

thinking for themselves. This, too, is a fact apparent to all who know them.

Even with regard to the authority of the Bible there is not that divided opinion which the clergyman refers to. The fact is that every scholar, Mormon or non-Mormon, knows that the sacred Scriptures, although in the main points identical with the original documents, yet have suffered so many changes that at present it is absolutely impossible to restore the original text in every particular. Our Christian friends are well aware of this fact, but some of them have a motive for endeavoring to conceal it as far as possible. They believe that God no longer holds the position relative to His children that He held anciently; they deny His power or His will to reveal truth in the same way as He revealed it centuries ago. A complete, infallible and stereotyped Bible is their only refuge when pressed for reasons for this alleged change in Him whom they declare is unchangeable. Were it not for the sake of the necessity of denying direct communication with God, Christians would view the Bible in the same light as the Mormons do—as a record of God's dealings with man in former dispensations, reliable in every main point notwithstanding the alterations it may have suffered at the hands of fallible men.

The position of the Mormons on this point is between two fires. Against these Christians who, without sufficient grounds, claim the miraculous preservation of the Bible text in every letter, in order to have an excuse to refuse to listen to the voice of God now, they maintain that the sacred volume is no longer complete, nor its now received text infallible in every detail, and that it, consequently, cannot be a substitute for living, inspired servants of the Lord. Against the critics that would like to relegate the Scriptures to the domain of heathen myth they maintain the genuineness and the authenticity of the Bible record in all points essential for the enlightenment of mankind on the subjects it deals with. There is no inconsistency in this.

When ministers take the Mormons to task for their conceptions of the Deity, they are entering particularly dangerous ground to themselves. In the Bible it is declared that it is eternal life to know God, but modern theologians, ever since the day of the Athanasian creed, have declared that God is incomprehensible, thereby freely confessing that they themselves lack one element of eternal life. What right, then, have they, who themselves profess ignorance, to stamp others as heretics because of views not in harmony with theirs? Did the Son of God reveal the Father? Did He teach His followers to call upon the Lord under the name of Father? And is that a figure of speech merely, or is it a truth? Let those who profess to believe in the Bible answer.

It is conceivable that those who have no practical experience in the moral effects of the Gospel, or more than a superficial knowledge of its doctrine, can regard it as an obstacle to moral progress. Ancient philosophers at first looked upon Christianity in the same light, and they freely accused Christians of immorality. It was nevertheless true that the Gospel then was in its effects superior not on-

ly to the heathen philosophical systems but also the gnostic mysticism that competed with it for recognition. And it is equally true now that Mormonism in its moral effects far surpasses the effect of any other religious system. We are willing to compare the facts.

BAPTISTS AND CHURCH BANKRUPTCY.

According to an interview in Friday's New York World, Lawyer D. W. Perkins, who has charge of the finances of the American Baptist home mission society, which has funds loaned on church edifices of the Baptist denomination in nearly every state and territory, thinks the society is in for foreclosing a lot of these mortgages, and as a consequence will become the owner of more church edifices than the organization desires to take out of the hands of local congregations. Mr. Perkins says the society is calling in all its mortgages on church property throughout the country, because of the free silver movement.

This society has been in existence since 1832, and expends about half a million dollars annually in its special line. It loans money to other than Baptist congregations who wish to erect church edifices, and for three years past has insisted on the gold clause in all mortgages to all but Baptists; these do not sign a gold-mortgage when they borrow money to build. Mr. Perkins says that in response to the society calls for its interest letters come saying "the silver agitation is so materially affecting the finances of the localities that it makes it next to impossible to raise money." Then the interview goes on:

Mr. Perkins says: "We are now endeavoring to obtain payment of these loans. But the report from the churches is to the effect that it is utterly impossible for them, in the present condition of finance, to pay these mortgages, and many of them really admit that if there should be a favorable vote for free coinage they will probably be compelled to yield their church property, unless the society can carry them longer. The result is that the society is greatly crippled in its work, and our fear is that if the silver movement shall be successful our work will have to largely cease."

"Wouldn't the majority of churches, under those circumstances, have to go into bankruptcy?" asked the reporter.

"The churches, under such circumstances," replied Mr. Perkins, "would, of course, lose their church property unless our society continued to carry them without payment of principal or interest. In such an event it would make the society almost powerless to carry on its work in aiding the erection of churches in new localities."

It will be readily reorganized that the publication of such interviews, and the action referred to therein, is in accord with the threat of certain classes of creditors to precipitate a financial panic if necessary to block the free silver movement. It will be noted also that before the free silver movement has reached the point of inauguration into the country's finances it is "utterly impossible" for the mortgagors to pay up. To that extent, then, the "dead wall" is reached; and without going into pro-

longed and unnecessary argument the subject may be referred to the intelligent reader with the suggestion that, the "impossible" being arrived at, no change can make it worse, and any change might bring improvement. The mortgagors cannot pay now and must be carried or foreclosed on; hence if silver success caused any movement at all from that situation, now at its worst, it must be for a better state of affairs.

IMMORAL MARRIAGES.

The growing frequency with which divorces are successively obtained by men and women in order that they may almost immediately re-enter the marriage state is attracting considerable comment in pulpit and press, the consensus of opinion being that such proceedings amount to a gross immorality that menaces the family relation in this country. The ease with which divorces are obtained leaves no difficulty in the way of persons who desire to live together for a short time and then change their companionship for a new fancy to do so with all the forms of legality. The more notable cases of this kind that come before the public are those of actors and actresses, some of whom have been known to make the change so quickly that before leaving the room where the divorce has been granted the new engagement has been announced; and the trip frequently has been made direct from the divorce court to the marriage hall. But while the stage people attract the most public attention because of their "lightning changes" in the marriage relation, there are many couples in private life who discount actors and actresses in the rapidity of transition from one family partner to another. Considering the utter contempt in which the family relation, once held so sacred, is being brought by this practice in modern society, it is no wonder that people who have the welfare of the nation at heart feel, as the New York World expresses it, that these frequent divorces and re-marriages "are no different from open immorality. The complicity of the court and the cupidity of the minister cannot alter the essential central fact. In one way they are more subversive than open immorality. They bring the institution of marriage into disrepute. They make its vows absurd and its high ideal of consistency a matter of derision."

GERMAN PAPERS say that Bjornstjerne Bjornson, Norway's celebrated poet and politician, has concluded to go into voluntary exile and take up his residence in Germany, owing to the attacks made upon him in his own country on account of his political ideas. Even his friends have counseled him lately to keep still—an utter impossibility. There seems to be something peculiar about the great literary lights of that country. Jónas Lie lives in Paris. Henrik Ibsen has been an exile so long that he is almost a stranger in his own country. Jansen lived in the United States several years, and now Bjornson seems to have found his countrymen ungrateful. Is it another case of a prophet not being appreciated in his own house?