

GLEANINGS FROM EXCHANGES.

SPIRITUALISM is making rapid strides and daily increasing in influence in the world. Its doctrines are now proclaimed through numerous respectable-looking newspaper sheets, printed in different parts of the Union—several of which come to this office—and new organs are from time to time being started to advocate the claims of this new-fangled system.

Judge Edmonds, who, for some time past, has favored the public with dissertations on spiritualism, through the *N. Y. Tribune*, in his chapter on "Physical Manifestations"—or, those manifestations which are addressed to the senses, irrespective of the mental or moral consciousness—thus expatiates on a miraculous spiritual interposition through the sense of smelling:

"Once, after midnight, when I was in bed sick of a headache, I perceived an odor of a peculiar kind, such as I had never smelled before, pungent, but not ungrateful. It was not diffused through the room, but was presented to my nostrils at intervals, as if from a smelling bottle. Lying on my side, I fancied it might come from the bed clothes; I accordingly changed my position to lying on the other side, and on my back, and sat up in bed throwing off the clothes. But in every situation it continued to come with the same smell, and with similar intermissions. In a short time it operated both as a cathartic and emetic, and I was speedily relieved of my illness.

Other strange and supernatural operations through the same sense are related. He then cites the following feeling instances:

The first time I experienced this was at a dark circle. Ten or a dozen persons were present sitting around a table. Two of the company were directed to pass behind the rest of us. As they did so slowly, each one seemed to be touched. Sometimes I could only judge from their exclamations, but sometimes I could hear the slap of a hand very distinctly. The manifestation was rather rude, and was offensive to me; and as I was approached I was apprehensive of a similar display with me; but, on the contrary, all I felt was a hand gently laid on my head, and there moved around a few times, and then two or three soft touches on my side. The room being dark, I could not, of course, know that it was not done by one of the two persons who were behind me. But it was not a little remarkable that it should have been made to conform to a thought which I had not uttered, and so unlike all the others both before and afterward during the evening, and that it should be a touch with which I was familiar, for it was the gesture with which my wife was wont to pass my chair, as she would enter my library of an afternoon and find me at work at my law cases. No one then present, I think, could have known that, and it was too peculiar to be deemed accidental.

My doubts, however, were soon removed, for not long afterward, at a circle, my arm was seized above the elbow as by an iron hand. I felt distinctly the palm of the hand, the ball of the thumb, and each finger; and I was held fast, with a force far superior to any that a mortal hand could exert. I was powerless in its grasp. I tried to shake it off, but could not. I tried to move my arm, but in vain. There was none of the softness and elasticity of human flesh in the touch, but it was hard and inflexible like metal, and my arm was pressed to the verge of pain. Yet it did not hurt, but simply held me fast. It could be no human hand, and, beside, I knew it was not, for I put my other hand on the affected part, and all around it, so as to be certain. I became uneasy, and importuned it to leave me, but it continued long enough to show me it was independent of my will, and then it left.

These occurred during his early investigation of spiritualism—while he was yet somewhat skeptical and watching closely, as he says, against the possibility of deception—since which time, however, he has seen, heard, felt, tasted and scented sufficient to convince him beyond the possibility of a doubt that what is termed spiritualism is not all delusion—that there are unseen agents of some kind immediately in association with and bearing some affinity to the inhabitants of the earth; that those agents possess some power, with varied degrees of intelligence; that they are not all reliable.

In his summing up, under this head, Judge Edmonds declares:

FIRST: That which struck me most amid all the wonders I beheld was the intelligence that was displayed in it all. It was not only guided by intelligence, but it had an intelligent object and held an intelligent conversation with me.

SECOND: Others may ask, as a very clever correspondent did in a recent letter, Why use such "low and vulgar modes" of communication? I answer they are not more inconsiderable than opening the door of a prison or telling a woman where to find water. But, characterize them as we may, they have this object in view—and they are attaining it with marvelous celerity—TO CONVICT MAN OF HIS IMMORTALITY BY APPEALS TO HIS SENSES. The effort to convince him by appealing to nature, to reason and to revelation, has been vain with the great mass of mankind. The argument now comes in this form—the block letters in an infant school—and it comes with such force that he who will place himself in its way, cannot escape conviction.

If "to convict man of his immortality" is the great object and mission of modern spiritualism, we do not know that the attainment of this object is any more certain, with all the facilities and manifestations afforded by spiritualism; for it is plain that, though the feat of

wrapping, table-moving and a thousand other curious antics by hidden agencies are very well attested, these, to the man who has the hardihood to mistrust and whose mind is so darkened as to deny his own immortality, could neither be convinced nor "convicted" thereof by anything we have ever heard of as emanating from spiritualism.

But, granting all that is claimed by Judge Edmonds for the "marvelous celerity" of these exhibitions in convicting "man of his immortality by appeals to his senses," what great good can possibly result from that alone?

