edgar Hoover in the April 1967 FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin in these words:

'Morality, integrity, law and order and other cherished principles of our great heritage are battling for survival in many communities today. They are under constant attack from degrading and corrupting influences which, if not halted, will sweep away every vestige of decency and order remaining in our society.'

"A recent issue of the well-known and highly respected Babson's Washington Forecast Letter carried a four-page special supplement, which concluded as follows:

'Who are we to indict for sparking this chaos in America? Are the prime defendants the Stokely Carmichaels, the H. Rap Browns, the hippies, the draftcard burners, the peaceniks, the juvenile delinquents, the rabble-rousers, the Commies who have gained respectability as honest dissenters? Certainly, **most of these could be brought before the bar of justice to answer charges of law violations and they should be.**

'However, there is a stronger, truer **bill of indictment which may be drawn against those who have invited the bloody blackmail of America by permitting, even encouraging, mounting civil disobedience.**

"And then the article names of men of national prominence and continues:

'These men of power, prestige, and great influence in the political structure of America have permitted the concept of 'freedom of speech' to be expanded to include subversion, intimidation, sedition, and incitement to riot; they have condoned the distortion of 'academic freedom' to encompass the adulteration of young minds with Communist doctrine and the disintegration of a well-disciplined educational system; they have allowed 'freedom of assembly' to mushroom into disruption of peaceful activity, mob rule, riot, and insurrection.

'Unless those in authority in the United States can be influenced to abandon the suicidal course on which they have embarked—or unless they can be replaced by men who will—we cannot hope to restore in our nation the kind of domestic peace and order which has made our many generations proud to be Americans . . . living in a land of freedom, security, opportunity, and justice under law.

'The crisis we now face is the most serious, the most dangerous, in the history of our country. Each of us must diligently employ our influence and our effort – in speech, letters, and at the ballot box – to help set straight the way.'

"The facts are clear. Our problem centers in Washington, D.C. And this applies to the administration of both political parties. In the words of James Madison, Since the general civilization of mankind, I believe there are more instances of the abridgment of freedom of the people by gradual and silent encroachments of those in power, than by violent and sudden usurpations.' (Elliot's Debates, Vol. 3, p. 87.)

"If America is to withstand these influences and trends, there must be a renewal of the spirit of our forefathers, an appreciation of the American way of life, a strengthening of muscle and sinew and the character of the nation. America needs guts as well as guns. **National character is the core of national defense.**"

("Americans Are Destroying America", General Conference, April 1968)

Ezra Taft Benson*

"I believe that **God has endowed men with certain inalienable rights as set forth in the Declaration of Independence** and that no legislature and no majority, however great, may morally limit or destroy these; that the sole function of government is to protect life, liberty, and property, and anything more than this is usurpation and oppression.

"I believe that the Constitution of the United States was prepared and adopted by men acting under inspiration from Almighty God; that it is a solemn compact between the peoples of the states of this nation that all officers of government are under duty to obey; **that the eternal moral laws expressed therein must be adhered to or individual liberty will perish....**

"I am hereby resolved that under no circumstances shall the freedoms guaranteed by the Bill of Rights be infringed. In particular I am opposed to any attempt on the part of the federal government to deny the people their right to bear arms, to worship, and to pray when and where they choose, or to own and control private property."

(An Enemy Hath Done This, p. 143-44; also in GFC 299-300; revised in TETB 617; from an address given at the Utah Forum for the American Idea, Salt Lake City, UT, 29 Feb 1968)

Ezra Taft Benson*

"I thank God for **freedom — the right of choice**. I am grateful for this great nation. Every true Latter-day Saint throughout the world loves the USA. The Constitution of this land is part of every Latter-day Saint's religious faith.

“This is not just another nation, not just a member of a family of nations. This is a great and glorious nation with a divine mission and a prophetic history and future. It has been brought into being under the inspiration of heaven.

“It is our firm belief, as Latter-day Saints, that the Constitution of this land was established by men whom the God of heaven raised up unto that very purpose. It is our conviction also that the God of heaven guided the founding fathers in establishing it for his particular purpose.

“The founders of this republic were deeply spiritual men. They believed men are capable of self-government and that it is the job of government to protect freedom and foster private initiative.

“Our earliest American fathers came here with a common objective — freedom of worship and liberty of conscience.

“They were familiar with the sacred scriptures, and they believed that liberty is a gift of heaven. To them, man as a child of God emphasized the sacredness of the individual and the interest of a kind Providence in the affairs of men and nations.

“These leaders recognized the need for divine guidance and the importance of vital religion and morality in the affairs of men and nations.”

(“The Lord’s Base of Operations”, p. 454-55; also in Title of Liberty 86)

Ezra Taft Benson*

“The Founding Fathers recognized **the importance of vital religion and morality in the affairs of individuals and governments**, and they turned to religion in order to give their new experiment a sense of direction. **They were well aware that the principles of moral, intellectual, and spiritual integrity taught and exemplified by the Savior are the perfect guide for the conduct of countries and of individuals. It is no accident that the principles of Christian religion are the foundation of the Constitution of the United States.**”

(Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, p. 600; from an address given at Frankfurt am Main, Germany, 1964)

Ezra Taft Benson*

“In recognizing God as the source of their rights, the Founding Fathers declared Him to be the ultimate authority for their basis of law. This led them to the conviction that people do not make law but merely acknowledge preexisting law, giving it specific application. The Constitution was conceived to be such an expression of higher law. And when their work was done, James Madison wrote: ‘It is impossible for the man of pious reflection not to

perceive in it a finger of that Almighty hand which has been so frequently and signally extended to our relief in the critical stages of the revolution' (The Federalist, no. 37)."

(CHB 23; Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, p. 597)

Ezra Taft Benson*

"Who has the right to beget illegitimate children?

"Who has the right to take the virtue of an Asian or any other girl, or to lose his own?

"Which American—at home or abroad—has the right to abandon his own flesh and blood and forget that his illegitimate child ever existed?...

"...Some would justify their immorality with the argument that restrictions against it are merely religious rules, rules that are meaningless because in reality there is no God. This you will recognize is merely an untruthful rationalization designed to justify one's carnal appetite, lust, and passion. **God's law is irrevocable. It applies to all, whether they believe in God or not. Everyone is subject to its penalties, no matter how one tries to rationalize or ignore them....**

"...Our nation, the United States of America, was built on the foundation of reality and spirituality. To the extent that its citizens violate God's commandments, especially his laws of morality—to that degree they weaken the country's foundation. A rejection and repudiation of God's laws could well lead our nation to its destruction just as it has to Greece and Rome. It can happen to our country unless we repent. An eminent statesman once said, 'Our very civilization itself is based upon chastity, the sanctity of marriage, and the holiness of the home. Destroy these and Christian man becomes a brute.' (J. Reuben Clark, Jr., Conference Report, October 1938, p. 137.) Home is the rock foundation, the cornerstone of civilization. No nation will be stronger than its homes and families.

"God's laws are not to be trifled with. One cannot cancel out what God himself has decreed. He will not tolerate it."

(This Nation Shall Endure, 1977)

Ezra Taft Benson*

"We live in a choice land. But we live in a time of anxiety—a time when the basic concepts and values of a free society, which we cherish, are being seriously challenged. This challenge is not only from godless, imperial communism abroad, but also from dangerous ideologies and practices here at home....

“...We note with fear the **increase in crime, juvenile delinquency, alcoholism, drug addiction, and sex offenses....**

“...Because sin is rampant and increasing, I make bold enough to call this nation to repentance. Only through righteousness is there safety for our beloved country. There is no other way.

“The youth of today are the trustees of the future. Sooner than we think the leadership of the Church and the future of our country will rest in their hands. **It is our grave obligation to help prepare American youth to be worthy trustees, to help them fit themselves for their coming responsibilities. This is the obligation of every adult citizen....**

“...Great nations have fallen when they became morally corrupt, because the sins of immorality left their people scarred and misshapen creatures who were unable to face the challenge of their times.

“I speak about one aspect of this question of morality which affects all our youth. There are forces at work in this country today which are victimizing many thousands of our youth, undermining their moral fiber, poisoning their minds. **There is being spread about in this land a veritable flood of obscene photographs, movie films 'for private showings,' filthy books, and so-called comics that drip with depravity and obscenity.**

“Who are the targets of this drive? **Three-fourths of these circulars are sent to our youth. Our school children are the targets, our boys and girls, particularly between the ages of eleven and sixteen.**

“The United States Post Office department estimates that between 700,000 and a million children in American homes will receive unsolicited obscene and pornographic literature through the mails this year.

“Our boys and girls need not have shown any interest in this vile stuff. It is thrust into their hands by racketeers who go to great lengths to get the names of our children....

“...Now, what are the effects of this material on our youth?

“Juvenile delinquency has become a blot on our country. Gangs roam the streets of some of our big cities. Arrests of juveniles for major crimes rose about ten percent last year. **Authorities have observed on repeated occasions that the obscenity racket is a prime contributor to the increase in juvenile delinquency.**

“FBI figures show that more boys of eighteen and nineteen are now committing the heinous crime of rape, than males in any other age group. The percentage of convictions of boys under twenty has grown substantially in recent years.

“Now, of course, some people will argue that many children exposed to these pictures and books never become delinquent. This argument has no merit at all. Your child may be exposed

to tuberculosis or polio and never contract either disease. Is this a reason for deliberately exposing children to infection? Of course not.

"It is true that people go wrong for many reasons. Children become delinquent in part because of such factors as broken homes, drinking parents, indifferent parents, and bad companions. But the wish is father of the deed. Thought precedes action. We cannot help being influenced by what we read and what we see. A dirty book, a filthy picture, may be the trigger that sets off a terrible crime....

"...These are some of the direct results of the smut campaign. There are indirect results too. **Our children, our wives, our friends, may be the horrified victims of criminals who are triggered by obscene materials....**

"...**What are we going to do about it?** Shall we fold our arms, shake our heads dismally, and do nothing?

"Shall we permit **organized crime** to continue and extend the obscenity racket—already a half billion dollar a year business — and make it really big and immeasurably more vicious?

"Shall we allow more and more of our children to be victimized, allow them to be 'hooked' by this **menace to clean and right living**, this threat to moral purity?

"Shall we sit by and watch sex crimes grow and grow in number and violence?

"Shall we permit these cheap peddlers of filth to undermine the moral fiber of our youth, the moral strength of our nation?

"I believe I know what our pioneer forefathers would have answered to these questions.

"And I think I know what you and other responsible citizens will answer. They would have said, as we say today: '**Forbid it, Almighty God. We shall not sit by any longer. We shall act in defense of decency and order and in the name of our country.**'

"**Our government is striking with all the weapons it possesses against the obscenity menace.** Until last year, purveyors of filth had to be prosecuted at the point from which they mailed their smut. This was a severe handicap to prosecution. Courts, notably in Los Angeles and New York, where the great bulk of the mail-order business in obscenity originates, handed down soft rulings on obscenity. Few offenders were convicted, and these usually paid a small fine and began operating again.

"**Legislation passed by Congress last year has now made it possible to prosecute where the mail is received.**

"The first case prosecuted under the new law was in Boise, Idaho. A man and his wife, who were mailing extremely obscene material from the west coast, were given ten years in jail, plus a heavy fine.

"A Virginia man and his wife dealing in obscenity were sentenced to a year in the **Federal Penitentiary** and fined \$2,000. In Louisiana, two more dealers in filth were given a year and eighteen months in jail respectively.

"This is a good start. But it is only a start.

"If government is to make full use of the new legislation, it needs and must have the co-operation of all our citizens and especially of all our parents....

"...Get local judges, law enforcement officers, and representatives of the police force to talk before civic groups telling what they, as guardians of the community's laws, know of the relationship between the traffic in obscene literature and juvenile delinquency and sex crimes.

"We must defend our youth, in the interests of this nation which God has blessed above all others. We must rise to this task, stand up, and be counted on the side of decency. We must show by our lives and actions that we possess the virtues that made America great.

"There will be those who will cry 'censorship' and 'suppressing of freedom of information.' To these people there does not seem to be any difference between liberty and license—but there is a real difference. It is not a denial of liberty to forbid the sale of narcotics or alcohol to children, and neither is it a denial of liberty to ban the distribution of filthy, obscene, character destroying materials.

"There has developed in this country, I am sorry to say, a species of so-called 'broadmindedness' which tolerates anything and everything. It is high time right-thinking citizens showed they are fed up with such false broadmindedness. I, for one, fail to see where this so-called 'tolerance' of evil has made society any better or individuals any happier. We cannot steer a safe course without a compass. We cannot build an enduring society except on principles of righteousness.

"As Dr. Daniel A. Poling recently wrote in the *Christian Herald*, **'It's time for a new crusade,' a crusade for decency.**

"The youth of the Church and of America deserve that we parents live up to our responsibilities in this regard....

"...The youth of the Church and of America are our jewels. Let us prize them as they deserve. **A clean America will be a strong America, a secure America, a prosperous America, a peaceful America, a free America, an America that will continue to merit God's blessings in the future as it has in the past.**

“God grant it may be so, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.”

(“Call to Repentance”, General Conference, October 1959, reprinted in the Congressional Record Friday January 22, 1960 by the title “A Crusade for Decency” as an argument for strengthening federal laws against pornographic literature)

Ezra Taft Benson*

“There is a conspiracy of evil. The source of it all is Satan and his hosts. He has a great power over men to 'lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken' to the voice of the Lord (Moses 4:4). **His evil influence may be manifest through governments; through false educational, political, economic, religious, and social philosophies;** through secret societies and organizations; and through myriads of other forms. **His power and influence are so great that, if possible, he would deceive the very elect** (see Matthew 24:24). As the second coming of the Lord approaches, Satan’s work will intensify through numerous insidious deceptions.”

(“May the Kingdom of God Go Forth”, General Conference, April 1978)

Ezra Taft Benson*

“Many parents, in and out of the Church, are concerned about security against a cascading avalanche of wickedness which threatens to engulf Christian principles. I refer to bold and stark 'best sellers' that exploit adulterous confessions, open declarations of atheism, **so-called 'gay rights,'** and other vulgar displays of debauchery. **When decent people resist such encroachments into their community, accusations are made that civil liberties authorized by the Constitution are being curbed. And sometimes these fallacious arguments are upheld by the courts. Concerned people rightfully ask, 'Is there no protection?'**

(“Latter-day Temples: Beacons to a Darkened World,” Jordan River Utah Temple Groundbreaking, 9 June 1979.)...

“...The nations of the earth continue in their sinful and unrighteous ways...”

“...**There has developed in this country, I am sorry to say, a species of so-called 'broadmindedness' which tolerates anything and everything. It is high time right-thinking citizens showed they are fed up with such false broadmindedness. I for one fail to see where this so-called 'tolerance' of evil has made society any better or individuals any happier. We cannot steer a safe course without a compass. We cannot build an enduring society except on principles of righteousness** (So Shall Ye Reap, pp. 202-3.).”

(*** The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, January 1988)

Ezra Taft Benson*

“The source of all these blessings is God, because to a great extent we have been a God-fearing, Christ-worshipping people. Yet it should be evident to all who survey the social, political, and domestic landscape before us today, that **we have departed from the ways of our forefathers and the path they marked out for us. In recent years we have witnessed a corrosion of the constitutional government established by our forebears, and a departure from the laws of God.** No longer may it be said that we have a nation united under God. In Abraham Lincoln’s words, ‘We have forgotten God.’

“There are some in this land, among whom I count myself, whose faith it is that America is ‘a land choice above all other lands’ to the Lord, and that **we shall remain on this land only as we remain in God’s divine favor.**

“There are principles that may bring us back into heaven’s favor again. These principles are embodied in the Decalogue, or the Ten Commandments. They came from God Himself to Moses, and form the foundation of civilized society. Designed by the Almighty, these laws plumb the depths of human motives and urges, and, if adhered to, will regulate the baser passions of mankind. No nation has ever perished that has kept the commandments of God.

“Neither permanent government nor civilization will long endure that violates these laws. The conscience of all right-thinking people declares this to be so. ‘**America cannot remain strong by ignoring the commandments of the Lord.**’ (President Spencer W. Kimball, June 3, 1976.)”

(This Nation Shall Endure, published 1977)

Theodore M. Burton

“I see, as you see, ideological dissension throughout the length and breadth of the earth. **We read in papers and magazines and books various proposals of men who seek to solve moral and ethical problems by the passing of legislation. We see men and women turning to political theory or to science in an attempt to solve the spiritual and moral problems of today’s civilization. We are trying to solve our problems by man’s philosophy and learning and by human wisdom.**”

(“Thus Saith the Lord”, General Conference, October 1971)

D. Todd Christofferson*

“In years past, we generally used the term free agency. That is not incorrect, but more recently we have taken note that free agency does not appear as an expression in the

scriptures. They talk of our being ‘**free to choose**’ and ‘**free to act**’ for ourselves and of our obligation to do many things of our own ‘**free will**.’ But the word agency appears either by itself or, in Doctrine and Covenants, section 101, verse 78, with the modifier **moral**: ‘That every man may act in doctrine and principle . . . according to the **moral agency** which I have given unto him, **that every man may be accountable for his own sins in the day of judgment**’. When we use the term moral agency, then, we are appropriately emphasizing the accountability that is an essential part of the divine gift of agency. **We are moral beings and agents unto ourselves, free to choose but also responsible for our choices.**

“The Elements of Moral Agency

“What, then, are the elements of moral agency? To me there are three.

“First, there must be alternatives to choose among. Lehi described it as opposites, or ‘opposition.’ He spoke of righteousness and its opposite, wickedness; holiness versus misery; good versus bad. Without opposites, Lehi said, ‘All things must needs be a compound in one; . . . no life neither death, nor corruption nor incorruption, happiness nor misery, neither sense nor insensibility.’

“He further explained that for these opposites or alternatives to exist, **there must be law. Law provides us the options.** It is by the operation of laws that things happen. **By using or obeying a law, one can bring about a particular result—and by disobedience, the opposite result.** Without law there could be no God, for He would be powerless to cause anything to happen. Neither He nor we would be able to predict or choose a particular outcome by a given action. Our existence and the creation around us are convincing evidence that God, the Creator, exists and that our mortal world consists of ‘both things to act and things to be acted upon,’—or, in other words, choices.

“Second, for us to have agency, we must not only have alternatives but we must also know that they exist and what they are. If we are unaware of the choices available, the existence of those choices is meaningless to us. Lehi called this being ‘enticed by the one or the other.’ He recalled the situation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden presented with a choice, ‘even the forbidden fruit in opposition to the tree of life; the one being sweet and the other bitter.’ Adam and Eve’s choice, of course, brought about the Fall, which brought with it a knowledge of good and evil, opening to their understanding a multitude of new choices. Had they remained in Eden, ‘they would have remained in a state of innocence, having no joy, for they knew no misery; doing no good, for they knew no sin.’ But with the Fall, both they and we gain sufficient knowledge and understanding to be enticed by good and evil—we attain a state of accountability and can recognize the alternatives before us.

“The beauty of the gospel of Jesus Christ is that it pours knowledge into our souls and shows things in their true light. **With that enhanced perspective, we can discern more clearly the choices before us and their consequences. We can, therefore, make more intelligent use**

of our agency. Too many fall into unanticipated traps and unhappiness because they either lack or ignore the gospel light. They are unaware of their options or are confused about the outcomes of their choices. **Ignorance effectively limits their agency.**

“Third, after the existence of choices and a knowledge of choices, is the next element of agency: **the freedom to make choices. This freedom to act for ourselves in choosing among the alternatives that the law establishes is often referred to in the scriptures as agency itself. For this freedom we are indebted to God. It is His gift to us.**

“The Lord said unto Enoch: Behold these thy brethren; **they are the workmanship of mine own hands**, and I gave unto them their knowledge, in the day **I created them**; and in the Garden of Eden, gave **I unto man his agency.**

“King Benjamin reminded us that **in addition to giving us the freedom to choose, God makes it possible for us to use the gift because He ‘is preserving you from day to day, by lending you breath, that ye may live and move and do according to your own will, and even supporting you from one moment to another.’**

“Let us pause and note that **freedom of choice is the freedom to obey or disobey existing laws – not the freedom to alter their consequences.** Law, as mentioned earlier, exists as a foundational element of moral agency with fixed outcomes that do not vary according to our opinions or preferences. Elder Dallin H. Oaks observed in a devotional talk here that **‘we are responsible to use our agency in a world of choices. It will not do to pretend that our agency has been taken away when we are not free to exercise it without unwelcome consequences.’**

“Satan’s Attack on Agency

“We recognize **the gift of agency as a central aspect of the plan of salvation proposed by the Father in the great premortal council, and that ‘there was war in heaven’ to defend and preserve it.** The Lord revealed this to Moses:

‘Wherefore, because that **Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him**, and also, that I should give unto him mine own power; by the power of mine Only Begotten, I caused that he should be cast down;

‘And **he became Satan, yea, even the devil, the father of all lies, to deceive and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will**, even as many as would not hearken unto my voice.

“Satan has not ceased his effort ‘to destroy the agency of man.’ He promotes conduct and choices that limit a person’s freedom to choose by replacing the influence of the Holy Spirit with his own domination. Yielding to his temptations leads to a narrower and

narrower range of choices until none remain and to addictions that leave one powerless to resist. While Satan cannot actually destroy law and truth, he accomplishes the same result in the lives of those who heed him by convincing them that whatever they think is right is right and that there is no ultimate truth—every man is his own god, and there is no sin.

“Of course Satan’s ongoing opposition is a useful and even necessary part of moral agency. The scripture states:

‘It must needs be that the devil should tempt the children of men, or they could not be agents unto themselves; for if they never should have bitter they could not know the sweet.

‘Remember, though, that we retain the right and power of independent action. God does not intend that we yield to temptation. Like Jesus, we can gain all we need in the way of a mortal experience without yielding....

“The Savior’s Exemplary Use of Moral Agency

“The Savior’s use of moral agency during His lifetime is an instructive example for us. At one point in His teaching He revealed the principle that guided His choices: ‘He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.’ I believe that much of the Lord’s power is attributable to the fact that He never wavered in that determination. He had a clear, consistent direction. Whatever the Father desired, Jesus chose to do.

“John reported the following response to Jesus’ statement that He did always those things that please the Father:

‘As he spake these words, many believed on him.

‘Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

‘And ye shall know the truth, and **the truth shall make you free.**

“So, being Jesus’ obedient disciple—just as He is the Father’s obedient disciple—leads to truth and freedom. Then He added, ‘If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.’

“To the secular world it seems a paradox that greater submission to God yields greater freedom. They look at things through Korihor’s lens, which is that obedience to God’s laws and ordinances is ‘bondage.’ So how do obedience and truth make us free? You can easily think of some practical ways in which **truth gives us the ability to do things we otherwise could not do or to avoid disasters we might otherwise suffer.**

"I was interested to read recently of a young British girl who learned in school about the characteristics of water along a shoreline that signal the approach of a tsunami. Two weeks later, on vacation with her family in Thailand, she observed those phenomena and insistently warned her parents and the people around her. They escaped to higher ground just in time when the December 26, 2004, tsunami hit south Asia. More than a hundred people owe their lives to that girl's knowledge of certain truths of the natural world.

"But the Lord's statement that the truth will make us free has broader significance. 'Truth, He tells us, 'is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come.' Possession of this knowledge of things past, present, and future is a critical element of God's glory: 'The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth.' Does anyone doubt that, **as a consequence of possessing all light and truth, God possesses ultimate freedom to be and to do?**

"Likewise, **as our understanding of gospel doctrine and principles grows, our agency expands. First, we have more choices and can achieve more and receive greater blessings because we have more laws that we can obey.** Think of a ladder—each new law or commandment we learn is like one more step on the ladder that enables us to climb higher. Second, with added understanding we can make more intelligent choices because we see more clearly not only the alternatives but their potential outcomes. **As Professor Daniel H. Ludlow once expressed it, the extent of our agency 'is in direct proportion to the number and kind of laws we know and keep.'**

("Moral Agency", BYU Speeches, 31 January 2006)

D. Todd Christofferson*

"The societies in which many of us live have for more than a generation **failed to foster moral discipline.** They have taught that truth is relative and that everyone decides for himself or herself what is right. Concepts such as sin and wrong have been condemned as 'value judgments.' As the Lord describes it, 'Every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god' (D&C 1:16).

"As a consequence, self-discipline has eroded and societies are left to try to maintain order and civility by compulsion. The lack of internal control by individuals breeds external control by governments. One columnist observed that 'gentlemanly behavior [for example, once] protected women from coarse behavior. Today, we expect sexual harassment laws to restrain coarse behavior.

"Policemen and laws can never replace customs, traditions and moral values as a means for regulating human behavior. At best, the police and criminal justice system are the last

desperate line of defense for a civilized society. Our increased reliance on laws to regulate behavior is a measure of how uncivilized we've become."

("Moral Discipline", Ensign, November 2009)

Spencer J. Condie

"Premortal Council

"The gift of agency is a crucial and fundamental element of our Father's great plan of happiness. **Because we can exercise our agency only when alternate choices are possible, this plan involves considerable risks—the ability to make mistakes, to transgress divine laws, to disobey, to sin, and to rebel.** As Lehi explained, 'It must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things.' Without such ubiquitous opposition, 'righteousness could not be brought to pass, neither wickedness, neither holiness nor misery, neither good nor bad' (2 Ne. 2:11).

"Intertwined with the principle of agency is the Atonement, through which we become cleansed from our sins and mistakes. Repentance, baptism, and necessary priesthood ordinances further qualify us to regain the presence of God. In the process of repenting and learning from our past mistakes, we have the potential to acquire the attributes of godliness. The more we exercise our agency wisely, basing our choices on righteous principles, the more Christlike we become. Thus the freedom to choose is a very sacred gift. Indeed, **President David O. McKay observed that 'next to the bestowal of life itself, the right to direct that life is God's greatest gift to man'** (Gospel Ideals, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1993, p. 299).

"The Price of Agency

"I am indebted to President Boyd K. Packer, who made us aware of the fact that **the term free agency appears nowhere in holy writ. Instead, the scriptures generally speak of agency or free will, but when agency is modified, it is referred to as 'moral agency'** (D&C 101:78). Because the term free agency has been used by various modern prophets, I use the terms free agency and moral agency interchangeably, aware that **the latter term is more correct....**

"Enemies of Agency

"One of the critical elements of the great plan of happiness presented in the premortal council was the importance of our use of time in mortality. Alma explained to Corianton that 'there was a time granted unto man to repent, yea, a probationary time, a time to repent and serve God' (Alma 42:4). That is a rather brief agenda for our sojourn here on earth. We are to use our time repenting and serving God, remembering, of course, that 'when [we] are in the service of [our] fellow beings, [we] are only in the service of [our] God' (Mosiah 2:17).

“Satan would have us waste our time in activities that impede our progress on the pathway to perfection. Following are **some of the many enemies of agency**.

“Addiction. Many people lead empty lives completely devoid of purpose, meaning, and direction. Empty lives must be filled with something, anything, so some people fill their empty lives with **endless hours of television**, while others become addicted to **pornography, alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs**. Still others develop an unhealthy capacity for **overeating**. And ever so surely **these individuals trade their moral agency for their addiction until they are no longer able to exercise their agency. All of their decisions are now on automatic pilot, with seemingly little hope of changing the direction of their lives. There is little advantage to living in a free country if we are in bondage to personal habits.**

“Debt. The accumulation of financial debt is **another dangerous incursion upon our moral agency**. A poignant description of the enslaving power of debt was provided by the late President J. Reuben Clark: ‘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 has no love, no sympathy; it is as hard and soulless as a granite cliff. 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’ (in Conference Report, 6 April 1938, p. 103).

“There are, of course, justifiable occasions when one incurs debt, such as for the purchase of a house or a major business investment. But even then, great wisdom should be used.

“Discouragement. Discouragement and its fellow travelers of depression, despair, and hopelessness are much like the proverbial rocking chair: they keep us busily occupied, but they do not take us anywhere.

“I have found through personal experience that whenever I am discouraged and start thinking only of myself and how hard hit I have been, when I kneel down and count my blessings, all of a sudden my personal problems do not seem large at all.

“President Spencer W. Kimball provided us with excellent counsel in overcoming discouragement and finding meaning to our lives: ‘When we concern ourselves more with others, there is less time to be concerned with ourselves. In the midst of the miracle of serving, there is the promise of Jesus, that by losing ourselves, we find ourselves (see Matt. 10:39). ... The more we serve our fellowmen in appropriate ways, the more substance there is to our souls. ... Indeed, it is easier to ‘find’ ourselves because there is so much more of us to find!’ (Ensign, Dec. 1974, p. 2.)

“Cultural Traditions. A recurrent theme throughout the Book of Mormon is the constraining influence of the false ‘tradition of their fathers’ passed down from Laman and Lemuel through subsequent generations (see Mosiah 10:11–12; Alma 37:9; Alma 60:32; Hel. 5:51; Hel. 15:4;

Hel. 16:18–20). Tradition can be a double-edged sword. When based upon the perpetuation of righteous principles, tradition can become a marvelous support system in helping us employ our moral agency wisely. On the other hand, many traditions find their origins in the false pride and foibles of mankind. In modern-day revelation, the Lord has taught: ‘Every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning. ... [But] that wicked one cometh and taketh away light and truth, through disobedience, from the children of men, and because of the tradition of their fathers’ (D&C 93:38–39).

“Cultural customs and traditions often provide a useful map for the members of a given society, but if we are to become members of a celestial culture, we must overcome the natural man reflected in earthly cultures (see Mosiah 3:19; D&C 88:22). Indeed, some cultural enticements—such as following the crowd in matters of fashion and acceptance of worldly standards—are spiritually, and sometimes even physically, destructive. John the Revelator admonished us to ‘love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him’ (1 Jn. 2:15; see James 4:4).”

(“Agency: The Gift of Choices”, Ensign, September 1995)

James E. Faust

“How can this tide of wrong values be reversed? Can anything be done to combat these challenges? May I suggest three ways to increase the hope that the next generation will grow up with a greater chance to find some continued happiness.

“First, adults need to understand, and our children should be taught, that private choices are not private; they all have public consequences.

“There is a popular notion that doing our own thing or doing what feels good is our own business and affects no one but us. The deadly scourges that are epidemic all over the world have flourished in the context of this popular notion. But this is simply not true.

“All immoral behavior directly impacts society. Even innocent people are affected. Drug and alcohol abuse have public consequences, as do illegitimacy, pornography, and obscenity. The public cost in human life and tax dollars for these so-called private choices is enormous: poverty, crime, a less-educated work force, and mounting demands for government spending to fix problems that cannot be fixed by money. It simply is not true that our private conduct is our own business. Our society is the sum total of what millions of individuals do in their private lives. That sum total of private behavior has worldwide public consequences of enormous magnitude. There are no completely private choices.

“Second, adults and children need to know that public and private morality is not outmoded. We need to love our children enough to teach them that laws, policies, and public

programs with a moral and ethical basis are necessary for the preservation of a peaceful, productive, compassionate, and happy society. Without the qualities and characteristics of integrity, honesty, commitment, loyalty, respect for others, fidelity, and virtue, a free and open society cannot endure.

"Elder Dallin H. Oaks recently responded to those who say, 'Don't legislate morality.' Said Elder Oaks: 'I suppose persons who mouth that familiar slogan think they are saying something profound. In fact, if that is an argument at all, it is so superficial that an educated person should be ashamed to use it. As should be evident to every thinking person, a high proportion of all legislation has a moral base. That is true of the criminal law, most of the laws regulating family relations, businesses, and commercial transactions, many of the laws governing property, and a host of others' (\"Gambling—Morally Wrong and Politically Unwise,\" transcript of an address given at Ricks College, 6 Jan. 1987, p. 20).

"Until recently, ethics and moral philosophy were the foundation of higher education. They were a legacy passed from generation to generation. Those values are as relevant today as when they were taught by Aristotle. Said he, 'Man perfected by society is the best of all animals; he is the most terrible of all when he lives without law, and without justice' (Politics, 1.1253a, 31–34). Therefore, public and private morality need much greater emphasis everywhere."

(**"Will I Be Happy?"**, General Conference, April 1987)

Edwin Brown Firmage*

"The Latter-day Saint belief in man's uncreated individuality and in the sanctity of his agency – an agency so sacrosanct that God himself will not infringe upon it – denies the legitimacy of force as a means of attaining the community's ends. Man's goal is seen as being the perfection of his individuality in the image of his Heavenly Father, until he is able to enjoy a celestial community. The attainment of such a goal, however, can only be accomplished by loving persuasion, not by force."

(Ensign, June 1976)

Heber J. Grant*

"It is said that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. My heart has been set for many years firmly and steadfastly upon the accomplishment of certain results in our fair state. One result which I would like to see accomplished is the doing away with amusements upon the Sabbath day. I feel that it is a reproach to the Latter-day Saints that we should have amusements in our towns and cities on the day of the Lord. As the years come and go, and young men and young women go to their ruin because of losing their respect for the Sabbath, and the sacredness of the day, I feel that the men who have sat in the legislature, and who have failed to protect us against this evil, will have much to answer for."

"If the whole of Utah should go 'dry!' it would be the one great thing above all others, to my mind, which would be beneficial to this fair state of ours, and would add more to the health and longevity of its people, and would cause a more wonderful increase for good in the excellent vital statistics which we heard read here today, than anything I can possibly think of. I believe absolutely in the prohibition of the manufacture and the sale of liquor, and I hope and pray, with all the energy with which God has endowed me, that this great blessing for the uplift and for the betterment of the people of our fair state may come to us at no far distant day.

"A few months ago it fell to my lot to have the privilege of attending some of the meetings of a very wonderful convention of a number of organizations which are engaged in the fight against liquor. These were the meetings Of the Anti-Saloon League, and other temperance organizations, at Columbus, Ohio. The meetings of the convention lasted for several days, sessions being held morning, noon and night. **It was to me a very inspiring sight to witness the enthusiasm, the earnestness and the determination, as manifested by the assembled multitude, running into the thousands, who attended those gatherings.** I listened with a great deal of pleasure to nearly all of the very many inspiring speeches which were made upon that occasion.

