

EDITORIALS.

FINANCIALLY UNFORTUNATE.

The announcement made yesterday that Rev. G. M. Pierce, Methodist clergyman, who has been lately conducting a book and stationery business in the Wasatch Block, had suffered a financial collapse, has been the subject of a good deal of talk since its publication. Mr. T. C. Griffiths is the assignee to whom the assignor has handed over his assets for the benefit of his creditors.

We learn on reliable authority that the liabilities amount to between \$35,000 and \$40,000. The assets are not much over one-fourth, consisting of stock, etc., to the value of about \$6,000 and a house and lot that will increase the sum to \$10,000 more or less. According to this showing, the gentleman only having been in business a comparatively brief period, it is estimated that he must have been going backward at an average monthly rate of not far from \$500, a somewhat precipitous declension.

The creditors are said to be numerous, and include all sorts of people, among them Sunday school teachers and pupils. The failure is attributed by Mr. Pierce to one of his creditors, said to be the London Bank of Utah, to whom he is indebted to the amount of \$2,300, pressing him too closely for payment.

The event has caused considerable feeling among those who were formerly numbered among the friends of the unfortunate gentleman, their revulsion of sentiment being probably caused by the parties being losers.

Those creditors who are inclined to censure Mr. Pierce should suspend judgment until they hear a full explanation of his affairs, if they have not yet obtained one. It is to be expected that a man of his standing, especially in view of his position as a representative of a prominent religious body, will be able to show beyond doubt that the present condition of his affairs is due either to a lack of business capacity, for which he cannot be held morally responsible, or the result of circumstances over which he had no control, and which occasionally overtake men in their business relations.

Mr. Pierce has expressed his intention of remaining in the city, instead of resorting to ignominious flight, and devoting his time and ability in future, to meeting the demands of his creditors. This is an eminently proper course to pursue, and the only one that an honorable man can take when overtaken by pecuniary disaster. His statement of intention to stop, however, appeared to be somewhat unnecessary, as among the various remarks that we have heard regarding his bankruptcy there has been no intimation of a purpose on his part to fly the country.

We have had frequent occasions in the past to allude to what we deemed the unjust and misrepresentative course pursued by Mr. Pierce in relation to the "Mormons," but we bear him no ill-will on that or any other account, and hope to see him come out clear from his present trying position, and that he will not be too hastily condemned or ostracized by those who have heretofore been his friends.

THE "JOSEPHITE" LEADER'S UNWILLING ADMISSIONS.

Our columns to-day contain a letter from Joseph Smith, of Lamoni, Iowa, that arrived during our absence, and which we now publish, not because it contains anything that throws light on his side of the controversy, which has sprung up through the Littlefield correspondence, but because we do not wish to appear discourteous nor to give Mr. Smith any reason for complaint as in the case of the *Utah Journal*. And we will say here, that our Cache County contemporary is an independent paper, able to vindicate its own course, and we are not responsible for it or for Mr. Littlefield's utterances in its columns, or for the refusal of its editor to prolong a discussion which, we think with him, had proceeded far enough on

the main point at issue, which was not the rightfulness of plural marriage, but the question of whether or not that doctrine was taught and practised by Joseph Smith the Seer.

The point now taken up by Mr. Smith is the right of the Almighty to alter His laws to suit the varied conditions of mankind, without being open to the charge of changeability. Mr. Smith had claimed that if God gave a command to His people at one time to have only one wife, and at another time permitted or commanded them to have more than one, He was therefore a changeable being in whom no confidence could be reposed. We showed from the Scriptures that in numerous instances the Almighty had acted in this way, and that the change was not in God but in His laws given under different conditions. Mr. Smith now tacitly admits the correctness of the principle which we laid down, but tries to shelter himself from the consequences of his forced admission by charging us with not explaining the change of the conditions which prompted the change of the divine law in relation to marriage.

