

#44: Good Citizens of Country and Kingdom

Monte F. Shelley, 20 Dec. 2009

Quotes

- All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good en to do nothing.—Edmund Burke
- Be thankful we're not getting all the government we're paying for.—Will Rogers
- When buying and selling are controlled by legislation, the first things to be bought and sold are legislators.—P. J. O'Rourke
- If a fellow isn't thankful for what he's got, he isn't likely to be thankful for what he's going to get.—Frank A. Clark
- Government is not reason, it is not eloquence—it is force! Like fire, it is a dangerous servant and a fearful master!—Washington

Sources:

1. CH=Church History institute manual (institute.lds.org)
2. MAP= Richard Vetterli, *Mormonism, Americanism, and Politics*, 1961
3. Alex=Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 1986

Timeline of Events Related to Temple Work	
Pre	War in Heaven Satan ... [said] I will <u>redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost</u> , ... wherefore give me thine honor. ... Satan rebelled against me, and <u>sought to destroy the agency of man</u> ... and also, that I should give unto him mine own power. (Moses 4:1-4) <u>We will make an earth whereon these may dwell; ²⁵ And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them; (Abr 3:24-25)</u>
OldT	Abraham, Isaac, Jacob: Self-defense (tribes) Joseph in Egypt: Pharaoh Moses: Theocracy (God made laws, appointed servants) Citizen→obey law, sustain & defend kingdom Samuel: Israelite King (prophet appointed, king covenants) Suzerain-Vassal treaties: kings (Babylon, Rome) Roman republic→ Roman empire
BoM	Kings → Judges (voice of the people); Men seek power→stir up to anger→offensive war Men seek freedom→defend life, liberty, property
325	Marriage of Church and State (Council of Nicea). <u>Catholic Church established as state church and therefore entitled to government money and to use government force to silence dissent from heretics.</u> <u>"Eventually, far more Christians... were slaughtered by the sword of the church than had ever been slain by the Romans."</u> (Shelley, "Our Judeo-Christian Heritage ...")
410	Fall of Rome. The Catholic Church continued to be the established religion in most European countries and the pope retained power over or influence with kings.
1448	Gutenberg press invented. Latin Bible soon published.
1500	Protestant Reformation began. Catholics used government force (the Inquisition) to identify, torture, and kill Protestants heretics. In some cases, force was used to compel conversion to Christianity. When Protestants became the established religion in a country or state, they also developed creeds and used heresy laws to silence those who disagreed with them.
1611	King James Bible published. (~80% Tyndale's translation)
1620	Pilgrims came on the Mayflower to America (Plymouth, Massachusetts). Protestants established their religion in their states and used the power of state government to fund the church and to silence dissent.

1776	Declaration of Independence: People's law vs. Ruler's law
1788	US Constitution ratified (republic, federalism, checks) <u>Tyranny=1 person/group: legislative, executive, judicial</u> <u>"The accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands, whether of one, a few, or many, and whether hereditary, self-appointed, or elective, may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny."</u> (Madison, Federalist #47) <u>Six of the thirteen states still had state religions. The Bill of Rights prevented the federal government from establishing a U.S. religion and from making laws that restricted (a) the religious liberties of citizens or (b) the rights of states to have a state religion.</u>
1789	Mar 4. Government under new constitution began
1820	First Vision; restoration of the gospel began
1833	Mobs drove Saints from Jackson County. D&C 98:5-11. That law of the land which is constitutional, supporting that principle of freedom in maintaining rights and privileges, belongs to all mankind, and is justifiable before me. ... Whatsoever is more or less than this, cometh of evil. ... ⁹ Nevertheless, <u>when the wicked rule the people mourn.</u> ¹⁰ Wherefore, <u>honest men and wise men should be sought for diligently</u> , and good men and wise men ye should observe to uphold. (D&C 98:5-11) D&C 101:76-80: Seek redress from government officials. God " <u>established the Constitution ... by the hands of wise men</u> " " <u>for the rights and protection of all flesh, according to just and holy principles; that every man may act ... according to the moral agency which I have given him ... [and] be accountable for his own sins.</u> " <u>I say unto you, those who have been scattered by their enemies, it is my will that they should continue to importune for redress, and redemption, by the hands of those who are placed as rulers and are in authority over you—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.</u> 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 101:76-80)
1835	D&C 134 on governments and laws unanimously accepted.
1839	Mar. Joseph in Liberty Jail. "The Constitution of the United States is a glorious standard; it is founded in the wisdom of God. It is a heavenly banner" (HC 3:304). <u>Joseph repeatedly indicted on false charges that he avoided.</u>
1844	US Presidential candidates refused to stop persecution. Joseph ran for President of the United States. "I feel it to be my right and privilege to obtain what influence and power I can, lawfully, in the United States, for the protection of injured innocence; and if I lose my life in a good cause I am willing to be sacrificed on the altar of virtue, righteousness and truth, in maintaining the laws and Constitution of the United States, if need be, for the general good of mankind." (HC 6:210) <u>"Give every man his constitutional freedom, and the</u>

