

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

GENERAL CONFERENCE.

The Sixty-eighth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will convene in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, at 10 a. m. Wednesday, April 6th, 1898. All officers and members of the Church are invited to be present.

WILFORD WOODRUFF,
GEORGE Q. CANNON,
JOSEPH F. SMITH,

First Presidency.

Scandinavian meeting, Assembly Hall Thursday April 7th, at 7 p. m.

General Priesthood meeting, in Tabernacle, Saturday, April 9th, at 10 a. m.

Seventies' Conference, in Assembly Hall, Sunday, 2 p. m., April 10.

Relief Society conference in Assembly Hall, forenoon and afternoon of Tuesday, April 5th, and forenoon of Saturday, April 9th.

Deseret Sunday School Union meeting, in Tabernacle, Sunday, April 10th, at 7 p. m.

German meeting, Assembly Hall, Sunday afternoon, April 10th, from 5 to 7 p. m.

CHURCH AND SOCIETIES.

The attention of religious denominations is being called to the influence of private societies on the progress of the churches. The Episcopal Methodists are confronted by the unpleasant fact that the net gain of communicants for the past year fell to the low figure of 19,500, while the average for the past ten years has been 57,000. The Zion's Herald, a Methodist organ, unhesitatingly expresses the conviction that the Epworth league is responsible for the decline. The paper summarizes its observations thus:

"1. It is the era of the Epworth league in the church. The league has been given the right of way everywhere, and what it has stood for has very largely dominated the church. The international convention at Toronto last year filled the thought and life of the church as perhaps no other gathering of recent years has done. If the year had been one of large spiritual ingathering, gladly would we have accredited the league with having large part in the result. Now that the reverse is so lamentably true, must we not with equal justice lay the actual consequences at its door? 2. The work of the league, though not so intended, has diverted the purpose of the church from its own historic and characteristic mission of soul-winning, and has dissipated its energies into other channels. While the motives of the league have been worthy, they have not been on that high plane of spiritual activity for which the church has always been distinguished. 3. The separate Epworth league meeting has drawn a line of demarkation between this organization and the church, and multitudes have magnified the league above the church, and made it a substitute for it. In many churches the league is only a social club and therefore lacking in spiritual aspiration, grip and power. The effect of the league upon

thousands of churches has been to tone down its spiritual and revival power."

The Christian Endeavor society receives similar criticism in England. What far-seeing men in many denominations have forecasted is now being realized. The British Weekly, an influential Non-conformist journal, gives expression to the following views:

"In many cases they [the societies] are encouraging. They are especially so in mission churches, where practically the Christian Endeavor society is the church, in the smaller denominations of Methodism particularly. They are strong and flourishing where there is a popular minister, and where the tide of prosperity has only to be swelled. They are good also in other cases where the motto of the society, 'For Christ and the Church,' is clearly kept in view. But it is obvious that in many places they are evil. This is the testimony not merely of ministers, but of Christian Endeavorers themselves. In particular there is frequent complaint that the prayer-meetings and week-night services are seriously injured. The young people go to the Christian Endeavor meeting and neglect the meetings of the church. The old are in one camp and the new in another. In many cases the minister is ignored, and church services are often neglected. Nearly all the replies received from Scotland, and the great majority of the replies from Congregationalists, are to the effect that the society is not only not helpful to the church, but distinctly harmful. What has struck us very much is that from churches where the ministers are prominent leaders of Christian Endeavor there are serious complaints from members that their energy has gone too much into that channel, and that the ordinary work of the church is impoverished. Some leading Baptist ministers also are strongly hostile to the movement from experience."

From the standpoint of a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints the conditions complained of do not appear quite as serious as indicated by the quotations given above. In the multitude of religious denominations and societies where each claims to be one division, one part of the so-called universal church, it would seem immaterial whether those religiously inclined devote their time and energy to this division or that. The decline in membership noticed in the Methodist organization is no loss to the so-called church, if a corresponding increase takes place in the Epworth league or the Endeavor society, any more than the withdrawal of a sum of money from one safety vault and depositing it in another is in itself a loss to the owner. The question of the administration of the Sacraments is excluded, as long as it is admitted that an organization can be a church without properly authorized servants of the Lord to administer the ordinances, and even entirely without Sacraments. Still, there is a truth embodied in the objection to private religious societies as stated—a truth which deserves attention at a time when societies and associations of all sorts seem to be the order of the day.

The Church of Jesus, considered in its external aspect, is something higher and infinitely more sacred than any merely human organization, however noble its aim. It is, and must be, a visible society of disciples of the Master combined for the purpose of being the bearers of light and salvation to the actual human world, to living and to dead. For the accomplishment of

its work, divinely instituted ordinances and rightly ordained officers are essential. And therefore we meet in Sacred writ with repeated warnings to remain loyal to the Church and the leaders to whom God has entrusted its care; to avoid division and all that may lead to it, whether insubordination or arrogance. In accordance with this scriptural view of the Church every tendency that leads Church members away from their characteristic mission of saving souls and diverts their energy into other channels must be regarded with deep concern, no matter how innocent it may look on the surface. A profession of love for the Lord must be proved to be genuine by sincere concern for the spiritual welfare of His flock—His Church.

PRATT CONFIRMED.

Arthur Pratt has been confirmed chief of police. Luckily for him he had two strings to his bow, and when the combine in the City Council rejected him, all he had to do was to go before the Supreme court. The full text of the decision, which was announced this forenoon, is not at hand at this writing, hence its points in detail cannot be definitely stated; but the court grants the petition for a mandamus to compel the city auditor to draw his warrant in favor of the petitioner in payment of his salary as chief of police, including the month of January of this year. It is thus settled that Arthur Pratt was chief of police of this city up to the close of that month; and it follows that he is yet.

The auditor has twenty days in which to move for a rehearing. Failing to so move within that time, a remittitur will be handed down to the district court ordering the mandamus to be issued. If the motion is made it will be set for argument and the case will pend in the Supreme court for some weeks or months before being finally terminated. It is probable, however, that the claims of Mr. Pratt will not be further contested by the auditor, who is the ostensible while the city is the real defendant. Or perhaps it would be a more accurate statement of the fact to say that the party resisting Mr. Pratt is the City Council combine.

Now let the combine dissolve. Let its members borrow a little horse sense from the Mayor, for out of his abundance of that article he can well afford to eke out their scanty supply. Let business principles control in all departments of the city government, the Council especially, for that is what all the voters voted for at the last election, and that is what all the candidates on all the tickets promised. Let us have peace.

A PECULIAR FACT.

A somewhat curious subject has recently received attention in certain scientific circles. The fact is popularly known that persons who have lost a limb by amputation frequently imagine that the missing part of the body is still in its place, but it may not be generally known that the illusion often is so vivid as to lead to accidents. Recent observations, it is said, have led to the conclusion that in a majority of cases the impression that the amputated limb is still retained is so distinct as to constantly deceive the intelligence of the individual.

The National Druggist gives the statements of several patients as to their feelings and impressions. One says:

"I know mighty well that I have no