

PLANCHETTE—LET IT ALONE.

THE most of our readers are doubtless familiar, at least by name, with "Planchette." The paragraphs about it and its performance have been very frequent of late. It is not long since we saw it stated that the inventor had cleared \$50,000 by its manufacture. Numerous articles have appeared upon the subject of its performances, some denouncing them as impostures, others claiming that they are unmistakably genuine and the results of an unseen power. It is claimed by some to be the development of a new power or force in nature, its performances not being explicable on any principle as present understood by mankind. The experiments which have been made with it, demonstrate that it will work much better for some persons than others. We have never seen it operate, and, therefore, we are indebted to a friend, who has seen it and witnessed its performances, for the following description of it, and the method of working it.

Planchette is a simple looking instrument about ten inches long and seven or eight inches broad in the broadest part. It is a small three-legged, heart-shaped board, the surface of which is highly polished. Under each lobe of the heart is a short leg, which turns on a pivot at the top, and to the bottom of which a small wheel is attached. Under the point of the heart the pencil is fixed in a similar manner to the legs, so that the machine will turn in any direction with the greatest facility. The operators sit with their hands resting lightly on Planchette, their thumbs and little fingers touching and forming a circle around it.

Our object in alluding to "Planchette" at the present time is to warn our people against meddling with it themselves or permitting it to be introduced into their houses or letting their children experiment with it. We understand there are a number of these curious little machines in the houses of our citizens, and that it is no uncommon thing for young people, and their seniors, too, to go where they are to amuse themselves with their revelations and singular answers. Much mischief may be done in this way to young people before their parents or guardians are aware of what they are at. A case of this kind has already been brought to our knowledge by the father of a family in this city. He has three children grown up, and they, prompted by curiosity, have been to a friend's house several times to see the wonderful working and read the oracular sayings of "Planchette." The father was not aware of the object of these visits. The first knowledge that he obtained of them was through two of these young people being seized with a power that prostrated them and left them almost lifeless. They were attacked in a most singular manner in the night, and in relating the occurrence to us, he said that when he first saw them he scarcely expected they could live until morning. He is an Elder of some considerable experience, and he is fully satisfied that the influences to which they were subjected were devilish. He gave us permission to mention the case without mentioning names, as he hoped it would be a warning to others not to tamper with "Planchette."

As a people we are familiar with the spiritual agencies that operate upon mankind. Our elders especially have had numerous opportunities, in their experience abroad, of witnessing the effects of good and evil spiritual influences upon the people. Since the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints belief in spiritual agencies has increased very much among the inhabitants of Christendom. Hundreds who would not believe that angels could minister to man in these days, when Joseph Smith bore testimony that they had ministered unto him, have readily adopted spiritualism. And the converts to that system—if it may be called a system—are now numbered in this Republic by millions. Comparatively few men express doubts now about spiritual manifestations.

We have no doubts about many of the statements of the Spiritualists. They do have manifestations; but we have no confidence in their truth or reliability. It is not inconsistent with the devil's method of dealing to tell nineteen truths to create faith in and pave the way for one lie, that he desires to have believed.

There are truths occasionally told by means of writing mediums, speaking mediums, table-tipping and "Planchette." If there were no truth told by these means, all such operations would soon fall into disrepute; but it is the truth that is told that gives them influence and makes them dangerous. It creates confidence and the alloy of falsehood is readily swallowed as truth. To our mind there is no greater objection to table-tipping or writing mediums being in a house of a Latter-day Saint than "Planchette." They are equally obnoxious and injurious. They have, in our opinion, a common origin, and the effects upon those who have recourse to them are similar.

We understand "Planchettes" are offered for sale in places belonging to

Latter-day Saints in this city. By thus exposing them to the public many innocent people, thinking it a curious toy, and ignorant of the mischief it may work upon the mind, are drawn under the influence which accompanies it. No man who has any faith in his religion will, after knowing the nature of Planchette's influences, continue to import or sell them.

REMARKS.

By Elder JOHN TAYLOR, delivered in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Jan 10th 1890.

REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS.

It is a great privilege to meet together as the Saints of the living God. It is a great privilege, after a lapse of 1800 years to participate in the memorials of the shed blood and broken body of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And whilst we are doing this we look forward to the time when Jesus will again come, and when we shall sit bread with Him in the Kingdom of our God. These are thoughts that naturally crowd upon the mind while partaking of the Sacrament of the Lord's supper. The ordinance has a tendency to draw our minds from the things of the world and to place them upon things that are spiritual, divine, and heavenly; and that are in accordance with the nature, desires, and attributes of man. It is a great privilege to have one day in seven set apart for the worship of the living God. Men differ in their opinions as to what day it ought to be. That is a matter, however, of very little importance. We meet together as servants and handmaids of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we participate in the emblems of his broken body and shed blood. We think, we reflect, speak and cogitate upon things that are calculated to elevate our minds, to impart comfort to our spirits, and to bring peace, joy and happiness, and to reflect upon things of the past, present or future.