Now there is no necessity for this. It would be easy to give reasons for the retention of the law of celestial marriage, including the plurality of wives until the time when it was manifested, if they would affect the main question. But they do not. The point in controversy is yielded by Mr. Smith in the letter which we publish at his request. Not acknowledged in an open, frank and manly manner it is true, but "given away" in a further attempt at reply. It is confessed by Mr. Smith that there have been changes made by the Lord in revealing His laws to man. First came the everlasting Gospel, then the law of carnal commandments, afterward the old Gospel restored by Christ. Here are changes which on Mr. Smith's theory, propounded in personal letters, prove God to be a changeable being. We denied this charge against Deity, and proved that it was erroneous. On the same principle Mr. Smith made unfair and unfilial charges against his father, if the latter had taught and practised plural marriage having previously inculcated monogamy. We defended the Prophet from these imputations, and showed that under certain conditions plural marriage might be for bidden and under others commanded, without inconsistency either in God or in His Prophet.

In this case it is a gradual restoration of the old and everlasting Gospel brought forth as fast as the people are in a condition to receive its principles. Baptism for the living only was permitted in the rise of the Church; afterwards baptism for the dead was taught and practised. Many great and important truths and ordinances were kept back in the beginning, and were gradually unfolded as the people became prepared to accept them. It was so with the ancient patriarchal order of marriage, which God revealed to the Prophet Joseph and which was declared in the due time of the Lord. The citations made by Mr. Smith are merely in the nature of "beating about the bush," the central fact looms up amid it all, that God has at different times changed His laws as varying conditions required, and therefore it follows that He may do so in the latter days as well as in ancient days, without being chargeable with changeability. And Mr. Smith's own quotations show that God has given a lower law when the people were not fit for the higher, and then restored the higher when they had advanced sufficiently from the lower. Thus He changed His laws, as we have all along contended, adapting them to the conditions of those to whom they were revealed.

Mr. Smith is entirely mistaken in stating that the words, "I the Lord, command and revoke as it seemeth me good," occur in the revelation which states that when people are prevented by their enemies from performing a given work it "behooveth the Lord to require that work no more at their hands." The saying is given as a general principle, and does not relate in any way to the circumstances referred to by Mr. Smith. The revelation he cites was given at Nauvoo, Illinois, January 19th, 1841, and that from which we quoted was given at Kirtland, Ohio, in June, 1831. But whenever given or however explained, the principle remains the same; that is, God commands and then revokes as it seemeth good to Him, not because He changes, but

because He regards the condition of the people to whom He reveals His laws.

There is no need to proceed further with this argument. Mr. Smith, in his eagerness to condemn the revelation on celestial marriage, stumbled into an egregious error of fact and principle, and he, no doubt, sees it now, it is clear to us from his present attempt. If we have characterized some of his meanderings as "puerile" and "nonsensical," we had no desire to offend and are quite willing to compare epithets. If we have indulged in a harsh word occasionally, it has been very mild compared with the rash, uncharitable and denunciatory expressions used by him, and is not to be classed for a moment with the violent and brutal language used in the Kirtland Temple at the "Josephite" gathering, evoking the Littlefield letter, and that may often be found in reference to the Utah "Mormons" in the columns of the paper edited by Mr. Smith. We concur in the sentiment that "truth can lose nothing by examination, but at the same time suggest that there is little profit in lengthy letters that evade main issues and that "darken counsel by words without knowledge."

ANTI-"MORMON" METHODISTS AT CINCINNATI.

We print in another part of this paper the ebullitions of an anti-"Mormon" committee, specially appointed at the Cincinnati Methodist Conference to compose something on a subject that the writers evidently knew nothing about, the Conference feeling under conscientious obligations not to adjourn without "pitching into the Mormons." The manifesto starts out with a falsehood, and its whole substance is based upon and imbued with the spirit of that fundamental error. It declares that "Mormonism is not a religion." What is it, then? These Methodist defamers say: "It is a crime, and therefore cannot be entitled to protection and tolerance as a matter of conscience." But what is this "Mormonism" that causes so much noise and hostility in the "Christian" world? Not one of the signers of the Methodist manifesto is able to answer the question, and they make no attempt to define the system which they assail with such venom and vituperation.