	<p>president full power to send an army to suppress mobs; and the states authority to repeal and impugn that relic of folly, which makes it necessary for the governor of a state to make the demand of the president for troops, in case of invasion or rebellion. The governor himself may be a mobber and, instead of being punished, as he should be, for murder and treason, he may destroy the very lives, rights, and property he should protect.” (HC 6:206)</p> <p>Jun. Joseph murdered in Carthage.</p>		<p>pay the school fees of a number of children who are either orphans or sons and daughters of poor people. But in aiding and blessing the poor I do not believe in allowing my charities to go through the hands of a set of robbers who pocket nine-tenths themselves, and give one-tenth to the poor. Therein is the difference between us; I am for the real act of doing and not saying. Would I encourage free schools by taxation? No! (JD 18:357)</p> <p>The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, with John Taylor as its President, took leadership of the Church after the death of Brigham Young</p>
1847	1847–1850. Saints governed by a type of theo-democracy using Church organization. Bishops presided over wards or districts. (MAP 353)	1879	US Supreme Court ruled anti-polygamy laws constitutional
1849	Provisional government of State of Deseret. Brigham elected governor and counselors were Lt. Gov & Sec of State. Other Church leaders appointed or elected. Bishops appointed as justices of the peace. (MAP 358)	1880	John Taylor sustained as third President of the Church
	Attempts for statehood blocked by slave states not wanting another “free state.”	1882	Edmunds Act passed, intensifying anti-polygamy crusade
1850	Jun 15. Deseret News was first published.	1885	President Taylor, other Church Authorities, and many members went “underground” to escape prosecution. Some settled in Mormon colonies in Mexico. Marion G. Romney and George W. Romney born there.
1851	Provisional State of Deseret → Territory of Utah. Federal non-LDS appointees sent to govern.	1887	Mar 3. Edmunds-Tucker Act became law without signature of President Cleveland. Prohibited polygamy and punished it with a fine and imprisonment. Required anti-polygamy oath for voters, jurors, and public officials. Women’s right to vote abolished. Church disincorporated and property over \$50,000 seized. Perpetual Emigration Fund dissolved. Public education system established with seized assets. Many LDS men had to hide to avoid arrest. Homes raided at night.
1852	Brigham publically announced plural marriage. He said it was constitutional because of freedom of religion.		With the passage of the Edmunds-Tucker Act in March 1887, wives were required to testify against their husbands, and all marriages were to be publicly recorded. The law also provided that county probate judges be appointed by the president of the United States. Women’s suffrage was abolished in Utah, the Perpetual Emigrating Fund was dissolved, as was the Nauvoo Legion, and a public education system was established. The Church was disincorporated, and authority was given to the United States attorney general to escheat (turn back to the United States) all Church property and holdings valued over fifty thousand dollars. Federally sponsored persecution of the Church thus continued into the new administration of President Wilford Woodruff. (CH #33)
	On 28–29 August 1852 a special conference was held. ... On the second day of the conference, under the direction of President Brigham Young, Orson Pratt made the public announcement that the Church was practicing plural marriage under commandment of God. Speaking of the United States, he declared that “the constitution gives the privilege to all the inhabitants of this country, of the free exercise of their religious notions, and the freedom of their faith, and the practice of it. Then, if it can be proven to a demonstration, that the Latter-day Saints have actually embraced, as a part and portion of their religion, the doctrine of a plurality of wives, it is constitutional. And should there ever be laws enacted by this government to restrict them from the free exercise of this part of their religion, such laws must be unconstitutional.” (CH #33)		The law officially dissolved LDS Church as a legal corporation and required the Church to forfeit to the government all property in excess of fifty thousand dollars. Government officials set out immediately to confiscate Church holdings. For example, the buildings on Temple Square and other Church offices were placed in receivership and then rented back to the Church. In an attempt to stop the flow of European converts, the government dissolved the Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company, the chief agency for immigration. More and more Saints were stripped of their voting rights. Schools were placed under the direction of the federally appointed territorial supreme court. U.S. marshals arrested more men who were then nearly automatically sentenced to prison. Among them was President George Q. Cannon. ... The greatest problem for the Church was its inability to acquire and hold the funds necessary to build temples, do missionary work, publish material, and provide for the welfare of the Saints. Church leaders succeeded in getting their case before the United States Supreme Court, arguing that the confiscation of Church property under
1861	Apr. Civil War began		
1862	Congress passed the Morrill Act—the first anti-polygamy law. Lincoln signed it but did not enforce it.		
	He said that while plowing a field for planting, he came to a large tree stump that “was too solid to cut, too green to burn, and rooted too deeply to dislodge. Therefore, he had decided that in order to avoid a great deal of trouble, effort and unhappiness, he should leave it alone and plow around it.” (MAP 499)		
1870	Utah liberal party formed by gentile businessmen. They controlled the Salt Lake Tribune. Mormons formed the People’s Party. (MAP 591–2)		
1874	Poland Act passed, allowing for indictments of men involved in plural marriage. This act dismantled Utah’s judicial system by giving the United States district courts (controlled by non-Mormon federal appointees) exclusive civil and criminal jurisdiction. Individuals could now be brought to trial for breaking the Morrill Law.		
1875	George Reynolds convicted in “test case”		
1877	Apr. Brigham’s final conference talk.		
	I am opposed to free education as much as I am apposed to taking away property from one man and giving it to another who knows not how to take care of it. ... I now		