"Since coming into the meeting this afternoon, I have been glancing over one of those speeches to mark a few passages to read to you, and I find myself almost at a loss to pick out which passages I would like to read. To be perfectly frank with you, I would like to read the entire speech, as it is such a splendid one, but time will not permit. The speech was made by Ex-Governor J. Frank Hanly, who for many years was the governor of Indiana. He says, in part, referring to the fight for a constitutional amendment:

"It is not partisan, it is civic. It is not sectarian, it is catholic. It is not sectional, it is national.* *
It has been said that the things we seek — an amendment to the national constitution prohibiting throughout the United States the manufacture, sale, importation, exportation and transportation of intoxicating liquors to be used as a beverage — is contrary to the genius and the spirit of our government, as the constitution gives only limited powers to the national government. * * This I deny. I believe in the federal constitution, believe in it profoundly.* * * Five times I have solemnly sworn to preserve, protect and defend it, and I would not change in the slightest measure a single one of its great fundamental provisions.* * * First. Its representative or Republican character. Second. Its trinity of departments with their co-ordinate and independent powers. Third. Its dual form, or system of separate sovereign states within a sovereign whole. Fourth. The authority of the judiciary to interpret the constitution and decide the constitutionality of laws, state and national."

"Henceforth we will know this cause only. For it, whenever necessary, men shall be set aside and parties abandoned. * * * Slavery had become a national evil, too vast and powerful for state control, affecting the nation as a whole and imperiling the life of the government itself, and the nation struck it down, writing its epitaph in the blood" of a hundred tragic battle fields. As it was

with slavery before the adoption of the thirteenth amendment to the constitution, so it is now with the liquor traffic. It has outgrown state boundaries and become a national evil amounting to a menace, too powerful for state regulation or control, affecting the nation as a whole and requiring national jurisdiction and treatment. It accomplishes by insidious means what slavery sought in the open, doing by corruption and shameless misuse of wealth all slavery sought by force of arms. It beggars the individual, burdens the state and impoverishes the nation. It capitalizes human weakness and commercializes human vice. It impairs the public health, breaks the public peace and debauches the public morals. It makes cowards of public men, intimidating political parties, bribes, badgers and dominates the makers, interpreters and administrators of the law, and suborns the public press. It claims for itself a special right and privilege asserted by no other interest in all the land — the right and privilege to violate municipal ordinances at will, to infract legislative resolves and enactments, and to set aside the most solemn and sacred provisions of constitutions framed and adopted by free peoples."

"With the intelligence with which God has endowed me, I believe, beyond the peradventure of a doubt, that more evil, suffering and crime has come into the world by the use of intoxicating liquors, and more misery has been brought into homes of the people, many, many times over, than was ever caused by slavery. I believe that the greatest financial, the greatest moral problem that is before the people of the United States today is this liquor problem. I regret exceedingly that the first state-wide 'white' spot upon the map of the United States was not made by the State of Utah. However, I rejoice in knowing that in every town, in every county, when the matter of local option came up at the election a couple of years ago, that where the Latter-day Saints were in the majority, with the exception of one town, liquor had to go. I rejoice in this record made. I rejoice in knowing that today the majority of all the people in the United States are living in 'dry' territory. There are ninety-one millions of people in the United States, and forty-six millions — one million more than half are living in "dry" territory. Of the area of the United States there are two million nine hundred and seventy-three thousand square miles, and two million one hundred and thirty-two thousand square miles are in 'dry' territory and only a little over eight hundred thousand in 'wet' territory. The battle is on and I feel assured that it will be won. Why? Because I am convinced beyond a doubt that our fight is right, and right is bound to prevail. I agree with Governor Hanly that we, who are converted to the benefits of prohibition, shall dedicate ourselves to this cause; shall labor for it; shall pledge our honor, and also pledge our means to accomplish it.

"I endorse William Jennings Bryan's words:

'A Christianity that does not make a man a better citizen would be difficult to defend. I shall not attempt to lay down rules to cover every phase of the liquor question that must be met by legislation, but I will venture to suggest a principle that is universale its application and that cannot be ignored at any time, at any place or under any circumstances, viz.: That the liquor question is a moral question which must be dealt with as a question of conscience and not as a question of profit.'

"I have heard Latter-day Saints say that we need the saloon to help pay our taxes. **God pity the men whose consciences have become so elastic.** President Smith says, 'They are "Mormons," not Latter-day Saints.'

"Quoting again from Secretary Bryan:

'Whatever decision one reaches as to the position he should take on any legislative phase of the liquor question he must be able to defend it before the bar of his conscience. No advantage that he could secure in business, no money that he can take out of his decision, directly or indirectly, and no advantage that he can secure for his party can be allowed to weigh in the balance. **Any unit, however small or large, should be permitted to rid itself of the saloon or place restrictions upon the sale of liquor, according to the will of the majority.'**

"And I believe, beyond the peradventure of a doubt, that **a majority of the citizens of the State of Utah is, has always been, and always will be, as long as the Latter-day Saints are in the majority, against liquor.** Therefore, I claim, let us have a state-wide vote and we will have prohibition; because then the men who are trafficking and dealing in this damnable stuff in our cities will no longer control our majority. **We are citizens of the United States where the majority should rule, and all we ask is a fair battle and we are sure to win because we are right.**

"I rejoice in knowing that **the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has taken a positive stand on the liquor question.** I rejoice in knowing that **the Lord, Himself, has given us a revelation, and that every Latter-day Saint in his daily life, in his walk, in his conversation, if he lives up to the commandments of God, is in very deed... a prohibitionist** so far as liquor is concerned....

"...The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as I say, has a standard, and it behooves each and every one of us to live up to that standard. May God help us to do so is my prayer, and I ask in the name of Jesus. Amen."

(***, in Conference Report 84th Annual General Conference, April 1914, pp. -28)

Heber J. Grant*

"I believe that it will require the force of the whole people, men and women, applied at the ballot box, to effectually blot out of existence the great curse to the country, 'The laws that license and permit the sale of alcohol as a beverage.' I deny the right of the government to sell to one citizen the privilege to tempt another to commit crime. I doubt the policy of those laws that seek to raise a revenue by the sale of that which debases the people, it is the prolific source of crime and pauperism, and costs the country annually a

thousand times more than the revenue received therefrom. **I deny the justice of those laws that on one page of the statute books legalize that which promotes crimes and makes criminals, and on the next, provide severe penalties to be administered to those they have tempted to transgress.** This little volume [larger than our large edition of the Doctrine and Covenants] is presented to the public to promulgate those views. They may be thought radical, and perhaps are so; but **they are the result of long years of experience in our criminal courts, and are but a feeble expression of my abhorrence of the vice of intemperance, and the laws that encourage and promote it.**”

(“Spiritual and Financial Advantages in Obeying the Word of Wisdom”, April 1916)

Heber J. Grant

“[Prohibition is] **the greatest financial and moral blessing that has ever come to humanity.**”

(William G. Hartley, “The Church Grows in Strength,” Ensign, Sept. 1999, p. 32)

David B. Haight

“It is about the 'evil designs of thine enemies' that I shall speak. I have prayed for spiritual guidance, and that I might be able to communicate to you in a thoughtful manner my frank and candid expressions of concern over the spreading of evil in our society today.

“Over the past twenty years a plague of pornography has swept across most countries of the world with increasing momentum and devastating impact. What began a few years ago as a few crude picture magazines that startled sensitive people has grown to hundreds of publications, each seeking to outdo the others with increasingly shocking content.

“So-called 'adult' bookstores, selling materials that appeal to the prurient mind, are now open in nearly every city. Obscene materials once available only by mail and in a plain brown wrapper now are prominently displayed on the magazine racks of many local convenience stores and other business establishments where they are readily accessible to the young and the old alike.

“Theaters showing X-rated films and worse have become established in most cities. It is reported that one particularly offensive movie, filmed at a cost of forty thousand dollars, has earned revenues of over six hundred million dollars.

“It should come as no surprise that grand juries have found that **90 percent of all pornography is dominated by organized crime. Large profits from one project become a source of funds for still larger and more sophisticated enterprises as a growing tidal wave of smut dashes against the weakening bulwarks of morality.**

“New technologies that can bless our lives in so many positive ways are also being used to spread pornographic corruption. Video recorders now can bring to homes great classics of

music, history, art, and drama. But they also bring into some of these same homes lurid portrayals of debauchery that contaminate those who view them and extend their corrupting influence to our communities and society.

“Cable television and satellite transmissions, with their powerful capacity for good, are not only being used, but are also being abused. **State and national laws necessary to govern their proper use are not yet established, and they are almost totally unregulated. Greedy men have been ready to exploit this vacuum in legal regulation without regard for the consequence to its victims.**

“Some may ask 'What is pornography?' It was United States Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart who said that while he could not exactly define pornography, 'I know it when I see it,' he said. (Jacobellis v. Ohio, 378-U.S. 184, 1964.)

“Pornography is not a victimless crime. Who are its victims? First, those who either intentionally, or sometimes involuntarily, are exposed to it. Pornography is addictive. (See Ensign, March 1984, pp. 32–39.) What may begin as a curious exploration can become a controlling habit. **Studies show that those who allow themselves to become drawn to pornography soon begin to crave even coarser content. Continued exposure desensitizes the spirit and can erode the conscience of unwary people. A victim becomes a slave to carnal thoughts and actions. As the thought is father to the deed, exposure can lead to acting out what is nurtured in the mind.**

“But there are other victims. Crimes of violence have increased in the United States at up to five times the rate of population growth. A 1983 University of New Hampshire study found that states having the highest readership of pornographic magazines also have the highest number of reported rapes. Pornography degrades and exploits men, and women, and children in a most ugly and corrupt fashion.

“Perhaps the greatest tragedy of all is in the lives of children who become its victims. The saddest trend of our day is the alarming, large increase in child abuse. Much of it occurs within families and involves corrupting the divine innocence that children have from birth. We sing, as we did this morning, 'I am a child of God, and he has sent me here. ... Lead me, guide me, walk beside me, help me find the way [that I might] live with him some day' are part of those words (“I Am a Child of God,” Sing With Me, B-76.) The Savior reserved His harshest condemnation for those who would offend little children. He said: 'Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for ... it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.' (Matt. 18:10, 14.)...

“...[W]hat impels these offenders to such terrible deeds? Police report that some 80 percent of those who molest young boys and girls admitted modeling their attacks on pornography they had viewed.

"How has this evil gained such a foothold in our society? Have we ignored the warnings of our Church leaders? President Kimball declared: **'So long as men are corrupt and revel in sewer filth, entertainers will sell them what they want. Laws may be passed, arrests may be made, lawyers may argue, courts may sentence ... men of corrupt minds, but pornography and ... insults to decency will never cease until men have cleansed their minds.'**

"Continuing, President Kimball said, 'When ... [man] is sick and tired of being drowned in filth, ... he will not pay for that filth and its source will dry up.'

"Hence it is obvious,' he continued, 'that to remain clean and worthy, one must stay positively and conclusively away from the devil's territory, avoiding the least approach toward evil. Satan leaves his fingerprints.' (The Miracle of Forgiveness, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969, pp. 229, 232.)

"This growing presence of obscenity has been aided by the lowering of media standards for advertising, by relaxed movie ratings, by television soap operas and situation comedies that use their powerful voices to justify, glamorize, and encourage sexual relations outside of marriage.

"Perhaps we have been intimidated by those who claim that producing, distributing, and using obscene materials is a basic right to be defended. This is not true. Even under the divinely inspired constitutional principles of this land, obscenity is not condoned nor protected. The United States Supreme Court has clearly held that criminal prosecution of those who produce and distribute obscene materials does not violate their First Amendment rights. (Miller v. California, 413 U.S. 15, 1973.)"

"This spreading evil has been aided by a failure to enforce laws designed to prohibit or regulate it. Although some additional legislation may be helpful, those who have been fighting the discouraging battle against pornography in recent years are in agreement that nearly 90 percent of all obscene materials could be eliminated from our communities if existing obscenity laws were strictly enforced. A few courageous cities have performed outstanding service by ridding themselves of X-rated theaters and so-called 'adult' bookstores, and by limiting access to hard-core pornographic books and magazines. The citizens of Mt. Lebanon, Pennsylvania, formed a citizen action group and determined that they were not going to allow such degrading material in their community. They closed an adult bookshop and a large distribution warehouse, and, as a result of their determined citizens' organization and involvement, they have had enacted a city public nuisance ordinance."

"Lawmaking bodies will listen to effectively organized citizens. However, too often the trend is tragically toward citizen apathy and a sense of futility."

“And who is to blame? We could conveniently point the accusing finger at public prosecutors who are not vigorously enforcing the law. But we need men and women of courage and conviction in these offices of public trust if the awful tide is to be stemmed. But as one accusing finger is pointing toward those who make or enforce the law, another may point to ourselves, who may be equally to blame.

“Fortunately, what is deemed legally obscene is partially determined by local community standards. We as citizens, by our own standards, are the ones who can help establish what offensive materials are—which ones are legally obscene—and cannot claim protection from the law.

“Unfortunately, many people assume that even hard-core pornography is legal because it is so prevalent. But that is not true. Some public prosecutors may excuse themselves from seeking enforcement of obscenity laws by explaining that community standards determine what is obscene. They therefore conclude that because the community tolerates such material, its presence must reflect the accepted community standard. Concerned citizens—you and I—can change this misunderstanding.

“What, then, is needed to reverse this ominous insult to ourselves, our families, and our communities? Only when men and women concerned for their families and communities let their voices and their influence be felt in thoughtful, rational ways will we alter the destructive course on which we are traveling. Silent indignation may be misinterpreted as approval. Irrational action may be ineffective because it is regarded as prudish rather than thoughtful.

“Albert Camus wrote: 'By your actions or your silence, you, too, enter the fray.'...

“...Second, let our voices be heard in our communities—members and nonmembers alike. If something offends standards of decency, our voices should be heard. We would encourage members to persevere in their efforts to work with local groups and to establish a visible relationship with other like-minded citizens, and seek to preserve our quality of life by encouraging steps against such material.

“Should we not actively approach the management of some stores, movie theaters, bookstores, television and radio stations, with a request to withdraw indecent materials from public display or use or patronage? Of course, such efforts should be consistent with the constitutional process, exercising gentle persuasion.

“Some nationally owned and franchised convenience stores and others have responded to the courteous request of their customers to discontinue selling certain degrading materials. We commend them for what they have done and would encourage others to follow their lead.

“And third, we can make our own elected officials and law enforcement people aware that we support the fair enforcement of laws prohibiting obscenity and regulating indecency, thank them for their past service and present efforts, and encourage them to continue the difficult and sometimes thankless task of strictly enforcing the existing laws in a consistent and fair manner.

“And fourth, where legislation is needed to meet new technological advances in cable and satellite transmission, let us support the enactment of reasonable laws and regulations that would help reduce the number of those whose lives will otherwise become marred by addiction, child abuse, and many of the other social ills that pornography helps foster. These laws should be carefully drawn within constitutional limitations, so that the freedoms we seek for ourselves now and in the future are not denied for others.”

(“Personal Morality”, General Conference, October 1984)

Robert D. Hales*

“I would also like to pose the problem that the total freedom of one person may be an oppression of another’s freedom. And I ask this question: Should we tolerate an individual’s saying, printing, and doing whatever he wants (and say that he deserves freedom) without bounds or restraints of any moral sensibilities? Let’s think about that for a moment. That does not seem to be an easy question, but **the answer is easy.** A justice of the Supreme Court summed the problem up this way, in essence, after the court had worked for weeks trying to come up with a definition of pornography: We cannot agree on what the legal definition of pornography is, but show it to us and we know what it is...

“...When a person sitting next to you on an airplane asks, ‘Do you mind if I smoke?’ it is easy to say, ‘I really would.’ The shock on his face comes from the fact that he usually has the cigarette out and a match lit. But when you exercise your rights, he pauses, and then you can start telling him why you do not smoke and explaining a few of your own beliefs. He will enjoy it. Nobody wants to offend knowingly, but smoking is a conditioned reflex...

“...Too often we think of free agency as something that lets us do what we want. We know that this idea is not true; we have found that out in life...

“...Oh, my brothers and sisters, the commandments of our Heavenly Father are there for one reason; they are there for one purpose – to save us from those things that will ultimately destroy us.

“Brothers and sisters, let us ask ourselves about moral laws. Why are they there? They are there for one reason: to protect us. Do you realize what happens in your life when you get diverted on moral issues? Your whole eternal progress changes. You have to wait until you

can repent and come back, and valuable time is lost in your progression. There is nothing as dangerous as a fallen lighthouse.”

(“Freedom and Personal Liberty”, BYU Speeches, 6 July 1975)

Robert D. Hales*

“Although the devil laughs, his power is limited. Some may remember the old adage: ‘The devil made me do it.’ Today I want to convey, in absolutely certain terms, that the adversary cannot make us do anything. He does lie at our door, as the scriptures say, and he follows us each day. Every time we go out, every decision we make, we are either choosing to move in his direction or in the direction of our Savior. But the adversary must depart if we tell him to depart. He cannot influence us unless we allow him to do so, and he knows that! **The only time he can affect our minds and bodies—our very spirits—is when we allow him to do so.** In other words, we do not have to succumb to his enticements!

“We have been given agency, we have been given the blessings of the priesthood, and we have been given the Light of Christ and the Holy Ghost for a reason... In these latter days, as in the times of old, we must avoid being acted upon by acting for ourselves to avoid evil. The Holy Ghost will prompt us.

“But if we ignore those promptings, the light of the Spirit will fade. **Our agency will be limited or lost, and we will lose the confidence and ability to act.** We will be ‘walking in [spiritual] darkness at noon-day.’ Then how easy it is to wander into strange paths and become lost! **How quickly we are bound in the chains of sin** spoken of by Lehi to his rebellious sons. For example, **if we make choices that put us deeply in debt, we will lose our agency to meet our wants and needs or to save for that inevitable rainy day. If we choose to break the law, we may be put in prison, where our agency is so limited that we cannot choose where we go, who we see, or what we do.** Spirit prison is very much like that. Therefore, **to retain our agency we must daily walk in the light of our Lord and Savior and follow the path of obedience.** It is the only path that leads to our Father in Heaven.”

(“To Act for Ourselves: The Gift and Blessings of Agency,” General Conference, April 2006)

Gordon B. Hinckley*

“President Grant carried to his grave a deep sense of sorrow that, contrary to his counsel, the people of Utah cast the final vote, in 1934, that repealed the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution.”

(“Believe His Prophets”, Ensign, May 1992, 50)

Gordon B. Hinckley

"I have time to discuss one other question: 'Why does the Church become involved in issues that come before the legislature and the electorate?'

"I hasten to add that **we deal only with those legislative matters which are of a strictly moral nature or which directly affect the welfare of the Church. We have opposed gambling and liquor and will continue to do so. We regard it as not only our right but our duty to oppose those forces which we feel undermine the moral fiber of society. Much of our effort, a very great deal of it, is in association with others whose interests are similar. We have worked with Jewish groups, Catholics, Muslims, Protestants, and those of no particular religious affiliation, in coalitions formed to advocate positions on vital moral issues.** Such is currently the case in California, where Latter-day Saints are working as part of a coalition to **safeguard traditional marriage from forces in our society which are attempting to redefine that sacred institution.** God-sanctioned marriage between a man and a woman has been the basis of civilization for thousands of years. There is no justification to redefine what marriage is. **Such is not our right,** and those who try will find themselves answerable to God.

"Some portray legalization of so-called same-sex marriage as a civil right. This is not a matter of civil rights; it is a matter of morality. Others question our constitutional right as a church to raise our voice on an issue that is of critical importance to the future of the family. **We believe that defending this sacred institution by working to preserve traditional marriage lies clearly within our religious and constitutional prerogatives. Indeed, we are compelled by our doctrine to speak out.**

"Nevertheless, and I emphasize this, I wish to say that our opposition to attempts to legalize same-sex marriage should never be interpreted as justification for hatred, intolerance, or abuse of those who profess homosexual tendencies, either individually or as a group. As I said from this pulpit one year ago, our hearts reach out to those who refer to themselves as gays and lesbians. We love and honor them as sons and daughters of God. They are welcome in the Church. It is expected, however, that they follow the same God-given rules of conduct that apply to everyone else, whether single or married.

"I commend those of our membership who have voluntarily joined with other like-minded people to defend the sanctity of traditional marriage. As part of a coalition that embraces those of other faiths, you are giving substantially of your means. The money being raised in California has been donated to the coalition by individual members of the Church. You are contributing your time and talents in a cause that in some quarters may not be politically correct but which nevertheless lies at the heart of the Lord's eternal plan for His children, just as those of many other churches are doing. **This is a united effort."**

("Why We Do Some of the Things We Do", General Conference, October 1999)

Gordon B. Hinckley

"The flood of pornographic filth, the inordinate emphasis on sex and violence are not peculiar to this land. The situation is as bad in Europe and in many other areas. News stories tell of the production in Denmark of a filthy, erotic, and blasphemous movie to be produced on the life of the Son of God. The whole dismal picture indicates a weakening rot seeping into the very fiber of society.

"Our legislatures and courts are affected by this wave. Legal restraints against deviant moral behavior are eroding under legislative enactments and court opinions. This is done in the name of freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of choice in so-called personal matters. But the bitter fruit of these so-called freedoms has been enslavement to debauching habits and behavior that leads only to destruction. A prophet, speaking long ago, aptly described the process when he said, 'And thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell.' (2 Ne. 28:21.)...

"...The building of public sentiment begins with a few earnest voices. I am not one to advocate shouting defiantly or shaking fists and issuing threats in the faces of legislators. But I am one who believes that we should earnestly and sincerely and positively express our convictions to those given the heavy responsibility of making and enforcing our laws. The sad fact is that the minority who call for greater liberalization, who peddle and devour pornography, who encourage and feed on licentious display make their voices heard until those in our legislatures may come to believe that what they say represents the will of the majority. We are not likely to get that which we do not speak up for.

"Let our voices be heard. I hope they will not be shrill voices, but I hope we shall speak with such conviction that those to whom we speak shall know of the strength of our feeling and the sincerity of our effort. Remarkable consequences often flow from a well-written letter and a postage stamp. Remarkable results come of quiet conversation with those who carry heavy responsibilities....

"...Speak to those who enact the regulations, the statutes, and the laws—those in government on local, state, and national levels; and those who occupy positions of responsibility as administrators of our schools. Of course, there will be some who will slam the door, some who will scoff. Discouragement may come. It has always been thus. Edmund Burke, speaking on the floor of the House of Commons in 1783, declared concerning the advocate of an unpopular cause:

'He well knows what snares are spread about his path. ... He is traduced and abused for his supposed motives. He will remember that obloquy is a necessary ingredient in the

composition of all true glory: he will remember ... that calumny and abuse are essential parts of triumph.' (Quoted in foreword to John F. Kennedy, Profiles in Courage, New York: Harper & Row, 1964, p. xviii).

"The apostle Paul, in his defense before Agrippa, gave an account of his miraculous conversion while on the way to Damascus, declaring that the voice of the Lord commanded him to 'rise, and stand upon thy feet.' (Acts 26:16.)

"I think the Lord would say to us, 'Rise, and stand upon thy feet, and speak up for truth and goodness and decency and virtue.'"

("Opposing Evil", General Conference, October 1975)

Howard W. Hunter

"The accelerating advance of science, bringing into common use the achievements of our modern world, is staggering to the human mind, yet we know it is the result of **the application of natural law—God's law.**"

("To Know God", Howard W. Hunter, October 1974, General Conference)

Spencer W. Kimball

"The growing permissiveness in modern society gravely concerns us. Certainly our Heavenly Father is distressed with the increasing inroads among his children of such insidious sins as adultery and fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, abortions, pornography, population control, alcoholism, cruelty expressed in wife-beating and child-abuse, dishonesty, vandalism, violence, and crime generally, including the sin of living together without marriage.

"We call upon our Church members everywhere to renew their efforts to strengthen the home and to honor their parents, and to build better communications between parent and child.

"Important as it is, building stronger homes is not enough in the fight against rising permissiveness. We therefore urge Church members as citizens to lift their voices, to join others in unceasingly combatting, in their communities and beyond, the inroads of pornography and the general flaunting of permissiveness. Let us vigorously oppose the shocking developments which encourage the old sins of Sodom and Gomorrah, and which defile the human body as the temple of God.

"To our beloved brethren and sisters everywhere, as well as to all peoples of the world who love the Lord and desire to live in harmony with the teachings of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we say **no people can remain strong and happy who condone these loose standards of morality.**

“While we cannot tolerate sin and we exercise Church discipline against those who do sin, we must help the transgressor, with love and understanding, to work his or her way back to full fellowship in the Church. Let us help each toward the blessing of a lasting repentance, a resolute turning away from error....

“...We must be aware that one of the most powerful forces Satan uses to destroy our purity of life is the deceit of conspiring men.

“While deceitful men produce and sell alcoholic drinks the whole world over, to the amount of millions of gallons and for millions in gains and profits, the truth of the Lord’s words is coming home today in the terms of **poverty; broken health; broken homes; broken hearts; industrial distress through loss of efficiency, lower production, and absenteeism; and carnage on the world’s highways**, caused partly through the determination to exceed the speed limits on the highways.

“In this day of the 'new morality' as sex permissiveness is sometimes called, we should be made aware of the Lord’s concern about immorality and the seriousness of sex sins of all kinds.

“We have come far in material progress in this century, but the sins of the ancients increasingly afflict the hearts of men today. **Can we not learn by the experiences of others? Must we also defile our bodies, corrupt our souls, and reap destruction as have peoples and nations before us?**

“God will not be mocked. His laws are immutable. True repentance is rewarded by forgiveness, but sin brings the sting of death.

“We hear more and more each day about the sins of adultery, homosexuality, and lesbianism. Homosexuality is an ugly sin, but because of its prevalence, the need to warn the uninitiated, and the desire to help those who may already be involved with it, it must be brought into the open.

“It is the sin of the ages. It was present in Israel’s wandering as well as after and before. It was tolerated by the Greeks. It was prevalent in decaying Rome. The ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are symbols of wretched wickedness more especially related to this perversion, as the incident of Lot’s visitors indicates.

“**There is today a strong clamor to make such practices legal by passing legislation. Some would also legislate to legalize prostitution. They have legalized abortion, seeking to remove from this heinous crime the stigma of sin.**

“**We do not hesitate to tell the world that the cure for these evils is not in surrender.**
“

But let us emphasize that **right and wrong, righteousness and sin, are not dependent upon man's interpretations**, conventions and attitudes. **Social acceptance does not change the status of an act, making wrong into right.** If all the people in the world were to accept homosexuality, ... the practice would still be a deep, dark sin.' (The Miracle of Forgiveness, Bookcraft, p. 79)

"As we think back upon the experiences of Nineveh, Babylon, Sodom and Gomorrah, we wonder—will history repeat itself? What of our world today? Are we forgetting in our great nations the high and lofty principles which can preserve the nations?

"I recall to mind the words of General Douglas MacArthur on the occasion of the Japanese surrender:

'Military alliance, balances of power, League of Nations all in turn failed. ... We have had our last chance. If we do not now devise some greater and more equitable system, Armageddon will be at our door. The problem basically is theological and involves ... improvement of human character. It must be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh.' (Douglas MacArthur, "Last Chance," Time, September 10, 1945.)

"Are we not inviting eventual destruction as we desecrate all things holy and sacred, even to the common and irreverent use in our daily talk of the names of Deity, and make his holy day, the Sabbath, a day of work, of commercialism, and of pleasure-seeking?

"How then can we hope to escape the wrath of God and have peace and righteousness in the land?"

("The Foundations of Righteousness", General Conference, October 1977)

Joni L. Koch

"Oftentimes we put permanent labels on people by saying something like 'Our Relief Society president is a lost cause; she is so stubborn!' In contrast, we might say, 'The Relief Society president has been less flexible lately; maybe she's going through some difficult times. Let's help her and sustain her!'

"Brothers and sisters, **we have no right to portray anybody, including from our Church circle, as a badly finished product!** Rather, our words about our fellow beings should reflect our belief in Jesus Christ and His Atonement and that, in Him and through Him, we can always change for the better!'

("Apart, but Still One", General Conference, October 2017)

Harold B. Lee

“Where is there safety in the world today? **Safety can’t be won by tanks and guns and the airplanes and atomic bombs.** There is only one place of safety and that is within the realm of the power of Almighty God that he gives to those who keep his commandments and listen to his voice, as he speaks through the channels that he has ordained for that purpose....

“Peace be with you, not the peace that comes from the legislation in the halls of congress, but the peace that comes in the way that the Master said, by overcoming all the things of the world.”

(“Peace Be unto Thy Soul”, Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee, Chapter 22)

Richard L. Lyman

“During the years 1932 and 1933, **the people of our nation voted to repeal the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States and to repeal also all our prohibition laws.** Will I be unpatriotic if I say to you that **this action filled me with 'righteous wrath'?** **The people did not then nor will they ever repeal that law of nature which makes alcohol a poison.**”

(“Liquor, Immorality, and Our Armed Forces”, Conference Report, October 1942, pp. 61-64)

Neal A. Maxwell*

“Q: **But clearly we cannot legislate morality!**

“A: **No, we cannot pass a bill declaring all individuals righteous and assume that all people will then meet celestial criteria. But legislation can clearly affect the climate in which individual morality either flourishes or declines.**

“Q: Is such **climate-building** basically all that a legislative body can do, morally?

“A: **No, for legislative and executive departments can mandate certain minimum standards of behavior. That is much more than tone-setting. Murder and child-beating are thus not only unacceptable but illegal and punishable as well.**

“What we are seeing now in so many situations is a **more rigorous setting of standards for commercial relationships, but also a simultaneous, cheek-by-jowl retreat from standard setting in personal behavior.** This is somewhat like building more lifeboats and de-emphasizing swimming lessons. Rescue work involves both, **but prevention by self-discipline is more efficient and less costly than correction by external controls.**

Living one preventive principle is better than a hundred remedial governmental programs.

“To assume that because all things cannot be legislated, therefore nothing can be legislated, is a dangerous delusion. Take something as simple as child labor laws, which helped to correct some of the grim abuses in child labor decades ago. Now, ironically, we are in a situation in which there are often too few chances for youth to work. Parenthetically, our very affluence has created many incentives not to work; more and more idlers are eating bread that belongs to workers. The secular way in which we seek to solve one problem perpetually creates another. Work is a basic need, not only economically but also spiritually. Sometimes we are too clever by half.

“Incidentally, those who say dogmatically that morality can’t be legislated turn about and say dogmatically that total welfare can be legislated! **In the long run, the welfare state operates against human welfare, particularly our precious agency,** but the pathology may take a few decades to become visible. I’m reminded of the vaunted guns of Singapore, which ‘guaranteed’ the security of that port city. The trouble was, the guns fired seaward only, and Singapore was taken by land. Such myopia is not the exclusive property of military planners, but among all planners without principles.”

(***)

David O. McKay*

“I mentioned Communism in its war against individual liberty and free enterprise as surreptitiously sowing poisonous seeds within the body politic. It is also from within, morally speaking, that our cities become corrupt, not from outward, open assaults on virtue, but from insidious, corrupt actions of trusted individuals. Our government, as you know, has recently uncovered a gambling ring that covers a twenty billion dollar business in vice. Many large cities in the United States are connected with it and contaminated by it.

“Too many of these city officials license darkened rooms wherein men and women, and not infrequently teenage boys and girls, may guzzle beer and whiskey and indulge in other vices sought by persons of low ideals. For the permission and perpetuation of such dens of iniquity in our cities, the public is not entirely free from blame. However, those who are elected to office – commissioners, peace officers, trusted servants of the people – are most directly responsible.

“Generally speaking, these men are honest in their intentions and actions to enforce the laws and if possible to eradicate, at least to reduce to a minimum, the evils upon which the underworld thrives. One or two, or a half a dozen unprincipled men, however, can frustrate the most earnest efforts of the upright officials. For example, officers informed that minors are

permitted to enter a certain 'joint' will find when they get to the place that the proprietor has been 'tipped off' and seemingly everything is within the law.

"If and when appreciation for such 'tips-off,' and other favors, is expressed in secretive payments of money, those participating in the graft may meet in a room, a club, or in a private residence, ostensibly to play a social game of poker and under this guise divide their ill-gotten gains. Thus do our cities, as individuals, become corrupt from within.

"Such exploitation of the poor unfortunates whose thoughts and desires lead them only to gratify their appetites, indulge their passions to exist by deceit, cunning, and crime, are among the corruptions that Peter says 'are in the world through lust.'

"Let us always remember that, 'there is no vice so great but we can kill and conquer it if we but will'."

("The Transforming Power of Faith in Jesus Christ", General Conference, April 1951)

David O McKay

"[There are] **two contending Forces**. Those forces are known and have been designated by different terms throughout the ages. 'In the beginning' they were known as Satan on the one hand, and Christ on the other... In these days, they are called '**domination by the state,**' **on one hand, 'personal liberty,' on the other.**"

("Two Contending Forces", BYU Speeches, May 18 1960)

Elder Russell M. Nelson

"A strong human spirit with control over appetites of the flesh is master over emotions and passions and not a slave to them. That kind of freedom is as vital to the spirit as oxygen is to the body! Freedom from self-slavery is true liberation!...

"...In our day civil governments have a vested interest in protecting marriage because strong families constitute the best way of providing for the health, education, welfare, and prosperity of rising generations. But civil governments are heavily influenced by social trends and secular philosophies as they write, rewrite, and enforce laws. Regardless of what civil legislation may be enacted, the doctrine of the Lord regarding marriage and morality cannot be changed. Remember: sin, even if legalized by man, is still sin in the eyes of God!

