DESERET EVENING NEWS.

DESERET NEWS PUBLISHING COMPANY, LESSEES.

Salt Lake City, : September 21, 1895

The Deseret Evening News is published daily, Sunday excepted, at Salt Lake City, Utah.

Terms: Edition at 5:00 p.m. Regular Edition is published.

The Deseret Semi-Weekly News is published on Tuesday and Friday of each week.

The Deseret Weekly is compacted form is published every Saturday.

Terms of Subscription.

Daily (3 Months	$3.00
Daily 6 Months	5.00
Daily 9 Months	7.50
Daily 1 Month	1.00
Daily by the Week	25
Semi-Weekly 3 Months	1.00
Semi-Weekly 6 Months	1.50
Semi-Weekly 9 Months	2.00
Weekly 3 Months	50
Weekly 6 Months	1.00

Postmasters for Subscriptions always in advance.

Subscribers changing their place of residence should always give former as well as present address.

The News is on sale at the principal Hotels, News Stands and on passenger trains leaving the city that p.m. daily.

Any Subscribers will kindly notify J. T. Dooley, Secretary, of any irregularity in the delivery of their papers.

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Telephone 106

CONFERENCE NOTICE.

The Sixty-sixth Semi-annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will convene in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, on Friday morning, October 6th, 1895, at 10 o'clock a.m. A cordial invitation is given to the officers and members of the Church to be present.

WILFORD WOODRUFF,
GEORGE Q. CANNON,
JOSEPH F. SMITH,
First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

AN OLD CONTROVERSY.

A contemporary published in Minneapolis, in the interest of the Lutheran church in this country, devotes a couple of columns to the famous letter of Cyprian on the subject of infant baptism and draws the conclusion, that from this letter it is indisputable that the belief of the Lutheran church in this point is in perfect accordance with the doctrine of the ancient Christian martyr church.

The subject is somewhat antiquated. Well informed Protestant students of ecclesiastical history now generally admit the futility of any endeavor to establish divine authority for the practice of infant baptism. If it was taught by the early fathers at all, it was not in such a way that from their extant writings, it cannot be proven. But as occasionally the contention is made that the so-called early fathers prove the rite to be of apostolic origin, and as Cyprian in particular is relied upon for this statement, it may not be out of place to give the matter a moment's consideration.

Caecilius Cyprianus, born in Africa was a prominent rhetorician converted to Christianity about 246 after Christ. During the Decian persecution he was forced to withdraw into concealment. He was a close student of Tertullian, and in much of his teachings but re-echoes the doctrines of that father. His chief celebrity dates from the hour of his martyrdom. He was called to the office of a teacher before he had learnt the principles of Christianity thoroughly, and the subsequent persecutions left him but little leisure for theological research, wherefore Augustine, without scruple, contraverts his decisions on important questions. But the chief fact to remember in connection with the question of the authority of this father is this, that if only a part of what he himself tells about the members of the church with which he was connected is true, their corruption was such that little credence can be attached to what they unanimously decide to be right or wrong.

In the year 253 a council was held at Carthage, Africa, where sixty-six bishops were present. Among the questions discussed was whether infant baptism ought to be deferred until the eighth day, after the pattern of circumcision, and the decision was unanimous not to defer it, because "we ought not to deny any human being, as soon as born, the mercy of God." From this pre-christian triumphantly concludes that infant sprinkling was the universal practice of the church at the time of Cyprian and that the rite has apostolic sanction.

It is easy to see that never was logic so misapplied. That the churches in Africa, two and a half centuries after Christ, among other errors also had fallen into the one of considering baptism a Christian form of circumcision is indeed indisputable, but the testimony of Tertullian on this point is conclusive, even without the council of Carthage, for his vehement denunciation of the practice and the principles on which it rested proves that they were comparatively new at that time and not among the teachings handed down from the Apostles of our Lord. His argument that the children born under the covenant are "holy" is unanswered to this day by the followers of other African bishops.

Lutheran theologians especially should be careful when building arguments on the expressions of the early fathers, because their opponents probably have the better end of the argument as soon as that mode of reasoning is turned against them. In the controversy about the Lord's supper, in which Luther's followers have taken such a decided view, the whole array of early ecclesiastical writers goes against them. The Alexandrian Clement says the wine in the sacrament allegorizes the blood. This is Cyprian's. Tertullian tells Marcion: "The bread taken and distributed to the disciples, Christ made His own body, saying, 'This is My body;'" which seems to be pure Catholic transubstantiation. However, he adds, "That is, the figure of my body," which again seems to be Calvinism. Cyprian's doctrine on this point is this: "We have the image of the sacrifice of Christ in the bread and wine," and he contends that in the Sacrament both wine and water must be used, on the queer ground that if we partake of wine only, the body of Christ would be without us; if of water only, we would be without Christ, while the water and wine testifies a union of Christ to His Church. Now, if it is possible to comprehend the meaning of his argument on this point, he may claim to be authority on other doctrines.

