



# BOOK OF MORMON CENTRAL

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## Editor's Table: Principle, Not Popularity

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## EDITOR'S TABLE.

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### PRINCIPLE, NOT POPULARITY.

It is to be regretted that there is a class of Latter-day Saints, who try, at the risk of principle, to popularize "Mormonism." They desire to make our religion conform to the doctrines and wishes of other people. They appear to be more concerned about being in harmony with men of the world, than with living according to the principles of the gospel. If any particular action of the Church comes in contact with the ideas of men who walk in their own way, such action, in the minds of these so-called Saints, should immediately give place to the changeable notions of public clamor. "Be like others; let us not be peculiar," is their cry—even if that peculiarity manifests itself in the old-fashioned notion of demanding our legal rights, and fair play among our fellows. But if for just cause we cannot be like others, they criticise the authorities who do not or cannot accept their liberal notions.

Such brethren should remember that the theories of the worldly-wise cannot with safety be engrafted into the principles of the gospel. We have received a distinct dispensation of the gospel given us by the Lord, and it has been maintained to this day by the revelations of God to his constituted servants. Since we know that it will continue, we cannot consent to be guided by inspiration from the outside, but are in duty bound to follow in the way revealed by God. To be directed by the postulates of the world, and by leaders of men, will be just as fatal to the Latter-day Saints, as it was for the Former-day Saints.

How was it with them? For nearly three hundred years after

Christ, the principles of the gospel remained in tolerable, though not complete, purity among the children of men; but when the great Roman ruler, Constantine, caused Christianity to become the chief religion, and the Saints consented to popularize their belief by letting a Pagan political ruler direct them, instead of being guided by the revelations of God, they fell into rank apostasy, and gradually turned away from the simple but pure and saving doctrines of Christ. Under the strain of persecution, many followers of, and many more or less fervent believers in, the religion of the Savior, gradually fell into fellowship with Pagan ideas. While this seemed to lighten the persecution, and the great pressure of world-hatred which was directed against them, their course resulted in engrafting into the Christian cause the fruits of Paganism, and sowing, in the minds of men, the seeds of apostasy from the true Church of Christ. For a season the truly staunch and faithful continued to suffer persecution, rather than share popularity with the errors of Paganism. They were ridiculed and scoffed at by their enemies, until either death relieved them, or they were driven to join the popular throng for self-protection.

To the Latter-day Saints, the true, pure, simple gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored. We are responsible for maintaining it upon the earth. It must not be mixed with policies that are foreign to the purposes of God. It will not do for us to forget the lessons learned from the experience of the Former-day Saints. It will not do for us to save our feelings, if by so doing we corrupt the precious principles of the gospel, by compromises with the world.

It grieves my heart to know that there are some of the young men who would do this, who, while they would gladly cling to the gospel, are yet trying to swim in the popular pool. They cannot endure persecution, nor can they comprehend why the Saints should submit to it, when it would be as easy to make friends with the enemy. Some again pose as Saints when with the Saints, but when with the world are cordial, compromising, sociable and friendly; and even admit that all the changes demanded by the opponents of "Mormonism" will in time be made; and that what they object to and are fighting, are mistakes that will be remedied in time. They are led by Cæsar and not by the

will of the Lord. They judge the authorities of the Church by the emotions of the world, and not by the inspirations of the Almighty. From this point of view, they see occurrences as they are seen by men who are devoted to temporal and not to eternal things, and hence cannot, or will not, comprehend how matters appear differently to those whose mental surveys are taken from the heights of gospel truth. Having only their own peace, and the good will of men, in mind, they fail to appreciate the toil and anxiety of the servants of God who are laboring for the greater peace, which emanates from an honest desire to witness the prosperity and advancement of God's holy cause upon the earth.

My words do not imply that we should not respect the opinions of others, but they do mean that we need not therefore depart from what we know to be true and right, to adopt false and wrong ideas, in order to become popular. That is not what the Lord expects of us. To be a Latter-day Saint requires the sacrifice of worldly aims and pleasures; it requires fidelity, strength of character, love of truth, integrity to principle, and zealous desire to see the triumphant, forward march of truth. This means that often our position must be unpopular. It means unending battle against sin and worldliness. It is not an easy road to travel; and the opposing power will always manifest itself in the way of the young man who walks therein; but only so may we establish the truth, build character, and keep pure the principles of the gospel that have been entrusted to us.

JOSEPH F. SMITH.

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#### MESSAGES FROM THE MISSIONS.

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Elder James W. R. Hurst, writing from Manchester, England, says: "The *Era* is indeed a valuable publication, and is a big help in spreading the truth. It is carefully read, and with great interest, by Saints, elders, and investigators of the Gospel. We feel grateful for the privilege we have of receiving it."

A baptismal service of the West Hartlepool branch was held on Saturday, May 26, we learn from the *Star*, on the shore of the North Sea. Ten persons were baptized, Elders Walter Cox, William O. Smith, and Joseph A. F. Everett officiating. The confirmations were attended to on May 27, in the Villier Hall.