"While we are to emulate our Savior's kindness and compassion, while we are to value the rights and feelings of all of God's children, we cannot change His doctrine. It is not ours to change. **His doctrine is ours to study, understand, and uphold.**"

("Decisions for Eternity", General Conference, October 2013)

Dallin H. Oaks*

“So what does it mean when a person says, 'Don't try to legislate morality'? There is ample room for debate on the **wisdom** of most legislation, whether it has a moral base or not. **Some legislation is unwise or undesirable because it is an excessive interference with liberty or because it will be impossible or expensive to enforce. But the mere statement that we should not legislate morality contributes nothing to reasoned public discourse.**

“I conclude this discussion of public policy arguments against gambling with several moral objections. Law is concerned about morality, and there are serious legal-moral objections to state lotteries. I quote five of these objections from a publication of the Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission:

‘It is a moral issue when the state decides to derive income from an activity which is a highly regressive form of taxation that affects poor people more extensively than affluent people.

‘It is a moral issue when a state decides **not only to tolerate gambling but to get in the business** of planning games, engaging in promotional activities... and **targeting its citizens through extensive marketing analyses in the hopes of creating new gamblers...**

‘It is a moral issue when a state adopts a form of gambling which in all probability will increase the extent and the amount of illegal gambling.

‘It is a moral issue when a state adopts a form of gambling that will draw off large amounts of money, especially from the poor people for whom the state supposedly has a responsibility to provide assistance.

‘It is a moral issue when a state engages in naive projections and adopts financial planning that amounts to putting a shoddy patch on a state's long-term financial problems.

“To summarize: **That governments would tolerate gambling is regrettable; that governments would promote gambling is reprehensible.**

“So what should Latter-day Saints do about gambling? They should not participate in any way, and they should encourage others, especially their family members, not to participate.

“What should Latter-day Saints do about state-sponsored lotteries, present or proposed? The First Presidency answered that question in their statement last fall: 'We urge members of the Church to join with others with similar concerns in opposing the legalization and government sponsorship of lotteries.'

“If members of our Church do not oppose immoral and pernicious practices, who will? If not now, when? We can make a difference! May God help us to do so.”

(“Gambling Is Morally Wrong and Politically Unwise”, March 1987)

Dallin H. Oaks*

“Provoked by that contrast, I will use this occasion to speak about the **role of religion-based values and religious leaders in public policy debates.**

“Questions of Right and Wrong

“Fundamental to the role of religion in public policy is this most important question: **Are there moral absolutes?** Speaking to our BYU students earlier this year, President Rex E. Lee said:

'I cannot think of anything more important than for each of you to build a firm, personal testimony that there are in this life some absolutes, things that never change, regardless of time, place, or circumstances. They are eternal truths, eternal principles and, as Paul tells us, they are and will be the same yesterday, today, and forever.'

“Unfortunately, other educators deny the existence of God or deem God irrelevant to the human condition. **Persons who accept this view deny the existence of moral absolutes. They maintain that right and wrong are relative concepts, and morality is merely a matter of personal choice or expediency.** For example, a university professor reported that her students lacked what she called 'moral common sense.' She said they believed that 'there was no such thing as right or wrong, just good or bad arguments.' **In that view, even the most fundamental moral questions have at least two sides, and every assertion of right or wrong is open to debate.**

“I believe that these contrasting approaches underlie the whole discussion of religious values in public policy. Many differences of opinion over the role of religion in public life simply mirror a difference of opinion over whether there are moral absolutes. But this underlying difference is rarely made explicit. It is as if those who assume that all values are relative have established their assumption by law or tradition and have rendered illegitimate the fundamental belief of those who hold that some values are absolute.

“One of the consequences of shifting from moral absolutes to moral relativism in public policy is that this produces a corresponding shift of emphasis from responsibilities to rights. Responsibilities originate in moral absolutes. In contrast, rights find their origin in legal principles, which are easily manipulated by moral relativism. Sooner or later the substance of rights must depend on either the voluntary fulfillment of responsibilities or the legal enforcement of duties. When our laws or our public leaders question the existence of absolute moral values, they undercut the basis for the voluntary fulfillment of responsibilities,

which is economical, and compel our society to rely more and more on the legal enforcement of rights, which is expensive.

“Some moral absolutes or convictions must be at the foundation of any system of law. This does not mean that all laws are so based. Many laws and administrative actions are simply a matter of wisdom or expediency. But many laws and administrative actions are based upon the moral standards of our society. If most of us believe that it is wrong to kill or steal or lie, our laws will include punishment for those acts. If most of us believe that it is right to care for the poor and needy, our laws will accomplish or facilitate those activities. **Society continually legislates morality. The only question is whose morality and what legislation.**

“In the United States, the moral absolutes are the ones derived from what we refer to as the Judeo-Christian tradition, as set forth in the Bible—Old Testament and New Testament.

“Despite ample evidence of majority adherence to moral absolutes, some still question the legitimacy of a moral foundation for our laws and public policy. To avoid any suggestion of adopting or contradicting any particular religious absolute, **some secularists argue that our laws must be entirely neutral, with no discernable relation to any particular religious tradition. Such proposed neutrality is unrealistic, unless we are willing to cut away the entire idea that there are moral absolutes....**

“...During this same period, Professor Henry Steele Commager criticized the Moral Majority and the Roman Catholic Church for 'inject[ing] religion into politics more wantonly than at any time since the Know-Nothing crusade of the 1850's.' Writing in a New York Times column, this distinguished scholar asserted that 'what the Framers [of the U. S. Constitution] had in mind was more than separating church and state: it was separating religion from politics.' While conceding that no one could question the right to preach 'morality and religion,' Commager argued that churchmen of all denominations crossed an impermissible line 'when they connect morality with a particular brand of religious faith and this, in turn, with political policies.'

“Apparently, churchmen can preach morality and religion as long as they do not suggest that their particular brand of religion has any connection with morality or that the resulting morality has any connection with political policies. Stated otherwise, religious preaching is okay so long as it has no practical impact on the listeners' day-to-day behavior, especially any behavior that has anything to do with political activity or public policy.

“As we know, the idea that there is an absolute right and wrong comes from religion, and the absolute values that have influenced law and public policy are most commonly rooted in religion. In contrast, the values that generally prevail in today's academic community are relative values.

"I have read serious academic arguments to the effect that religious people can participate in public debate only if they conceal the religious origin of their values by translating them into secular dialect. In a nation committed to pluralism, **this kind of hostility to religion should be legally illegitimate and morally unacceptable**. It is also irrational and unworkable, for reasons explained by BYU law professor Frederick Mark Gedicks:

'Secularism has not solved the problem posed by religion in public life so much as it has buried it. By placing religion on the far side of the boundary marking the limit of the real world, secularism prevents public life from taking religion seriously. Secularism does not teach us to live with those who are religious; rather, it demands that we ignore them and their views. Such a 'solution' can remain stable only so long as those who are ignored acquiesce in their social situation.'

"Fortunately, the Supreme Court has never held that citizens could not join together to translate their moral beliefs into laws or public policies even when those beliefs are derived from religious doctrine. Indeed, there are many sophisticated and articulate spokesmen for the proposition that the separation of church and state never intended to exclude religiously grounded values from the public square. For example, I offer the words of Richard John Neuhaus:

'In a democracy that is free and robust, an opinion is no more disqualified for being 'religious' than for being atheistic, or psychoanalytic, or Marxist, or just plain dumb. **There is no legal or constitutional question about the admission of religion to the public square; there is only a question about the free and equal participation of citizens in our public business.** Religion is not a reified 'thing' that threatens to intrude upon our common life. **Religion in public is but the public opinion of those citizens who are religious.**

"...By the same token, churches and church leaders should expect the same broad latitude of discussion of their views that conventionally applies to everyone else's participation in public policy debates. **A church can claim access to higher authority on moral questions, but its opinions on the application of those moral questions to specific legislation will inevitably be challenged by and measured against secular-based legislative or political judgments.** As James E. Wood observed, 'While denunciations of injustice, racism, sexism, and nationalism may be clearly rooted in one's religious faith, their political applications to legislative remedy and public policy are by no means always clear.'...

"...In summary, I have pointed out that **many U.S. laws are based on the absolute moral values most Americans affirm, and I have suggested that it cannot be otherwise. I have contended that religious-based values are just as legitimate a basis for political action as any other values.** And I have argued that churches and church leaders should be able to participate in public policy debates on the same basis as other persons and organizations, favoring or opposing specific legislative proposals or candidates if they choose to do so."

[\(https://www.latterdayconservative.com/articles/religious-values-and-public-policy/\)](https://www.latterdayconservative.com/articles/religious-values-and-public-policy/)

Dallin H. Oaks

“Our duty is clear. The Savior gave us the Golden Rule: 'All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them' (Matt. 7:12).

“Satan’s position is the opposite. He sponsors self-interest, raw and unrefined by any other consideration....

“

...Cain killed Abel. The scriptures say that he did so 'for the sake of getting gain' (Moses 5:50), the flocks of his brother (JST, Gen. 5:18; Moses 5:33). Seeing this, the Lord asked Cain, 'Where is Abel thy brother?' Cain first attempted to cover his sin with a lie: 'I know not.' Then he added a rationalization: 'Am I my brother’s keeper?' (Gen. 4:9; Moses 5:34).

“Are we our brothers’ keepers? In other words, are we responsible to look after the well-being of our neighbors as we seek to earn our daily bread? The Savior’s Golden Rule says we are. Satan says we are not....

“...Despite that high standard, some who profess to be Christians seek to earn their living by systematically victimizing their neighbors.

“Some seize wealth by trafficking in illegal drugs or pornography. Traders in these products enrich themselves by transactions that ruin the bodies, minds, or morals of their customers.”

(“Brother’s Keeper”, General Conference, October 1986)

Glenn L. Pace

“Even though you have a testimony and want to do what is right, it is difficult not to be drawn to the great and spacious building. From all appearances, the people in the building seem to be having a great time. The music and laughter are deafening. You would say to me what my children have said, ‘They’re not really happy, huh, Dad?’ as you watch them party.

“They look happy and free, but don’t mistake telestial pleasure for celestial happiness and joy. Don’t mistake lack of self-control for freedom. Complete freedom without appropriate restraint makes us slaves to our appetites. Don’t envy a lesser and lower life.”

(“They’re Not Really Happy”, General Conference, October 1987)

Boyd K. Packer

“We live in a very dangerous world that threatens those things that are most spiritual. **The family, the fundamental organization in time and eternity, is under attack from forces seen and unseen.** The adversary is about. His objective is to cause injury. **If he can weaken and destroy the family, he will have succeeded.**”

“**Latter-day Saints recognize the transcendent importance of the family** and strive to live in such a way that the adversary cannot steal into our homes. We find safety and security for ourselves and our children in honoring the covenants we have made and living up to the ordinary acts of obedience required of the followers of Christ....”

“We know that we are spirit children of heavenly parents, here on earth to receive our mortal bodies and to be tested. **We who have mortal bodies have the power over the beings who do not. We are free to choose what we will and to pick and choose our acts, but we are not free to choose the consequences. They come as they will come.**”

“**Agency is defined in the scriptures as ‘moral agency,’ which means that we can choose between good and evil. The adversary seeks to tempt us to misuse our moral agency.**”

“The scriptures teach us ‘that every man may act in doctrine and principle pertaining to futurity, according to the **moral agency** which I have given unto him, **that every man may be accountable for his own sins in the day of judgment.**’”

“Alma taught that ‘**the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance.**’ In order to understand this, we must separate the sin from the sinner.”

“For example, when they brought before the Savior a woman taken in adultery, obviously guilty, He dismissed the case with five words: ‘Go, and sin no more.’ That is the spirit of His ministry.”

“**Tolerance is a virtue, but like all virtues, when exaggerated, it transforms itself into a vice. We need to be careful of the ‘tolerance trap’ so that we are not swallowed up in it.** The **permissiveness** afforded by the **weakening of the laws of the land to tolerate legalized acts of immorality** does not reduce the serious spiritual consequence that is the result of the violation of God’s law of chastity.”

(“These Things I Know”, General Conference, April 2013)

Boyd K. Packer*

“...‘Tell me,’ she said, ‘how you are able to control your youth and build such character as we have seen in your young men?’”

"I was interested in her use of the word 'control'. The answer, I told them, centered in the doctrines of the gospel. They were interested; so I spoke briefly of the doctrine of agency. I said we develop control by teaching freedom. Perhaps at first they thought we start at the wrong end of the subject. A four-star general is nothing if not a disciplinarian. But when one understands the gospel, it becomes very clear that the best control is self-control.

"It may seem unusual at first to foster self-control by centering on freedom of choice, but it is a very sound doctrinal approach.

"Some who do not understand the doctrinal part do not readily see the relationship between obedience and agency. And they miss one vital connection and see obedience only as restraint. They then resist the very thing that will give them true freedom. There is no true freedom without responsibility, and there is no enduring freedom without a knowledge of the truth. The Lord said, 'If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' (John 8:31–32.)

"The general quickly understood **a truth that is missed even by some in the Church.** Latter-day Saints are not obedient because they are compelled to be obedient. They are obedient because they know certain spiritual truths and have decided, as an expression of their own individual agency, to obey the commandments of God.

"We are the sons and daughters of God, willing followers, disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, and 'under this head are [we] made free.' (Mosiah 5:8.)

"Those who talk of blind obedience may appear to know many things, but they do not understand the doctrines of the gospel. There is an obedience that comes from a knowledge of the truth that transcends any external form of control. We are not obedient because we are blind, we are obedient because we can see. The best control, I repeat, is self-control.

"The general knew then why we teach our children the doctrines of the gospel of Jesus Christ and where they get the resolute determination to protect individual freedom."

("Agency and Control", General Conference, April 1983)

Boyd K. Packer

"My message is to you who are tempted either to promote, to enter, or to remain in a life-style which violates your covenants and will one day bring sorrow to you and to those who love you.

"Growing numbers of people now campaign to make spiritually dangerous life-styles legal and socially acceptable. Among them are abortion, the gay-lesbian movement, and drug addiction. They are debated in forums and seminars, in classes, in conversations, in

conventions, and in courts all over the world. The social and political aspects of them are in the press every day....

"...The commandments found in the scriptures, both the positive counsel and the 'shalt nots,' form the letter of the law. There is also the spirit of the law. We are responsible for both.

"Some challenge us to show where the scriptures specifically forbid abortion or a gay-lesbian or drug-centered life-style. 'If they are so wrong,' they ask, 'why don't the scriptures tell us so in 'letter of the law' plainness?' These issues are not ignored in the revelations.* The scriptures are generally positive rather than negative in their themes, and it is a mistake to assume that anything not specifically prohibited in the 'letter of the law' is somehow approved of the Lord. All the Lord approves is not detailed in the scriptures, neither is all that is forbidden. The Word of Wisdom, for instance, makes no specific warning against taking arsenic. Surely we don't need a revelation to tell us that!

"The Lord said, 'It is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant.' (D&C 58:26.) The prophets told us in the Book of Mormon that 'men are instructed sufficiently that they know good from evil.' (2 Ne. 2:5; see Hel. 14:31.)

"Life is meant to be a test to see if we will keep the commandments of God. (See 2 Ne. 2:5.) **We are free to obey or to ignore the spirit and the letter of the law. But the agency granted to man is a moral agency.** (See D&C 101:78.) We are not free to break our covenants and escape the consequences....

"...**Always when these destructive life-styles are debated, 'individual right of choice' is invoked as though it were the one sovereign virtue. That could be true only if there were but one of us. The rights of any individual bump up against the rights of another. And the simple truth is that we cannot be happy, nor saved, nor exalted, without one another.**

"The word tolerance is also invoked as though it overrules everything else. Tolerance may be a virtue, but it is not the commanding one. There is a difference between what one is and what one does. What one is may deserve unlimited tolerance; what one does, only a measured amount. A virtue when pressed to the extreme may turn into a vice. Unreasonable devotion to an ideal, without considering the practical application of it, ruins the ideal itself....

"...**Little do we realize what we have brought upon ourselves when we have allowed our children to be taught that man is only an advanced animal.** We have compounded the mistake by neglecting to teach moral and spiritual values. Moral laws do not apply to animals for they have no agency. **Where there is agency, where there is choice, moral laws must apply. We cannot, absolutely cannot, have it both ways....**

“...Several publications are now being circulated about the Church which defend and promote gay or lesbian conduct. They wrest the scriptures attempting to prove that these impulses are inborn, cannot be overcome, and should not be resisted; and therefore, such conduct has a morality of its own. **They quote scriptures to justify perverted acts between consenting adults. That same logic would justify incest or the molesting of little children of either gender. Neither the letter nor the spirit of moral law condones any such conduct.**

“I hope none of our young people will be foolish enough to accept those sources as authority for what the scriptures mean. Paul, speaking on this very subject, condemned those 'who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator.' (Rom. 1:25.) In that same reference the word covenantbreakers is used for the only time in scripture. (See Rom. 1:31.)”

(“Covenants”, General Conference, October 1990)

Boyd K. Packer

“[T]here are those today who not only tolerate but advocate voting to change laws that would legalize immorality, as if a vote would somehow alter the designs of God’s laws and nature. A law against nature would be impossible to enforce. For instance, what good would a vote against the law of gravity do?

“There are both moral and physical laws 'irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world' that cannot be changed. History demonstrates over and over again that moral standards cannot be changed by battle and cannot be changed by ballot. To legalize that which is basically wrong or evil will not prevent the pain and penalties that will follow as surely as night follows day.

“Regardless of the opposition, we are determined to stay on course. We will hold to the principles and laws and ordinances of the gospel. If they are misunderstood either innocently or willfully, so be it. **We cannot change; we will not change the moral standard. We quickly lose our way when we disobey the laws of God. If we do not protect and foster the family, civilization and our liberties must needs perish.**”

(“Cleansing the Inner Vessel”, General Conference, October 2010)

Boyd K. Packer

“Society excuses itself from responsibility except for teaching the physical process of reproduction to children in school to prevent pregnancy and disease, and providing teenagers with devices which are supposed to protect them from both.

"When any effort is made to include values in these courses, **basic universal values**, not just values of the Church, but of civilization, of society itself, **the protest arises, 'You are imposing religion upon us, infringing upon our freedom.'**

Freedom to Choose

"While we pass laws to reduce pollution of the earth, **any proposal to protect the moral and spiritual environment is shouted down and marched against as infringing upon liberty, agency, freedom, the right to choose.**

"Interesting how one virtue, when given exaggerated or fanatical emphasis, can be used to batter down another, with freedom, a virtue, invoked to protect vice. Those determined to transgress see any regulation of their life-style as interfering with their agency and seek to have their actions condoned by making them legal.

"People who are otherwise sensible say, 'I do not intend to indulge, but I vote for freedom of choice for those who do.'

Flawed Argument

"Regardless of how lofty and moral the 'pro-choice' argument sounds, it is badly flawed. With that same logic one could argue that all traffic signs and barriers which keep the careless from danger should be pulled down on the theory that each individual must be free to choose how close to the edge he will go.

No Free Agency

"The phrase 'free agency' does not appear in scripture. The only agency spoken of there is **moral agency**, 'which,' the Lord said, 'I have given unto him, that every man may be accountable for his own sins in the day of judgment.' (D&C 101:78; italics added.)...

The Right to Speak Out

"**When a moral issue does arise, it is the responsibility of the leaders of the Church to speak out.** Gambling, for instance, certainly is a moral issue. Life is a moral issue. **When morality is involved, we have both the right and the obligation to raise a warning voice. We do not as a church speak on political issues unless morality is involved.** In thirty years and thousands of interviews, I have never once asked a member of the Church what political party they belonged to....

"**Civilizations, like Sodom and Gomorrah, destroyed themselves by disobedience to the laws of morality.** 'For the Spirit of the Lord will not always strive with man. And when the Spirit ceaseth to strive with man then cometh speedy destruction.' (2 Ne. 26:11; see also Gen. 6:3;

Ether 2:15; D&C 1:33; Moses 8:17.) **God grant that we will come to our senses and protect our moral environment from this mist of darkness which deepens day by day. The fate of all humanity hangs precariously in the balance."**

("Our Moral Environment", General Conference, April 1992)

Boyd K. Packer

"We know that young people generally don't like restrictions. Believe it or not, we were young once and we remember.

"A resistance to anything that limits one's conduct has almost taken over society. **Our whole social order could self-destruct over the obsession with freedom disconnected from responsibility**, where choice is imagined to be somehow independent of consequences."

("The Word of Wisdom: The Principle and the Promises", General Conference, April 1996)

James M. Paramore

"I have agonized as I have thought about the ordeal of Jean Valjean—the nineteen years in prison and the things done to him for the small transgression of stealing a loaf of bread to feed a starving family. He suffered so many indignities, even after he was finally released from the physical prison.

"Some of the same feelings flood my mind as I reflect upon the self-inflicted sufferings of Bob Merrick. The life of a prominent surgeon was lost and the sight of another because of Bob Merrick's wayward activities, selfishness, ego, and disdain for others. He suffered in **a prison of his own making**.

"Yes, I realize these masterfully crafted episodes are fictional, but they cause me to think about **the various types of prisons Satan leads us into building for ourselves and others, or that others build for us**.

"Haven't we all been delivered from **various forms of captivity**? How did you feel when the doors were opened to your personal prison? How was it to feel free? How wonderful it is to be liberated from any kind of a prison....

"As difficult as a physical captivity or prison is, there are other captivities or prisons even more devastating. They are very subtle and take various forms in life, like (1) taking advantage of another; (2) bearing false witness to get gain; (3) knowing things to be true and not defending them; (4) stealing the morality of another; (5) destroying the innocence of a little child; (6) being captive to alcohol or drugs; (7) or financially digging a pit for another, causing hardship and destroying his ability to take care of his needs and so on. There are many prisons which come from our sins or the sins of others "according to the captivity and power of the devil" (2 Ne. 2:27) who leads us away....

“...Years ago, an acquaintance of mine was captive, for over twenty years, to a serious alcohol problem, which bound him every day. He would leave work, buy his alcohol, drive into the countryside, and drink until he could barely find his way home. **He truly was under the captive spirit of the devil and lived in hell....**

“Certainly, a Latter-day Saint will demonstrate **the freedom he has received by walking in all morality and all honesty, as taught by the Lord.** For his word is his bond—sacred and honored. His life becomes the testament that it is all true—every principle and every word that proceeded from the mouth of the Savior and His prophets. **By living these cardinal principles, we are truly free** and we become the witnesses of His word.”

(“By the Power of His Word Did They Cause Prisons to Tumble”, General Conference, October 1992)

Charles W. Penrose

“We have in this Church and in this Territory, perfect liberty. The Gospel is the “perfect law of liberty;” (James 1:25) but it is **the liberty which is confined to that which is right. There is no true liberty outside the bounds of wholesome law. When we act outside the limits of proper law, and claim that to be liberty, it is not liberty, it is license, and it is injurious to the individual and to the mass.** If this people called Latter-day Saints obey any instructions that they may receive from the brethren who are appointed to lead them, they do so in the spirit of liberty. They do not do it because they choose to do it. They do it because they are willing to do it. They do not perform the duty because they are obliged to do it, because of any coercive power exercised over them, or because they will be called upon to submit to any penalty; but they do it because they please to do it, and they please to do it because it is right. I admit that sometimes they may do things which seem at first to be irksome. They could refuse; but they feel that if they do refuse they will suffer loss. In what way? Their religion teaches them that every good thing that they do is bound to bring its reward, and that every evil thing which they do is sure to bring its punishment, either in this world or in the world to come; that is, that sin inevitably brings its penalty, and that righteousness certainly brings reward. Therefore, if a Latter-day Saint is called upon to perform anything in connection with this which he feels it is his duty to do, and he neglects that duty, he expects at some time to be punished or suffer loss for that neglect.”

(Discourse by Elder Charles W. Penrose, delivered in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday Afternoon, September 23, 1883.)

L. Tom Perry

“Men and women receive their agency as a gift from God, but their liberty and, in turn, their eternal happiness come from obedience to His laws....

“...In the little brown book, immediately after the letter from the First Presidency, there is a 'Prefatory Note to Men in the Service,' titled 'Obedience to Law Is Liberty.' **The note draws a parallel between military law, which is 'for the good of all who are in the service,' and divine law.**

“It states, 'In the universe, too, where God is in command, there is law—universal, eternal ... law—with certain blessings and immutable penalties.'

“The final words of the note focus on obedience to God’s law: 'If you wish to return to your loved ones with head erect, ... **if you would be a man and live abundantly—then observe God’s law. In so doing you can add to those priceless freedoms which you are struggling to preserve, another on which the others may well depend, freedom from sin; for truly ‘obedience to law is liberty.’**”

(“Obedience to Law Is Liberty”, General Conference, April 2013)

Franklin D. Richards

“[W]e are living in a troubled world with an abundance of problems. In reality, this is one of the great purposes of life, to meet challenges and obstacles and learn to overcome them. Meeting obstacles and learning to overcome them give us experience, and each experience should be for our good.

“Today we hear much about the need to 'tell things as they are,' the need for honesty and consistency in living, and the need for greater freedoms.

“True and false freedoms

“**Someone has said, 'There are two freedoms; the false freedom where one is free to do what he likes, and the true freedom where one is free to do what he ought to do.'**

“I think it is appropriate and timely to discuss some things as they are and can be, as well as to consider **the difference between loyalty and disloyalty as pertains to the true and false freedoms.**

“First, **loyalty to true freedom principles or causes embraces love, dedication, faith, allegiance, willingness to sacrifice, and many other qualities that contribute to achievement and happiness.**

“**Disloyalty to true freedom principles or causes embraces betrayal, unfaithfulness, disaffection, sedition, infidelity, and other qualities that contribute to failure, destruction, and unhappiness.**

“Loyalty to false freedom principles can only bring delusion, a counterfeit happiness, and eventual destruction. False freedom principles include such things as the abuse of one’s body by the use of **drugs, liquor, and tobacco, as well as sexual immoralities.** False freedom principles likewise include **the spread of communistic doctrine and protest by force.**

“In reality, true freedom can only exist in doing what is right, in being loyal—yes, in doing what we ought to do....

“True freedom

“My counsel to you is to live for true freedom, choose the right, do what you ought to do, and make the choice that Joshua did—to serve the Lord.

“Never give your loyalty to a cause that will bring you a false freedom of delusion, counterfeit happiness, failure, and eventual destruction. Your loyalties set the pattern for your life and eventually become a way of life for you.

“Be loyal to yourself, your family, your God and church, your country, friends, and employers. This will assure you true freedom and independence and result in peace, great achievement, happiness, and eventually eternal life.”

(“Loyalty and Freedom”, Conference Report, April 1969, pp. 18-21)

Stephen L. Richards*

“Is there an established way or order? Under the law the answer must be yes – at least to the extent that the law covers the ways of life. The Ten Commandments is not a legal document, but its principles are all incorporated into the law by means of penalties prescribed for infraction of these commandments, at least so far as violations of the commandments may be manifest in social behavior.

“Would it not be a great gain in winning respect for the law to make it more clear that the laws of the land in the main have their origin in divine pronouncements, and that in the main they win approval only as they conform to such generally accepted standards of morality and righteousness? Is that not the vital distinction between democracy and communism? The test of democratic law has always been, and will continue to be, is it right in accordance with revealed principles of righteousness? The test of communistic law seems to be, is it effective in the maintenance of controls superimposed by arbitrary authority? It seems to be of no concern that there is no conformity to divine principles of human conduct, and no recognition of divinity as well.

“Could we help wayward youth if we confronted each one with wayward tendencies with these forthright questions: 'Are you a communist and an anarchist? Is it your purpose to overthrow the

government and forfeit all the safeguards, the rights, and liberties derived from our ancestors who fought so valiantly and made so many sacrifices for the free society we now enjoy? Are you an atheist? **Do you believe there is no divine source of right and wrong?** Would you like to see this country of ours, and other peace-loving democratic countries, turned over to communistic domination and dictatorship? You should know that vice and crime in sufficiently extended proportions can do that without a single foreign bomb being exploded in our territory. **Vice and crime are rebellion. They can bring on war as devastating as that between states,** and they have able and clever leadership, for their general is the father of lies, the author of clever seductions and enticements, the deceiver, the adversary, the opponent of all that is good and virtuous. That leader is Satan, given power to tempt humanity in mortality that they may develop resistance and strength. They who follow his lead, though they may think themselves tough, are weaklings without resistance. They are without vision. If they had vision, they could see and understand the gravity and the futility of their offenses, and they would be able to see prison walls stronger and more impenetrable than those built of steel and concrete which will separate them from all the finer things of life-family, friends, the love of God and fellow men.

“Washington said that morality and religion were the firmest props of government. I say **morality – private morality – is indispensable to a good society rounded on happy homes in nations of freedom. One of the disappointments that has come to me in the observation of our political life is that all too frequently our citizens are prone to tolerate private immorality in public office,** and that by comity neither side will accuse the other. I do not make this indictment general, but I firmly believe that there are a sufficient number of cases of hypocritical living in public affairs, and a sufficient number of instances of infidelity in the homes of the land, exposed and unexposed, as to have furnished an example for youth which has not been encouraging. **The need of the hour is for good example and good teaching, and teaching is very difficult without the fortification of example.**

“I humbly pray that **all the forces at our command, the home, the church, the school, the government, and the exemplars of the nation, shall all combine to show wayward youth the right way, which is God’s way.**”

(“The Wayward”, General Conference, April 1957)

Marion G. Romney

“As a youth, I was stirred by Patrick Henry’s famous battle cry, ‘Give me liberty or give me death!’

“**The meaning of the word liberty is difficult to circumscribe.** Abraham Lincoln was of the opinion that **‘the world has never had a good definition of [the term]. We all declare for liberty,’ he said; ‘but in using the same word we do not mean the same thing. With some, the word liberty may mean for each man to do as he pleases with himself and the product**

of his labor; while with others [liberty] may mean for some men to do as they please with other men and the product of other men's labor.'

"Again he said, 'The shepherd drives the wolf from the sheep's throat, for which the sheep thanks the shepherd as his liberator, while the wolf denounces him for the same act.' (Address, 18 Apr. 1864; quoted in John Bartlett, Familiar Quotations, 15th ed., Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1980, p. 523.)

"The issues have changed since the time of Lincoln, but the multipurpose use of the word liberty and its synonym freedom has not changed. **The sweets of liberty about which we usually speak may be classified as (1) political independence, (2) economic freedom, and (3) free agency.**

"I would have us strive for that liberty which comprehends all three of these freedoms, and more. I would have us strive for a freedom of the soul to which they all contribute....

"...I invite your attention to a few illustrations in support of the thesis that, while political independence, economic freedom, and free agency may contribute to liberty of the soul, they do not guarantee it.

"First, as to political independence and power:

"In this field, perhaps the exploits of **Alexander the Great** are among the most widely known. **With high physical courage, impulsive energy, and fervid imagination, he, at the unripe age of thirty-two years, became to all intents and purposes master of the then-known world. But he was far from enjoying liberty, for of himself he was not master. In his thirty-third year he died, a victim of his own excesses, a total stranger to freedom of the soul.**

"Cardinal Wolsey learned, to his sorrow, **how little political independence and even political power can contribute to true liberty....**

"...While perhaps it is seldom, if ever, contended that either political independence or economic freedom alone brings perfect liberty, it is not, however, uncommon for free agency to be considered as synonymous with freedom of the soul. And it is true that the God-given right to choose one's course of action is an indispensable prerequisite to such freedom. Without it we can scarcely enjoy any type of liberty—political, economic, or personal. It is one of our greatest heritages. For it we are deeply indebted to our Father in Heaven, to the Founding Fathers, and to the pioneers. God gave it to man in the Garden of Eden. (See Moses 7:32.) The Founding Fathers, under the Lord's inspiration, wrote a guarantee of it into the fundamental law of the land. And the pioneers, led by the inspiration of heaven, gave their all to perpetuate it. Surely we ought always to be alert in its defense and willing, if necessary, to give our lives for its preservation.

“Free agency, however, precious as it is, is not of itself the perfect liberty we seek, nor does it necessarily lead thereto. As a matter of fact, through the exercise of their agency more people have come to political, economic, and personal bondage than to liberty.

“The Nephites, for example, at one time, by the exercise of their agency, brought themselves to such a state of affairs that their only course led to political bondage. This they did while living under a government providing for the freest exercise of agency.

'Their laws and their governments,' says the record, 'were established by the voice of the people, and they who chose evil were more numerous than they who chose good.' Therefore, 'they could not be governed by the law nor justice, save it were to their destruction.' (Hel. 5:2–3.)

Under these circumstances, they chose as rulers wicked men, who would certainly destroy their political liberties, to replace righteous men who had in the past protected and preserved those liberties and would have continued to do so in the future.

“The freewill choosing of a king by the Jaredites led directly to their captivity. (See Ether 6:21–7:5.)...

“...With respect to the loss of personal liberty through the misuse of free agency, our daily lives are filled with tragic evidence. We see the alcoholic with his craving for drink, the dope fiend in his frenzy, and worse, the pervert with his irretrievable loss of manhood. Who will say that such persons enjoy liberty?

“Notwithstanding the fact that through its misuse, political, economic, and personal liberty are lost, free agency will always endure because it is an eternal principle. However, the free agency possessed by any one person is increased or diminished by the use to which he puts it. Every wrong decision one makes restricts the area in which he can thereafter exercise his agency. The further one goes in the making of wrong decisions in the exercise of free agency, the more difficult it is for him to recover the lost ground. One can, by persisting long enough, reach the point of no return. He then becomes an abject slave. By the exercise of his free agency, he has decreased the area in which he can act, almost to the vanishing point....

“...Just as following wrong alternatives restricts free agency and leads to slavery, so pursuing correct alternatives widens the scope of one's agency and leads to perfect liberty. As a matter of fact, one may, by this process, obtain freedom of the soul while at the same time being denied political, economic, and personal liberty....

“...Surely Paul, in his soul, enjoyed perfect freedom.