The fact is that many of those who argue for infant sprinkling eagerly seize the early fathers as authority where they perceive an agreement, but discard them in other points, and no theologians are more inconsistent in this regard than our Lutheran friends. How much better in matters of this kind to rely on the revealed word ifidied and the guidance of that Spirit whose office it is to reveal the truth. Were this the practice of Christians, there would be unity in faith and in worship.

THE WET.

There are three great things to be thankful for in connection with this storm.

One is for the storm itself, which is worth a hundred times more than it will cost, and which is of inestimable benefit to farmers, stockmen, rubber-goods dealers, coal men and sprinkling cart drivers.

The second is that the equinoctial storm only comes twice a year, and that we need therefore look for no other visitation from it until about the end of next March or April.

The third is that since there are such things as equinoctial storms, there is nothing like having them come along on time, as that forewarned people can get ready for them and be able to display that rare quality of sense which is exemplified in the ability to "get in out of the wet."

It will be remembered by nearly all old settlers that the so-called equinoctial storm heretofore generally eulogized its coming till Conference. Especially in the days when country visitors used to come to town in their wagons, prepared to live and sleep in them or out of doors until they got back home again, the Conference storm was as regular and inevitable and irrevocable a part of the semi-annual journey to this city as ever equinoctial gale was to the navigator upon the high seas. Since the days of the railroad, when visitors could more readily get back and forth, the weather has had no occasion to be so capricious as in times before—there was no such reward as the old-time discomfort and the drenchings administered to the luckless sojourners within our gates.

For all these things let us be truly thankful—for the storm itself, for its arrival on time, and for the promise of good weather for the approaching Conference.

NONE OF THE WORK IN VAIN.

A common observation of Elders in the missionary field preaching the Gospel is the general indifference presented by so many professing Christians to the necessity of conforming to those rules which the Lord has indicated as leading to the road to salvation. There appears to be a popular impression that mere mental assent to the leading idea of Christianity, without active application of all its principles in detail to human conduct, is all that is required to secure salvation in the hereafter; hence oftentimes individual Elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who proclaim the real and applied Christianity note events of a discouraging nature in the comparatively few that listen to their testimony and give heed to the Gospel message. In the aggregate, however, the results of Gospel teachings in the various nations is of a most encouraging character, and evince a remarkable progress towards the great consummation of the Lord's purposes in these times, referred to in prophecy as the latter days, when the fullness of the Gentiles shall be ushered in and the kingdom of Christ be established on earth.

These aggregate results are noted in a general Church capacity are themselves conclusive proof of the fact that none of a faithful Elder's work is in vain, no matter how slight his action as a messenger of God. The little things which he performs in this capacity, although to his immediate knowledge they bear no important fruits, in time often become most potent for doing good. As not a sparrow falls to the ground unobserved by the great Creator, so not one act of His servants in spreading the Gospel news is unavailing in its providences as a means of accomplishing His purposes. Incidents illustrative this are discovered to be innumerable when inquiry thereto is instituted. A casual remark on Gospel truths, a testimony borne under apparently foreboding circumstances, or even the dropping of a Gospel tract by a humble Elder on his rounds of tracting the people, often has been productive of the most gratifying results. Like the scriptural "bread cast upon the waters," it has returned in blessings after many days. As an instance of this kind, illustrating the great principle that God does nothing in vain, not even through the instrument of His Elders who may appear to be surrounded by discouraging conditions, the following is reproduced from a letter recently written by Elder A. H. Lund, president of the European mission. At the time of writing Brother Lund had just concluded a visit to the Netherlands mission, presided over by Elder A. W. Judd. The following is an extract from Elder Lund's letter:

"In the evening Elder Pieper, who labors in Belgium, arrived. This young man speaks fluently the French language, which enables him to labor in all parts of Belgium, as several languages are spoken there. He gave an interesting account of a visit which he had lately made to Casselard, a Belgian city. Some time ago a gentleman of that place, while on a visit to London, England, met one of our Elders, who gave him the little pamphlet written by Elder James H. Anderson, entitled 'The Latter-day Saints.' He took it with him home, and not of curiosity sat down and read it through. What he read gave a new direction to his thoughts. Things belonging to a family well known in the history of France and living in a Catholic country, he knew to be Protestant. The little book made a deep impression on him. A stream of light on the principles of the Gospel flooded his mind. He became anxious to see a Mormon Elder, but could not find one in Belgium. He then, in his anxiety, directed a letter to President Woodruff, asking for more information and expressing a desire to be taught by one of the Elders. The letter was sent to the Liverpool office and then forwarded to Elder Judd, with the suggestion that Elder Pieper pay a visit to the writer.

"When Brother Pieper arrived at Charleroi he was met by a gentleman who was very anxious to be informed concerning the truth of the Latter-day message, and in broken English introduced Brother Pieper as an interpreter. He introduced Elder Pieper to his acquaintance as his friend, a Mormon missionary, and also informed them that he himself was investigating the principles of the Latter-day Saints, having received the name 'Mormon,' it is said from the Protestant minister upon his own request, and he immediately accused himself, saying he had not time to see or listen to a Mormon missionary. Instead, therefore, of introducing