	<p>the Edmunds-Tucker Act was unconstitutional. But in May 1890 the Court upheld, in a five to four decision, the constitutionality of all the government had done under the Edmunds-Tucker Law. ... The gradual loss of voting rights added to the distress of the Church. The Edmunds-Tucker Act provided for the <u>disfranchisement of anyone convicted of polygamy or unwilling to pledge obedience to anti-polygamy laws</u>. By 1890 some twelve thousand Utah citizens had been deprived of their right to vote. In Idaho, where there were several communities of Saints in the southeast portion of the state, the legislature disfranchised all believing members of the Church by <u>requiring voters to swear that they did not belong to a church that believed in plural marriage</u>. <u>In February 1890 the United States Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of this Idaho test oath</u>.</p> <p>Jul 25. John Taylor died.</p> <p>President Woodruff was in Salt Lake City during the funeral of John Taylor but did not attend for fear of being arrested. Immediately after the services he met with the Twelve and began leading the Church, but continued to avoid any public appearances. ... Church property was confiscated by the government, and some private individuals were enriching themselves at the expense of the Church.</p>	<p>Aug. Woodruff learned that the <u>U.S. government, in spite of an 1888 agreement, was going to confiscate the temples</u>.</p> <p>Sept 24. Manifesto stopping plural marriage was approved and published next day.</p> <p>In the first week of October, delegate Caine informed the First Presidency in a telegram that the Secretary of the Interior had told him the government would not recognize the official declaration unless it was formally accepted by the Church's general conference.</p> <p>Oct 6. Manifesto unanimously accepted at Conference.</p>
1889	<p>Wilford Woodruff wrote concerning this on New Year's Eve 1889: "Thus ends the year 1889 and the word of the Prophet Joseph Smith is beginning to be fulfilled that the whole nation would turn against Zion and make war upon the Saints. The nation has never been filled so full of lies against the Saints as to day."</p> <p><u>In Utah the Liberal Party was gaining influence as many members of the Church lost their voting rights. The Liberal Party's political crusade matched the severity of the crusade of the federal officials. Using some illegal voting tactics, the Liberal Party succeeded in gaining control of the Ogden city government in 1889. Then they turned their attention to campaigning in Salt Lake City, where an election was scheduled for February 1890. The non-members were helped by the decision of a United States judge that no Latter-day Saint immigrants were worthy of becoming U.S. citizens or of having the right to vote. Many Gentile (nonmember) registrars also unfairly prevented members ... from registering to vote.</u></p> <p>Wilford Woodruff, sustained as President</p>	<p>1891 Jun. People's Party officially disbanded. Most members became Democrats. Leaders wanted influence in both parties and encouraged many to become Republicans. Before Congress would allow Utah statehood, it required the Church to relinquish participation in politics. The Church's party—the People's Party—was disbanded, and Utah's citizens aligned themselves with national political parties. ... Traditionally the Saints had leaned toward the Democratic Party because the Republicans, who had been in power most of the time since 1861, had promoted and enforced the anti-polygamy legislation. Furthermore, the Democratic-appointed officials of 1885–89 had been more lenient with the Saints. Considering the political tendency of Church members and the fact that most nonmembers in Utah were Republican oriented, the First Presidency wanted to avoid the Democrats becoming another Church party. Meetings were held with stake presidents and bishops where they were instructed to encourage more Latter-day Saints to vote Republican. This would demonstrate to national party leaders that a viable two-party system could exist in Utah. ... Members who were known to have strong Democratic convictions were not asked to switch parties, but those whose commitment was not particularly strong were encouraged to change. This method was effective, and by 1892 the Republican Party was strong in Utah politics. (CH)</p> <p>Church leaders wanted substantial Mormon influence in both parties. Two senior apostles and Joseph F. Smith became Republicans. "Because of the power of the GOP in national politics, increased Mormon membership in the Republican party became an important prerequisite to achieving statehood." Thus prominent church leaders began to ask members to become Republicans. (Alex 7)</p>
1890	<p>May 19. Supreme Court upheld Edmunds-Tucker Act allowing Congress to dissolve the Church corporation and seize its properties "for the use ... of common schools"</p> <p><u>In <i>Mormon Church v. United States</i>, 136 U.S. 1 (1890), the Supreme Court ruled that private property owned by the LDS Church, including the Church's tithe-funded system of religious school assets, could be forcibly "seized" by the federal government in its capacity of "parens patriae" (father of the nation), and appropriated "for the use and benefit of [government] common schools." (http://www.quaquu.org/utah.htm)</u></p> <p>Jul–Aug. Liberal party won the Salt Lake school election and control of secular education because many Saints were barred from voting, and most of the elected offices in Salt Lake and Weber counties. Old police force fired, crime and immorality abounded, prostitution was supervised not suppressed, and graft was not curtailed.</p>	<p>1893 Liberal party lost control of Salt Lake City, and disbanded Congress passed law returning Church property. National financial panic.</p> <p>1894 Jul. Congress passed the Utah Enabling Act. Utahans worked on a state constitution acceptable to Congress. It prohibited plural marriage, established public schools, and ensured the complete separation of church and state. <u>Requirements for statehood: freedom of religion, no polygamy, public schools open to all without church control, no federal land</u> en.wikisource.org/wiki/Utah_Enabling_Act,1894</p> <p>1896 Jan 4. Utah became a state.</p> <p>Apr. Church issued the Political Manifesto. It emphasized the separation of church and state and the Church's intention not to encroach upon the political rights of any citizens. The statement also added that for peace and goodwill to continue in Utah, it was inadvisable for high Church leaders "to accept political</p>