If indeed this be the primary object of these spiritual developments, as stated by this great advocate and medium—will even the knowledge of his immortality make man a pure and holy being—or can it have a tendency to dispose the naturally depraved and wicked to return to righteousness? If these things were the legitimate fruits of such knowledge, would not the world have been converted long ago? But, so far from this, it will require no elaborate argument to prove that, during the past ten or twenty years notwithstanding the "marvelous celerity" with which mankind are attaining the conviction of their immortality, through the wonderful manifestations and revelations of spiritualism—crime has been alarmingly on the increase, as well in monstrosity as in prevalence.

However, it may be reasonably doubted whether there are many in the world who seriously and honestly deny their immortality. Man's pre-existence and return, after the dissolution of his earthly tenement, to an existence beyond the confines of the grave, are so well defined and so firmly planted in the breast of every human being, that there is little room for such denial. The light which is in man—a spark emanating from the throne of Jehovah—which lighteth every man that cometh into world," precludes such a thought. We have never met a man who, in his sober, reflecting moments, would confess his belief that when the career of this mortality closed, his existence was forever at an end.

This thought, if it were possible to give it tangibility and cause it to take root in the human heart, would prove even more disastrous to the peace and well-being of mankind than the total absence of all knowledge or tradition relative to a future existence, accountability, reward and punishment. It would annihilate that glorious hope—which cheers the despondent Saint; encourages the faint-hearted; imparts new joy to those who, overwhelmed with accumulating afflictions and temptations, would be given over to anguish irretrievable, and which, in all generations, had proved the universal balm of life—an assurance of things not seen; of relief, in a future existence, from corroding care, from treachery, disappointment and sorrow.

If such a view has obtained to any extent, it is only in theory; while the theory itself, it must be admitted, is inconsistent with reason and common sense—dismissing entirely from the account a mention of those inherent impulses that have so indelibly stamped upon the mind of man the impression of his immortality.

We do not know what other particular object—besides that of aiding mankind in their universal belief of a future existence—is claimed by the advocates of spiritualism. If this be the main object, then we are not, thus far, disappointed in its results. What cardinal virtue attaches to a work or project attempting or affecting only to demonstrate that which is self-evident and, in its relative, intrinsic character, abstract and comparatively inoperative in the fundamental work of man's regeneration and exaltation?

The success of the system may be traced to an instinctive love of the marvelous, which so largely predominates in the mental endowments of the world of mankind. Remove this craving for novelty, and spiritualism loses its charm. Remodel spiritualism and place it upon the sober-sided, long-faced, priestly basis of those Christian sects which have survived opposition and established themselves as permanent national institutions, and its votaries would speedily return to the "pit from whence they were dug"—to the bosom of the "orthodox" churches and to swell the ranks of infidelity and professional skepticism.

If spiritualism has in contemplation the accomplishment of any other objects than that avowed by Judge Edmonds, the inquiry by "a very clever correspondent" is not without some force. If not, we think the means is quite adapted to the end. In other words, if "appealing to nature, to reason, and to revela-

tion has been vain with the great mass of mankind," the plain inference is that mankind are turned to their idols and that the Great God has decided to let rebellious man alone, to grope in darkness their way through the world, unenlightened by special revelations from exalted intelligences and unadministered to by the holy messengers of His presence—therefore, to supply this deficiency, other agencies have undertaken to enlighten him by appealing to his grosser senses—by communicating with him through supernatural rappings; by knocking him down, at times, and again by lifting him up—not to the third heavens—but to the ceiling of the first, second or third story of a building; by toting tables, stands, chairs, sofas, bedsteads, and all manner of moveables around a room; by the exercise of more than human force—sometimes treating persons and things quite harshly; by responding to almost every call—like the witch of Endor, assuming to bring forth the spirits of all the dead Samuels, Johns, Toms and Jerries that have passed from this existence into the spirit world and receiving from them such communications as they choose to impart and even assuming to render resurrected and glorified intelligences subservient to their vague purposes!

Now, it were with some semblance of credulity that the spirit of such men as Tom Hyer and Yankee Sullivan, or any other bruisers, shoulder-hitters, sportsmen or play actors were called into such requisition; but to presume that even any high-minded, honorable man would willingly submit himself as a machine for such fantastic operations, is, to use the mildest term, unreasonable; and, when carried so far as to pretend that Jesus Christ, the risen Savior, who has ascended to the right hand of the Father, has condescended to the character of a rapping spirit, it is a farce too glaring to pass current; the bogus is there detected without the aid of any scientific test. The same is true also when this is asserted of Joseph Smith, or any faithful Saint who has overcome and passed into the spirit world. Such are not subject to the powers of darkness—they dwell in the light and have power over the hosts of darkness.

It is claimed that great and important truths have been elicited through spiritual mediums. In what do those truths consist? Is there any important message or commandment revealed, or any new dispensation ashered in? If so, what prophet is at the head of it? If it has none of these characteristics, it must be classed with the rest of the sects of the world, who, without authority from God and without the Holy Priesthood, are seeking to establish themselves in the earth.

