

## 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, 1893. All officers and members of the Church are invited to be present.

WILFORD WOODRUFF,

GEORGE Q. CANNON,

JOSEPH F. SMITH,

First Presidency.

Seventies' Conference, in Assembly Hall, Friday evening, April 8th.

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

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

### ONE BAPTISM.

A correspondent from Bonnetterre, Mo., writing to the "News," states that he accepts the doctrines of the Latter-day Saints in some particulars, and asks for further information regarding baptism for the remission of sins. It appears to him, he says, that the New Testament mentions three separate and distinct baptisms, and that not water baptism but "the blood of the new covenant" is given for the purpose of the remission of sins. The subject is one upon which the New Testament is very clear, and the confusion regarding the baptismal rite, existing in the world, is all the more strange.

It is true enough that the word baptism is used in the Scriptures in more than one sense. We read of baptism in the Holy Ghost, and in fire, and our Lord refers to His sufferings on Calvary as a "baptism." But the primary meaning of the term is the immersion in water in accordance with the commission given to the Church by its divine Founder. That is the sense in which the word is employed most frequently, and in that sense there is, as the author of the letter to the Ephesians declares, only one baptism, as there is one faith, one Lord, one hope.

Of the signification of this ordinance the Scriptures speak with no uncertain sound. It is "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2: 38); "wash away thy sins" (Acts 22: 16); we are baptized "Into our Lord" (Gal. 3: 27); "Into His death," His "grave" (Rom. 6: 3, 4; Col. 2: 12); "raised with Him" (Col. 2: 13); "clothed with Christ" (Gal. 3: 27); it is saving "by the answer of a good conscience" (1 Pet. 3: 21). The Church is "sanctified and cleansed by the laver of the water" (Eph. 5: 26). The fundamental idea in all these expressions is that the act of baptism is the dividing line between the old and the new life in the experience of the believing and repentant sinner. It is to the individual what the passage through the Red sea was to ancient Israel, after the liberation from slavery. It cannot be better expressed than by the words of inspired authors, that it is "for the remission of sins," since, if rightly performed and accepted in faith, the ordinance is the seal of God upon the act of justification, by which past sins are forgiven, and the recipient enabled to lead an entirely

new life, in accordance with the divine will.

Lately there has been a tendency to study the ordinances of the New Testament in connection with those of previous dispensations. It is clear that one of the functions of circumcision, for instance, was to be a seal on the covenant made with the progenitor of the Hebrews. In analogy with this, it appears clearly that the Almighty in baptism has instituted an ordinance in which spiritual blessings are given to men and women, not to be obtained in any other way. In the language of St. Bernard:

"A ring is given for the ring's sake; and there is no significance: it is given to invest an heir in some inheritance, and it is a sign. The recipient can in that case say, The ring avails nothing, but yet it is the inheritance which I sought. In this manner the Lord, drawing near His passion, took means so to invest His people in His grace, that the invisible grace might be granted by some visible sign."

This view seems to be well supported by the Scriptures. It accounts for the immeasurable importance of obedience to the word of the Lord in regard to baptism, both as applied to the living and the dead, and it shows why in the nature of things the ordinance, unless administered by one having divine authority, and in the manner prescribed, must be regarded as an empty ceremony, a worthless imitation.

### DEFECT IN THE LAW.

In the town of Richfield, Sevier county, there has recently occurred an illustration showing how the vicious propensities of a vile wretch may be sated by the perpetration of a gross outrage upon any number of respectable citizens, without placing him within the reach of the law in any manner or degree; and how justice can be administered to a miscreant only by exposing to legal penalties the person who performs the good work.

The "News" yesterday (Thursday) contained a reference to the publication in the Richfield Advocate of the 9th inst. of matter grossly insulting to a number of the best families in the place. On the day following the appearance of the article, so it is reported, John Meeter, editor of the Advocate, was in the act of leaving the post office with an armful of mail matter, when a lady of fine physique and the courage of her convictions, who was one of the victims of the foul and brutal attack that had appeared in the paper named, gave him a ringing slap in the face, following it up with a succession of blows rapidly and vigorously delivered.

Word comes from Richfield that the lady is to be arrested. The "News" has the greatest respect for the law, and desires to see it maintained and vindicated at all times. Undoubtedly the lady violated it, and if the unspeakable perpetrator of the outrage that provoked her shall appear in court and prosecute her and make out a case against her, let not the court or jury hesitate to convict her.

But let her punishment be fixed at a fine in the sum of one cent, and then let her fellow citizens take up a collection to defray the cost of a suitable medal to be given to her for her bravery in defending by the only means in her power to employ—physical force—her own good name and the honor of the family of which she is a member. Let the law take its course and let all its

forms and requirements be complied with. But let there also be such an expression of public opinion as will be just to all concerned.

That the law should protect where it ought to punish with extreme severity, and that it should punish where it ought to protect, as in the Richfield episode, shows a grave defect in it which legislative wisdom has not been able to remedy. But public opinion may, and in this case should, make amends for the imperfections in the law.

### SPAIN IN AMERICA.

The conditions prevailing in the Central American republics would undoubtedly be duplicated in Cuba should that island become independent, as now seems probable. The Central American states for nearly three centuries formed a part of the Spanish empire and had no independent role in the history of the world. Then they broke loose and plunged into the maelstrom of revolution, from which they have never been able to emerge. Plundering dictators have followed each other in rapid succession; trade languishes and the people remain poor and ignorant in the midst of wealth and the luxuries of a tropical nature. Roads hardly exist; forced loans and military exactions are the order of the day, and it is believed the population of the isthmus today is less numerous than it was at the beginning of the century.

A noteworthy fact is that there are so many aborigines in Central America. About two-thirds of the entire population is said to be pure Indians, a gentle, docile race, industrious and living much in the same way as their ancestors did, when the country was first settled by the Spaniards. The others are of mixed race, white and Indian, exhibiting generally the vices of both. These are the rulers of the countries, the well-to-do, and the instigators of the revolutions.

The fact that so many pure Indians still exist in the Central American states is pointed out as an evidence that Spanish rule, whatever can be said against it, has at least not resulted in the extermination of the natives, as is in many instances the case in countries brought under Anglo-Saxon influence. The fact is that the Spanish adventurers were religious in their way. They were accompanied by priests who baptized the heathen that could be persuaded to submit to the rite, and when this was performed, the church recognized the right of her newly adopted children to protection and treated them as equals in many respects with the conquerors. The Spanish women remained at home, and the settlers mingled freely with the natives and planted their homes in their midst. Thus it happened that in all Spanish America a large proportion of the people remains as it was, as to race, when first discovered. Five-sixths of the people of Guatemala and about one-half of Mexico are said to be Indian.

If the question were to try Spain before the bar of civilization on a charge of cruelty against native races on this continent, and her acts were to be compared with those of other countries in the sixteenth century in America, or in Africa at the present time, the verdict would not be entirely against the defendant. Her mistake at present as regards Cuba seems to be this; that, realizing her inability to hold the island by civilized methods, she has resorted to the extremely revolting policy of starving thousands of innocent people to death, to induce the rebels to lay down their arms. This, more than anything else, has turned the sympathy of a great nation for the Cubans and