	office or enter into any vocation that would distract or remove them from the religious duties resting upon them, without first consulting and obtaining the approval of their associates and those who preside over them.”	1942	Apr. First Presidency position on war. Although “hate can have no place in the souls of the righteous,” the Saints “are part of the body politic” and must loyally obey those in authority over them. The First Presidency’s official statement read at the April 1942 general conference. This declaration was a comprehensive and authoritative review of the Church’s attitude on war and was widely distributed in pamphlet form. The Saints were told that <u>although “hate can have no place in the souls of the righteous,” the Saints “are part of the body politic” and must loyally obey those in authority over them.</u> The Presidency continued, “The members of the Church have always felt under obligation to come to the defense of their country when a call to arms was made.” If in the course of combat servicemen “shall take the lives of those who fight against them, that will not make of them murderers, nor subject them to the penalty that God has prescribed for those who kill. ... For it would be a cruel God that would punish His children as moral sinners for acts done by them as the innocent instrumentalities of a sovereign whom He had told them to obey and whose will they were powerless to resist. ... This Church is a worldwide Church. Its devoted members are in both camps,” the message affirmed. The Presidency also promised those servicemen who lived clean lives, kept the commandments, and prayed constantly that the Lord would be with them and nothing would happen to them that would not be to the honor and glory of God and to their salvation and exaltation. ¹² Heeding the counsel of their Church leaders, Latter-day Saints responded when called into military service. (CH #40) Apr. “ <u>These revolutionists are using a technique that is as old as the human race—a fervid but false solicitude for the unfortunate over whom they thus gain mastery and then enslave them.</u> They suit their approaches to the particular group they seek to deceive. <u>Among the Latter-day Saints they speak of their philosophy and their plans under it as an ushering in of the United Order.</u> Communism and all other similar <i>isms</i> bear no relationship whatever to the United Order. (First Presidency, Apr. 1842) Oct. “There is a growing ... sentiment that communism and the United Order are virtually the same thing. ... <u>Bishops, who belong to communistic organizations, are preaching this doctrine.</u> ... In practice the brethren in Missouri got away, in their attempts to set up the united order, from the principles set out in the revelations. This is also true of the organizations set up here in Utah.” (President J. Reuben Clark, Oct. 1942) Elder Harold B. Lee chairman of Church Servicemen’s Committee. Army and navy were reluctant to appoint chaplains who were not professional clergymen. By end of war 46 had served. Soldiers did missionary work. Food storage used because of government gas rationing, wage & price controls, and food shortages. Donations to Red Cross and to help soldiers and their families.
1898	Sept 2. Wilford Woodruff died. Sept 13. Lorenzo Snow became President. B. H. Roberts elected to Congress but not seated because he was a polygamist. After 15 months he was expelled.		
1900	Reed Smoot ordained an Apostle. He was not a polygamist		
1903	Republican Reed Smoot elected to US Senate. Allowed to serve during 4 year investigation caused by opponents. He was a senator for 30 years. During the hearings Smoot stated under oath that he had been intimate with only one woman and challenged the other senators to do the say the same under oath. Senator Penrose, reportedly glared at one or more of his Senate colleagues who had a reputation for philandering and said, “As for me, <u>I would rather have seated beside me in this chamber a polygamist who doesn’t polyg than a monogamist who doesn’t monag.</u> ” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reed_Smoot_hearings		
1904	Democrat national platform attacked Mormonism → many Mormons switched to the Republican Party. (MAP 702)		
1917	US entered World War I. Utahans bought 50% more liberty bonds than quota. Church provided food for starving people in Europe. The Church’s April general conference was in session when the United States officially entered the war in 1917. ... President Joseph F. Smith said that even in war <u>the people should maintain “the spirit of humanity, of love, and of peace-making.”</u> He instructed prospective soldiers to remember that they were “ <u>ministers of life and not of death; and when they go forth, they may go forth in the spirit of defending the liberties of mankind rather than for the purpose of destroying the enemy.</u> ” (CH #37)		
1918	Nov 23. Heber J. Grant became President		
1919	Jan 16. Prohibition amendment ratified. HJG supported.		
1929	Oct 29. Stock market crash led to Great Depression		
1933	J. Reuben Clark , counselor in First Presidency (1933-61) Oct. HJG : Many people have said ... ‘Well, others are getting some [government relief], why should not I <u>get some of it?</u> ’ <u>I believe that</u> there is a growing disposition among the people to try to get something from the government <u>of the United States</u> with little hope of ever paying it back. I think this is all wrong.” Dec 5. Utah was last state needed to repeal prohibition.		
1934	David O. McKay became counselor in First Presidency		
1936	HJG detested New Deal policies and opposed FDR’s reelection. First Presidency published unsigned editorial [by JRC] in <i>Deseret News</i> accusing FDR of ‘ <u>knowingly promoting unconstitutional laws and... advocating communism.</u> ’ 1200 LDS cancelled subscriptions. A few days later 69.3% of Utah votes went for FDR & New Deal.		
1939	Aug 24. First Presidency evacuated European missionaries		
1941	Helmuth Hübener , 16, anti-Nazi German, excom; killed ‘42 Dec 7. Pearl Harbor attacked (US enters war in 1942) In their Christ message, the First Presidency stated that only through living the gospel of Jesus Christ would enduring peace come to the world. ... The Presidency exhorted <u>members in the armed forces to keep “all cruelty, hate, and murder” out of their hearts even during battle.</u> ¹¹		
1945	May – Apr 1951. George Albert Smith , president Aug. World War II ended Fall. Church sent relief supplies to Europe.		
1946	Jan 14. Elder Ezra Taft Benson to reopen European missions. He supervised distribution of relief supplies.		