"Mormonism" is a religion because it is a system of faith and practice founded upon the basis of belief in God and in His Son Jesus Christ, and the necessity of doing the will of God and keeping His commandments. It prescribes a mode for divine worship, provides for ordinances and ceremonies in the Divine service, and inculcates devotion, humility and complete obedience to the Divine will. Supposing that it is not the true religion, it is nevertheless a religion, in the same way that Methodism is a religion, while being very far from a likeness to the religion taught in the New Testament.

We suppose that the strong and un-Christian language used by the Committee is directed against that part of "Mormonism" which regulates the marriage relation. It springs from violent prejudice, not from sound judgment or true knowledge. There is nothing in "Mormon" marriage that ministers to "the lowest depravities of human nature." On the contrary, it is more strongly opposed to indulgence in animal appetites than any other system called religion that has an existence on earth. "Promiscuous intercourse of the sexes," so unwarrantably introduced in connection with this subject by the Methodist Committee, is not proposed or sanctioned or permitted by "Mormonism," either "under the guise of marriage or in any other way. The foul minds of the men who framed the report which the Methodists adopted at Cincinnati, conceived the dirty idea, and out of the abundance of their hearts their words flowed.

But plural marriage is only one part of the system of faith and practice which constitutes the religion called "Mormonism." And those who are in the practice of that feature of the faith form but a minority of the members of the Church. How then can the whole system be denounced as a

crime? Indeed, correctly speaking, how can any system be properly denounced a "crime?" Crime consists of some act which is an infraction of law. An individual may commit crime, a system never. Belief in a system, however erroneous it may be, or may be considered, is not a crime. It is only the doing of something unlawful by an individual or individuals that can be called crime. "Mormonism" therefore is not a crime, the belief in it is not a crime and it is a religion for the reasons that we have already advanced.

We do not propose here to enter into the question of whether or not it is the true religion, or to prove—which we could easily do—that Methodism is not the true religion, taking the Bible, or common sense, or both as the standard. We maintain that "Mormonism" is a religion and that it is as much entitled to the protection and tolerance of the professors of other religions and of the laws of the United States as any other religious system, "as a matter of conscience." And those who, under the specious pretence that it is not a religion, endeavor to stir up the angry passions of the intolerant, to invoke the power of the civil government and to countenance "a resort to arms" in order to "extirpate from the land, root and branch," a religion which they confess their inability to overcome by argument and their own powerless creed, are enemies to Christian tolerance, foes to good order and good society and opponents of the Spirit of Him who has given free agency to man, and to whom alone men are accountable for their religious beliefs.

One of the indications of the lack of the Committee's knowledge of their subject is their attempt to explain the position and feeling of plural wives when crowned with the blessing of matrimony. "Mormon" ladies in that condition have no anxiety on the score of respectability for themselves or their offspring. They are thoroughly satisfied that their marital relations are divinely sanctioned and that their children are a heritage from the Lord, heirs to the blessings of the everlasting covenant and fully and completely legitimate in the sight of heaven. They do not trouble themselves about making a "plurality of wives legal" in the sense mentioned by the Methodist committee. Nothing that man or the laws of man could do would, in their view, make their marriage relations more sacred and binding, or their children more truly and eternally respectable.

The Cincinnati Methodists do not seem to be aware that the Edmunds law legitimated all the offspring of "Mormon" plural marriage up to the first day of January of the present year. But that is the fact, so there cannot be any trouble about the issue of plural marriages up to that date. And it would astonish the Methodist Committee if they could understand how little the "Mormon" mothers care about that matter; and that they do not recognize the slightest difference in that respect between the children born during this year and those who came into the world in previous years. For "Mormon" plural marriage is a religious institution, entered into from religious motives, solemnized by religious ordinances, and governed by religious covenants and regulations; and the sanction approbation and recognition of Almighty God in these matters is thought much more of by "Mormon" men and women than the opinions prejudices and objections of men or nations.