“The Apostle's conclusion that the reward won by him is to be available to others suggests that there must be a pattern of living by which each of us may attain it, and I believe there is.

“Many years ago, while riding through Cleveland, Ohio, on a train, I saw on a building the inscription '**Obedience to Law is Liberty.**' With the proper interpretation of the word law, we have in this inscription a statement of ultimate truth. By inserting three words, it is made to read, '**Obedience to the law of Christ is liberty.**' (See D&C 88:21.) This is not only a statement of the perfect law of liberty, but also a statement of the way to perfect liberty....

“...**Freedom thus obtained—that is, by obedience to the law of Christ—is freedom of the soul, the highest form of liberty.** And the most glorious thing about it is that it is within the reach of every one of us, regardless of what people about us, or even nations, do. All we have to do is learn the law of Christ and obey it. To learn it and obey it is the primary purpose of every soul's mortal life.”

(“The Perfect Law of Liberty”, General Conference, October 1981)

Sterling W. Sill*

“Unless we deliberately distort our own intelligence, turn off our reason, and smother the whispering of the Spirit, we cannot help but know right from wrong and good from evil. We are intelligent people.

“We can all know that we ought to honor our parents and that we ought to obey God rather than man. **No one has a right to do wrong. We are not free to conduct ourselves as we please. What we do is the business of every other person in the world.** We distort our own intelligence and deceive ourselves when we sin against our own conscience. Many of our most serious sins are not written in the statute books. For example, just think what great errors we make when we sin against reason, against intuition, and against instinct. And one of our greatest sins is when we sin against knowledge....

“...In order to keep our freedom, we must place out of bounds all those things that would enslave us. James says: 'Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.' (James 4:7.) **Sometimes people bring disaster upon themselves when they fail to distinguish between freedom and irresponsibility, not recognizing that the right kind of freedom has limitations on it. For example, freedom of the press does not give anyone the license to commit libel against his neighbor.** Freedom of the seas does not give anyone a pirate's license to take the treasures of others, not does it entitle anyone to sink ships or destroy lives. **A very important part of liberty consists in understanding where freedom ends and license begins.**

“A marriage certificate does not entitle one to ruin the success or destroy the happiness of his marriage partner. **When one brings children into the world, he is not free to desert or neglect them. Actually, no one is ever given any right to do wrong. God has said, 'For I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance.'** (D&C 1:31.) He is completely bound by his own laws of righteousness. He said, 'I, the Lord, am bound when ye do

what I say . . .' (D&C 82:10), and **when we obey the laws of God, we begin to become free as God is free.**

“As we obey the laws of health, we free ourselves from disease. As we obey the laws of success, we free ourselves from failure. As we obey the laws of God and heaven, we free ourselves from the bonds of Satan and the torments of hell. Even Satan is not free, and sometime when he feels the full shock of the backfire of evil, he will discover he has paid a bitter price for his rebellion and sin.”

(Wealth of Wisdom, Published 1977)

Joseph F. Smith*

“What Is Liberty?

“Let me tell you. It is simply **the liberty of all mankind to worship God in righteousness; that is what it is; for all mankind to have the liberty to do right, the liberty to do good, the liberty to pursue happiness, in honor, in virtue and in uprightness.** But it cannot for one moment descend in any degree to license or to infringement upon the rights of others. No man has any liberty to impose upon his brother, to rob or to steal, to lie or to bear false witness, or to injure or wrong his fellowmen.

“We are not trying to defend the liberty of mankind to be drunken, to be debauchees, to advocate crime, to interfere with the rights of others. This is not liberty. The law of nations, as well as the law of God, prohibits it, and it cannot exist except it exist contrary to the laws of righteousness and contrary to the principles of liberty that we are willing to fight for and that we are striving for.”

(*** General Conference, April 1918)

George Albert Smith*

“I have heard men say that they have **a right to do wrong.** In one sense, a man has such a right; and in another sense, he has no such right. **We possess, in reality, very little; and that little the Lord has given us, and that is the power of choice.** We may choose to do good, and, **if we do good, we get the reward of good; we may also choose to do evil and reap the penalty.** A man may knock another down because he has a right to, and have to pay a fine of fifty dollars because he is obliged to. I deny that a man has a right to make thieves of his children and prostitute his family. If he does this, the Lord is justified in cursing him, and he will be obliged to endure it.”

(George Albert Smith, Sept 10, 1861, Journal of Discourses, 26 vols., 9:, p.115)

George Albert Smith*

“...and that when the time should come for us to exercise our full rights as American citizens, we might be able to administer the laws and govern in such a way that all should be protected, that every man of every creed, of every nation, and of every people, should enjoy his rights in our midst as perfectly as if he were in full faith with the majority of the people. **Not the right to do wrong, not the right to practise iniquity, not the right to trample upon his neighbour, to intrude upon his rights, but the right to do that which may seem good in his own eyes**, so long as he should not thereby interfere with the rights of others...”

(Journal of Discourses, 26 vols., 20:, p. 337-338)

George Albert Smith*

“Now I do really think that it is degrading to the religion, science and civilization of the age, where there are five hundred thousand ministers, editors, and public teachers in the country, to ask the Government to interfere in any manner whatever to correct any moral or religious error. I think it is acknowledging a weakness in the civilization and religion of the age to do so.”

(“Bearing False Witness”, Journal of Discourses, 13:332)

Joseph Fielding Smith*

“Some may enquire, **is it right — is it lawful for another government to be organized within the United States, of a theocratical nature? Yes, perfectly so! Does not the constitution of our country guarantee to all religious societies the right of forming any ecclesiastical government they like? Certainly it does, and every intelligent man knows this to be the fact.**

“The nucleus of such a government is formed, and **its laws have emanated from the throne of God, and it is perfect, having come from a pure fountain**, but does this make us independent of the laws of the United States?

“No, this new government does not come in contact with the government of the United States. In keeping our covenants and observing our religious laws and ceremonies, or the laws that God has given to the children of men, **we are not required to violate the principles of right that are contained in the constitution and laws of the United States.**”

(Orson Pratt quoted in The Progress of Man, p. 417-18)

Joseph Smith

“I attended City Council in the morning and **advocated strongly the necessity of some active measures being taken to suppress houses, and acts of infamy in the City; for the**

protection of the innocent and virtuous and good of public morals, shewing clearly that there were certain characters in the place who were disposed to corrupt the morals and chastity of our Citizens, and that houses of infamy did exist, upon which a City Ordinance concerning Brothels and disorderly characters was passed to prohibit such things, and published in this day's Wasp. I also spoke largely for the repeal of the Ordinance of the City licencing Merchants, Hawkers, Taverns, and Ordinaries, **desiring that this might be a free people, and enjoy equal rights and privileges** and the Ordinances were repealed."

("History, 1838–1856, volume C-1 [2 November 1838–31 July 1842]," p. 1331, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed December 31, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-c-1-2-november-1838-31-july-1842/505>)

Joseph Smith

"Proclamation.

"Mayor's Office, Nauvoo, June 16, 1844.

"As there are a number of statements in circulation which have for their object, the injury of the 'Latter day Saints,' all of which are false and prompted by blackhearted villains: I therefore deem it my duty to disabuse the public mind in regard to them, and to give a plain statement of facts which have taken place in the city within a few days past, and, which has brought upon us the displeasure of the unprincipled and the uninformed, and seems to afford an opportunity to our enemies, to unite and arouse themselves to mob; and already they have commenced their hellish operations by driving a few defenceless Mormons from their houses and homes in the vicinity of Warsaw and Carthage.

"A short time since **a press was started in this city which had for its object the destruction of the institutions of the city, both civil and religious: its proprietors are a set of unprincipled scoundrels who attempted in every possible way to defame the character of the most virtuous of our community, and change our peaceful and prosperous city into a place as evil and polluted as their own black hearts. To rid the city of a paper so filthy and pestilential as this, become the duty of every good citizen, who loves good order and morality; a complaint was made before the City Council, and after a full and impartial investigation it was voted—without one dissenting voice, a public NUISANCE, and to be immediately destroyed; the peace and happiness of the place demanded it, the virtue of our wives and daughters demanded, and our consciences demanded it at our hands as conservators of the public peace. That we acted right in this matter we have the assurance of one of the ablest expounders of the laws of England, viz: Blackstone— the constitution of the State of Illinois, and our own chartered rights. If then our charter gives us the power to decide what shall be a nuisance and cause it to be removed, where is the offence? What law is violated?** If then no law has been violated, why this ridiculous

excitement and bandying with lawless ruffians to destroy the happiness of a people whose religious motto is 'peace and good will toward all men?'

"Our city is infested with a set of blacklegs, counterfeiters and debauchees, and that the proprietors of this press were of that class, the minutes of the Municipal Court fully testify, and in ridding our young and flourishing city of such characters, we are abused by not only villainous demagogues, but by some who from their station and influence in society, ought rather to raise than depress the standard of a human excellence. We have no disturbance or excitement among us, save what is made by the thousand and one idle rumors afloat in the country. Every one is protected in his person and property, and but few cities of a population of twenty thousand people, in the United States, hath less of dissipation or vice of any kind, than the city of Nauvoo.

"Of the correctness of our conduct in this affair, we appeal to every high court in the state, and to its ordeal we are willing to appear at any time that His Excellency, Governor Thomas Ford shall please to call us before it. I therefore, in behalf of the Municipal Court of Nauvoo, warn the lawless, not to be precipitate in any interference in our affairs, for as sure as there is a God in Israel, we shall ride triumphant over all oppression.

"JOSEPH SMITH, Mayor [p. [3]]

("Proclamation, 16 June 1844," p. [3], The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed December 31, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/proclamation-16-june-1844/1>)

Joseph Smith

"June 10 Mayor made a statement of what William Law said before the City Council under oath, that he was a friend to the Mayor &c., and asked if there were any present who recollected his statement; when scores responded, yes!

"Councilor Taylor continued— Wilson Law was president of this Council during the passage of many ordinances, and referred to the Records; William Law and Emmons were members of the Council, and Emmons has never objected to any ordinance while in the Council; but has been more like a cipher, and is now become Editor of **a libellous paper, and is trying to destroy our charter and ordinances. He then read from the Constitution of the United States on the freedom of the press, and said, 'we are willing they should publish the truth'; but it is unlawful to publish libels; the 'Expositor' is a nuisance, and stinks in the nose of every honest man.**

"Mayor read from Illinois constitution. Article 8, Section 22, touching the responsibility of the press for its constitutional liberty.

"Councilor George Stiles said a nuisance was any thing that disturbs the peace of a community, and read Blackstone on private wrongs, Vol. 2, page 4, and the whole

community has to rest under the stigma of these falsehoods— referring to the ‘Expositor’, and if we can prevent the issuing of any more slanderous communications, he would go in for it; it is right for this community to show a proper resentment, and he would go in for suppressing all further publications of the kind.

“Councilor H. Smith believed the best way was to smash the press, and ‘pi’ the type.

“Councilor **Aaron Johnson** concurred with the councilors who had spoken.

“Alderman **Samuel Bennett** referred to the statement of the ‘Expositor’ concerning the Municipal Court in the case of Jeremiah Smith as a **libel, and considered the paper a public nuisance.**

“Councilor Benjamin Warrington considered his a peculiar situation, as **he did not belong to any church or any party; though it might be considered rather harsh for the council to declare the paper a nuisance, and proposed giving a few days’ limitation and assessing a fine of \$3,000 for every libel, and if they would not cease publishing libels to declare it a nuisance, and said the statutes made provisions for a fine of \$500.**

“Mayor replied that they threatened to shoot him when at Carthage, and the women and others dare not go to Carthage to prosecute; and [HC 6:445] read a libel from the ‘Expositor’ concerning the imprisonment of Jeremiah Smith.

“Councilor H. Smith spoke of the Warsaw Signal, and disapproved its libellous course.

“**Mayor remarked he was sorry to have one dissenting voice in declaring the ‘Expositor’ a nuisance.**

“**Councilor Warrington did not mean to be understood to go against the proposition; but would not be in haste in declaring it a nuisance.**

“Councilor H. Smith referred to the mortgages and property of the proprietors of the Expositor, and **thought there would be little chance of collecting damages for libels.**

“Alderman Elias Smith considered there was **but one course to pursue, that the proprietors were out of the reach of the law; that our course was to put an end to the thing at once;** believed by what he had heard that if the city council did not do it, others would.

“Councilor **Edward Hunter** believed it to be a nuisance...

“Alderman **Orson Spencer** accorded with the views expressed that **the ‘Nauvoo Expositor’ is a nuisance; did not consider it wise to give them time to trumpet a thousand lies; their property could not pay for it; if we pass only a fine or imprisonment, have we any**

confidence that they will desist? none at all! we have found these men covenant breakers with God! with their wives!! &c, have we any hope of their doing better? their characters have gone before them, shall they be suffered to go on, and bring a mob upon us; and murder our women and children, and burn our beautiful city? No! I had rather my blood would be spilled at once, and would like to have the press removed as soon as the ordinance would allow; and wish the matter might be put into the hands of the Mayor, and every body stand by him in the execution of his duties, and hush every murmur.

“Councilor **Levi Richards** said he had felt deeply on this subject, and **concurred fully in the view General Smith had expressed** of it this day... Considered the doings of the council this day of immense moment, not to this city alone, but to the whole world; would go in to put a stop to the thing at once; **let it be thrown out of this city**, and the responsibility of countenancing such a press be taken off our shoulders and fall on the State, if corrupt enough to sustain it.

“Councilor Phineas Richards said that he had not forgotten the transactions at Haun’s Mill [Hawn’s Mill], and that he recollected that his son George Spencer then lay in the well referred to on the day previous, without a winding sheet, shroud, or coffin; he said he could not sit still when he saw the same spirit raging in this place; **he considered the publication of the Expositor as much murderous at heart as David was before the death of Uriah**; was for making a short work of it; was prepared to take his stand by the Mayor, and whatever he proposes; would stand by him to the last. The quicker it is stopped the better.

“**Councilor Phelps had investigated the Constitution, charter, and laws; the power to declare that office a nuisance is granted to us in the Springfield charter, and a resolution declaring it a nuisance is all that is required.**

“John Birney sworn— said Francis M. Higbee and Wm. Law declared they had commenced their operations, and would carry them out, law or no law.

“Stephen Markham sworn— said that Francis M. Higbee said the interest of this city is done the moment a hand is laid on their press.

“Councilor Phelps continued, and referred to Wilson Law in destroying the character of a child— an orphan child, who had the charge of another child.

“Warren Smith sworn— said F. M. Higbee came to him, and proposed to have him go in as a partner in making bogus money. Higbee said he would not work for a living; that witness might go in with him if he would advance fifty dollars, and shewed him (witness) a half dollar which he said was made in his dies.

“Councilor Phelps continued and said he felt deeper this day than ever he felt before, and wanted to know, by yes, if there was any present who wanted to avenge the blood of that innocent female who had been seduced by the then Major General of the Nauvoo Legion,

Wilson Law? when yes!! resounded from every quarter of the house. **He then referred to the tea plot at Boston, and asked if anybody's rights were taken away with that transaction; and are we offering, or have we offered to take away the rights of any one these two days? (No!!! resounded from every quarter.)** He then referred also to Law's grinding the poor during the scarcity of grain, while the poor had nothing but themselves to grind; and **spoke at great length in support of active measures to put down iniquity, and suppress the spirit of mobocracy.**

"Alderman Harris spoke from the chair, and expressed his feelings that **the press ought to be demolished.**

"The following resolution was then read and passed unanimously, with the exception of Councilor Warrington:

'Resolved by the City Council of the City of Nauvoo, that the printing office from whence issues the 'Nauvoo Expositor' is a public nuisance, and also all of said Nauvoo Expositors, which may be, or exist in said establishment, and the Mayor is instructed to cause said printing establishment and papers to be removed without delay, in such manner as he shall direct. Passed June 10th, 1844.

'Geo. W. Harris,

'President pro tem.'

'Willard Richards, Recorder.

"The following order was immediately issued by the Mayor:

'State of Illinois,)

City of Nauvoo.)

'To the Marshal of said city, greeting.

'You are hereby commanded to destroy the printing press from whence issues the 'Nauvoo Expositor' and pi the type of said printing establishment in the street, and burn all the Expositors and libelous hand bills found in said establishment, and if resistance be offered to your execution of this order by the owners or others, demolish the house; and if any one threatens you, or the Mayor, or the officers of the city, arrest those who threaten you, and fail not to execute this order without delay; and make due return hereon.

'By order of the City Council,

Joseph Smith, Mayor.'

"Marshal's return— 'The within named press and type is destroyed and pied according to order on this 10th day of June, 1844, at about 8 o'clock, P. M.

"John P. Greene, C. M.'

"Head Quarters,

"Nauvoo Legion, June 10th, 1844.

"To Jonathan Dunham, acting Major General of the Nauvoo Legion; **'You are hereby commanded to hold the Nauvoo Legion in readiness forthwith to execute the city ordinances, and especially to remove the printing establishment of the Nauvoo Expositor, and this you are required to do at sight, under the penalty of the laws; provided the Marshal shall require it, and need your services.**

"Joseph Smith

"Lieut. General Nauvoo Legion.' [HC 6:448]

("History, 1838–1856, volume F-1 [1 May 1844–8 August 1844]," p. 83-85, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed December 31, 2019,

<https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-f-1-1-may-1844-8-august-1844/89>)

Joseph Smith

"Proclamation.

"By virtue of my office as Mayor of the City of Nauvoo, I do hereby strictly enjoin it upon the Municipal Officers and Citizens of said city, **to use all honorable and lawful means in their power to assist me in maintaining the public peace and common quiet of said city.** As attempts have already been made to excite the jealousy and prejudice of the people of the surrounding country, by **libels and slanderous articles** upon the citizens and City Council, **for the purpose of destroying the 'Charter' of said city, and for the purpose of raising suspicion, wrath, and indignation among a certain class of the less honorable portion of mankind, to commit acts of violence upon the innocent and unsuspecting,** in a certain newspaper called the 'Nauvoo Expositor', recently established for such purposes in said city, and **which has been destroyed as a nuisance according to the provisions of the Charter,** I further call upon every Officer, authority, and citizen, to **be vigilant in preventing by wisdom, the promulgation of false statements, libels, slanders, or any other malicious or evil designed concern that may be put in operation to excite and ferment the passions of men to rebel against the rights and privileges of the city, Citizens, or laws of the land; to be ready to suppress the gathering of mobs; to repel, by gentle means and noble exertion, every foul scheme of unprincipled men,** to disgrace and dishonor the city, or state, or any of their legally constituted authorities: and finally to **keep the peace by being cool, considerate, virtuous, unoffending, manly, and patriotic,** as the true sons of liberty ever have been; and honorably maintain the precious boon our illustrious fathers won:

"In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of said Corporation at the City of Nauvoo, this 11th day of June, 1844.

"L. S. Joseph Smith, Mayor."

("History, 1838–1856, volume F-1 [1 May 1844–8 August 1844]," p. 86, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed December 31, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-f-1-1-may-1844-8-august-1844/92>)

Joseph F. Smith

"THE MEANING OF FREEDOM

"So much has been talked about liberty; so much has been said about fighting for freedom.

What good is the winning of battles if we shall negate them by acts of unwarranted hatred?

About this matter of freedom, I should like to say this regarding personal responsibility: too many people think of freedom in terms of license. Freedom is not the right to do as one 'jolly well' pleases. Freedom stops for someone when someone else commits an act detrimental to his neighbor. I have no right to any conduct which would impede the progress of my neighbor. I have no right to any act which would take the freedom from someone else. And that thought carried a little further is of tremendous significance to the Latter-day Saints. This is a missionary Church. Upon us rests the responsibility of crying the gospel to the world because only by it can peace and liberty come.

"THE POWER OF EXAMPLE

"It is very easy sometimes for Latter-day Saints to say, 'What I do is my own business. If I break the Word of Wisdom a little bit, that's my business.' There is no such thing as strictly private conduct. A Latter-day Saint, in a careless moment, may perform a thoughtless act which will stand in the way of someone else's accepting the gospel. I know of one little branch in the mission field that had been built up laboriously, and that little branch was all but destroyed by a careless act of a thoughtless missionary. It is well for us to take careful stock of any projected action, no matter how seemingly trivial, and ask ourselves. 'If I do this, if anybody sees me do this, will it discourage his faith in the gospel of Christ?'

"How tragic to have someone interested in the gospel, on his way in the path of investigation, see a Latter-day Saint violate one of his ideals, and then say, 'If that's Mormonism, I want none of it. If they preach one thing and do another, I want none of it.' Brethren and sisters, every one of us will be held responsible for any act which proves to be a stumbling block to someone else. **We have no right to such conduct. Yes, we have the power to choose; we have the power to do, but we have no right to conduct which would discourage someone else from obtaining the blessings which come through faith and obedience to the gospel of Jesus**

Christ. It is easy in the modern tempo of living to be careless. It is easy to be unwise. It is easy to speak harshly. Let's take thought as Latter-day Saints; let's be contributors to peace. Let's be brethren. Let's love one another and remember that love can be deliberately developed. It can be cultivated through service. You love those whom you serve. Parents love children more than children love parents because the parents do more for the children. Their love grows out of service. If you would love a man, do something for him."

("Live by Love", General Conference, October 1945)

Joseph Fielding Smith

"The Lord cannot forgive us when we know better and we violate his commandments. He has given unto us a law, a commandment, saying that we are to accept the words of the Lord as he has revealed them unto us. **We have no right to transgress this law or any one of the other laws that are so fundamental to our exaltation**, and how can the members of the Church expect to receive salvation and exaltation in the celestial kingdom of God, and show contempt for his sacred commandments?"

("The Sabbath—a Day of Rest", General Conference, April 1957)

Joseph Fielding Smith*

"I have no right to do wrong, and you have no right to do wrong, although we have our agency and the privilege of doing right or wrong as we may choose in and of ourselves"

(*** Conference Report, October 1922, Afternoon Session, p.73 - 74)

Joseph Fielding Smith

"I have heard people say, and members of the Church too, 'I have a right to do as I please.' My answer is "No, you do not. You haven't any right at all to do just as you please. There is only one right that you have, and that is to do just what I read to you: keep the commandments of Jesus Christ. He has a perfect right to tell us so. We have no right to refuse. I do not care who the man is; I do not care where he lives, or what he is – when the gospel of Jesus Christ is presented to him, he has no right to refuse to receive it. He has the privilege. He is not compelled to receive it, because our Father in heaven has given to every one of us, in the Church and out, the gift of free agency. That free agency gives us the privilege to accept and be loyal to our Lord's commandments, but it has never given us the right to reject them. Every man who rejects the commandments of our Father in heaven is rebellious.

"Of course, I realize that there are thousands of people who have never heard the gospel. They are not going to be punished for that. We cannot expect a person to observe a commandment he has never heard. But all those who have never had the privilege of hearing it will at some

time have that privilege. If it is not in this life, it will be in the spirit world. And every soul will have the opportunity to accept the mission of our Savior Jesus Christ or to reject it. When the Lord commands us, if we love him we will keep the commandments. This is the law to members of the Church, in the words of the Savior: 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me' Again, the Savior said: 'If ye love me, keep my commandments.'

"Unfortunately we have members of the Church who set aside the commandments the Lord has given us, who fail to observe them strictly. **This is not your right. It is just your privilege, the privilege the Lord has given you to act for yourself. You are agents with the power within you to obey or to disobey. If it were not so, no one could be tried for disobedience.** We read in the scriptures that every man will be tried according to his works. **Well, if we are not under obligation, who can try us? Did you ever think of that? If there were no obligation for me to keep the commandments of the Lord, if I broke them, I could not be punished.**

"BENEFITS OF OBEDIENCE

"We do not punish men for doing something that is not contrary to the laws do we? But the Lord has given us his laws, the gospel of Jesus Christ, not because it is pleasing to him, not because he is going to get anything out of it. **He has given us these laws that we might get something out of them.** And, of course, every person who keeps these commandments adds that much to his personal glory. There is no question about that, because when we sustain our Savior and are true and faithful to him, he is the benefactor. But are we not benefited, and are not the benefits greater to us by far than they are to him? Our Lord never gave a commandment in this world to any man that was not intended to be to his eternal benefit. I think sometimes we overlook that."

("He That Loveth Me", General Conference, April 1967)

Delbert L. Stapley

"Elder Bruce R. McConkie made this statement about free agency:

'Four great principles must be in force if there is to be agency: 1. **Laws must exist**, laws ordained by an Omnipotent power, laws which can be obeyed or disobeyed; 2. **Opposites must exist**—good and evil, virtue and vice, right and wrong—that is, there must be an opposition, one force pulling ... the other. 3. **A knowledge of good and evil** must be had by those who are to enjoy the agency, that is, they must know the difference between the opposites; and 4. **An unfettered power of choice** must prevail.

'Agency is given to man as an essential part of the great plan of redemption.' (Mormon Doctrine, Bookcraft, Inc., 1966 ed., p. 26.)

“...We cannot use our free agency as a justification to do evil. Man is free to choose the good or the evil in life, and to obey or disobey the Lord’s commands as he may elect. He can choose to act **without compulsion or restraint.**”

“Free agency doesn’t suggest we do wrong or infringe upon the rights and privileges of others. We often hear a person who transgresses console himself by saying, ‘I am only hurting myself.’ If a man chooses to commit adultery, he must pay a penalty for his sin. Because of his transgression, he is infringing upon the rights of his wife and family, overlooking those who love him and look to him for guidance, good example, and eternal blessings of family unity and togetherness. He hurts others in the process of doing what he calls ‘exercising my free agency.’”

“Too many people have the wrong attitude about free agency. They use it as a negative force in their lives rather than as a positive one. Perhaps you have heard this statement: ‘I can smoke and drink if I want to. I have my free agency.’ But why not think in terms of eternal values and say, ‘I can smoke and drink if I want to. I have my free agency, but I choose to use my agency in bettering my life—in choosing the right and not the wrong.’ This can apply to any vice in one’s life. **Have the right attitude and a vice can turn to a virtue, and virtue has its own reward. To use our agency for good, we must set aside the defensive, arrogant, and haughty attitude of a transgressor.**”

“Brigham Young taught: ‘Men should not be permitted to do as they please in all things; for there are rules regulating all good societies ..., the violation of which cannot be countenanced either by civil or religious usages. ... Men ... should not be free to sin against God or against man without suffering such penalties as their sins deserve.’ (Discourses of Brigham Young, p. 65.)

“How far does our agency extend? Brigham Young answered this question by saying:

‘There are limits to agency, and to all things and to all beings, and our agency must not infringe upon that law. A man must choose life or death. ... the agency which is given to him is so bound up that he cannot exercise it in opposition to the law, without laying himself liable to be corrected and punished by the Almighty.”

‘It behooves us to be careful, and not forfeit that agency that is given to us. The difference between the righteous and the sinner, eternal life or death, happiness or misery, is this, to those who are exalted there are no bounds or limits to their privileges, their blessings have a continuation ... they increase through all eternity; whereas, those who reject the offer, who despise the proffered mercies of the Lord, and prepare themselves to be banished from his presence, and to become companions of the devils, have their agency abridged immediately, and bounds and limits are put to their operations.’ (Discourses of Brigham Young, pp. 63–64.)

“God has given commandments with promise of blessings for compliance with his laws, and penalties for violation of them. The late James E. Talmage said: **'Obedience to law is the habit of free men. The transgressor fears the law, for he brings upon himself deprivation and restraint, not because of the law which would have protected him in his freedom, but because of his antagonism to the law. It is no more a part of God's plan to compel men to work righteousness than it is his purpose to permit evil powers to force his children into sin.'** (The Great Apostasy, Deseret Book Co., 1958, pp. 34–35.)

“A person's freedom should never be suppressed by men, by Satan, nor by our Lord. Men should never be in bondage one to another. While Satan would like us under his control, God does not control the actions of men. He has given us our agency to combat the trials, temptations, and evils of every kind. However, he gives certain principles that, if followed, will lead us back to his presence. **God's kingdom is founded upon perfect liberty.** Every man, woman, and child has the right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience. Each person alone is responsible to his creator for his individual acts.

“God gave us the everlasting gospel, the principles of life and salvation, and has left it up to each of us to choose or reject, with the understanding that we become responsible to him for the results of our acts. **The Lord does not force anyone to embrace the gospel, and he will not force them to live it if they have embraced it. 'They act for themselves, and act from choice.'** (Discourses of Brigham Young, p. 57.)...

“...Be aware and warned of the subtle workings of Satan, for he never stops trying to lead us astray. He is an expert on making things seem appealing and right, when actually they can bring about our moral destruction. He does not believe in free agency, and would like to control our minds, thoughts, and acts. We can see his workings more and more in the movies, television shows, magazines, and in the actions of men and nations. **If our thoughts are turned to sensual things, we will be strongly tempted to use our free agency wrongfully.**

“Once a person yields to sin, he is under Satan's control and it is not easy to break away.

“Be suspicious of those who would put you in a compromising position. Never compromise the right, for compromise can lead to sin, sin to regret, and regret can hurt so very much.

“No man is free who is not master of himself. True freedom of agency exists with the observance of God's laws. Keep in mind that good and evil can never be amalgamated into one. They are at opposite ends. They do not abide in harmony within a person. One tendency will prevail over the other...”

(“Using Our Free Agency”, ***)

Elder James E. Talmage*

"I have the right to be safeguarded against utterances which are offensive to hear. If a man says that he under the guise of his rights as a free citizen may swear and use vile and obscene language and may profane the name of God, I say to you that is not liberty, that is a license that is illegal.

"There are men who say that they have the right to smoke tobacco if they want to, and in this State if they be of age they have that right legally and I know they exercise it (laughter), but I long to see the day when I shall have some rights too in that matter, and when I shall not be forced to breathe the foul emanations that come from smokers' mouths. I hope to see the day when women will no longer be offended as they board or leave street cars or as they pass along the streets, by having clouds of tobacco smoke blown into their faces. I believe we shall improve in the matter of liberty and come to see that there are rights that others have as well as rights that we claim for ourselves."

(*** Conference Report, October 1912, Afternoon Session., p.128)

N. Eldon Tanner

"It is hard to imagine and impossible to calculate the tremendous influence we would have if every one of us would honor his priesthood, and magnify his calling, and really try every day and in every way to use his influence to meet the onslaught of Satan. Too many of us seem to take the priesthood which we hold for granted; we fail to realize what the Lord expects of us, or we don't have the conviction, courage, and fortitude to stand up for the right and be counted, to be different when necessary....

"...'For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.' (John 12:42–43.)...

"...As I said before, we just cannot imagine or calculate in any way what a great influence for good we would have in the world if every holder of the priesthood would magnify his calling, and how much happier and more successful each individual would be if he would always choose the right. How sad it is to see one who would rather be popular than do what he knows is right....

"...Let us always remember that people expect us to live up to our standards and respect us much more when we do, even though they may entice us to do otherwise.

"I want to bear my testimony that I was never embarrassed in any way, when in the government, or industry, or in my private life, by trying to live up to the teachings of the gospel....

“...Someone said to me the other day when we were talking about this that those who constantly love the praise of men more than the praise of God are faint reflections of another—meaning Satan, of course—who in the preexistence wanted to save all mankind, but with one condition attached—that the honor and glory go to him, not to God. He was more concerned with credit than with results; glory and praise were the end in themselves. My friend went on to say that **on the crucial issues, if individuals are more concerned with pleasing men than pleasing God, then they suffer from the same virus Satan had, for there are many situations where seeking the praise of men will clearly result in their hurting, not helping, mankind for they will do expedient and temporary things instead of those which are lasting and beneficial.**

“How much more satisfying it is when we receive the praise of God, knowing that it is fully justified and that his love and respect for us will persist, when usually the praise of men is fleeting and most disappointing.

“It is shocking and appalling indeed to those who believe in the teachings of Christ to see how **people in high places, in order to enjoy the praise of those who are so vocal in encouraging and promoting immorality, do not take a stand against these evils and promote the teachings of Christ which are so clearly stated in these words in the Ten Commandments: 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.'** (Ex. 20:14.)

“And then in 1 Corinthians we read:

‘Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind.’ (1 Cor. 6:9.)

“We also find legislation having been passed and being passed legalizing these very things contrary to the will of the Lord. It is permissive legislation of the worst kind. Brethren, the Lord expects us as his priesthood holders to take a stand for right and do all in our power to oppose and discourage such action and to encourage our people to live according to the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“I quote from Elder Neal Maxwell:

‘The leader who is willing to say things that are hard to bear, but which are true and which need to be said, is the leader who truly loves his people and who is kind to them. Nothing is more cruel than that leader who, in order to have the praise and plaudits of his followers, entices them from safety into the swamp out of which some may never return. The straight and narrow way is just that—straight and narrow. It is an arduous up-hill journey. The way to hell is broad and wide and slopes ever so gently, and those who walk that path scarcely notice the descent; sometimes they don’t notice the descent because praise of men distracts them and they do not see the warning signs! **The**

choice is still between the golden calf and the Ten Commandments.' (Unpublished letter dated Aug. 12, 1975, "Some Thoughts," from Neal A. Maxwell to President Tanner.)"

("For They Loved the Praise of Men More Than the Praise of God", General Conference, ***)

N. Eldon Tanner

"I wish to join wholeheartedly with the millions of people who appreciate this country in which we live and are determined to do what they can to maintain and strengthen the principles of democracy established by our Founding Fathers. To do this, it is most important that we be loyal and law-abiding citizens.

"Some time ago a young man said to me, 'Why do we have so many laws and rules and regulations? Why can't we just be free to do what we want to do? The Church teaches that man is that he might have joy, and that the greatest gift of God to man is free agency.'

"I tried to explain to him that **everything in the universe, and the universe itself as organized by a divine Creator, is governed by laws, known as the laws of nature; and that we must have laws of the land, or of man, so that we might have order and protect the rights of mankind and punish those who infringe on the rights of others.** I gave him several examples of what I was referring to. Then we talked at some length about the laws of God and how important it is that we keep his commandments.