1951	Apr – Jan 1970. David O. McKay , president*
1952	Elder Benson, Secretary of Agriculture (1952–1961) DOM blessed Elder Benson that he would have clear vision to see the needs of the nation and be fearless in defense of the Constitution against subversive elements threatening the nation's freedoms.
1966	Apr. Marion G. Romney: "Is Socialism the United Order?" "The United Order can never function under socialism or "the welfare state," for the good and sufficient reason that the principles upon which socialism and the United Order are conceived and operated are inimical."
1968	Ezra Taft Benson: "The Proper Role of Government"
1970	Jan – Jul 1972. Joseph Fielding Smith , president
1972	Jul – Dec 1973. Harold B. Lee , president*
1973	Dec – Nov 1985. Spencer W. Kimball , president*
1976	Spencer W. Kimball : "The False Gods We Worship" "We are a warlike people, easily distracted from our assignment of preparing for the coming of the Lord. <u>When enemies rise up, we commit vast resources to the fabrication of gods of stone and steel—ships, planes, missiles, fortifications—and depend on them for protection and deliverance. When threatened, we become anti-enemy instead of pro-kingdom of God; we train a man in the art of war and call him a patriot, thus, in the manner of Satan's counterfeit of true patriotism, perverting the Savior's teaching: Love your enemies. ...</u> "
1980	ETB : "Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophet"
1985	Nov – May 1994. Ezra Taft Benson , president
1987	Sept 17. Bicentennial of Constitutional Convention ETB : "The Constitution—A Glorious Standard" at BYU
1994	May – Mar 1995. Howard W. Hunter , president
1995	Mar – Jan 2008. Gordon B. Hinckley , president