We do not intend to take up seriatim, the blunders, vindictive paragraphs, ungrammatical sentences and silly resolutions which compose the Methodist manifesto, but suggest that in the event of the holding of similar conferences by ministers of the Methodist society, they select persons to frame resolutions on the subject of "Mormonism" who at least understand good English, and can do something better than enlarge upon two or three stereotyped phrases formulated by previous committees and having within them no element of truth, consistency or Christianity. Methodism and "Mormonism" are widely at variance on many important questions, but the former will not overcome the latter by abuse nor make anything for itself by invoking civil or military force, in a controversy that should only be conducted with the weapons of argument and scripture, and in the spirit of Him who commanded that evil should be overcome with good.

A METHODIST MANIFESTO.

THE CINCINNATI CONFERENCE ON "MORMONISM."

The following display of ignorance and spleen was the work of a special committee at the Methodist Conference held a short time ago in Cincinnati. There was no standing committee on this question, but as an after-thought the committee whose names appear below, was extemporized and their lengthy piece of bitterness, bad grammar and strong bigotry was adopted by the Conference;

"Mormonism is not a religion. It is a crime, therefore cannot be entitled to protection and tolerance under the laws and Constitution of the United States as a matter of conscience. It is not a religious superstition, but a system of masked sensuality, and hence subversive of every principle of morality, and abhorrent to every feeling of virtue. It is not even a spiritual delusion, and therefore cannot be condoned on the ground that it is a hallucination or innocent mistake in prophecy. It is a preconcerted infernal scheme, partly mercenary, partly political, and chiefly licentious. It was originated in the deepest depravity, and is fed by three motives—money, power and lust. It aims to diffuse itself by pandering to the lowest depravities of human nature. When this cannot be done directly, on account of the natural revolts of instinctive virtue to the monstrous proposition of the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes under the guise of marriage, a resort is had to deception and falsehood. They take advantage of the ignorance, poverty, degradation and fanaticism of some persons, and of the unsuspecting credulity of unwary youth. They first dupe then doom their victims. It is romance and heaven in representation until liberty, virtue and respectability are lost; then it is slavery and debauch.

When the so-called multitudinous wives become mothers, the finest property in human nature is made the strongest support of this abomination—the property of maternal affection. Being themselves beguiled women, disgraced, and having entailed that disgrace upon their offspring, they see no hope of respectability for their children but by making polygamy respectable, and that can only be done by making a plurality of wives legal, and illegitimate children legitimate. As this cannot be done under the Constitution and laws of the United States, a necessity is created for an independent sovereignty. This generates the spirit of rebellion and prompts Mormons to increase their numbers and strength by importations, illegitimate births, and by the corruption and bribery of politicians. The work of rotten increase, we are informed, is going on with alarming rapidity. The wretched plague spot is spreading into all our Territories and some of the States. By concealment and perjury they evade the laws and defeat the Commission provided for by Congress and appointed by the President, to arrest the evil. And such are the meshes, the seavery, and the new affections and interests involved in the progress of the system, that few defections from Mormonism occur, and still fewer converts to Christianity are made from their number. It is already so rooted in the soil, the politics, the family life, and the religious fanaticism of that part of the country, that nothing but prompt and extreme measures will eradicate the evil. And unless the Government shall immediately take decisive steps to exterminate the abomination, it will soon acquire such dimensions and potency as to render it impossible to remove the evil by legislation or any civil measures. Indeed, it is the belief of some well informed men now, that this dreadful ulcer can only be removed by a resort to arms. We may at least conclude that delay in the application of civil remedies will soon call into requisition the sacrifice of life and the price of blood, or we must submit to have our virgin soil permanently stained with the foulest system of corruption and depravity that ever saw the light in a civilized and Christian country.

Now, with such a huge evil confronting us, what is being done to abate the nuisance? Almost nothing. Ever since the appointment of the Congressional Commission there has been a seeming lull in out