"Without going further into the details of our conversation, I should like today to deal with **the majesty of law as it affects mankind. For the sake of this discussion let us divide it into three subheadings: First, the laws of nature; second, the laws of man, or the laws of the land; third, the laws of God as they pertain to our salvation and exaltation.**

"Speaking first of the **laws of nature**, have you ever stopped to think what would happen if we could not depend on the **sun rising at a certain time** each morning? Or if the earth failed to **rotate on its axis** for only one day, or for just a few minutes? Or if the **law of gravity** were suspended? In a very short time, the earth and all mankind would be destroyed. **All bodies of the universe are controlled in space and move according to law.**

"If iron, when heated, were to expand one day and contract the next, it would be impossible for anyone in the world to operate a machine shop or produce implements of any kind. These laws are immutable and must be such that we can depend upon them at all times and under all circumstances.

"It would be interesting to review in our minds all the things we do every day and see how totally we depend on the laws of nature and how they must be followed to the very letter in order to accomplish our purposes.

"We have seen men walk on the moon, and we have marveled that man and spacecraft from different countries could have a rendezvous in space. We have watched the Viking leave on a mission to Mars in search for evidence of life. If any of the natural laws had been ignored or had failed to operate, the space missions would have been complete failures and lives would have been lost. We are awed when we read of the predictions of astronomers who can foretell so accurately the appearance of comets and eclipses.

"All of this is possible only because through the laws of nature, the Creator keeps creation in its course.

"Law is simply the application of truth. Let me draw your attention to some statements taken from the writings of great thinkers:

"Frank Crane: **'Truth is the logic of the universe. It is the reasoning of destiny; it is the mind of God. And nothing that man can devise or discover can take its place.'** (Quoted by Leo J. Muir, *Flashes from the Eternal Semaphore*, Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1928, p. 100.)...

"Now, regarding the laws of the land, or the laws of man, it is necessary that we be governed by laws, which are made not alone to curb the evildoer, but to protect the rights of all. Let me quote from the Doctrine and Covenants:

"We believe that governments were instituted of God for the benefit of man; and that he holds men accountable for their acts in relation to them, both in making laws and administering them, for the **good and safety** of society.

"We believe that no government can exist in peace, except such laws are framed and held inviolate as will secure to each individual the **free exercise of conscience, the right and control of property, and the protection of life.**

"We believe that all governments necessarily require civil officers and magistrates to enforce the laws of the same; and that such as will administer the law in equity and justice should be sought for and upheld by the voice of the people if a republic, or the will of the sovereign.'
(D&C 134:1–3.)

"Our Twelfth Article of Faith [A of F 1:12] states: 'We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.'

"It is most important that all citizens be informed in matters of government; that they know and understand the laws of the land; and that they take an active part wherever possible in choosing and electing honest and wise men to administer the affairs of government.

“There are many who question the constitutionality of certain acts passed by their respective governments, even though such laws have been established by the highest courts in the land as being constitutional, and they feel to defy and disobey the law.

“Abraham Lincoln once observed: 'Bad laws, if they exist, should be repealed as soon as possible; still, while they continue in force, they should be religiously observed.'

“This is the attitude of the Church in regard to law observance. We agree with the author of the following statement:

'In reality the man who defies or flouts the law is like the proverbial fool who saws away the plank on which he sits, and a disrespect or disregard for law is always the first sign of a disintegrating society. **Respect for law is the most fundamental of all social virtues, for the alternative to the rule of law is that of violence and anarchy.**' (Case and Comment, March/April issue, 1965, p. 20.)

“There is no reason or justification for men to disregard or break the law or try to take it into their own hands. Christ gave us the great example of a law-abiding citizen when the Pharisees, trying to entangle him, as the scriptures say, asked him if it were lawful to give tribute money unto Caesar. After asking whose inscription was on the tribute money, and their acknowledgment that it was Caesar's, he said:

'Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.' (Matt. 22:21.)

“It is the duty of citizens of any country to remember that they have individual responsibilities, and that they must operate within the law of the country in which they have chosen to live. I quote further from the Doctrine and Covenants:

'We believe that all men are bound to sustain and uphold the respective governments in which they reside, while protected in their inherent and inalienable rights by the laws of such governments; and that sedition and rebellion are unbecoming every citizen thus protected, and should be punished accordingly; and that all governments have a right to enact such laws as in their own judgments are best calculated to secure the public interest; at the same time, however, holding sacred the freedom of conscience.' (D&C 134:5.)”

(“The Laws of God”, ***)

Richard L. Evans

We have talked in past weeks of truth and of love and of what each one lacks without the other. If a man loves the truth, he will live it, and to live the truth requires self-control. There is a quoted

sentence that puts it thus: "**No man has a right to do as he pleases, except when he pleases to do right.**" (Charles Simmons (1798-1856), American clergy.)

("To 'Live Together in Love'", Improvement Era, March 1963)

In addition to the imperative demands of citizenship, to which the Latter-day Saints are responding with unsurpassed devotion and zeal, our people consider duty in the present crisis as a requirement of their religious profession. We have particular concern in the outcome of the great conflict, for we solemnly proclaim that to this Church has been given the divine appointment to preach the restored Gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world; and the discharge of this high commission is

1030 IMPROVEMENT ERA

possible in its entirety only as free speech, liberty of conscience, and a free press are insured among the nations.

The frightful war forced upon liberty-loving peoples is a belated attempt on the part of Lucifer to try anew the issue on which he was defeated in the primeval world, as the Scriptures attest. His plan of compulsion, by which every soul would be bereft of agency, was rejected in the council of the heavens, and the plan of liberty and individual freedom was adopted, with Jesus Christ as the fore-ordained Redeemer of the race.

The decision brought war, and Lucifer and his hordes were cast out upon the earth. In these last days that same Lucifer, or Satan, as he is now known, is operating through those who are ready to do his bidding, to rivet the shackles of monarchical despotism upon mankind.

Autocracy is the form of government that prevails in hell; and individual freedom is the basal principle of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Any man who seeks to enforce unrighteous dominion upon his fellows is the devil's own agent.

Citizenship in the kingdom of God is offered to all men

on equal terms, for truly God is no respecter of persons. The Church proclaims this fundamental tenet in her Article of Faith: "We believe that through the atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel."

Obedience to righteous law is an essential of true liberty. That liberty, falsely so called, which regards not the rights of others, is but evil license for selfish dominion with all its attendant abominations.

https://archive.org/stream/improvementera21012unse/improvementera21012unse_djvu.txt

https://archive.org/stream/improvementera4605unse/improvementera4605unse_djvu.txt

Ten Latter-day Saints serve in the present U.S. Congress — three senators and seven representatives. Because of their important public positions and wide influence, we continue their thought-provoking responses to some questions of relevance to Latter-day Saints.

Q — How do you feel about the Supreme Court decisions on obscenity?

Congressman Clawson of California — This question deals specifically, of course, with the rights guaranteed in the First Amendment, wherein it states, among other things, "Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press . . ." and the Fourteenth Amendment, which provides that "no State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States. . . ."

There appears to be no question about the preemption of the areas of speech and press freedom by the Constitution itself. This, then, leaves us the problem of obscenity, its definition, and at what point speech and press become obscene in the constitutional sense. The majority of the members of the Supreme Court have held that a state may not constitutionally inhibit the distribution of literary material as obscene unless "(a) the dominant theme of the material

taken as a whole appeals to a prurient interest in sex; (b) the material is patently offensive because it affronts contemporary community standards relating to the description or representation of sexual matters; and (c) the material is utterly without redeeming social value."

Interpretations and opinions will again differ from individual to individual, community to community, and state to state. The diffi-

prohibition might be much better, with proper concern for juveniles and the right of privacy of the individual from unwilling exposure to offensive material. To be included also would be the methods of sale and distribution.

Although I am not a lawyer, I

have frequently been critical of Supreme Court decisions, but on this subject, the state and local governmental jurisdictions must avoid legislating in the field of free expression, whether oral or literary. Over and over again, the concern, distress, and anxiety of the local community over the publication, sale, and distribution of obscene and offensive material, whether in the form of personal or public performance, movies, publications, or any other means, has been assuaged through the firm and constructive action of an aroused citizenry.

Education in the development of high standards of morality, ethics, and cultural appreciation is the best tool for combating obscenity and all of its peripheral problems. The

W^C^

culty of legislating in the field of obscenity has always been apparent to legislators on all levels of government whenever they have attempted to come to grips with the problem. Regulation rather than

imagination and initiative of members of civic and service organizations of any given community can,

in my humble opinion, devise methods and pressures to deal with such problems on the local level whenever the desire for improvement is strong enough.

Congressman Hanna of California
— In this line of Supreme Court decisions, I see the great challenge that faces our American society; that is, how to maintain the highest

Improvement Era

level of freedom and at the same time maintain a level of conduct that encourages the production of a morally strong citizenry. Where the level of conduct is held high by adherence of the people on a voluntary basis, a voluntary commitment arises out of individual good taste and is driven by individual desire for the highest order of living, and when individual responsibility for conduct is appropriately assumed', the minimum level of law enforcement is required in those areas which impinge upon morality. But when individual voluntary commitment is lowered, when substantial segments of the population are willing to accept lower standards of behavior, when good taste does not prevail in bringing individual restraint, then other elements in our society whose sense of decency is thereby offended will press strongly for a greater encroachment of law enforcement into the fields of moral

behavior.

If this occurs, true freedom in these areas will be eroded and

Most of the statutes on obscenity turn out to be a struggle with semantics, and when it is all over, the basic question, however expressed, is still one of taste and a level of acceptable conduct. These are most difficult to express in the rigid language of criminal statutes. Therefore, it is my opinion that the Supreme Court decision on obscenity correctly admonishes a very cautious approach to those who seek the answers to these questions of moral behavior in the sterile and inflexible language of the criminal articles.

Congressman Moss of California —
The Court has not, in the case of obscenity, drawn precise lines. In fact, the Court has become enmeshed in a quagmire forcing it to deal with the question of obscenity on a case-by-case basis, which inevitably will lead to an obscurity of definitive lines.

Congressman Hansen of Idaho —
I believe that no individual can adequately develop his talents without complete freedom of self-

Beginning at
far left:

Senator Wallace F.

Bennett, Utah;
Congressman Laurence
J. Burton, Utah;
Senator Howard W.
Cannon, Nevada;
Congressman
De/w/n M. C/awson,
California; Congressman
Richard T. Hanna,
California.

diminished. This is, in my judgment, very unfortunate, for it is in these fields of moral behavior that close and careful definitions, which make the application of criminal statutes acceptable or even tolerable in an open society, are most difficult.

expression, but it must certainly be pointed out that there is a difference between liberty and license. If certain individuals abuse their freedoms to the extent that they harm others, they are, in effect, infringing on the rights of others. There cannot be true liberty for all when license is allowed or encouraged. In this light, I am concerned that recent Supreme Court deci-

sions have not maintained this balance.

Senator Moss of Utah — The Court has not drawn the right line be-

tween freedom of expression and the right of communities to outlaw pornography, and I deplore it. As we know, for many years it was illegal to send obscene literature through the mail or to sell it in bookstores or on newsstands. Now the Supreme Court has held that some of these books have social value and are protected under the First Amendment. The decisions are based on fear of censorship, since the first act of a dictator is to limit free speech and free press.

There are, however, several bright spots in the picture. First, the Supreme Court recently upheld a lower court decision to fine and jail a New York publisher for publishing an obscene magazine because the advertisement blatantly described the contents of the magazine in question as obscene. Second, a federal court in Iowa has recently convicted a California publisher for publishing obscene literature, and this case will now come before the Supreme Court. Furthermore, the Court indicated in one decision that laws passed by states to keep pornographic literature out of the hands of juveniles might be constitutional. I hope the individual states will act on this.

Under a bill now pending before the Senate, a citizen may ask the Postmaster General to order the sender of erotic or sexually provocative literature to refrain from sending any further literature, and parents can ask that a similar order

be entered for their children. — ►

November 1967

Q — How essential is compromise
in political decision-making?
Senator Bennett of Utah — The

word "compromise" has come to
have a bad connotation, which it
does not deserve. In a body like the
Senate, made up of a hundred men,

ministration. Factors reflecting
partisan politics are nearly always
present. Then, of course, there is
the constant potential conflict
created by variations in the in-
terests of the state a senator repre-
sents, divisions of opinion with the

I refer to those incorporated in the
13th Article of Faith: honesty,
truthfulness, chastity, and similar
virtues. In any given situation,
either a man tells the truth as he
knows it to be, or he does not; he
is either honest or he is not; he is

"You cannot be a good Latter-day Saint without being politically active."

each with his own background and his own opinion, any legislation, in order to secure the needed 51 percent of the votes to pass, must be the result of compromise. Sometimes there is general agreement on the basic form of the legislation, and the compromise involves details. Sometimes there is head-on disagreement on the problems and philosophy of the legislation, and in that case compromise becomes more serious.

Those who feel that "compromise" is a bad word tend to see it in such a phrase as "to compromise one's principles." People who hold that view tend to regard people who do not agree with them as either having no principles or having surrendered them. Actually, in my long experience in the Senate I have come to realize that when people who have this kind of an idea talk of principles, they are really talking of their self-interest. They are not talking about the basic aspects of character and integrity. Sometimes they are saying that a person who does not agree with their interpretation of a situation has compromised his principles.

The factors to be weighed in the inevitable compromise change with every problem. Some are economic, some social, some matters of ad-

state or party, what might be

called national interest, and the personal philosophy of government a senator may hold.

Congressman Burton of Utah —

The original meaning of "compromise," and the one that particularly applies to the legislative process, is "a settlement by arbitration or by consent reached by mutual concessions." As one might suspect, there is hardly any issue that comes before the House of Representatives that all 435 members would completely agree upon. In truth, many if not most of the bills that are enacted into law are a synthesis of varying points of view.

For my own part, I have often

either chaste or he is not. I do not believe that it is in any way necessary for a legislator to be less principled than persons engaged in other callings. But— and this is the point that should be understood— an effective legislator can and does compromise with respect to certain legislative goals without doing violence to his personal integrity.

Senator Cannon of Nevada — Compromise is an absolutely necessary ingredient of the decision-making process in a democratic form of government. It is the only way by which the needs and demands of divergent sections of the country can be satisfied. It is also the only way by which conflicting view-

found it necessary to vote for measures that embody less than the ideal for which I may have hoped. I have done this because, in my judgment, the measure in question represents the best that the House would approve, and, as a practical matter, "half a loaf is better than no loaf at all."

I am certainly not unmindful, however, that there are certain absolute values that cannot properly be the subject of compromise.

points can be merged in agreement. The job of a member of Congress is to view the entire problem and make an equitable decision as to how our nation's needs can best be met.

This decision should not and need not involve an abandonment of principles, but without compromise the governmental processes could not function, and in most instances legislative action could not be accomplished.

Improvement Era

Congressman Hansen of Idaho—

A breakdown in the principle of

compromise— and therefore a breakdown in good government— occurs when a political party in power is so strong numerically that it can ride roughshod over the thoughts and opinions of its opponents without giving them due consideration.

Congressman Clawson of California — I prefer to eliminate the word "political" and discuss compromise and decision-making in a general sense, inasmuch as all decision-making involves "compromise," even in the councils of the Church. The degree of toughness that one holds to a position depends upon the issue and the factors surrounding it.

I have tried to follow a strict personal guideline that when matters of judgment are involved, compromise is often required. If the decision imposes a deviation from principle (integrity, rightness, honor, justice), then compromise cannot be countenanced. On the federal legislative level, some of

Q — How does political life afford new dimensions for expression of personal integrity?

Congressman Hansen of Idaho —

Political life affords new dimensions for expression of personal integrity by allowing public officials and aspirants to public office considerably more latitude than

they would generally experience as private citizens. Because of this, it is often easy to abuse newfound privileges and immunities that may go with the office. Generally, however, there is a great challenge to an individual, who now is responsible, not only to himself but also to the people he represents and to the nation, to conduct himself in a manner above reproach and to weigh the issues more carefully and in greater depth before arriving at decisions on them.

Senator Bennett of Utah — It seems to me that the basic principles of character that can be summarized by the phrase "personal integrity" should apply in all activities of life, and while the pressures and temp-

Beginning at far left:
Congressman George
Vernon Hansen, Idaho;
Congressman Sherman P.
Lloyd, Utah; Senator
Frank E. Moss, Utah;
Congressman John E.
Moss, California;
Congressman Morris
K. Udall, Arizona.

the factors I use include: Is it constitutional? Is it necessary? Is it in the public interest? Is it within the province of the federal government, or should it be at some other governmental level? And even such

a mundane factor as, "Can we afford it?"

tations may be a little different in political life, certainly there are none that are new or unique. Congressman Lloyd of Utah — I believe that even good men operate within the context of their personal interest, but they also recognize a larger context. I am often asked the question, "If your personal convictions were in conflict over the wishes of your constituency, how would you vote?" There are many questions on which I believe the

congressman should represent the opinion of his constituency, if it is possible to ascertain what the majority will is.

However, there are other situations in which it is necessary to vote one's convictions. For example, I voted in favor of the Civil Rights Act of 1963, which I viewed as a moral issue, in spite of the fact that my mail was overwhelmingly in opposition. On questions of labor-management relations, education, taxation, and other controversial issues, a congressman has the responsibility, in my opinion, of deciding what is best, and not what is politically expedient. After all, good citizens expect leadership as well as representation from their congressmen.

I believe this is the true test of personal integrity, and I acknowledge that two persons, equally honest, might disagree on the definition of personal integrity. For example, one might decide that it is his responsibility to vote the apparent desires of his constituency while the other might decide that it is his responsibility to vote his convictions based on honest study, and to let the chips fall where they may. There is perhaps no other form of activity in which personal integrity is challenged more often than in the field of politics.

Q — What advice would you give the thousands of Latter-day Saints as they enter politics on the local, city, state, and national level?
Senator Moss of Utah — Become an active member of a political party! That is the best advice I can give to those entering the active years

November 1967

of citizenship. Almost every voter sees the election in which he feels he must scratch his ticket, but the task of governing the nation is done largely by our political parties. Those who vote only in general elections exert little influence for either good or bad. Candidates are selected and ideas put into platforms through mass meetings, con-

ventions, and primaries. Only through them can men of integrity and devotion to the public good be put on a ticket. Many a law or political career has been germinated in a meeting of a small group of interested citizens determined to move their party. If you do not participate, you leave to others—often those with axes to grind—the determination of the future of our country.

Congressman Clawson of California — May I say that you cannot be a good Latter-day Saint without being politically active, whether or not you hold office. Read carefully the instructions in the Doctrine and Covenants regarding the selection of public officials. If this counsel is followed, then you are in politics.

Congressman Burton of Utah — I know of no other church that places such heavy emphasis on good citizenship as does our own. But to make democracy really work, all members of the body politic must participate in it. Every year in thousands of school board, city council, and county commission meetings, highly important decisions involving budgets of millions of dollars are made and approved with scarcely any citizen interest whatsoever. This is a shame!

Senator Cannon of Nevada — I would urge Latter-day Saints to apply the principles that they carry with them through life in the conduct of their activities at every political level. These principles have been tried and tested and

have enabled countless Latter-day

Saints to make valuable contributions to our way of life. My further advice is to apply the principles of fairness and justice to politics in a manner that will make these virtues as meaningful in the political arena as they are in day-to-day life. And there is no effective substitute for active membership and participation in the political party of one's choice. Only through such an organization can ideas be put into motion and find their expression in our laws.

Congressman iVloss of California —
Be informed, fully and carefully; be compassionate; be willing to be unpopular if need be in order to render service. Entering politics with the idea of always being popular is a dangerous thing. I personally have been well guided through my years of political service by the words of Edmund Burke: "But his unbiased opinion, his mature judgment, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you, to any man, or to any set of men living. These he does not derive from your pleasure, no, nor from the law and the Con-

stitution. They are a trust from Providence, for the abuse of which he is deeply answerable. Your representative owes you, not his in-

dustury only, but his judgment; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion." Congressman Udall of Arizona — Running through my personal philosophy, and doubtless underlying my approach to problems of government, are fundamentals that my church teaches and represents: the value of the individual, the importance of man's free agency, the belief that problems can be overcome with goodwill, intelligence, and hard work, the vital necessity of our free institutions, respect for authority, and the idea that we are our brother's keeper. By using these and other teachings of the Church, Latter-day Saints should be able to make an immeasurable contribution to mankind. O

(Note: The first response on page 27— October, Part 1—is from Congressman John E. Moss instead of Congressman Richard T. Hanna.)

Lehi and his people were Hebrews; all other nations are designated in the Book of Mormon as Gentiles. As later parts of the record make plain, "the promised land" is the continent of America. The "man among the Gentiles," who was to come across the many waters and discover the descendants of Nephi's brethren upon whom the wrath of God had fallen, was Christopher Columbus whose mission was as surely foreappointed as was that of any prophet. Then follows the prediction of the migration of the Pilgrim Fathers, who are described as "other Gentiles" going forth out of captivity; while the subsequent occupation of the land by multitudes of the Gentiles who would prosper as a nation and would subjugate the Indians is impres-

sively set forth. The struggle of the American colonies for independence was foretold, and the assurance that the power of God would be exercised to give them victory over "their mother Gentiles," or the British nation, was inscribed on enduring metal before the existence of the western world had found place even in the dreams of mankind.

In the economy of God, America, which is veritably the land of Zion, was aforetime consecrated as the home of a free and independent nation. It is the divinely assured inheritance of the "House of Israel;" and people of all nationalities who will abide by the laws of righteousness, which embody the principles of true liberty, may become by adoption members of the House of Israel. For a wise purpose this promised land, the American continent, was long kept from the knowledge of men; and the hand of the Lord has been potent in directing its discovery and in the establishment of the nation of promise and destiny thereon.

https://archive.org/stream/improvementera2006unse/improvementera2006unse_djvu.txt

(Continued) of Mormon theology as expressed in the Great Council of the Gods, should readily appreciate the Declaration. The Declaration presupposes that human liberty is a necessity for human happiness and well-being. It further presupposes that the reasons for this necessity are within man, not external, not beyond nor outside of him. **Man must be free to be either good or evil; to do good or evil.** In defense of this doctrine in the seventeenth century, Milton went so far as to make something of a hero out of Lucifer in *Paradise Lost*. More than that, Milton portrays almost as heroic, Lucifer's defense of his own freedom when he seemingly desired that freedom to force others not to have freedom! This is something like an

American writer portraying Stalin in heroic proportions, defending the "liberty" of a one-party dictatorship against the western world! Yet it reveals something of a fundamental principle. Milton probably went out of his way to make the point. In his *Areopagitica*, published November 25, 1644, Milton, arguing for repeal of an Act of Parliament requiring all books to be licensed by official censors before publication, said:

"Who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God. . . .

"Good and evil . . . grow up together almost inseparably; . . . what wisdom can there be to choose, what continence to forbear without the knowledge of evil? He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true wayfaring Christian.

"Let Truth and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter? . . . For who knows not that Truth is strong, next to the Almighty? She needs no policies, nor stratagems, nor licensings to make her victorious; those are the shifts and the defenses that error uses against her power."

The meaning of the Declaration is further appreciated when it is

understood that it broke rather sharply with past American colonial,

as well as British and European experience, in incorporating the Miltonian, Great Council-like view. **To many of the best, the respected minds of 1776, freedom meant freedom only to do "good."** These honorable people, like the ones to whom Milton addressed *Areopagitica*, felt it was their duty to suppress, censor, stifle expression contrary to their own opinions. What was "safe and sound" for public consumption was a privileged matter, not a question of individual right. They were not aware of the need for "opposition in all things." Truth and progress are only served under circumstances of freedom. Winston Churchill, writing in April 1958, said the advantage of being in opposition (rather than in the government) "is that one can out-distance in imagination those whose fortune it is to put plans into practical effect."

Jonathan Boucher (1738-1804), for example, was George Washington's minister. He was also the schoolmaster of Washington's stepson. Boucher bitterly opposed the American revolution. After 1764 his pulpit was used to oppose the movement, arguing that Washington and the like were not only seditious, but were "resisting the ordinances of God." Like the men at Runnymede who wrested the Magna Carta from King John, **the American revolutionists were told by many of their clergymen that they were fighting**

God and defying the Lord. Boucher was greatly influenced by Sir Robert Filmer, as were the English of the seventeenth century, before the time of John Locke. **Filmer (ca. 1600-1653), in his book Patriarcha, taught that God had conferred divine authority upon Adam; that Adam had reconferred it upon his sons, and so on down to the kings and government of England. Whoever, therefore, resisted or questioned the government of England questioned divine right and the authority of God.** John Locke's Second Treatise on Government (1690) was written to show the folly and fiction of Filmer's Patriarcha. The Declaration of Independence follows Locke's doctrine and is a denial of Patriarcha. So, too, **it is a denial of Jonathan Boucher's sermons in 1775.**

Boucher's view of liberty is Filmer's view. John Winthrop and John Cotton, the early leaders of Massachusetts Bay, also tended to-

wards Filmer's view. Only Roger Williams, among the early leaders of New England, expressed a view sympathetic to that later expressed by Locke (1690) and the Declaration (1776). **Here, for example, is how Boucher defined liberty:**

"True liberty, then, is a liberty to do everything that is right, and the being restrained from doing anything that is wrong."

The difference between the Filmer-Boucher and Milton-Locke-Jefferson positions is, of course, not extreme. It is rather one of emphasis, and of the role of legal administration. The Filmerites, as found for example in John Winthrop's writings, would have magistrates require people to conform. They would expel or excommunicate those who did not satisfy the held views of the community. (See Winthrop's Defense of an Order of the Court, 1639.) Thus Roger Williams, whose theological and political views differed from those of Winthrop, was expelled from Massachusetts in 1635. Both views place a high role on the law; but **the Locke -Jefferson notion is more liberal with respect to the rights of the individual, especially in the field of expression.**

Liberty, then, has to be found in relationship to law. But the Declaration, in recognizing the basic doctrine of the natural rights of man, the individual, opened the way for a more generous embodiment of individual rights within the law. English law had begun this process in the eleventh century. The Magna Carta (1215) embodied a procedural principle whereby power less than that of the central authority could maintain itself. The Petition of Right (1629), the Habeas Corpus Act (1673), and the Bill of Rights (1689),

in England, moved the process forward. But it remained for the

Declaration of Independence to establish a political society, based on the broad recognition of individual values, rather than on special privilege or narrowly held notions. This is the grand meaning of the powerful phrases that read:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."

Why government? What is the purpose of government? It is not to perpetuate some ancient expression of human life, but to permit the continuous, onward sweep of human expression as endowed by the Creator. In the words of the Declaration: "That, to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

What about a government that fails to respect individual rights? Says the Declaration: "That, whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such Principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."

In short, as John Locke had stated,

earlier, the same basic doctrine:
"The People Shall Judge."

The Declaration of Independence is more than a declaration of national independence of the American colonies from their great mother country. It is a declaration of the independence of the individual human spirit. The basic doctrine was embodied and restated in the nineteenth century by William C. Gregg in the lines of a familiar hymn which reads:

"Know this, that every soul is free
To choose his life and what he'll be,
For this eternal truth is given
That God will force no man to
heav'n.

"He'll call, persuade, direct aright,
And bless with wisdom, love, and

light,
In nameless ways be good and kind,
But never force the human mind."

558

THE IMPROVEMENT ERA

The great doctrine of freedom of conscience, basic to the religious liberty provided by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States (effective December

15, 1791), derives from this same great pattern and principle. It is not an easy doctrine to maintain. Its nub lies in our willingness to tolerate not our own views, but the views of other men whose ideas, or even their very persons, are obnoxious to one's self. It requires Gamaliel-like wisdom and strength to meet such circumstances. Such are the conditions of freedom. The responsibilities of freedom are another, though related, story. But once a year, on July Fourth, it is good to contemplate the ideal of liberty.

No virtue comes to us ready made, but only through a cleansing discipline which at times is hard to bear. Man ultimately reaches out unto the truer and fuller life, and he comes to know that obedience to the holy laws of God is true liberty.

https://archive.org/stream/improvementera4710unse/improvementera4710unse_djvu.txt

2. I trust my readers will also grant that religion, objectively considered, is simply God's will expressed and made known to man, and consequently man has religion and is truly religious only and so far as he thinks, speaks and acts in conformity with that will; that religion being God's will it must be truth, for God cannot will or express error, can have no right to wrong; and being truth itself, can be honored, worshipped and pleased only by truth; that religion being truth it must be (a) one, immutable and universal, for such are the well known and universally recognized attributes of truth; and (b) an essential condition of true liberty, for man is bound only to God or his order and is truly free only and so far as he is subject to him and governed only by him, that is, by truth, right and justice.

3. I am sure it will be further conceded that God alone, because Creator and supreme legislator, has the right to establish a religion or found a church for the purpose of teaching it, that is, to tell us his will, to make known to us

the real and full relationship that exists between him and us and the duties arising, on our part, out of such relationship; and consequently that a man-made religion or church, that is, a religion or church that, without proper divine authorization, usurps the legislative office of God, and thus substitute or may substitute the will of man for the will of God, and imposes it as such on mankind, is worse than worthless.

https://archive.org/stream/improvementera11unse/improvementera11unse_djvu.txt

President George Q. Cannon often said to me and to others that he would rather be shut up with a skunk than be shut up in a smoking car with smokers. What right has a man to befoul with his nauseous breath the air that I breathe? What right have I to make noxious the air that you breathe? I have no right to do it, and you have a right to protest against my doing it, and to show those who are in the habit of doing these things your contempt for their practices, if you have any respect for them. You should show at least your contempt for that which they do foolishly, for their practice is wrong, pernicious, and they are unmindful of the rights of others. I have thought seriously that a boy or man who has become addicted to the use of tobacco in any form, to the extent that he is unable to resist his appetite for it, or who has practiced it until he is unable to resist or overcome

EDITORS' TABLE 81

it, is a man who is so mentally weakened, so morally degraded that he is not competent to perform and would not be worthy to be entrusted with any responsible duty. Why? because a man who has become so weak-minded and irresolute that he cannot overcome, the temptation to do wrong or resist the power of an acquired, vicious appetite for poison, how can he be trusted? It is a weakness, a degradation that sinks far below the ordinary weak-

nesses of mankind, and therefore, the person who is so enslaved to vitiated appetites for poisonous, hurtful things that he cannot overcome them, being a slave to a pernicious habit, a degrading practice — that he cannot rise above it, how dare you trust him ? How can you entrust to one whose mind has become so weakened, so vitiated and so degraded that he is not his own master, but an irresolute slave to unholy passion, any trust that requires honor, strength of manhood, determination, and will-power to resist evil and temptation to do wrong? You can't do it. You can't trust a man who has not the power of will to say "no" to temptation, to do evil or to that which entices to evil ; he is only worthy of condemnation, and you cannot safely trust him, and you ought not to trust him.

IN CONDEMNATION OF FORBIDDEN DRINK

The same can truly be said of the man who is in the habit of using intoxicating liquors ; the same principle and argument apply perhaps more thoroughly to one who is given to drunkenness than to one who is only given to the use of tobacco, and yet, in perhaps ninety-nine cases out of the hundred, the man who is in the habit of using tobacco will also be found using intoxicating drinks, thus adding to his weakness, his instability, proof upon proof of his unworthiness to be entrusted with anything of importance. Oh, my brethren and sisters, will you, if possible to prevent it, permit your sons to indulge in these infamous practices which the Lord says are not good for them? Which he says are injurious to them. Tobacco was not intended for such use ; it is intended for bruises and sick cattle, but not for the stomach, not for the appetite of man, and we ought not to use it.

Then you may go from these practices to lesser evils, perhaps, and yet not always very much lesser, because some people have become so addicted to the use of coffee that they do not have the power to say, "No, thank you, I don't want it." But if they were asked, "Will you take coffee, or will you have tea ?" they will say : "Well, yes, please." Why? Because they are in the habit of it, and they can't say "No." I have noticed this in the society of so-called "good Latter-day Saints."

https://archive.org/stream/improvementera1701unse/improvementera1701unse_djvu.txt

The Ethics of Tobacco Prohibition

By Fred L. W. Bennett, President of The No-Tobacco League of UtaJi

I think tobacco could very properly be prohibited on the ground that it is a common nuisance. But suppose all the smokers agreed or were compelled to indulge their habit only in the privacy of their own homes. What then? Many hold the opinion that a man has a perfect right to do what he likes so long as he is not interfering with the rights of others; that he should be allowed to poison himself if he wishes, that it is his own affair. But is it? Let us consider the matter for a moment.

One of the fundamental principles of civilization is that the state is under an obligation to care for every indigent citizen who is taken ill, quite regardless of how that illness was brought about. Many persons have ruined themselves by the use of narcotics, among other things, and the state has already decided that certain narcotics, such as opium and morphine, shall not be used indiscriminately by any one. The contention is that if the state is to be considered under an obligation to care for individuals when they are sick, if they have no money, it has a moral right to say they shall not use a given thing when science and experience say that thing is detrimental to health. That seems to be a fair proposition to me.

If you say tobacco is not sufficiently dangerous to merit prohibition, that is entirely a different matter. The argument then is a scientific one, but many persons who profess to be against the use of tobacco are confusing the issue by saying the prohibition of tobacco would be wrong on ethical grounds. The fact is they have never regarded it as really injurious. The ethics of prohibition are sound, but is tobacco really harmful? Does it do all that we have been saying it does? Should it be annihilated? Should we destroy it? Do its sins merit such a course? These are the great questions. Science and religion are

on the side of its destruction. Are they right?

https://archive.org/stream/improvementera23011unse/improvementera23011unse_djvu.txt

Joseph H. Dean

Freedom or Bondage?

By Joseph H. Dean

"Well, say, I'm all balled up over freedom and bondage!
What is freedom, anyway?"