The doctrines and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ are the only means of salvation and exaltation in the celestial kingdom, which have ever been revealed. These doctrines and ordinances have been the same in all ages. They are as immutable as their great Author—"the same yesterday, to-day and for ever." The proclamation to the world is, "Repent and be baptized for the remission of your sins"—to the Saints, it is—"Seek unto the Lord your God and live your religion."

The channel of communication between God the Father and man on the earth has always been through authorized agents, sent forth to a certain person, at a certain period, to perform a certain work. Those messengers have come and, in a manner becoming the dignity of exalted beings, have executed their commission, and returned to the courts from whence they came.

But these "spiritual" modes of communication are most justly styled "low and vulgar," for such they are, emphatically—and by this their source is at once determined.

We do not question the reality of common spiritual manifestations—they are phenomena which are susceptible of explanation. The world of spirits who have tabernacled on this earth is here with us—around us—near us. Those spirits possess the various grades of capacity and intelligence which respectively characterized them while in their earthly tabernacles. A means of communicating with them has been devised by certain individuals and revelations have been rapped out.

The nature and character of all these manifestations, or revelations—for some of them reveal strange things—is diverse and varied—constituting, on the whole, a heterogeneous jargon of personal biography, past history, curious occurrences, confessions, expositions, cogitations; together with short essays from Lord Bacon, Shakespeare, Cromwell, Bonaparte, Tom Paine, Byron, Stephen Burroughs, Bene-

dict Arnold, George Washington, Martin Van Buren, Philip Barton Key—and tens of thousands of others—embracing philosophers, poets, dramatists, tyrants, generals, liberalists, infidels, libertines, robbers, murderers, traitors, statesmen, seducers, pettifoggers, high-minded and low-minded—of all grades, and stations,—who have gone and remained there from this earth during the past five or six thousand years.

Now, all this does not well comport with the established doctrines of Christendom, as declared some thirty years ago—that all communication with any other world was "done away." We have now an almost simultaneous communication with the numberless myriads of the spirit world.

But can all these combined, as exhibited through "spiritual" mediums, instruct a single soul in the true plan of salvation and exaltation in the celestial kingdom of God?—This can not be expected; for, as we have already said, the comparative few who have attained unto a knowledge of the principles of life and exaltation are not subject to the call of earthly mediums or spiritual circles; hence their relations and manifestations emanate from that class who themselves having no knowledge of these principles, cannot, of course, instruct others.

Since Joseph Smith obtained the plates and translated and published the Book of Mormon—proclaiming to the world that holy angels had committed to him the keys of the Eternal Priesthood and commissioned him to again send forth the gospel to the ends of the earth—the powers of darkness have exerted themselves even to their utmost to retard the work of regeneration, which he was authorized to commence.

The spirit rappings were first manifested near Rochester, New York, in the vicinity of the hill Cumorah, from whence the Prophet Joseph obtained the plates. Those manifestations have gradually extended, as the true gospel was more generally preached, until the system of spiritualism has arrived at its present popularity. Herein the two powers that are contending for supremacy on the earth are most plainly contrasted—on the one hand the great spiritual movement; on the other, the work called "Mormonism." "There must needs be an opposition in all things" and here is a demonstration of the Nephite's words.

Spiritualism, however, is but one division of the force arrayed against the truth. The great arch-enemy is panoplied in power with all the governments and religious sects of Christendom. The issue will be vigorously contested; but truth must finally triumph.

SERIOUS CHARGES have been preferred against Capt. Van Vliet, assistant Quartermaster, U.S.A. A Washington correspondent says that "these complaints come from parties who furnished part of the mules, and Capt. Van Vliet has been called on for an explanation. A Court-martial will no doubt be ordered, but the friends of this distinguished officer entertain no fears for the result."

THE AMERICAN Bible Society expended, last year, some sixteen thousand dollars in collecting and appropriating eighteen thousand dollars in carrying out the objects of the society.

THE PIKE'S PEAK question is said to be settled; the roads between there and the Missouri River, are literally filled with returning emigrants in a starving condition, vowing vengeance on those that deluded them with fair promises and selfish designs. If only the guilty suffer, few will complain, but the disappointed miners threaten to destroy whole towns in Kansas, and thus confound the innocent with the guilty.

TABERNACLE.

Sunday morning, June 12, 10 a.m., Elder Orson Pratt preached from the following text:—"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." Hebrews 6:1 and 2 verses.

In the afternoon, Elder W. Woodruff spoke of the importance of the great work of the last dispensation, the sending forth to the nations the fullness of the gospel of Christ; alluded to the fulfillment of prophecy; the dispositions of all men to cling to this world and to this life on account of not knowing the reward beyond the veil, and concluded by showing the anxiety of men to get into power for the short period of 4 years, and how much more anxious the Latter Day Saints should be to secure the power, authority and blessings of a more durable character.