1. Prohibition Amendment (1919–1933)

During the 1920s bishops interviewing members who wanted to enter the temple were asked to encourage them to comply with the principles in the Word of Wisdom. The Church also used its publications, especially the *Improvement Era*, to campaign against the use of tobacco. Many articles appealed to both scientific authority and Church doctrine to promote abstinence from both liquor and tobacco. Church leaders also urged anti-tobacco legislation, including the banning of advertising cigarettes on billboards. President Grant frequently preached against smoking and the consumption of liquor and firmly supported strict enforcement of the law. He even insisted that the *Deseret News* officially support Prohibition enforcement. Moreover, the Church provided financial aid to the Prohibition League.

During those years when Prohibition was in effect, there were strong forces working for its repeal. In spite of the vigorous support of the Church and public knowledge that President Grant stood unalterably behind Prohibition, Utah became the thirty-sixth state to vote for the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment. Ironically, it was this affirmative vote that ended Prohibition. President Grant publicly expressed his disappointment that Church members had not followed his lead or his counsel. Had they done so, he insisted, much of the suffering, sorrow, spiritual degeneration, and deterioration of physical health that accompany the consumption of liquor and tobacco, could have been avoided.

George Albert Smith: There are thousands ... who would walk any distance ... [to see] the Prophet of the Lord, and yet there are many of our own people who disregard his council. From this very stand he pleaded with us not to repeal the Eighteenth Amendment. ... He didn't speak as Heber J. Grant, the man. He spoke as the President of the Church and the representative of our Heavenly Father. And yet in a state where we could have retained what we had, there were enough Latter-day Saints, so-called (some of them hold positions in the Church. or did at that time), who paid no attention to what the Lord wanted, ignored what He had said through his prophet, and what is the result? Such delinquency as we have never known is in our own community today, and the sons and daughters and grandchildren, and in many cases the fathers and mothers, who defied the advice of our Heavenly Father and said "We will do as we please," are paying the penalty and will continue to do so until they turn away from their foolishness and desire with all their hearts to do what our Heavenly Father desires us to do. (CR Oct. 1943, 47)

2. Proper Role of Government (Ezra Taft Benson 1968)

My attitude toward government is succinctly expressed by the following provision taken from the Alabama Constitution: "That the sole object and only legitimate end of government is to protect the citizen in the enjoyment of life, liberty, and property, and when the government assumes other functions it is usurpation and oppression." (Art. 1, Sec. 35.)

An important test I use in passing judgment upon an act of government is this: If it were up to me as an individual to punish my neighbor for violating a given law, would it offend my conscience to do so? Since my conscience will never permit me to physically punish my fellow man unless he has done something evil, or unless he has failed to do something which I have a moral right to require of him to do, I will never knowingly authorize my agent, the government, to do this on my behalf.

I realize that when I give my consent to the adoption of a law, I specifically instruct the police—the government—to take either the life, liberty, or property of anyone who disobeys that law. Furthermore, I tell them that if anyone resists the enforcement of the law, they are to use any means necessary—yes, even putting the lawbreaker to death or putting him in jail—to overcome such resistance. These are extreme measures but unless laws are enforced, anarchy results. ...

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. ...

There are times when this principle of the proper role of government is most annoying and inconvenient. If I could only force the ignorant to provide for themselves, or the selfish to be generous with their wealth! ...

Once government steps over this clear line between the protective or negative role into the aggressive role of redistributing the wealth and providing so-called "benefits" for some of its citizens, it then becomes a means for what he accurately described as legalized plunder. It becomes a lever of unlimited power which is the sought-after prize of unscrupulous individuals and pressure groups, each seeking to control the machine to fatten his own pockets or to benefit its favorite charities—all with the other fellow's money, or course.