The family of Amos Taylor was spending the long winter evening in their comfortable homes, each occupied in what suited him best. The father, forty-four, was over at the bishop's on some ward business. The mother, forty-two, was mending stockings. Henry Amos, just returned from a mission to Samoa, was twenty-three. He was writing a letter to a missionary friend on the islands. Alice, nineteen, looking cross and nervous, because she had not been allowed to go to a dance in a nearby town with Richard Lamont, was trying to forget her troubles in a novel. Dorothy, fourteen, was working on her eighth grade examination problems. Then there were Jedediah ten, Harold seven, Mamie four, and baby Gordan asleep in the cradle.

Jed. — "Freedom, that's easy. Freedom is to be able to do as you please."

Dorothy. — "O sure, Jed. If you want some of daddy Henderson's melons, just go and steal them. If you want a piece of pie, just wait till) mother steps outside, and then go and take it." Jed gave Dorothy a black look, but said no more.

Lawrence. — "Henry, you are a wise guy, tell us what freedom is."

Henry. — "Don't call me wise, Lawrence. When I was your age I thought I was wise, but I am learning that I am pretty

foolish."

Lawrence. — "Well, you can surely tell us what freedom is."

Alice. — "There isn't any freedom. Just look at father, out nearly every night in the week. Gone into bondage to his church. When the bishop pulls the string, he jumps like he was shot, and drops his own work, and goes off on ward business. And you know, Henry, that you didn't want a mission, but you had to go, or be called a piker. I can't go to a dance tonight, because Dick doesn't measure up to father's standard."

Harold. — "Dick Lamont smokes."

Jed. — "And he swears, for I heard him."

Dorothy. — "And he stinks up the whole house with his to-

bacco when he comes here. Alice has, sure, got a funny taste."

Henry. — "Or maybe she has lost her smeller."

Alice.— yes, Henry Amos Taylor, I'd talk about smoking, if I were in your place. You know you smoked before you went on your mission, and like as not you'll take it up again. I'll wager the smell was all right in those days. And I believe Lawrence is smoking, too, for I have noticed lately, that his breath is always scented up with peppermint, or something."

Henry. — "Well, Lawrence, if you are taking up cigaret smoking, you will soon know what freedom 'ain't.' When I tried to quit, I found I was in the most terrible bondage. On my way to the Islands, I was tempted to sneak away from my companions in San Francisco, and smoke on the sly. And when we reached Honolulu, after a severe spell of sea-sickness, the craving was simply awful. One of my companions was in the same bondage that I was, and he said he would smoke if I would. And, O, Lawrence, and Jed, and Harold, I was so afraid that I would give way to the temptation, I rushed back on to the ship, and locked myself in my room, and cried and prayed, and prayed and cried, until I felt I had gained. the mastery, and

it was only with the help of the Lord, that I was enabled to gain the victory. And O, my dear brothers, I have been so worried, for fear that my bad example, before I went away, might lead you to take up the same filthy habit, and get into the same terrible bondage ; and I have prayed to the Lord, many and many a time, for you, that you might not do as I had done."

Henry's eyes filled with tears, and his voice trembled with emotion in his earnestness.

Alice was sorry she had spoken so unkindly; and Dorothy went over and put her cheek, lovingly against her big brother's, and ran her fingers through his curly hair. Harold went and took his hand and said, "I'll never smoke, Henry;" and Jed said neither would he. Lawrence looked miserable, but said nothing.

The mother had turned her rocker around, so her face could not be seen, and was silently weeping, for she had a battle to fight, that she hadn't won yet, so she said nothing.

At this point they heard the husband and father, stamping the snow off his feet on the porch, and Mamie clapped her hands, and went and opened the door, and the head of the family stepped inside. To look at Amos Taylor was good for sore eyes. He was fully six feet tall, and as straight as a tree. Strength and manliness and honesty, seemed to radiate from his person. He was manly, honored by all who knew him, and looked up to and loved by his wife and children. He took

off his coat and hat; swung Mamie up astride his shoulder, and dropped a pinch of snow down Dorothy's neck.

"Well," said he, "you all look excited, anything happened?"
Harold. — "Alice got vexed at Henry and called him names."
Father. — "And what did she call him, Harold?"
Harold. — "She called him Henry Amos Taylor," at which all the family laughed.

Father. — "Well, she sure called him names all right."

Jed. — "Yes, and she says you ain't free, and that you jump when the hishop pulls a string."

Father. — "Well, you folks have been haling fun. But what's this about my not being free? If I'm not free, I'd like to know who is."

Lawrence. — "I started all this racket, father. I was reading about conditions in Russia. The people revolted against the Czar, and overthrew his government, and butchered him and his family because of his tyrannical government; they wanted to be free, and now they are imprisoning the people so fast, their prisons are full. And then I got to thinking about the Pilgrim Fathers, how that they left the old world, and came here to a strange land to escape persecution, and so they could be free to worship God as they pleased, and then they turned Rodger Williams out of their midst because he didn't see as they did. Then our people were driven from their homes in the east, and many of them killed in this free land, and they had to come a thousand miles into the wilderness to escape religious persecution. And now the s'.riking coal miners are killing men who went to do the work they refused to do. So I said I would like to know what freedom is, anyway."

Father. — "And what did mother say?"

Mother. — "I didn't say anything, Amos, I didn't feel qualified to give an opinion."

Lawrence. — "Well, I must have given you all a hard nut to crack. Henry gave us an illustration of what bondage is: and father says he is free, and that's as far as we have got, it seems."

Father. — "Well, what is Henry's definition of bondage?"

Henry. — "I just told them, * father, of the struggle I had to quit my smoking when I went on my mission."

Father. — "Some bondage, wasn't it, Henry?"

Henry. — "Yes, sir, it took all the grit I had, and the help of the Lord besides, to set me free."

"Yes," said the father. "And I suppose one of the arguments the boys used to get you to smoke was, to show yourself a man, and not be in bondage to your Church, and a sissy, tied to your mother's apron strings."

Henry.- — "Yes, father, and that I was a coward, if I didn't."

Father. — "Yes. And so to show your 'freedom,' you went into the worst kind of bondage, and I warn you, Henry, that the same crowd will use the same arguments again. If a boy, or man either, has the manhood to obey the laws of God, and the laws of the land, he makes the smoker and the drinker, the 'bootlegger' and the gambler, the thief and the liar and all their tribe, look inferior and second best, and they resent it, and try their best to force him down to their level. It takes a man to stand their sarcasm and ridicule, and if he stands true to himself, and to his country, and to his religion, and stays a free man, he will have to walk alone in the world a good deal of his life, and one dreads to be alone."

Dorothy. — "We learned this verse in school:

"He's a slave, who dares not be
In the right, with two or three."

Father. — "Yes, and that's true. But it takes manhood and courage, of the highest order to carry it out, all the same. By the way, let me tell you what the bishop called me over to his place for this evening. Mother, Henry and Alice, you remember Helen Brim, who, some ten years ago, ran away and married Ernest Brockbank, a non-member of the Church. Some eleven years ago, I felt impressed to talk to Helen, to try and induce her not to marry that man for he was a worthless scamp. It seemed to be given me to see the bondage and degradation she would be running into, and the disappointment and heartache, and sorrow she would have to endure if she married him. I succeeded in thoroughly frightening Helen, and she declared she would have no more to do with Brockbank. But in less than six months, she ran away with him, and got married. They have one child, a lovely daughter, now ten years old. When she was an infant, Helen wanted to have her named and blessed in our Church, but her husband refused. And when she was eight, he refused to let her be baptized. Now she is dying, seemingly of typhoid-pneumonia, and the doctor says she won't live till morning. Poor Helen says she knows if the

bishop and I went and adminisatered to her, that the Lord would heal her. But her husband says if we come near his house, he will kick us into the street. Helen says her child is the only thing that has made life endurable now for years, and that if she dies, she doesn't want to live. The poor soul wrung her hands in her agony, and it melted our hearts to learn of her sufferings, but we couldn't see how we could help her."

Amos Taylor, big strong man though he was, choked up with emotion, and the family was profoundly moved in sympathy. Alice had gone over to the window, and taken a seat behind the curtains so she could cry without being seen, for

Richard Lamont, had suggested the night before, that as she was denied her "rights" and deprived of her "freedom," that she run away with him, and get married/ She had listened to him, and promised to give him an answer the following evening.

Lawrence. — "Well, Jed, it's plain to see that your idea of freedom, to do as we please, won't do."

Dorothy. — "Well, daddy, don't let us go to bed without a true definition of what freedom is."

Father. — "Well, now, after all we have said, let's try and see if we can't make up a definition ourselves. Suppose we start with the youngest, and take our turns. Jed, we will begin with you."

Jed. — "Well, this is mine, 'I am free to do as I please, if I don't do anything wrong.' "

Father. — "That's pretty good, Jed, for a ten year old boy."

Dorothy. — "Freedom is to do right, and not to do wrong."

Father. — "Pretty hard to beat, Dorothy."

Lawrence. — "Well, I suppose freedom is to do as I am told by those who have the right to direct me."

Father. — "Alice, your turn next, what is true freedom?"

Alice. — " 'There hain't no such animal,' " at which quotation they all laughed.

Father. — "Now, Henry, we'll hear from you."

Henry. — "I was just looking in my Bible concordance, father, to see what I could find there on the subject. The Savior says, 'And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' And again, 'If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.' And Paul says, 'Stand firm therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free.' I think therefore, that the gospel is the perfect law of liberty."

Father. — "Mother, we haven't heard a word from you all evening, will you give us your idea of freedom?"

Mother. — "Well, after listening to all that has been said, I am about convinced that freedom is obedience to law; and that any one that will do as he pleases, unless he pleases to do right, will go into bondage."

Dorothy. — "Now it's daddy's turn."

Father. — "Well, you haven't left much ground for me to plow. All your definitions are good. I can't conceive of freedom without obedience to law. Everything we see around us, in the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms, is governed and controlled by law, and are all filling the measure of their creation. Man is the only exception, not necessarily so, nor rightly so, but because of his free agency, he often chooses to be so. But every time man disobeys law, he must pay the penalty. We often hear the expression, *As free as the air we

breathe;' but air is only free to obey law, and that law is, that it shall accompany the earth in its flight through space; and that it shall be composed of certain elements in certain fixed proportions, and if those proportions are disturbed, as when

crowded halls are not properly ventilated, death and destruction begin their work. Our beautiful mountain streams are free, but they are governed by the law of gravitation. They cannot turn round and run up hill. The earth is free. No other planet, except its moon, within millions of miles of it. It is whirling through space seventy times faster than a cannon-ball can go, and yet, so fixed is the law governing its motions, that astronomers can tell just where it will be any number of years ahead; just when it will pass between the sun and the moon, causing an eclipse of the moon; or when the moon will pass between us and the sun, causing an eclipse of the sun. The earth is never early nor late, but just on time, and it has always been so ever since it was created. If it should be a law unto itself, like some people are, and should leave its orbit, and go off its course, the whole universe would be thrown out of harmony, and the end no doubt would be, that it would crash into some other planet, and be destroyed.

"The inmates of our prisons, reform schools and asylums, are made up, mostly, of those who would not obey law. Their idea of freedom was, that they had a right to do as they pleased, instead of doing as they should. The result is, that they have to be locked up where they can do no harm.

"Poor Helen Brim wouldn't obey the law of her parents, nor the laws of her Church. She was determined to be 'free;' and now she would willingly give her right arm to be cut off, if she could go back eleven years and be free again, as Alice here, and Dorothy are free.

"Everything that is clean, virtuous, praiseworthy, God-fearing and law-abiding, leads to health, happiness, respect of our fellows, freedom, and the blessing and approbation of our heavenly Father; while all that is unclean, unruly, disobedient, and law defying, leads down to bondage, degradation and death."

Amos Taylor was not blind to what was going on in his own family. His wife was a splendid woman. She had borne him eight lovely, intelligent children. She had worked uncomplainingly by his side from a state of poverty, when they were first married, to their present well-to-do condition. But she had come of a family that made no pretensions to keeping the Word of Wisdom, and had acquired the tea-drinking habit in

her girlhood. Since her marriage, she had tried several times to quit, but had invariably taken it up again. This had been a great trial to her husband, especially since the children had

grown old enough to take notice. He knew that they would justify themselves in breaking the same law because mother was breaking it. As we have seen, their oldest son had taken to smoking, which was a sore trial to his father. He was so thankful for the mission that had cured him, and sent him home clean and full of faith.

He had been afraid for Alice, in keeping company with Richard Lamont. And when his recital of the case of poor Helen Brim had driven her into the window seat, his suspicions increased. He also suspected Lawrence of smoking. He knew why his wife was taking no part in the discussions of the evening, and why she had turned her back to the family. He felt that she should be by his side, and by word and look and example, be helping him to save their children.

A sudden determination seized him. He felt that he had a right to know where his wife and children stood. He arose, and with a trembling, but kindly voice said: "My wife and children, we have discovered in our discussions here tonight, what freedom is and what bondage is. All my hopes for time and eternity are bound up in you. With your support and co-operation, I am strong. Without it, I am weak. 'A house divided against itself cannot stand.' Shall we walk together, hand in hand, and keep the commandments of God, and be free, or shall we each go his own way and maybe some go into bondage, and be lost? I feel that a critical time has arrived in the life of this family, and that I have a right to know where each of you stands. You also have a right to know where I stand. We all have our free agency. You have your salvation to work out as I have mine. 'Who's on the Lord's side?' Like Joshua of old, I feel to say, 'Choose ye this day whom ye will serve, but as for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord.' Now if you feel this way, and are willing to go with me and keep the Lord's commandments, I want you to manifest it by rising to your feet."

It was a dramatic moment. If his wife, or any of his children should keep their seats, what should he do? What could he do? Henry and Dorothy, Jed and little Harold promptly rose to their feet. Lawrence and his mother looked into each other's eyes for a moment, and the mother could see that her son was going to do as she did, and she dared not hesitate a moment longer. She arose and took her rightful place by her husband's side, and Amos Taylor, his heart singing with joy, put his arm around her and pressed her to him. Then Lawrence stood up. Alice now was the only one left. What would Alice do? Amos Taylor and his wife trembled with anxiety. But the curtains slowly parted, and a tall, beautiful girl with a white-

drawn face, showing that she had been fighting a hard battle, came slowly forward and stood by her father's side and took his hand, and the parents knew that their beautiful Alice was safe. With a voice shaking with feeling, the father said, "God bless you all, my loved ones. And now I suggest that in place of our usual evening's devotions, we stand as we are, and bow our heads in silent prayer for one minute, then you are all at liberty to go to your rooms."

When the minute was up, Alice drew her father's face down and fervently kissed him, and then embraced her mother, and without speaking went to her room.

The mother went into the kitchen, and called Lawrence to her, and when he was in, she quietly locked the door behind him. She had a half package of tea in her hand. "My son," said she, "this innocent looking thing has been my master all my life. For this tea I have sorely hurt your father, and set you, and all my children, the example of disobedience. On account of this tea, my conscience has hurt me for twenty years, and I have felt myself a hypocrite, and have felt cheap, and second class. When any of our leaders have preached on the Word of Wisdom, I have felt that they meant me, and I have been uncomfortable, and unhappy. And during that minute of silent devotion, I solemnly promised the Lord that I would never touch it again. What a coward I have been, to let such a

trifling thing get such a tremendous power over me. Lawrence, I am going to pass from bondage to freedom, even though it kill me. The very fact that I know I am going to conquer this time, makes me feel a different woman already. And now, my son, you see this package is only half full. There is just room for your sack of tobacco and cigaret papers. Come, my son, let's be free. Let's be able to look your father and all the world in the face, and say, 'I'm free! I'm free!' "

And Lawrence fished out his tobacco, and stuffed it in with the tea, and his mother led him over to the stove, and they threw their enemy on the coals and watched it reduced to ashes. Then the mother said, "Now, my son, kiss me and go to bed."

The next evening, just at dark, an auto stopped at the Taylor gate. A cigaret glowed in the darkness. The driver tooted his horn, and a tall, stately girl went down to the gate. "Good evening, Dick." "Why, hello, Allie, hop in. "No Dick, you see I haven't my wraps." "Well, why haven't you? Hurry and get them." "No, Dick, since I saw you last, I have had a change of heart, or maybe I should say, I have seen a light. I have been able to see that the proposal you made me, that we run away and get married, was both unwise and unmanly. For me at least, it would mean a disgraceful and dishonorable bond-

FREEDOM OR BONDAGE? 519

age, and I refuse to do it. I have decided to honor my father and my mother, and my Church, and not do a foolish thing that could only bring sorrow and disgrace to all concerned. And furthermore, Dick, if I ever get married, I shall choose a good, clean man of my own faith, and in place of going into a dishonorable bondage, I shall have a clear conscience, and be free!"

Dick. — "This is the work of your pious, hypocritical, missionary brother, I suppose."

Alice. — "You must excuse me, Dick, I refuse to quarrel with you. And as it is chilly, and I haven't any wraps, I will wish you goodnight." And with a light heart, and shining eyes, Alice

Taylor walked up the path and into the house.
Shelley, Idaho

Improvement Era***

Ethics of the Doctrine and Covenants
Lesson Seven — Ethics of Liberty.

The fundamental purpose of this lesson is to show that the Doctrine and Covenants provides for universal human liberty.

The Doctrine and Covenants specifically declares against all forms of human bondage (See Sec. 101:79). Compare the divine utterances as ethical principles with the human declarations that liberty is an inalienable right, and that all men are created free and equal; and consider under which of these statements would it have been most difficult to establish a system of slavery or imprisonment for debt.

Compare these ethical propositions with Doctrine and Covenants 1:10 and Sec. 76:

Liberty and law are inseparable.

The higher the law the greater the liberty, the lower the law, the less the liberty.

Special privileges for special services.

Even to the mind denying the divine origin of the vision of the three glories, how must the provisions made therein for the distribution of freedom still appear as to fairness, equity and wisdom?

Compare: "Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed," with 28:13; 26:2, in the Doctrine and Covenants.

Compare Doctrine and Covenants 101:77-80; 98:5 with the following:

The rights of humanity are greater than the rights of any nation.

Suggestive propositions for topics of conversation on the subject of liberty:

Liberty is free agency in action.

Liberty is the right to do as one pleases as long as he pleases to do right.

Liberty is agency operating for the immediate and remote welfare of the individual and the race.

The safety of the Universe depends upon the parallelism in the advancement of intelligence and the extension of agency.

Problems:

1. What does a law of perfect liberty mean to you? Explain and illustrate.

2. Correlate this latest ethical utterance: "It is our duty to make the world safe for Democracy," with the Doctrine and Covenants, 98:5.

https://archive.org/stream/improvementera2102unse/improvementera2102unse_djvu.txt

Freedom is not the right
to do what we want,
but what we ought.

The Summer looks out from her
brazen tower, Through the flashing
bars of July. — Francis Thompson

https://archive.org/stream/improvementera6807unse/improvementera6807unse_djvu.txt

Even parents with the best intentions — some who have really tried — now know that heartache. Many parents have tried in every way to protect their children — only now to find they are losing one. For the home and the family are under attack. Ponder these words, if you will:

Profanity

Nudity

Immorality

Divorce

Pornography

Addiction

Violence

Perversion

These words have taken on a new meaning in the last few years, haven't they?

You are within walking distance, at least within a few minutes' drive, of a theater in your own neighborhood. There will be shown, within the week, a film open to young and old alike that as recently as ten years ago would have been banned, the film confiscated, and the theater owner placed under indictment. But now it's there, and soon it will be seen at home on your television screens.

Improvement Era December 1970

"The home is the place for preparation. We have no right to thrust upon the world our 'unfinished' children. We ought to love them far too well to allow them to be ill-mannered and tiresome, spiteful or unfair, for by daily rubbing them over gently with the pumice stone of common sense and the oil of loving care, there will result a hue, smooth surface, difficult for life's irking spitefulness to catch on to; and the finely-polished surface will in no way take from their solid worth, but will rather enhance their sterling and beautiful qualities.

Our beloved late President David O. McKay has said: "Another element which makes for a happy home life is mutual service, each member of the home working for the other. . . ." (Treasures of Life [Deseret Book Co., 1965], p. 330.) That home is most beautiful in which you find each person striving to serve the other. A child has the right to feel that in his home he has a place of refuge, a place of protection from the dangers and evils of the outside world. Family unity and integrity are necessary to supply this need. He needs parents who are happy in their adjustment to each other, who are working happily toward the fulfillment of an ideal of living, who love their children with a sincere and unselfish love; in short, who are well-balanced individuals, gifted with a certain amount of insight, who are able to provide the child with a wholesome emotional background which will contribute more to his development than material advantages.

One of the soundest and safest bulwarks of society that is being undermined today is the family. Modern life is disintegrating the very foundation of the home. In the well-ordered home, where confidence and love abide, you will find life at its best. There is no real home without love. Homes are made permanent through love.

No matter how much one owes to his fellowmen, he

owes more to the Lord than to any one else, and the Lord should be regarded and treated as the preferred creditor. The tenth of one's interest belongs to the Lord, and we have no right to use that tenth for our own purposes, but we should regard it as being sacred and pay it to the Lord. The nine-tenths remaining is ours to use in any way that may be proper; in the paying of our obligations to our fellowmen, the purchasing of a home, or for any other worthy cause. Every purchase one makes for the needs of himself and family should be paid for with money that has been tithed. The tithing is not ours to use.

Even among Latter-day Saints whose lives and conduct should be without blemish, there is, no doubt, too much carelessness of conduct among the youth. Such conduct in the world, apart from the restraining influences which happily prevail here, would result disastrously to the moral life of the participants. That bad effects exist here is too apparent in some places.

Young men have no right to take the least liberty with their female companions, even though they are engaged; and young women should promptly and severely rebuke any undue familiarity on the part of their associates.

Francis M. Lyman

Now, I say that it would be better

for man not to receive the Priesthood, not to receive an appointment or calling, and not to be bap-

tized in this Church unless he intends to serve God and keep His commandments. Our probation is not very long. We can't tell when it will end; it is liable to end any time; and it is imperatively necessary that every member of this Church should be upon his mettle, advised, established, encouraged and fixed in his purpose to serve God and keep His commandments, and do what is right. For every member in this Church has all the authority that is necessary for works of righteousness ; and there is no limit or prohibition upon men doing good, but we have no right whatever to do . anything that is wrong ; we do nothing that is wrong when in the line of our duty. We are not required to do wrong, but always to do right and to deal justly by all men, whether they be Latter-day Saints or not, whether they be our neighbors or our friends, if they be the children of God, and they all are, it is our duty to treat them in the spirit of righteousness and of charity, and to teach them the Gospel by that great and eloquent sermon of example. That is what we should do.

We live in an interesting period of the history of mankind. The slow pace of man's progress from the beginning gradually commenced to accelerate and gain speed. Today we find advancement moving at such increased momentum that we are often frightened

by the, thoughts of the future. Man takes pride in the rapid strides of science that have created conveniences for his everyday living. His health has been improved by the progress of medicine, and his life-span has been extended. Sweeping reforms in many areas of society have enhanced his well-being. Business and industry are moving forward at a pace never before known, and this generation has the highest standard of living ever enjoyed by man. We are proud to be living in a modern world of achievement.

Will all of this spiraling progress be good for man in the years that lie ahead? Will it be beneficial in every respect to our children and grandchildren? We would agree, no doubt, that many things give us concern. What of the future of the family and home life, which in past generations have been great stabilizing forces in society? What of the solidarity of community and national life? What of the future of our economy, as the consequence of inflation and increased debt? What of the modern course of deterioration of morality and its effect upon individuals, families, nations, and the world? We are forced to admit that what we term as progress brings with it many consequences of serious concern.

We are entering into, or going through, a period of history in which so-called modern thought is taking precedence in the minds of many persons who classify themselves as advocates of a modern generation. The more extreme of these lean toward

free thinking and free action without assuming the responsibility men owe to fellowmen. Where will we be led if we follow those who advocate freedom of use of drugs and freedom of morality? What will be the result of universal free love, abortions at will, homosexuality, or legalized pornography?

What of spiritual values and the religious ideals of past generations, which have been the great stabilizing influence on society?

Richard L. Evans

Pornographic literature! It has been a shock, I am sure, to all of us to read the report of the commission that has been studying obscenity reports, and the recommendation that there should be a repeal of all laws prohibiting the distribution of explicit, sexual materials to consenting adults. Shocking! Now brethren, this is a thing that we must, as a priesthood, take a firm stand against, and do everything within our communities to see to it that by every means within our power we are going to play down the showing of or the distribution of any kind of pornographic literature, films, or advertisements. It has been a delight to us to have our Deseret News announce that, shortly, there will be no advertising of "R" and "X" rated films. We would wish it would be so in every community. If you brethren, in all of your communities, would now take a firm stand, I think there would be a time shortly when somebody would

wake up to the fact that we are no longer going to tolerate these kinds of things that are placed before our people to tear down their morals.

Richard L. Evans

"May we recall these two phrases from a moving and meaningful song: 'Confirm thy soul in self-control, Thy liberty in law.' 1 Always and earnestly urgent in all the issues and in all the aspects of life are 'self-control' and 'liberty' and 'law.' And always to be taught, and never to be forgotten, is that **liberty is preserved by law**. Self-control and liberty and law are basic to life, basic to the eternal plans and purposes of the Lord God pertaining to his children. **But sometimes we may seem more to have remembered freedom than self-control, liberty more than the law**. As we come together, as we live together, as we serve and receive service in a world where physically we come ever closer together, always we have to have self-control, always we have to live our lives with law as well as with liberty. Always we have to consider the rights, the privileges, the comfort, the convenience of others, with an awareness that **we have no right to do anything we want**, to take anything we want, or irresponsibly **to say anything we want, or to befoul the moral atmosphere**, or the water others use, or the air where others are, or the peace that others have, or their rightful privacy, **or to live uninhibited lives**. We have to be **considerate of others** always. **Self-control, with law, is the only safeguard of liberty**—and not the existence of law only, but respect for law, obeying the law—the laws of God, the commandments, the laws of the land.

"In a meaningful commencement address a great American said this of laws and liberty not many months before he left this life: 'We are too inclined,' he said 'to think of law as something merely restrictive—something hemming us in. **We sometimes think of law as the opposite of liberty. But that is a false conception . . . God does not contradict himself**. He did not create man and then, as an afterthought, impose upon him a set of arbitrary, irritating, restrictive rules. He made man free—and then gave him the commandments to keep him free. ... We cannot break the Ten Commandments. We can only break ourselves against them—or else, by keeping them, rise through them to the fulness of freedom under God. God means us to be free. With divine daring, he gave us the power of choice.' 2

"To this great utterance we would add: **The greatest threat to liberty is lawlessness**. And the greatest assurance of liberty is respect for law—the laws that lead to justice, to peace, and a quiet conscience, with consideration for others always. "Confirm thy soul in self-control, thy liberty in law." 1

("Self-control, and liberty, and law", The Improvement Era, September 1959)

John Taylor (?)

“The legislators of all civilized nations have seen the necessity of sustaining these things, and consequently have passed, generally, **very rigid laws for the protection of female virtue**, and the support of the marriage contract. **Hence Acts have been passed and enforced, disinheriting those who were not born in wedlock. This, in some instances, has produced a salutary effect.** Ministers of the various churches have also used their influence, in a great measure, in support of virtuous principles. **These have had their effect in assisting to stem the torrent of iniquity.** But as the nations themselves have forsaken God, how can they expect to stop this crying evil; for the very legislators who pass these laws are in many instances guilty themselves; and **when kings, princes, and rulers, corrupt themselves, how can they expect the people to be pure?** for no matter how rigid law may be, corrupt persons will always find means to evade it. And, indeed, so far have these abominations gone, that it seems to be an admitted fact, that these things cannot be controlled; and, although there are laws relative to matrimonial alliances, yet there are some nations, called Christian, who actually give licence for prostitution, and all the degradation and misery associated with it.”

(The Government of God, 1852 ***)

John Taylor

“Besides the preaching of the Gospel, **we have another mission, namely, the perpetuation of the free agency of man and the maintenance of liberty, freedom, and the rights of man.**”

(General Conference, April 1882)

John Taylor

“We have a local administration which provides test oaths to try to cover up the crimes of their friends, and to **protect prostitutes, whoremongers and adulterers, and to make that a crime which is nowhere proclaimed a crime by the Almighty.** And then we have these whitewashed Acts 23:3 and painted sepulchres Matt. 23:27 under the guise of the protectors of virtue and the defenders and advocates of purity and moral reform, bring all the weight of their influence and position to bear upon innocence, virtue and integrity. Surely, as it is said, justice is fallen in the street, righteousness standeth afar off, and judgment cannot enter. Isa. 59:14 But what of our people? With all of their weaknesses, follies and imperfections, of which we as a people have very many in the sight of God, they are yet in the balances of unbiased equity before the law, as per record ten times the superiors of our accusers, but with the points of **prostitution, harlotry, gambling and other vices**, not to mention the terrible crimes of **feticide and infanticide**, we have nothing to do; these are their institutions only, and do not belong to us.

“But it may be argued, are not the executive and judiciary expected to administer the law as they find it? Certainly; and if they would confine themselves to this, all honorable men would sustain them. **But governors are nowhere authorized to introduce test oaths, in violation of law, to protect the spoliators of virtue, the brothel and the adulterer;** nor is the judiciary required in the execution of its legal function to ignore the precedents of courts, nor to sanction the empanelment of packed juries.”

(“The Gathering”, Journal of Discourses, 25:341)

Dieter F. Utchdorf

“President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) often quoted an unknown author: ‘The greatest battle of life is fought out within the silent chambers of the soul. A victory on the inside of a man’s heart is worth a hundred conquests on the battlefields of life. To be master of yourself is the best guarantee that you will be master of the situation. Know thyself. The crown of character is self-control.’

“Be responsive to the counsel of the prophets, seers, and revelators, who will help you to reach true self-mastery. Be responsive to the promptings of the Spirit. The Spirit will influence your conscience and help you to refine yourself by working on **the little tasks of self-control—like controlling your thoughts, words, and actions—which leads to self-control of your whole self, of mind, body, and spirit.** Remember, anger is only one letter short of danger.

“Your choices are the mirror of your self-control. They will lead you to your eternal destination if they are made with divine direction and control. Stay morally clean. Keep a clean mind and heart. **Your thoughts will determine your actions. Control your thoughts.** Don’t submit yourself to temptation. Aristotle said, ‘**For where it is in our power to act it is also in our power not to act.**’...

“Opposition and agency. A word of caution: in aerodynamics, gravity and drag work in opposition to lift. This same important principle has been an integral part of the plan of salvation from the beginning. As Lehi explained, ‘For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things’ (2 Ne. 2:11; emphasis added). And as the angel taught King Benjamin, ‘For the natural man is an enemy to God ... unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit’ (Mosiah 3:19; emphasis added).

“This leads us to **God’s great gift to His children: agency.**

“Lehi taught this most important doctrine to his children. He said: ‘**The Lord God gave unto man that he should act for himself.** ... And **they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the**

captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself" (2 Ne. 2:16, 27).

"You have agency, and you are free to choose. But there is actually no free agency. Agency has its price. You have to pay the consequences of your choices...."

"Agency is a spiritual matter. Without awareness of alternatives, you could not choose. **Agency is so important in your lives that you not only can choose obedience or rebellion, but you must. During this life you cannot remain on neutral ground**; you cannot abstain from either receiving or rejecting the light from God."

("On the Wings of Eagles", BYU Devotional, November 11 2003)

Rulon S. Wells*

"There is no virtue in doing good under compulsion and likewise there is no vice in doing evil under compulsion. And, furthermore, if we had no knowledge of good and evil, sin would be impossible. **Where there is no law there can be no condemnation. We are only responsible for that which we do in the exercise of our free agency**, and according to the light or knowledge of good and evil, which has been given us."

(*** General Conference, April 1935)

Joseph B. Wirthlin

"The Lord has warned repeatedly against the evils and designs of conspiring men in our day who would **enslave us to our appetites and passions by tempting and tantalizing us with obscene images, words, and music.** Through His servants, the Lord has cautioned us strongly not to take into our minds thoughts that can harm our spirits.

"Since 1950, Church leaders speaking in general conference have counseled us some seventy-five times against unhealthy media consumption. In recent years, as **standards of public decency and morality have declined** and as public media have reflected and often led that decline, these words of loving concern from inspired shepherds of the Lord's flock have come with more frequency and greater urgency. The watchmen on the tower have raised a warning voice.

"I add my own voice. I suggest that we pay greater heed to voices of warning that our Father in Heaven has raised against **the forces of Satan that come so easily and so pervasively into our homes through the media.**"

("Windows of Light and Truth", General Conference, October 1995)

Orson F. Whitney*

“I know what your thoughts are. You are wondering, **Is it possible that God will compel men to be saved? No. Compulsion is the doctrine of Lucifer**; it is the doctrine of the German Kaiser, who stands upon the devil’s ground, compelling men to do his bidding. **The doctrine of Jesus Christ is freedom, free agency, the right of choice. He is the God of freedom, his gospel is ‘the perfect law of liberty;’ he is the God of this land, the land of liberty, and the only King who will ever rule over it.** Read the Book of Mormon and be convinced.”

(*** General Conference, October 1917)

Wilford Woodruff

“Our responsibilities before the Lord are great. **We have no right to break any law that God has given unto us. The more we do so the less power we have before God, before heaven and before the earth, and the nearer we live to God, the closer we obey his laws and keep his commandments, the more power we will have,** and the greater will be our desire for the building up of the kingdom of God while we dwell here in the flesh.

“**We have no right to break the Sabbath. We have no right to neglect our meetings to attend to our labors.** I do not believe that any man, who has ever belonged to this Church and kingdom, since its organization, has made anything by attending to his farm on the Sabbath: but if your ox falls into a pit get him out; to work in that way is all just and right, but **for us to go farming to the neglect of our meetings and other duties devolving upon us, is something we have no right to do.** The Spirit of God does not like it, it withdraws itself from us, and we make no money by it. We should keep the Sabbath holy. We should attend our meetings.”