3. Our Duties as Saints and Citizens

Ezra Taft Benson: At this bicentennial celebration we must, with sadness, say that we have not been wise in keeping the trust of our Founding Fathers. For the past two centuries, those who do not prize freedom have chipped away at our Constitution until today we face a crisis of great dimensions. We are fast approaching that moment prophesied by Joseph Smith when he said:

“Even this nation will be on the very verge of crumbling to pieces and tumbling to the ground, and when the Constitution is upon the brink of ruin, this people will be the staff upon which the nation shall lean, and they shall bear the Constitution away from the very verge of destruction.”

Will we be prepared? Will we be among those who will “bear the Constitution away from the very verge of destruction?” If we desire to be numbered among those who will, here are some things we must do:

1. *We must be righteous and moral.* We must live the gospel principles—all of them. We have no right to expect a higher degree of morality from those who represent us than what we ourselves exhibit. To live a higher law means we will not seek to receive what we have not earned by our own labor. It means we will remember that government owes us nothing. It means we will keep the laws of the land. It means we will look to God as our Lawgiver and the Source of our liberty.

2. *We must learn the principles of the Constitution and then abide by its precepts.* Have we read the Constitution and pondered it? Are we aware of its principles? Could we defend it? Can we recognize when a law is constitutionally unsound?

I quote Abraham Lincoln: “Let [the Constitution] be taught in schools, in seminaries, and in colleges; let it be written in primers, spelling-books, and in almanacs; let it be preached from the pulpit, proclaimed in legislative halls, and enforced in courts of justice. And, in short, let it become the political religion of the nation.”

3. *We must become involved in civic affairs.* As citizens of this republic, we cannot do our duty and be idle spectators. It is vital that we follow this counsel from the Lord: “Honest men and wise men should be sought for diligently, and good men and wise men ye should observe to uphold; otherwise whatsoever is less than these cometh of evil.” (D&C 98:10.)

Note the qualities that the Lord demands in those who are to represent us. They must be good, wise, and honest. We must be concerted in our desires and efforts to see men and women represent us who possess all three of these qualities—goodness, wisdom, and honesty.

4. *We must make our influence felt by our vote, our letters, and our advice.* We must be wisely informed and let others know how we feel. We must take part in local precinct meetings and select delegates who will truly represent our feelings.
 (“The Constitution—A Glorious Standard,” *Ensign*, Sep 1987, 6)

4. Fourteen Fundamentals of Following the Prophet

1. The prophet is the only man who speaks for the Lord in everything.
2. The living prophet is more vital to us than the standard works.
3. The living prophet is more important to us than a dead prophet.
4. The prophet will never lead the Church astray.
5. The prophet is not required to have any particular earthly training or credentials to speak on any subject or act on any matter at any time.
6. The prophet does not have to say “Thus saith the Lord” to give us scripture.
7. The prophet tells us what we need to know, not always what we want to know.
8. The prophet is not limited by men's reasoning.
9. The prophet can receive revelation on any matter, temporal or spiritual.
10. The prophet may be involved in civic matters.
11. The two groups who have the greatest difficulty in following the prophet are the proud who are learned and the proud who are rich.
12. The prophet will not necessarily be popular with the world or the worldly.
13. The prophet and his counselors make up the First Presidency—the highest quorum in the Church.
14. ... The living prophet and the First Presidency—follow them and be blessed; reject them and suffer.

I testify that these fourteen fundamentals in following the living prophet are true. If we want to know how well we stand with the Lord, then let us ask ourselves how well we stand with His mortal captain. How closely do our lives harmonize with the words of the Lord's anointed—the living prophet, **the President of the Church**, and with the Quorum of the First Presidency? (Ezra Taft Benson, 1980, speeches.byu.edu)

If my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants whom I have appointed to lead my people, ... they shall not be moved out of their place. But if they will not hearken to my voice, nor unto the voice of these men whom I have appointed, they shall not be blest. ... With my servant Almon Babbitt, there are many things with which I am not pleased; behold, he aspireth to establish his counsel instead of the counsel ... of the Presidency of my Church. (D&C 124:45–46, 84)

Conclusion

Quotes

Harold B. Lee: The kingdom of God must be a continuing revolution against the norms of the society that fall below the standards that are set for us in the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the field of public life, it must be a continuing revolution against proposals that contradict the fundamental principles as laid down in the Constitution of the United States, which was written by men whom God raised up for this very purpose. If we remember that, we will be in the forefront of every battle against the things that are tearing down our society. (CR Oct 1970) October 1970 General Conference, [http://search.ldslibrary.com/...](http://search.ldslibrary.com/)