(“Duties and Responsibilities of the Priesthood and Saints Generally”, July 3 1880)

Brigham Young

“A gentleman said to me ‘I would like to establish a billiard table and a drinking saloon in your city; you must have such places here by and by, anyhow.’ May be we will, and may be we will not; we shall see whether God Almighty will reign among this people, or whether the Devil will. I shall keep such Christian institutions out of this city as long as I can.”

(“The Earth the Home of Man, Etc.”, Journal of Discourses, 10:299)

Brigham Young*

“**Man is an independent being in his agency, to do right or wrong, and has the liberty of doing as he pleases; but I qualify this by saying that he has not the right to do wrong** or to infringe upon the rights of another individual. This is **the law of society**, and it is also the law of heaven. **We live together, we have been brought forth upon this earth, and we dwell**

together in communities. Men must respect the rights of each other, and it will be so in all nations upon the earth under the government of God.”

(Journal of Discourses, 26 vols., 9:, p.101)

Brigham Young*

“Well, I will say that our religion is nothing more nor less than the true order of heaven—the system of laws by which the Gods and the angels are governed. Are they governed by law? Certainly. There is no being in all the eternities but what is governed by law. Who is it who desires to have liberty and no law? They who are from beneath. This is what Lucifer, the Son of the Morning, wanted.

“He wanted to save the world without law, to redeem the world without order. There must be law, order, rules and regulations; there must be a system of government; and, to have a kingdom of God on the earth, there must be a king, and subjects to rule, and territory for those subjects to dwell upon. These things comprise the kingdom of God, the embryo of which is now being formed by the Latter-day Saints, by the will of the Father, by the power of God; and they will endure and truth will prevail, and we need not be afraid as to the result.”

(Journal of Discourses, Vol. 14, 3 July 1870)

Brigham Young

“When the time came for the Saints to move westward, they came headed by a prophet of God. They settled in this valley. It was a valley of sagebrush, very dry in the summertime, cold in winter. They came in the year 1847, and from then on, all the time, there were companies of Latter-day Saints on the plains, coming to Utah, coming in small numbers and then in larger groups, until the territory was settled, and Utah as a state was founded. A wonderful thought was expressed by President Brigham Young in the First General Epistle to the people at the close of 1847. It indicated the great love and respect that he and the Latter-day Saints had for all people.

‘Come, then, ye Saints; come, then, ye honorable men of the earth; come then, ye wise, ye learned, ye rich, ye noble, according to the riches, and wisdom, and knowledge of the great Jehovah; from all nations, and kindreds, and kingdoms, and tongues, and people, and dialects on the face of the whole earth, and join the standard of Emmanuel, and help us to build up the Kingdom of God, and establish the principles of truth, life, and salvation, and you shall receive your reward among the sanctified, when the Lord Jesus Christ cometh to make up his jewels; and no power on earth or in hell can prevail against you.

‘The Kingdom of God consists in correct principles; and it mattereth not what a man's religious faith is: whether he be a Presbyterian, or a Methodist, or a Baptist, or a Latter-day Saint or 'Mormon,' or a Campbellite, or a Catholic, or Episcopalian, or Mohametan, or even pagan, or any thing else, if he will bow the knee and with his tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ Philip. 2:10-11 and will support good and wholesome laws for the regulation of society, we hail him as a brother, and will stand by him while he stands by us in these things: for every man's religious

faith is a matter between his own soul and his God alone; but if he shall deny the Jesus, if he shall curse God, if he shall indulge in debauchery and drunkenness, and crime; if he shall lie, and swear, and steal; if he shall take the name of the Great God in vain, and commit all manner of abominations, he shall have no place in our midst, for we have long sought to find a people that will work righteousness, that will distribute justice equally, that will acknowledge God in all their ways, that will regard those sacred laws and ordinances which are recorded in that sacred book called the Bible, which we verily believe, and which we proclaim to the ends of the earth.”

(Levi Edgar Young, “A Look at History,” Conference Report, April 1960, pp. 62-64)

Brigham Young*

“If there is a people within the pales of this nation that is worthy of the constitution, good laws and institutions of the American Government, it is this people called Latter-day Saints. **It is the best earthly Government that ever was framed by man, and the true and righteous are alone worthy of it. It cannot long be administered by wicked hands.** 'When the wicked rule, the people mourn' (D&C 98:9).”

(Journal of Discourses, 9:368)

Clifford E. Young

“When President Joseph F. Smith became the President of the Church he made certain sound investments for the benefit and blessing of this Church. And I recall that **those not of our faith and who had no right to criticize**, went up and down this land, in print and otherwise, maligning the Presidency of the Church, **accusing the Church of a materialistic attitude**, of not being a spiritual organization, of misleading the membership of the Church. That didn't make any difference. The leadership carried on just the same, and we have seen the benefits and blessings of that great leadership, and today we see that leadership, the spirit of it, the inspiration of it manifest.”

(“Seeing Beyond the Shadow”, General Conference, April 1952)

Charles B. Pettey

THE ERADICATION OF EVIL.

Whence come the evils of the world, and how can they be eradicated? is a great world problem which seems to defy solution. Why all this misery, crime, poverty and suffering? Is it not possible to eradicate these things?

It is often more difficult to find the cause of an evil than it is to furnish a remedy. The best and most practical method of exterminating any evil is to first find the cause: then proceed with the remedy. The old saying has it, "An ounce of preventive is worth a pound of cure," or "prevention is preferable to punishment." Boards of Health realize this, for they not only endeavor to cure

the patient of disease, but they also quarantine, fumigate, and rigidly enforce sanitary laws and regulations. The religions of the world should constitute a moral Board of Health, and work against the vices which are preying upon mankind.

There are many apparent evils which are beyond the control of man. Some people regard as evil all sorrows, and everything which does not add to their own immediate pleasure and comfort. Sorrow often proves to be a friend in disguise, and he who has no sorrows is to be pitied. By reflection, one usually finds that the greater part of his sorrows have been caused by lack of proper action on his own part. We here wish to consider only those evils for which man is responsible ; those he has brought upon himself, and those he might at least lessen if not entirely exterminate.

Men desirous of knowing the cause of the thriving evils in the world have entered the jails, asylums, workhouses, hospitals and districts of extreme poverty and studied the lives of the confined subjects. Different nations have appointed expert committees and detectives to investigate crime and ascertain if possible where the responsibility lies. The Juvenile Courts and other civil bodies are working upon the same problem. The researches of these men show that from eighty to ninety per cent of the world's evil is due to the use of alcoholic drinks ; nine-tenths of the crime committed is by men who are subject to the use of alcohol. This statement is very startling to people who use this stimulant and believe it to be beneficial. Many people believe it to contain valuable food properties, and it is thought by the more ignorant that it is especially valuable for its supposedly inherent heat properties. Physiologists are pretty well of one mind that alcohol contains no food ; nor does it warm the body. This is proved by the fact that one's temperature is several degrees lower while he is intoxicated than while in normal health. It causes him to feel warmer, but his body is really not so warm. It only deadens the nerves and causes them to be less sensitive to cold or pain.

Alcohol is not only the cause of evil but is an evil itself; it is the curse of the world. It serves a nation as it does an individual : stifles the mental powers, demoralizes the ideals, blights the health and ruins prosperity. It is the demon which is shaking the very foundations of civilization at the present time. It is the medium through which the evil one acts upon the minds of men : by the use of it he seems to mesmerise his subjects and have them do his biddings. It is the net with which he fishes the souls of men. Shakespeare expressed it as being a mystery to him, "that men should drink of thee, oh wine ! and convert themselves into brutish beasts" thus intimating that under its influence all the finer and more desirable accomplishments are smothered and the lower, or animal instincts are brought into action. Under its influence man's ideals are shattered, his higher cultivations are subdued and he brings reproach not only on himself but on his family and associates. Each glass he drinks weakens character and constitution just that much, and by continual use men have become so low that they are no longer men, and have no right to wear the form. They should be sent back to Nature's mint and be re-issued as some baser creature.

Alcohol is not alone ; it has some near relatives which are likely responsible for most of the remaining ten or twenty per cent of crime. Tobacco, opium, tea, coffee and other things are treading closely on the heels of alcohol; they are its re-enforcements.

These, also, are injurious to man, mentally, morally and physically. They are never beneficial. They no more furnish the body with nourishment than a whip gives energy to a tired horse. Where one is, we usually find the others. They realize that unity gives strength; they go in legions and array themselves against the higher ideals of man. These combined evils form a battering ram which the constitution of man is unable to withstand. They are promoters of diseases, corruption, vices, and evils of every description. These evils are not only harmful to mankind of to-day, but have the most deplorable effects upon future generations. The Lord is "visiting the iniquities of the fathers on the children unto the third and fourth generation." Children of indulging parents are born into the world inheriting abnormal appetites for strong drink and tobacco. They are handicapped in life's race by having a weak mind and an enervated and unsound constitution which lessens physical vigor and invites disease and death. The human race is degenerating under these evil influences; they are carving their devastating effects upon the faces of humanity.

In most nations, these narcotics are sold, bartered and used by men, women and children. Under such influences the home is stripped of its love, unity and sacredness, and instead there dwells disrespect, selfishness and even hatred. The father's appetite is often gratified by the privation of the wife and little ones: he will even sell the last article of household furniture to enable him to satisfy his cravings. For several years a few nations have been restricting the sale and use of these stimulants. A few of the states in America have "gone dry," and others are fast falling into line. Many rich men and firms have suffered heavy losses by employing men who have the drinking habit and who have proved themselves to be unreliable. Some of these employers have an established rule to hire only teetotalers. Even China, the nation which has dwelt so long in ignorance and superstition, has awakened to the situation and is now energetically trying to exterminate these evils. All government officials and other public officers are required to abstain from the use of them. The farmers are compelled to diminish the amount of opium produced ten per cent, each year, so in ten years the country will be free from it.

What are the religions of the world doing to better conditions in this respect? Paganism, Mohammedanism and Buddhism are doing nothing, and the modern Christian sects are doing little more. They not only fail to discourage the use of these detrimental, but they encourage the young to use them — by permitting ministers and school teachers to publicly use them without reproach or shame ; teaching them by example — which is the most fruitful method. Does not the solution of this problem pertain to religion? What is religion for if not to better the condition of mankind? Every elevating truth or principle belongs to the teachings of the Savior. Some individuals wish to justify themselves in using strong drink and come forward with a flimsy argument such as: "A glass a day doesn't injure any one"; or, "If the Lord did not wish us to use them He should not have placed them on earth." And they even try to justify themselves by the Scriptures. "How far Reason often bends to justify Desire! All evils find harbor in the shadow of

justification." These arguments (?) are too ridiculous to be answered. Some may say that Christ did not teach against the use of these detrimentials, but the people were taught to use wisdom and discretion as may be seen. " For a bishop must be blameless * * * not given to wine * * * but sober, just, holy, temperate." (Titus 1: 7-8.) "Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience." (II. Peter 6: 7.) "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: that aged men should be sober, grave, temperate." (Titus 2: 12.)

Mormonism takes a positive stand in fighting these evils. For over three-quarters of a century thousands of Latter-day Saints have refrained from the use of them, and to-day the great majority of "Mormons" are teetotalers. As a result they are healthy, prosperous and are progressing rapidly. No other body of people has such a record. With propriety did the Prophet Joseph Smith stand out nearly a century in advance of his age and say to the people: "Inasmuch as any man drinketh wine or strong drink among you, behold it is not good. * * * Strong drinks are not for the belly but for the washing of your bodies * * * and again tobacco is not for the body neither for the belly, and is not for man, but it is an herb for bruises and all sick cattle, to be used with judgment and skill * * * and again hot drinks are not for the body nor belly." If it were not more than equal in all other respects, this one principle is sufficient to elevate Mormonism far above any of the creeds of the world. Could any religion advocate a grander or more ennobling principle than one which if lived would relieve the world of nearly all crime and sin? We have seen the source of most of the evils in the world, and the eradication of them is within the reach of mankind if they will live according to the teachings of Mormonism. No religion can teach perfection and condone the use of the above-mentioned evils; consequently if Mormonism is the only religion teaching the abstinence from these things, it is the religion which Avill best prepare souls for eternal life. It has the highest ideals, offers its members the grandest opportunities ! It has for its motto, "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

[As references, the writer has consulted "Krohn on Hygiene," J. A. Conwell, author of "Manhood's Morning," and Dr. J. A. Widtsoe on "Word of Wisdom."]

John A. Maynes

"President John A. Maynes said that the great commandment given by our Savior, that we should love our neighbor as ourselves, if universally obeyed, would preclude all kinds and degrees of social misery now prevalent in the world. Fraud, injustice, oppression, slander, and every other evil that is the least injurious to any human being would be done away with, and a condition that would far exceed the expectations of the most enthusiastic socialist would prevail. Said that **an answer to prayer is a revelation from God to man. A man who does not believe in revelation has no right to pray.**"

(The Millennial Star, No. 22, Vol. LXXVI. Thursday, May 28, 1914)

S. W. Richards

"Innocent vices" — there are none.

There are wrongs which persons may commit against themselves, and the observer says: "Well, he is only injuring himself, and if he will do so it is nobody's business, so long as he does not interfere with others." I assume that this is a mistake, and one to be avoided. **Man has no right to self-debasement of any kind**, either mental or physical.

Some have excused their indulgences in vice and ruinous habits, with the idea that they injure no one but themselves; but this is a false conclusion, a deceitful, if not wicked perversion of truth. Man is but a link in the great chain of humanity, and he cannot do that which shall destroy the efficiency of that relation which he sustain to others, without incurring penalties that must be endured, peradventure, by the generations to come.

"Sin and the **violation of the laws of life** are not to be excused in anyone. **All the energy of man's powers, mentally, physically or spiritually, should be secured to the generations following.** It is their lawful inheritance, and **should be transmitted to posterity in all the excellence, purity and divinity that man is capable of possessing.** It is their right, a right of which they must not be deprived; cannot be, without violating an eternal compact of endless lives.

"Ignorance of the eternal purpose and relation that man sustains to his fellowman, especially to his generations after him, is a fruitful, but inexcusable cause of much of the human frailty exhibited by sensual man.

"The parent acknowledges his duty to educate, and implant in the minds of his children every principle of intelligence that can serve to qualify them for the realities of life. Of how much more importance it should be to endow that child with both physical and mental endowments, which are to be transmitted in the conception of the being, and are not otherwise acquired!

"There is a higher relation, a higher obligation than that which is earthly, and the vicious qualities of one being should never become the inheritance of another.

"A man has no more right to entail vicious propensities upon another by generation, than he has by education. **When a man can habituate himself to profanity and lying (twin vices), to drunkenness, and the criminalities so prevalent in our professed Christian communities of enlightened notions, he has no right to posterity through which to perpetuate his sinful, God-defying career, in violation of every covenant by virtue of which he holds any relation to the immortal, eternal and Divine.**

“Example is a great educator. **Let a child know that his father can swear, curse, drink, and smoke without any compunctions of conscience, and that child's road is clear to infamy and disgrace**, and the responsibility will be placed to the father's account. A mother's influence, though more genial and consistent with the right, may not be sufficient to overcome, by precept, the force of example.

“No mother should be under the necessity of assuming the opposite of a father's example, in doing her duty to her children. To thus antagonize father and mother, husband and wife, is a violation of the marital relation. Discord and strife ensue, and the relation that was in the councils of the just, devised as an eternal union, becomes undesirable, oftentimes unbearable, and is dissolved; all in consequence of the persistent vicious habits of the father — man. What a fearful debt such a man owes to justice! And what a woeful fact that the debt must be paid! While the faith of the people may not generally seem to be impaired, **vices creep in among them, and in some instances become so common, and are so freely indulged in without reproof or restraint, that they are looked upon as innocent, as without criminal liability; while in fact they are vices not to be tolerated — are directly in violation of law, or God's word and will, revealed for man's exaltation**, and without observance of which none can be fully justified. He that offends in the least, may be adjudged guilty of all, if he turn not therefrom, for sin lieth at his door.

“To those who are believers in the revelations of God to man, through his Prophet, Joseph Smith, I would invite special attention to the almost universally prevailing habit of **using tobacco**. Many who make such profession, both old and young, are **completely enslaved** by the filthy, abominable practice of either smoking or chewing this detestable weed, with which the earth and humanity are cursed. In the beginning, God, the Creator, forbade the use of one of the fruits of the garden by man. This, designed to be test of man's integrity to his Father's instructions, resulted in disobedience and punishment.

“God has forbidden the Saints, in our day, the use of tobacco. He has said ‘it is not for the body, neither for the belly, and is not good for man;’ while thousands who profess to be Saints, declare by their practice in the constant use of it, that it is good for man, and they will not do without it. The practice of one is directly opposite to the declaration of the other. There is a lie somewhere, and who is guilty of it? It becomes a very serious matter when we read that all liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth, while it is also written that ‘it is impossible for God to lie.’

“It is clear from this evidence that judgment must be rendered against him who is guilty of both the lie and the practice, even though he professes to be a Saint, and deliberately refuses to live by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God. This he is commanded to do, and a persistent violation of law is sin, the wages of which is death. The fact that man may and does become a slave to such a deleterious weed, should be enough to cause him to shun it as he would the serpent of death. This most filthy, disgusting habit, to which so many have become abandoned, is as universally abhorred by sensitive woman, as it is entirely repugnant to the more sensitive nature of the Holy Spirit of promise, to those who are obedient.

“Youthful reader, let me urge you to refrain from all that God has forbidden, and take delight in reforming, by your example as well as precept, those who have so freely indulged in the many habits and vices that prevail, as to look upon them as being innocent to the present life of man and to his future happiness, while they are in fact the subtle tempter leading him to degradation and misery.

“Be admonished to go not in the way of the unbeliever nor approve the pernicious habits of the Gentiles, who have so far departed from the right, that their cup is full, and their day of grace is virtually passed; but remember that God has purposed to raise up a peculiar people, by calling out of Babylon those who are willing to forsake her ways, follies, vices, and sins, and walk in His paths, where all who will may find peace.

“We live in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation; a generation so intensely given up to sensualities, that they are almost wholly lost to spiritualities. We live in a day that is dark with unbelief, full of deceit, when every man is seeking his own and not another's good; when greed, sensual indulgence, and appetites have no bounds; and in the last, the eleventh hour of that day, the last call is made for man to reform his ways, and bring all his desires in subjection to the laws of life; both the temporal and the spiritual life of man. To accomplish this the dark ways of unbelief must be abandoned, and that which is of God — the light of life — must be sought after, the voice and words of wisdom must be listened to, and be faithfully observed — turning away from all the evil propensities of humanity, and from the ways in which the Gentile nations have corrupted themselves, and walking in that narrow way which only a few ever find, that leads to a knowledge of God, the fountain of all life.

“The Apostle has truly said in holy writ, that of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage. **If by the lusts of the flesh and much wantonness man becomes the servant of corruption, by practicing that which is sensual, in gratifying the tastes, desires, or passions, he shall utterly perish in his own corruption.** To save man from his evil habits and customs, derived from Gentile practices and indulgences, is the great object of the latter-day dispensation of God to man. **A life of selfish indifference leads to many of the common evils and vices that prevail so universally among men, and make them like the brute beasts.** They should be avoided by all Saints. The many indulgences of life, that appeal only to the senses, are but snares to the feet and degrading to the soul. If a different life from that of the Gentiles does not characterize and make peculiar the lives of the Saints, as a people, then the gathering has been practically a failure, and other means must be employed, and terrible they may be, to bring to pass the realization of God's purposes. He will not be frustrated in His designs. **Therefore touch not, taste not, handle riot, that which has been forbidden; which weakens and demoralizes, degrades and enslaves, and will eventually destroy the sensitive part of man's nature, and leave him to be led captive at the will of him who is ever seeking to destroy.**

“All excessive indulgences beyond the actual demands of nature are vices, not innocent, but destructive to man’s physical organization. Every departure from the strictest rules of morality is vicious and corrupting to his spiritual being, from which, only by repentance and sorrow, can he be redeemed.”

(“Innocent Vices”, The Contributor, March 1891)

Other Latter-day Saints

Milton Bennion

“The legitimate sphere of individualism consists in the right and duty of self-development on the part of each man and woman, but that development is unethical and onesided if it is not directed toward the service of humanity. We recognize, further, the right of the individual to judge moral questions that concern his own life, but that judgment must have respect to the well-being of the whole race. **That moral philosophy, however, which gives the individual the right to do as he pleases, so long as he does not interfere with the like right of others, recognizes only a negative duty. No man can be thus free from positive obligation to his fellows.** As partakers of the spiritual wealth of civilized society, we are debtors to humanity, and, as such, can fill our obligations to the race only by using our abilities and knowledge to the fullest extent for the benefit of mankind. This debt on the part of the one to the many is so great that no man can possibly do more than justice demands of him by way of service. Not how much, but how best can we serve, is the problem for each of us to solve. Let us find what we can do best that society needs most; then do it with the well-being of our fellows as a motive, and our own happiness will take care of itself. ‘For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.’ No greater truth was ever written. It is also true that he that seeketh his own pleasure shall lose it; while he that loseth himself in the service of God and his fellowmen shall find an enduring happiness in fellowship with them. This is the proper end and destiny of man.”

(“A Plea for the Larger Life”, The Improvement Era, September 1910)

Milton Bennion, M. A., PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY, UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

“Is he not, then, indebted to the race for this rich and ever-increasing inheritance? Instead of boasting of his superiority over the ancients, because of his science and art, his constitutional government, and his material progress, he ought rather to manifest the deepest gratitude to struggling humanity for this great heritage. Does not justice demand that he shall protect this culture and material civilization, enrich it to the extent of his ability, and pass it on to succeeding generations? **His debt to the past is immeasurable.** To those individuals who struggled and died for his freedom and well-being before he was born, he cannot pay this debt; neither could they discharge their obligations to their progenitors. But there is the obligation, nevertheless,

and the possibility of its fulfilment lies in the fact of race unity. **The individual is a debtor to humanity**, and to humanity, according as God shall give him strength, he may pay this debt. I speak here of obligations to mankind and possibilities of rendering service from a purely secular point of view. Man's obligations to God, and the further possibilities of serving humanity that religion reveals, may be added to this.

"To anticipate a possible objection, we may ask this question: If, then, **man comes into the world a debtor, under obligation to serve humanity for all his days**, what about his supposed individual freedom, and his ' **right to do as he pleases, so long as he does not interfere with the like right of others?**' But **has he any such right?** And if he had, would that constitute moral freedom? Would it not include **the right of a man**, after having been brought up and educated by society, **to commit suicide**, instead of giving to society something in return for what he has received? **It is necessary to distinguish clearly between free agency, legal right and moral right, and to understand the meaning of freedom. Free agency means that a man may serve either God or the devil, without external compulsion.** How can a man be compelled to serve the one or the other? It must, in the nature of the case, be a matter for **free choice. He has his free agency to commit all sorts of crime, even to murder. But he will very soon learn that he has no legal right to do so. The idea of noninterference with the lives, the property, and the peace of others is commonly taken as a basic principle in determining legal rights. This is good, as far as it goes, but it is not all.** A man may live within his legal rights, and remain a moral weakling. The moral life is based upon a higher principle, a much nobler conception of life, — the idea of race-unity and **the mutual indebtedness and obligation of man to man.** To be an ethical man, means to be a social individual, one whose life is brought into harmony with the idea of the welfare and betterment of humanity. To be a mere individual is no better than to be a toad. If that is the sort of individuality and freedom a man desires, he may find it without troubling himself about the moral law.

"What, then, is freedom? In a superficial way, and in the ordinary sense, it is to be without external restraint. But moral freedom means much more. A man may be free from external restraints, and yet be a slave to passion, appetite, ill-temper or other form of vice. As conformity to the law of the land is the condition of legal freedom, so only as a man lives the moral law, in both its negative and positive aspects, is he morally free. And moral freedom must always be regarded as an end in education.

"The discovery of the nature of the moral law has been one of the great aims of both religious and philosophic thought. In both scripture and philosophy morality is prominent and fundamental.

"Two things move me to ever greater awe; the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me. Duty ! Word so sublime and full of meaning, whence art thou, and what origin is worthy of thee? Thou dost not appeal to us through the persuasiveness of passion, nor by threats dost thou seek to stir our wills. Thou wouldst not have us shrink from thee in fear and terror. But thou settest up a law which is of our own souls; to this law thou expecteth

unconditional submission. Before the law we bow in awe, even though not always in obedience; all feelings retire before it in silence, even though they may seek to avoid its decrees.***Kant.

“Education is most certainly a duty. **The moral law requires that a person shall fit himself to render the best possible service to humanity.** While education, viewed from the social side, is love and service to God and man, it is also, from the individual point of view, a realization of the moral law within. There is no antagonism between a man's social duties and his moral perfection. **Conflict between the desires of the individual and the good of society arises only on the lower plane of material self-seeking.** The highway of social service is the only road to individual self-realization. “He that finds his life shall lose it; and he that loses his life for my sake shall find it.” Likewise, he that seeks to perfect his life apart from society and from social duties shall mar it; and he that loses thought of himself in the service of others shall attain the highest and most complete development.”

(“Concerning the Education of Young Men”, Improvement Era, April 1906)

Dr. Lowell L. Bennion

“I trust my own capacity to live life deeply and fully with the resources God has given me more than I trust chemicals whose dangers I have seen and whose values I have not found.

“Those who encourage the use of harmful and illegal drugs for monetary or other selfish reasons are the real culprits. Those who push or sell LSD, marijuana, “speed,” and similar drugs should be taken to task, convicted, and made to pay the penalty of the violation of law. Laws should, in my judgment, be passed to forbid the advertising of tobacco and alcoholic beverages. **It is inconsistent and nonsensical to advise young people to abstain from harmful drugs on the one hand and then permit irresponsible citizens to entice them by deceptive advertising on the other.**”

(“Drugs: Their Use and Abuse”, The Improvement Era, October 1968)

M. Dallas Burnett

Early in 1966 the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints called upon its members to “join in a concerted movement to fight pornography wherever it may be found.” That call to the battlements was no idle invitation. Pornography, smut, obscenity, or whatever word one chooses to use in describing this material, it is a satanic tool that

threatens the moral integrity of both children and adults.

One national organization, Citizens for Decent Literature, estimates that the smut business takes in two billion dollars annually in the United States. This includes both the legally obscene material and the magazines, sold openly on newsstands, that would only be classified as offensive.

It is of little consequence whether this guess at the dollar amount is accurate or not; pornography would be a serious problem if it involved only a few million dollars. The money, of course, is simply one measure of the volume of material that flows from the presses and cameras of panderers for profit. If you care to acquaint yourself personally with the gravity of the problem, check the magazine racks of drugstores and cigar stands in larger cities. Or better still, arrange for some behind-the-Counter purchases at so-called "candy stores" near many high schools in America.

When the First Presidency urged Church members and "all other right thinking people" to fight pornography, it was intended that this be done within the framework of the law. The statement specified that "legislators and civil authorities in every state and community should do all in their power to

curb this pernicious evil."

And as a key to action, the statement added, "Local as well as federal processes may be required to stem this tide, and yet such action will come only if an aroused electorate makes its feelings known."

In order to make their feelings effectively known, it would be helpful if citizens and Church members were conscious of the current legal status of the fight against obscene material. The legal situation is neither particularly bright nor completely clear, but three obscenity decisions handed down by the United States Supreme Court in March 1966 have provided some guides for those who would control smut and pornography in the United States.

One decision upheld the federal obscenity conviction of a New York magazine publisher, Ralph Ginzburg. Another, based on the same reasoning, upheld a New York State conviction of a book publisher, Edward Mishkin. The third decision reversed a Massachusetts court by finding that John Cleland's eighteenth century novel *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (commonly known as *Fanny Hill*) was not obscene.

An important point needs to be made before describing the views of the Supreme Court in these cases and in at least one previous

one. One of the vital freedoms guaranteed in the U.S. Bill of Rights is freedom of expression, both in speech and through the press. Any attempt to legally restrict the right to speak or to publish must be carefully considered

M. Dallas Burnett, assistant professor of communications at Brigham Young University, has wide journalistic experience and is presently completing his Ph.D. dissertation at Northwestern University. He is president of the quorum of elders in the Orem 29th Ward.

Improvement Era

in relation to the free speech heritage.

In fact, there are those on the Supreme Court who feel that the First Amendment guarantees are to be taken quite literally. Justice Hugo Black wrote in *Mishkin vs. New York* (1966) that "the First and Fourteenth Amendments taken together command that neither Congress nor the States shall pass laws which in any manner abridge freedom of speech and press—whatever the subjects discussed." Joined by Justice William Douglas, Black believes obscenity laws are unconstitutional.

Fortunately, Black and Douglas are in the minority on the high court and among others who make

and judge the laws. The Supreme Court has said specifically that obscenity lies outside the constitutional protection of the First Amendment. Nevertheless, freedom of speech and press are basic rights, and it is no simple matter to decide what is protected expression and what is not.

This leads to a basic dilemma faced by the courts over the years: defining or deciding what is obscene and what is not. Both the federal laws and most state codes make trafficking in obscene, lewd, and lascivious material illegal. But the rub has always been that most laws do not define obscenity.

In a 1957 decision, *Roth vs. United States*, the Supreme Court

laid down the first comprehensive criteria for judging obscenity. This standard has become known as the Roth Test. In substance it provides that material will not be considered obscene unless:

1. To the average person, applying contemporary community standards, the dominant theme taken as a whole appeals to the prurient interest.
2. The material is utterly without redeeming social importance.
3. The material is patently offensive.

Since 1957 courts all over the country have had occasion to use the Roth Test. In fact, the Supreme Court has applied it several times since 1957. Obviously, the test itself is subject to varying interpretation as to what is meant by "the average person," "the dominant theme," "socially important," and "patently offensive." As for the "community standard," the court has taken the view that this should mean the national community, not the moral standard of any individual community. This means, of course, that the smaller, homogeneous communities of the nation can have no higher standards in regard to obscenity than such metropolitan areas as Chicago,

New York, or Los Angeles.

It should also be added that the use of the test, especially in higher courts, has generally been quite liberal. With few exceptions, hardcore pornography is about the only thing found obscene in recent years.

With the recent Ginzburg decision the court added a new dimension to obscenity that provided a glimmer of hope for those who have looked to the law and the courts for assistance in fighting purveyors of filth. The phrase "glimmer of hope" is used because

of the neutralizing opinion handed down at the same time on the novel *Fanny Hill*.

Ralph Ginzburg was responsible for a magazine titled *Eros*, a bi-weekly newsletter about sex, and a book entitled *The Housewife's Handbook on Sexual Promiscuity*. The court viewed the "publications against a background of commercial exploitation of erotica solely for the sake of their prurient appeal."

In essence, the court decided

Latter-day Saints have been asked to use "local as well as federal processes" to curb the flow of smut.

March 1967

that Ginzburg deliberately and intentionally promoted and sold his publications on the basis of pornographic appeal. For that reason, the five-man majority of the court agreed that the intent of the accused should be considered in deciding obscenity. And because of this man's apparent design to pander and sell sex for the sake of profit, his conviction on a federal obscenity charge was upheld. The court noted, however, that the actual content of these publications might not have been considered obscene under the Roth Test.

Justice Brennan, who wrote the majority opinion, summarized: "Where an exploitation of interests

in titillation by pornography is shown with respect to material lending itself to such exploitation through pervasive treatment or description of sexual matters, such evidence may support the determination that the material is obscene even though in other contexts the material would escape condemnation."

Although the opinion said the examination of intention and manner of promoting material was a logical extension of the Roth Test, it should be kept in mind that this was in fact a new approach to obscenity. It came as quite a shock to Ginzburg, who had even guaranteed that if his material failed to reach buyers because of United States Post Office censorship, there would be a full refund.

On its face this decision would seem to say that all those who deliberately promote and sell their wares on the basis of their obscene appeal can effectively be prosecuted by local, state, and federal authorities. On second thought, though, it must be assumed that those in the borderline areas just beyond hard-core pornography will now merely be more cautious in promoting their goods.

In reality the court has not altered its liberal stance on what is obscene. The evidence of this was

in the Fanny Hill decision, in which a six to three majority overruled Massachusetts and said the book was not obscene.

Justice Tom Clark's dissenting opinion illustrates the disagreement at the highest judicial level over what is obscene. He said: "It is with regret that I write this dissenting opinion. However, the public should know of the continuous flow of pornographic material reaching this Court and the increasing problem States have in controlling it. *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, the book involved here, is typical. I have stomached past cases for almost 10 years without much outcry. Though I am not known to be a purist— or a shrinking violet— this book is too much even for me. It is important that the Court has refused to declare it obscene and thus give it further circulation."

The basic liberalness of the court on the question of what is obscene still stands. Questionable material must be without any redeeming social importance, which means that only hard-core pornography will be restricted, since there is always a "critic" to be found who will testify that a dirty novel has literary merit or that a lewd movie is a work of art. This leaves a vast array of near hard-core material that no moral person would care to see circulated in his community, especially to youngsters.

There is no question that the Supreme Court should be applauded for its willingness to consider the motivations of smut peddlers. The fact remains, though, that the desire of the court to give the greatest possible protection to

this cherished right of free expression is constantly being abused.

There appear to be at least two possible legal routes available in the fight against obscenity.

Justice Harlan suggested one in his dissenting opinion in the Fanny Hill case. He takes the position that the federal law should limit only hard-core pornography and that the states should be provided some flexibility in dealing with their own obscenity problems. "From my standpoint," he wrote, "the Fourteenth Amendment requires of a State only that it apply criteria rationally related to the accepted notion of obscenity and that it reach results not wholly out of step with current American standards."

In recognizing "varying conditions across the country and the range of views on the needs and reasons for curbing obscenity," Justice Harlan has offered a solution for the community that does not care to accept the standards of New York or Los Angeles. The Supreme Court will hear an ob-

scenity case in its current term. It can only be hoped that Harlan's position will gain favor among his colleagues.

A second possibility would be the acceptance of the principle that obscenity can be related to the age of the individual involved. In other words, laws could be passed restricting the sale of obscene material to youth. There is some indication from decisions in the United States that the courts may be willing to make a distinction between what is fit for children and allowable for adults. Youth protection laws may be an answer.

In the final analysis, however, every mother and father must bear the major responsibility in the home. Under present conditions, the parent who makes no effort to guide television and motion picture viewing or who offers no help in the selection of reading matter is gambling with the security of his children.

Careful counseling about movies and television is a must. And every home should create an atmosphere that encourages mature but wholesome reading.

(***, The Improvement Era, March 1967)

The word censorship sounds like a fingernail scraping across a chalkboard.

Censors are associated with the Star Chamber of seventeenth century England. They remind us of the tyranny of Hitler and of modern dictatorships, such as Spain, Portugal, Red China,

and the Soviet Union.

In the United States an attempt was made to eliminate the censor and censorship through the First Amendment to the Constitution, which says in part, "Congress shall make no law . . . [forbidding] freedom of speech, or of the press." Censorship, however, is not unknown in the United States. It has been used during time of war, and the Supreme Court has allowed cities and states to pre-censor motion pictures under very special conditions.

But with the current flood of obscene, lewd, and degenerate material that is so readily available to youngsters, is it possible that parents who are concerned for their children may need to advocate some form of legal censorship?

The question is posed with great hesitation. I am a journalist, teacher, and Latter-day Saint. That background demands a commitment to freedom and liberty. Censorship is historically a tool of tyranny. It is my reluctant conclusion, however, that in this country we have finally reached the point where the machinery of the state must be used to protect our youth from those who would exploit sex in books, movies, and magazines. Too many homes have lost control, willingly or unwillingly, of their youngsters' reading

Improvement Era

orship tie Answer?

and viewing habits.

Increasingly the laws that make obscenity a federal, state, or local offense have become relatively ineffective. The highest tribunal in the land has consistently taken a dim view of local obscenity convictions — finding in many instances that the material viewed as obscene in the local community is not obscene by federal standards.

This unwillingness to accept some local determination as to whether material is obscene or not was repeated in May 1967 when the Supreme Court reversed an Arkansas decision that had found several men's magazines unfit for sale. When the court accepted the case for review, it agreed to look into the matter of allowing the states to establish their own standards of obscenity. This was an approach that had previously been advocated by Justice John Marshall Harlan. In its decision, however, the court did not even discuss this question, which suggests that it will continue to decide obscenity on the basis of a liberal "national" standard.

If the court proceeds on its present course, and there is no reason to believe it will not, prosecutions in cities and states of anything but hard-core pornography will likely fail in the end.

This brings us back to the question

of what to do. It may be that now is the time to consider censorship of materials going into the hands of those under 18 unless there is parental approval. Let the adults consume the filth that the Supreme Court feels im-

pelled to protect under the First Amendment, but should we not do something to keep it from the youngsters?

Censorship is a hard word. There are some who would soften the sound by talking about "youth protection" or "classification." Let's not gloss it over. Whatever the phrase, we are talking about some form of censorship of material for youth. The proposal should be examined in that light.

It might be well to look at the legal possibilities and problems before wrestling with the philosophical aspects of this idea. Provo, Utah, furnishes a good starting point. Provo is the home of Brigham Young University, and its population of approximately 42,000 persons is over 80 percent Latter-day Saint. In 1966 the Provo City Commission passed what was called a youth protection ordinance. The law required that all motion picture theater operators and all vendors of magazines and books designate material that was unfit for youth. In this case, a youth was anyone under the age of 18. Once a publication or movie had been so designated, the vendor or operator became subject to a misdemeanor charge if he allowed an underage

person to buy a magazine or attend the motion picture. An attempt was made in the law to define what might be considered unfit for youth, and the law further provided that any ten citizens could complain that material had been improperly classified. Upon complaint, the city commission could make an

Dr. Dallas Burnett, Orem (Utah) Twenty-ninth Ward elders quorum president and associate professor of communications at Brigham Young University, is a former magazine editor who is intimately aware of the importance of freedom of expression.

examination of the case and could withdraw the license of the offending individual.

Just before the law went into effect, it was challenged in Federal District Court by a Salt Lake City magazine distributor. He complained that the law violated the freedom of the press guaranteed in the first and fourteenth amendments to the Constitution. An injunction was granted.

Provo authorities had passed their law with great gusto and at the first indication of a challenge promised a fight all the way to the Supreme Court. There was a change of heart, however, and just before the case was to be heard in Federal District Court, Provo repealed the law and passed two other ordinances.

The new ordinances dealt with movies and printed material separately.

More importantly, the new laws eliminated the licensing provisions and also any method of challenging the classification of material made by the news vendor or theater operator. The original law had also left the classification up to the seller, but there was a method of questioning whether his classification had been appropriate. Under the new laws, everything was left in the hands of the seller. His decision as to whether something was obscene or not was the final word.

A complaint was also brought against the two new ordinances by the same Salt Lake City magazine distributor, but the court this time refused to grant an injunction against enforcement of the law. The case, which was filed in mid-1966 against the two laws, has never come to trial and likely never will.

Although the final Provo ordinances

May 1968

13

"Society may find itself unable even to teach morality."

were toothless tigers, there is a purpose in discussing them. First, there was a psychological factor here that cannot

be discounted. The first ordinance never really went into effect, yet most of the magazine sellers in the city complied with it by taking many of the "girlie"-type magazines off the open stands and placing them behind the counters where they were no longer available to browsing youngsters. This action represented a classification of the magazines as "unfit" for youth. And even with the passage of the two new ordinances, which offered no legal threat at all to the dealers, most newsstands continued to keep such magazines behind the counter.

A second significant point in the Provo experiment is that it was precipitated in the first place by concerned citizens. A few people who had been "shocked" by some movies shown locally organized themselves in an attempt to bring about greater public awareness of the prevalence of obscenity and near-obscenity in motion pictures and magazines. The culmination of this effort was the Utah County Council for Better Movies and Literature, which in turn encouraged the passage of Provo's first ordinance. Over one thousand persons attended a meeting sponsored by the council prior to the passage of the Provo law. There can be little doubt that this impressed the city commission.

Genuine citizen concern is absolutely essential in fighting pornography, but at the same time it must be recognized that obscenity is not at all easy to define. Over-zealousness can lead to "witch hunting," which may be just as evil as the pornography itself.

The suggestion here, then, is that

the Provo approach is only a step in the direction of what must eventually be done to solve this problem. It is becoming more and more apparent that the youth protection law is the only real answer. However, any successful youth protection law must have teeth in it. Putting movie house owners and magazine dealers "on their honor" is not the answer, unfortunately.

To be more precise, we are calling attention to a legal concept called variable obscenity, as contrasted with constant obscenity. There are some indications that the Supreme Court of the United States may give its blessing to the idea that materials that are not obscene for adults may be obscene for youngsters. This is not a particularly consistent moral or religious philosophy, of course, but it may very well be the last legal hope in the battle against a declining moral standard.

There are several reasons for believing that the high court may give legal sanction to this idea of variable obscenity. In the first instance, Dallas, Texas, has a law that provides for classifying movies as to their fitness for showing to youngsters under 16. Under the Dallas ordinance, the classification is made by a city-appointed board — in essence, a censorship board. This particular law was found constitutional by the United States Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in 1966. The case has been

appealed to the Supreme Court and will be decided sometime this year. In the opinion of the Circuit Court, the Supreme Court has already suggested and accepted the variable obscenity concept in previous decisions. The Circuit Court judge wrote:

"The acceptance of this variable obscenity approach indicates that the

Supreme Court would uphold a properly drawn statute designed to regulate material obscene as to children so long as the legislation does not have the effect of reducing adults to a level of consumption fit for children. The motion picture classification statute presents a prime example of a means of protecting children without appreciably restricting adults."

In addition to the Dallas case, the high court will also decide the constitutionality of a New York State law that makes it illegal to sell a magazine containing a picture of a nude person to anyone under the age of 17.

Further, the Supreme Court said in the Arkansas decision cited earlier: "In none of the cases was there a claim that the statute in question reflected a specific and limited state concern for juveniles." All of this points to the hope that the Supreme Court is prepared to accept the youth protection law concept.

There is no purpose in spelling out in detail how these laws should read.

It is sufficient to make plain that cities and states may be given the legal go-ahead to tighten the lid on the sort of things that may be sold and shown to young people.

Is censorship the answer? Is the problem serious enough to take a step that involves the government in a responsibility that is basically parental?

Reluctantly, I say yes.

Too many parents in our society have abdicated their responsibility. Someone or something must protect these unprotected youngsters. In fact, the protective parents even need help. It is traditional to argue that morals cannot be legislated, but the society that doesn't make a try at it, at least for its children, may find itself unable even to teach morality. O

14

Improvement Era

- The publication and sale of obscene material is BIG business in America today. Degenerate sex pictures and pornographic literature, covertly peddled and sold in most cities and communities, net greedy smut merchants millions of dollars annually.

It is impossible to estimate the amount of harm to impressionable teenagers and to assess the volume of sex crimes attributable to pornography, but its influence is extensive. Sexual violence is increasing at an alarming pace. Many parents are deeply concerned about conditions which involve young boys and girls in sex parties and illicit relations. While there is no official yardstick with which to measure accurately the reasons for increases in any criminal violation, we must face reality. Pornography, in all its forms, is one major cause of sex crimes, sexual aberrations, and perversions.

Is our society becoming so wicked that we are turning from virtue and integrity to immorality and degradation? Are we becoming morally bankrupt and letting

(Reprinted by permission from the FBI
Law Enforcement Bulletin.)

J. Edgar Hoover,
FBI director,
writes about the

Evils of

Obscene Materials

our principles of conduct and decency deteriorate? Are we forsaking the simple teachings of right over wrong and good over bad?

Let us look about us. In the publishing, theatrical, and entertainment fields, are the good, enlightening, and educational qualities of their products being overshadowed by too much emphasis on obscenity, vulgarity, incest, and homosexuality? Many people believe this to be true. But the legitimate productions of these media are rather mild when compared with the hard-core pornography flooding the country in the forms of films, "playing" cards, "comic" books, paperbacks, and pictures. Such filth in the hands of young people and curious adolescents does untold damage and leads to disastrous consequences.

Police officials who have discussed this critical problem with me unequivocally state that lewd and obscene material plays a motivating role in sexual violence. In case after case, the sex criminal has on his person or in his possession pornographic literature or pictures. Under these conditions,

it is not surprising to note that

forcible rape in 1966 increased 10 percent over the 1965 total, a violation occurring every 21 minutes. Since 1960, forcible rape has increased 50 percent.

Obviously, all that is being done to combat the sale and traffic in obscene materials in the nation is not enough. Sound and workable laws are needed, and where they do exist, they should be vigorously enforced. Since many courts seem to judge obscenity on the basis of the moral standards in the community, the public has a vital role in upgrading the level of community morality. When obscene material is discovered, it should be exposed and citizens should complain to proper authorities. When pornography is received in the mails, postal authorities should be advised. Citizens should come forward and cooperate in the prosecution of the offenders.

Obscene material is indeed evil, but it is not a necessary evil. If the illicit profits in pornography were replaced with stiff punishments for the filth purveyors, this evil would be brought under control.

"In case after case, the sex criminal has on his person pornographic literature."

The Improvement Era Column

NO-LIQUOR-TOBACCO COLUMN

(Concluded from page 43)

board of directors of the International
Young People's Luther League adopts the
following:

1. We vigorously oppose the legalized liquor traffic which is sweeping an ever greater number of American youth into a stream of drunkenness, immorality, and crime.
2. We vigorously protest the treacherous and misleading liquor advertising which is directed primarily at the youth of America, presenting the use of liquor as desirable and unarmful.
3. We call upon the Christian youth of our land to take a firm stand, out of faith in Christ and love for his righteousness, against the liquor traffic and the rising tide of intemperance.
4. We extend the support of the young people we represent to the law enforcing agencies of our various communities to combat and correct the existing conditions.
5. We urge the support of our Christian young people of the many temperance organizations which are at work in our communities to conquer this liquor menace and to foster law enforcement and sobriety.

"The Voice" Comments:

No nation has ever been able to drink itself prosperous.

There is one way and only one way to "control" the liquor traffic and that is by police action backed up by the power of public opinion.

Legislatures cannot "legislate" morality. They cannot legislate health. They can pass laws intended to reduce the prevalence of disease.

It is a probability that during the year 1947, someone you know and love will be killed, seriously injured, or have his or her life placed in extreme jeopardy by the irresponsibility of a had-been-drinking driver. The man who will sell him the liquor is no doubt already licensed to do business in partnership with your government.

Joe Hic y :man

["The Rights of a Man"](#)

Hyrum Andrus*

"Joseph Smith held that there was a limit to what the state could successfully accomplish, or what man should attempt to accomplish through the state. 'The laws of

men may guarantee to a people **protection in the honorable pursuits of this life**, and the temporal happiness arising from a **protection against unjust insults and injustices**,' he wrote of the state; 'and when this is said, all is said, that can be in truth, of the power, extent, and influence of the laws of men, exclusive of the law of God.'

"Nephite prophets were not confused on the basic principles of freedom and government. **It was not the function of the state to legislate righteousness or establish social and economic justice**, except as it had an indirect bearing on these objectives by the maintenance of freedom and civil justice. **By teaching the law of God and applying it to the social and economic areas of society, Nephite prophets sought to raise a true standard of spiritual, moral, and social precepts that would persuade the people by an inward motivation to reform society according to Christian principles.** When Alma, as High Priest over the Church and Chief Judge over the Nephite nation, confronted a situation of 'great inequality among the people,' he did not seek a solution through the state, though being Chief Judge he could have. Instead, he resigned his political office in favor of 'a wise man' who would 'enact laws ... and ... put them in force according to the wickedness and the crimes of the people.' In this action, **he shored up the state in its role of establishing freedom and civil justice.** Alma then went 'among the people of Nephi, that he might preach the word of God unto them, to stir them up in remembrance to their duty, and that he might pull down, by the word of God, all the pride and craftiness and all the contentions which were among his people, seeing no way that he might reclaim them save it were in bearing down in pure testimony against them.'

"Man was not to be free merely out of respect for another's diverging opinions. This was not freedom, but tolerance. **Man was to be free because God gave him agency as a principle concomitant to the life within him.** 'We deem it a just principle, and it is one the force of which we believe ought to be duly considered by every individual, that all men ... have the privilege of thinking for themselves upon all matters relative to conscience,' Joseph Smith wrote. 'Consequently, then, we are not disposed, had we the power, to deprive any one of exercising that free independence of mind which heaven has so graciously bestowed upon the human family as one of its choicest gifts.' In full accord with the Prophet, **Brigham Young said: 'The Creator has given agency to every son and daughter of Adam, and he does not infringe upon our agency. We are at liberty to believe in him and in his son Jesus Christ, or to let it alone.'**

"**But freedom was not license. Though man would not be forced to do right, he was subject to the penalty of broken law.** 'Many are disposed through their own wickedness 'to do as I damned please,'" Brigham Young observed, then added: 'and they are damned.'

"**The volition of the creature is free, to do good or to do evil; but we are responsible to God for our acts, as man is responsible to man if he breaks the laws which man enacts.** When we boast of our independence to act, it would be well for us to remember that **we are bounded by these limits; if we transcend them and violate the laws of God, and man, we shall sooner or later be made to suffer the penalty without any reference to our choice**

whether we are willing to suffer that penalty or not. Hence, true independence and freedom can only exist in doing right.

“...the Prophet reflected the philosophy of freedom within the kingdom of God. Brigham Young declared:

‘Go into the world ... and tell them plainly that the law of God is going to be the law of the land, and they would be terrified... But tell them that the law of liberty, and equal rights to every person, would prevail and they could understand that, for it is according to the Constitution of our country...

‘The Holy Priesthood and the laws thereof .. will secure the rights of men... You can believe in one God, or in three gods, or in a thousand gods; you can worship the sun or the moon, or a stick or a stone, or anything you please... They can do as they please, so long as they do not infringe upon the rights of their fellow beings.

(*** Doctrines of the Kingdom: The Government of God)

L. L. Greene Richards

“But, while you are passing thus gaily along, Remember, dear boys, **you've no right to do wrong.**”

(“Sowing Wild Oats”, Improvement Era, 1902)

John Benson

“As referenced throughout this book, civil and religious leaders alike have asked for individuals to call upon government to legislate debauchery and vices, such as prostitution, pornography, gambling and liquor. This book has also addressed the concepts of agency, freedom, liberty, and that man’s laws should mirror God’s law. Some, after reading this, may still choose to disagree on certain points and fortunately, you are free to disagree.

“I propose that it is well within the righteous dominion of government to enact laws outlawing vices and that such regulations help to preserve our liberty and agency; not destroy agency or compel, coerce or force in any manner of unrighteousness.

“Now, to ease some concerns and bring in a reminder of the reality regarding man-run government:

‘I believe we Americans should use extreme care before lending our support to any proposed government program. We should fully recognize that government is no plaything. As George Washington warned, ‘Government is not reason, it is not eloquence – it is force! Like fire, it is a dangerous servant and a fearful master!’ It is an instrument of force and

unless our conscience is clear that we would not hesitate to put a man to death, put him in jail or forcibly deprive him of his property for failing to obey a given law, we should oppose it.' (Ezra Taft Benson – The Proper Role of Government)

“Government is an instrument of force, and force – being a tool – is not necessarily good or bad, but can be used for wicked or righteous purposes. It is our duty, as citizens and as disciples of Christ, to always be found on the side of righteousness, and in supporting only those laws which uphold the principles of freedom and maintain the rights of man (D&C 98:5).

“Ezra Taft Benson also stated that 'heaven disapproves of force, coercion and intimidation'. This statement seems to contradict the possibility that government force can be used righteously. It seems to imply that because 'heaven disapproves of force' and because 'government is force' that heaven disapproves of government. We know that conclusion is not true. It is often in the seeming conflicts that we come across the greatest lessons. Ezra Taft Benson also stated that 'every person has the right to defend – even by force – his person, his liberty, and his property'. I believe we can resolve the supposed contradiction by understanding that force, as a defensive measure, and especially in enacting the law of retribution, is justified, whereas preemptive force is not justified. Likewise, Ezra Taft Benson taught that it is wrong for government to 'redistribute the wealth or force reluctant citizens to perform acts of charity against their will'.

“Perhaps a simpler way to understand the principles revealed in this book is to state that a government can rightfully enforce laws punishing sins of commission (evil actions) but not sins of omission. Punishing the sin of murder, theft, deception, and debauchery, but not punishing someone for their lack of charity. Government force should operate defensively and therefore should not punish inaction, except in cases where there exists another clear responsibility, even an unwritten contract, to perform a certain duty, such as the responsibility of parents to provide for their children.

“Where do we draw the line in what actions shall be punished by force of government? Fortunately under this republic established by our Constitution, the people and representatives of each state, and of each community, have reserved to themselves the power to make such decisions. **Although it is not always convenient to relocate, we are also free to choose which state or local government we want to be subject to.**

“Furthermore, legislating, regulating, or outlawing vices (as defined by the community) and proscribing a punishment to those who violate such laws, is not unrighteous dominion, or compulsion, and is not a destruction of agency. You are free to do as you please, you have agency to make a choice for good or evil, but there are inescapable consequences to all actions – and in some cases those consequences have been defined by society, and righteously done in accordance to God’s divine law. Government is not going to put a camera in your bedroom (let’s hope it doesn’t to get to that point) to make sure

you aren't doing evil acts in the privacy of your home, but **if your vices are made public, you may face the consequences of the law** (with due process of course). **By obeying the law, your agency and freedom will be expanded. You are free to do as you choose, free to violate the law, but not free from the consequences. Only in choosing to obey righteous laws will you experience true Liberty and expanded agency.**

"Remember, the best form of control is self-control. What is the best way to achieve the desired results of a community free from sin and vice? Let us consider D&C 121:41-42:

'No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; by kindness, and pure knowledge...'

"Let's say we agree on the above points. How far should we go? What should we do? What laws should we support? This is where I believe it is important to take the correct approach and **allow such issues to be handled at the lowest level of government that can possibly handle it.** The greatest responsibility lies on the individual and families and then local governments. The State should only be called upon to get involved in those things that can't be handled by the family or local government.

"The Federal government should be limited to those few powers granted to it in the Constitution."

(***)

Philosophers & Other Public Figures

William Blackstone*

"Let a man therefore be ever so abandoned in his principles, or vicious in his practice, **provided he keeps his wickedness to himself**, and does not offend against the **rules of public decency**, he is out of the reach of human laws. **But if he makes his vices public, though they be such as seem principally to affect himself, they then become by the bad example they set, of pernicious effects to society; and therefore it is then the business of human laws to correct them...**"

(The Absolute Rights of Individuals, 1753 ***)

William Blackstone

"An involuntary act, as it has no claim to merit, so neither can it induce any guilt; the concurrence of the will, when it has its choice to do or to avoid the fact in question, being the only thing that renders human actions either praiseworthy or culpable."

(*** Commentaries: Of The Persons Capable of Committing Crimes)

William Blackstone

“Law, in its most general and comprehensive sense, signifies a rule of action; and is applied indiscriminately to all kinds of action, whether animate or inanimate, rational or irrational. Thus, we say, the **laws of motion, of gravitation, of optics, or mechanics**, as well as the **laws of nature and of nations**. And it is that rule of action which is prescribed by some superior, and which the inferior is bound to obey.

“Thus when the Supreme Being formed the universe, and created matter... He impressed certain principles upon that matter, from which it can never depart, and without which it would cease to be. **When He put the matter into motion, He established certain laws of motion, to which all movable bodies must conform**. And, to descend from the greatest operations to the smallest, when a workman forms a clock, or other piece of mechanism, he establishes at his own pleasure certain arbitrary laws for its direction; as that the hand shall describe a given space in a given time; to which law as long as the work conforms, so long it continues in perfection, and answers the end of its formation. If we further advance, from mere inactive matter to vegetable and animal life, we shall find them still invariable. The whole progress of plants, from the seed to the root, and from thence to the seed again; the method of animal nutrition, digestion, secretion and all the branches of vital economy; - are not left to chance, or the will of the creature itself, but are performed in a wondrous involuntary manner, and guided by unerring rules laid down by the great Creator.

“This, then, is the general signification of law, **a rule of action dictated by some superior being**; and, in those creatures that have neither the power to think, nor to will, such laws must be invariably obeyed, so long as the creature itself subsists, for **its existence depends on the obedience**. But laws... denote the rules, not of action in general, but of human action or conduct: that is, the precepts by which **man, the noblest of all sublunary beings, a creature endowed with both reason and free will, is commanded to make use of those faculties in the general regulation of his behavior. Man, considered as a creature, must necessarily be subject to the laws of his Creator, for he is entirely a dependent being. A being independent of any other, has no rule to pursue, but such as he prescribes to himself; but a state of dependence will inevitably oblige the inferior to take the will of him, on whom he depends, as the rule of his conduct**; not indeed in every particular, but in all those points wherein his dependence consists. This principle, therefore, has more or less extent and effect, in proportion as the superiority of the one and the dependence of the other is greater or less, absolute or limited. **And consequently, as man depends absolutely upon his Maker for everything, it is necessary that he should in all points conform to his Maker's will**.

“**This will of his Maker is called the law of nature**. For as God, when He created matter, and endued it with a principle of mobility, established certain rules for the perpetual direction of that motion; **so, when he created man, and endued him with free will to conduct himself in all**

parts of life, He laid down certain immutable laws of human nature, whereby that free will is in some degree regulated and restrained, and gave him also the faculty of reason to discover the purport of those laws....

“But, as he [the Creator] is also a being of infinite wisdom, he has laid down only such laws as were founded in those relations of justice that existed in the nature of things....

These are the eternal **immutable laws of good and evil**, to which the Creator himself, in all his dispensations, conforms; and **which he has enabled human reason to discover**, so far as they are necessary for the conduct of human actions. Such, among others, are these principles: that we should live honestly, should hurt nobody, and should render to everyone his due; to which three general precepts Justinian has reduced the whole doctrine of law. But if the discovery of these first principles of the law of nature depended only upon the due exertion of right reason, and could not otherwise be obtained than by a chain of metaphysical disquisitions, mankind would have wanted some inducement to have quickened their inquiries, and the greater part of the world would have rested content in mental indolence, and ignorance its inseparable companion. As, therefore, the Creator is a Being, not only of infinite power, and wisdom, but also of infinite goodness, He has been pleased so to contrive the constitution and frame of humanity, that we should want no other prompter than to inquire after and pursue the rule of right, but only our own self-love, that universal principle of action. For he has so intimately connected, so inseparably interwoven the laws of eternal justice with the happiness of each individual, that the latter cannot be attained but by observing the former; and, if the former be punctually obeyed, it cannot but induce the latter. In consequence of which mutual connection of justice and human felicity, **He has not perplexed the law of nature with a multitude of abstracted rules and precepts, referring merely to the fitness or unfitness of things, as some have vainly surmised; but has graciously reduced the rule of obedience to this one paternal precept, 'that man should pursue his own true and substantial happiness.'** This is the foundation of what we call ethics, or natural law. For the several articles into which it is branched in our systems, amount to no more than **demonstrating, that this or that action tends to man's real happiness, and therefore very justly concluding that the performance of it is a part of the law of nature; or, on the other hand, that this or that action is destructive to man's real happiness, and therefore that the law of nature forbids it.**

“This law of nature, being coeval with mankind and dictated by God Himself, is of course superior in obligation to any other. It is binding over all the globe in all countries, and at all times: no human laws are of any validity, if contrary to this; and such of them as are valid derive all their force, and all their authority, mediately or immediately, from this original. But in order to apply this to the particular exigencies of each individual, it is still necessary to have recourse to human reason; whose office it is to **discover, as was before observed, what the law of nature directs in every circumstance of life; by considering, what method will tend most effectually to our own substantial happiness. And if our reason were always, as in our first ancestor before his transgression, clear and perfect, unruffled by passions, unclouded by prejudice, unimpaired by disease or intemperance,**

the task would be pleasant and easy; we should need no other guide but this. But every man now finds the contrary in his own experience; that his reason is corrupt, and his understanding full of ignorance and error.

“This has given manifold occasion for the benign interposition of **divine providence; which, in compassion to the frailty, the imperfection, and the blindness of human reason, hath been pleased, at sundry times and in diverse manners, to discover and enforce its laws by an immediate and direct revelation. The doctrines thus delivered we call the revealed or divine law, and they are to be found only in the Holy Scriptures. These precepts, when revealed, are found upon comparison to be really a part of the original law of nature, as they tend in all their consequences to man's felicity. But we are not from thence to conclude that the knowledge of these truths was attainable by reason, in its present corrupted state; since we find that, until they were revealed, they were hid from the wisdom of the ages. As then the moral precepts of this law are indeed of the same original with those of the law of nature, so their intrinsic obligation is of equal strength and perpetuity. Yet undoubtedly the revealed law is of infinitely more authenticity than that moral system, which is framed by ethical writers, and denominated the natural law. Because one is the law of nature, expressly declared so to be by God Himself; the other is only what, by the assistance of human reason, we imagine to be that law. If we could be as certain of the latter as we are of the former, both would have an equal authority; but, till then, they can never be put in any competition together.**

“Upon these two foundations, the law of nature and the law of revelation, depend all human laws; that is to say, no human laws should be suffered to contradict these. There are, it is true, a great number of indifferent points, in which both the divine law and the natural leave a man at his own liberty; but which are found necessary for the benefit of society to be restrained within certain limits. And **herein it is that human laws have their greatest force and efficacy: for, with regard to such points as are not indifferent, human laws are only declaratory of, and act in subordination to the former.** To instance in the case of murder: **this is expressly forbidden by the divine, and demonstrably by the natural law; and from these prohibitions arises the true unlawfulness of this crime. Those human laws that annex a punishment to it do not at all increase its moral guilt, or add any fresh obligation in foro conscientiae (in the court of conscience) to abstain from its perpetration. Nay, if any human law should allow or enjoin us to commit it, we, are bound to transgress that human law, or else we must offend both the natural and the divine.** But with regard to matters that are in themselves indifferent, and are not commanded or forbidden by those superior laws; such, for instance, as exporting of wool into foreign countries; here the inferior legislature has scope and opportunity to interpose, and to make that action unlawful which before was not so.”

(Commentaries: Of the Nature of Laws in General, ***)

John Locke

“A man, as has been proved, cannot subject himself to the arbitrary power of another; and having in the state of nature no arbitrary power over the life, liberty, or possession of another, but only so much as the law of nature gave him **for the preservation of himself, and the rest of mankind; this is all he doth, or can give up to the commonwealth**, and by it to the legislative power, so that the legislative can have no more than this. **Their power, in the utmost bounds of it, is limited to the public good of the society. It is a power, that hath no other end but preservation**, and therefore can never have a right to destroy, enslave, or designedly to impoverish the subjects. The obligations of the law of nature cease not in society, but only in many cases are drawn closer, and have by human laws known penalties annexed to them, to inforce their observation. **Thus the law of nature stands as an eternal rule to all men**, legislators as well as others. **The rules that they make for other men’s actions, must... be conformable to the law of nature, i. e. to the will of God**, of which that is a declaration, and **the fundamental law of nature being the preservation of mankind**, no human sanction can be good or valid against it.”

(The Second Treatise on Civil Government. P. 365. 1689 ***)

John Locke

“**To understand political power right, and derive it from its original, we must consider, what state all men are naturally in**, and that is, a state of **perfect freedom to order their actions, and dispose of their possessions and persons, as they think fit, within the bounds of the law of nature**, without asking leave, or depending upon the will of any other man....

“**But though this be a state of liberty, yet it is not a state of licence: though man in that state have an uncontrollable liberty to dispose of his person or possessions, yet he has not liberty to destroy himself**, or so much as any creature in his possession, but where some nobler use than its bare preservation calls for it. The state of nature has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges every one: and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind, who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions: **for men being all the workmanship of one omnipotent, and infinitely wise maker; all the servants of one sovereign master, sent into the world by his order, and about his business; they are his property, whose workmanship they are, made to last during his, not one another's pleasure....** Every one, as he is bound to preserve himself, and not to quit his station wilfully, so by the like reason, when his own preservation comes not in competition, **ought he, as much as he can, to preserve the rest of mankind**, and may not, unless it be to do justice on an offender, take away, or impair the life, or **what tends to the preservation of the life, the liberty, health, limb, or goods of another**.

“And that all men may be restrained from invading others rights, and from doing hurt to one another, and the law of nature be observed, which willeth the peace and preservation of all mankind, **the execution of the law of nature is, in that state, put into every man's hands, whereby every one has a right to punish the transgressors** of that law to such a degree, as may hinder its violation: for **the law of nature would, as all other laws that concern men in this world 'be in vain, if there were no body that in the state of nature had a power to execute that law, and thereby preserve the innocent and restrain offenders.** And if any one in the state of nature may punish another for any evil he has done, every one may do so: for in that state of perfect equality, where naturally there is no superiority or jurisdiction of one over another, what any may do in prosecution of that law, every one must needs have a right to do....

“In transgressing the law of nature, the offender declares himself to live by another rule than that of reason and common equity, which is **that measure God has set to the actions of men, for their mutual security**; and so he becomes dangerous to mankind, the tie, which is to secure them from injury and violence, being slighted and broken by him. Which being a trespass against the whole species, and the peace and safety of it, provided for by the law of nature, every man upon this score, **by the right he hath to preserve mankind in general, may restrain, or where it is necessary, destroy things noxious to them,** and so may bring such evil on any one, who hath transgressed that law, as may **make him repent the doing of it, and thereby deter him, and by his example others, from doing the like mischief.** And in the case, and upon this ground, **EVERY MAN HATH A RIGHT TO PUNISH THE OFFENDER, AND BE EXECUTIONER OF THE LAW OF NATURE....**

“These are the bounds which the trust, that is put in them by the society, and **the law of God and nature**, have set to the legislative power of every common-wealth, in all forms of government....

“But farther, this question, (Who shall be judge?) cannot mean, that there is no judge at all: for where there is no judicature on earth, to decide controversies amongst men, **God in heaven is judge. He alone, it is true, is judge of the right.** But every man is judge for himself, as in all other cases, so in this, whether another hath put himself into a state of war with him, and whether he should appeal to the Supreme Judge, as Jephthah did....”

(The Second Treatise on Government, 1690)

John Locke*

“**The end of law is not to abolish or restrain, but to preserve and enlarge freedom.** For in all the states of created beings, capable of laws, **where there is no law there is no freedom.** **For liberty is to be free from restraint and violence from others,** which cannot be where there is no law; **and is not, as we are told, ‘a liberty for every man to do what he lists.’** For who could be free, when every other man's humour might domineer over him? But a liberty to dispose and order freely as he lists his person, actions, possessions, and his whole property

within the allowance of those laws under which he is, and therein not to be subject to the arbitrary will of another, but freely follow his own.”

(Two Treatises of Civil Government, 1689 ***)

Pastor John A. Stormer*

“If as the Declaration of Independence declares, the U.S. Constitution was written to make 'secure' our God-given rights, **how can any court find in the Constitution 'rights' to abort babies, engage in sodomy or have same sex unions - all actions which violate God's law? Would God give such rights?**”

(Betrayed by the Bench, ***)

George Washington

“**No People can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand, which conducts the Affairs of men more than the People of the United States.** Every step, by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation, seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency.”

(First Inaugural Address, Thursday, April 30, 1789)

George Washington

“Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, **religion and morality are indispensable supports.** In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them. **A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity.** Let it simply be asked: **Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.**

“It is substantially true that **virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government. The rule, indeed, extends with more or less force to every species of free government.** Who that is a sincere friend to it can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric?”

(George Washington's Farewell Address, 1796)