John Taylor: “What is the first thing necessary to the establishment of his kingdom? It is to raise up a Prophet and have him declare the will of God; the next is to have people yield obedience to the word of the Lord through that Prophet. If you cannot have these, you never can establish the kingdom of God upon the earth.” [JD 6:25; see also John Taylor, *The Gospel Kingdom*, 214]

Harold B. Lee: We have some tight places to go before ... this ... last dispensation, which shall usher in the coming of the Lord. ... The power of Satan will increase. ... We will see those who profess membership but secretly are plotting and trying to lead people not to follow the leadership that the Lord has set up to preside in this church. Now the only safety we have as members of this church is ... to give heed to the words and commandments that the Lord shall give through his prophet, "as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me ... as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith." (D&C 21:4-5.) There will be some things that take patience and faith. You may not like what comes from the authority of the Church. It may contradict your political views. It may contradict your social views. It may interfere with some of your social life. But if you listen to these things, as if from the mouth of the Lord himself, with patience and faith, the promise is that “the gates of hell shall not prevail against you; yea, and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and his name's glory.” (D&C 21:6.) ... He knows whom he wants to preside over this church, and he will make no mistake. The Lord doesn't do things by accident. He has never done anything accidentally. (CR Oct. 1970, 3rd day afternoon)

Ezra Taft Benson: I testify that wickedness is rapidly expanding in every segment of our society. (See D&C 1:14–16; 84:49–53) It is more highly organized, more cleverly disguised, and more powerfully promoted than ever before. Secret combinations lusting for power, gain, and glory are flourishing. A secret combination that seeks to overthrow the freedom of all lands, nations, and countries is increasing its evil influence and control over America and the entire world. (See Ether 8:18–25) (“I Testify,” *Ensign*, Nov 1988, 86)

Ezra Taft Benson: We have not been using the Book of Mormon as we should. Our homes are not as strong unless we are using it to bring our children to Christ. Our families may be corrupted by worldly trends and teachings unless we know how to use the book to expose and combat falsehoods in socialism, rationalism, etc. ... The situation in the world will continue to degenerate unless we read and heed the words of God and quit building up and upholding secret combinations, which the Book of Mormon tells us proved the downfall of ancient civilizations. (*Ensign*, Jan 1988)

Neal A. Maxwell: Discipleship includes good citizenship. In this connection, if you are a careful student of the statements of the modern prophets, you will have noticed that with rare exceptions—especially when the First Presidency has spoken out—the concerns expressed have been over moral issues, not issues between political parties. The declarations are about principles, not people; and causes, not candidates. On occasions, at other levels in the Church, a few have not been so discreet, so wise, or so inspired.

Make no mistake about it, brothers and sisters, in the months and years ahead, events are likely to require each member to decide whether or not he will follow the First Presidency. Members will find it more difficult to halt longer between two opinions. (See 1 Kgs. 18:21.)

President Marion G. Romney said, many years ago, that he had “never hesitated to follow the counsel of the Authorities of the Church even though it crossed my social, professional or political life” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1941, p. 123). This is a hard doctrine, but it is a particularly vital doctrine in a society which is becoming more wicked. In short, brothers and sisters, not being ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ includes not being ashamed of the prophets of Jesus Christ!

We are now entering a time of incredible ironies. Let us cite but one of these ironies which is yet in its subtle stages: We will see a maximum, if indirect, effort made to establish irreligion as the state religion. It is actually a new form of paganism which uses the carefully preserved and cultivated freedoms of western civilization to shrink freedom, even as it rejects the value essence of our rich Judeo-Christian heritage. ...

Your discipleship may see the time when such religious convictions are discounted. M. J. Sobran also said, “A religious conviction is now a second-class conviction, expected to step deferentially to the back of the secular bus, and not to get uppity about it” (*Human Life Review*, Summer 1978, pp. 58–59).

This new irreligious imperialism seeks to disallow certain opinions simply because those opinions grow out of religious convictions. Resistance to abortion will be seen as primitive. Concern over the institution of the family will be viewed as untrendy and unenlightened. ...

Before the ultimate victory of the forces of righteousness, some skirmishes will be lost. Even in these, however, let us leave a record so that the choices are clear, letting others do as they will in the face of prophetic counsel.

There will also be times, happily, when a minor defeat seems probable, but others will step forward, having been rallied to rightness by what we do. We will know the joy, on occasion, of having awakened a slumbering majority of the decent people of all races and creeds which was, till then, unconscious of itself.

Jesus said that when the fig trees put forth their leaves, “summer is nigh” (Matt. 24:32). Thus warned that summer is upon us, let us not then complain of the heat! (*Ensign*, Feb. 1979)

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