To be a Saint of God is to occupy a high position before God, angels and men. The light of truth, the revelations of Jehovah; and the holy priesthood, which the Saints of God enjoy, are the greatest boons that Heaven can bestow upon mortals. In this respect we stand alone in the midst of the nations of the earth; and in this respect we approach nearer to the object of our creation and the designs of our being than any other people that exist at the present day, on the face of the whole earth. Notwithstanding our many weaknesses, imperfections and follies the Lord still continues His mercy, manifests His grace and imparts unto us His Holy Spirit, that our minds may be enlightened by the light of revelation. He is still leading us onward; very slowly, it is true in the path of life, in the way that leads to principalities, powers, thrones and dominions in the eternal worlds.

We stand, as I have already said, a distinct and peculiar people; for whatever our weaknesses and imperfections may be, and they are many, there are no people at the present day who enjoy the privileges we are in possession of. Who is there that is acquainted with God? To whom has He communicated His will? Where are the people who to-day, rejoice in the blessings of revelation? Where shall we find, to-day, an organization of the holy priesthood? Where shall we find, a people to whom God communicates His will? Nowhere. There are no people who profess this, or lay claims to associations of this nature, or to blessings similar to those we enjoy. You may search in vain among the nations of the earth for such a people. You may investigate the various religious, social and political systems that exist upon the face of the earth and it is nowhere to be found. We stand alone in this particular among the nations of the earth—the blessed of God, the adopted of the Lord, the chosen of the Great Jehovah, to whom He has deigned to manifest His will, and reveal His purposes; and by whom He designs to build up His Kingdom and to establish righteousness upon the earth.

We occupy then, as I stated before, a very important position, and it is well for us, as Latter-day Saints, to consider well our pathway, to reflect, to consider, and to seek to pursue that course whereby we shall be able to magnify our callings, honor our God and our priesthood, stand approved before God, angels and men, and acquit ourselves in all respects as Saints of the Most High God: that we may ask and receive the blessings of Heaven upon us, upon our wives and children, upon our progenitors, and our posterity, worlds without end.

Our religion is not a religion of a day, a month, a year or a life time; but it reaches back into eternity, operates in time and stretches forth again into eternity. It embraces every truth that ever did exist, that exist now or ever will exist. It is adapted to the wants and capacities of immortal minds. It emanated from God and leads back again to Him, and it is very properly said that in Him we live and move and have our being. As immortal beings we are interested in the light of that truth which He has developed, and in the blessings of the everlasting gospel, which He is the author. And standing in this capacity it is well for us to consider the course we pursue.

We are living in an age pregnant with greater events than any other age the world has ever seen. There have been times when God has specially manifested Himself to individuals and nations, and when the revelations of His will have been made known to a certain extent, to His people, and when His people have been gathered together; but there never was a time so important as the present. It is not merely the word of the Lord to one man or to a few men, or a peculiar dispensation to the Israelites or the Nephties; but it is the dispensation of the fulness of times when God will gather together all things in one, and when He will settle upon the affairs of the nations of the earth, and the people of the earth, whether they be living or dead, whether they have slept thousands of years or have yet to come into existence.

It is the time in which He has organized His church according to the pattern that exists in the heavens, in which all the various organizations and priesthood that ever existed are concentrated. This is the age when the Saints are no longer to be trodden down or wickedness and iniquity to triumph; but when the righteous shall bear rule and the dominion of God be established. If there ever was a time when covenants were entered into associated with the people of God on the earth, it is now. If there ever was a time when the dead were to be redeemed, it is now. If there ever was a time

when God's mercy was to be extended to His people it is now.

The very introduction of this gospel, as first proclaimed, was "I saw an angel, saying through the midst of heaven, hailing the everlasting gospel to preach to every nation, kindred, tongue and people; crying with a loud voice fear God and give glory to Him for the hour of His judgment is come." The gospel has been proclaimed among the nations of the earth. Their elders have been as messengers to the nations, clothed upon with the holy priesthood and the power of God and have borne their testimony thereunto. And we have done more than this, we have been fulfilling the word of the Lord given anciently to His servants by the spirit of prophecy, gathering His "people" together, those who have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice." We have been gathering the people together for years. What for? Why the Lord says I will take one of a city and two of a family, and bring them to Zion; and I will give them pastors after my own heart who shall feed them with knowledge and understanding. They have been fed heretofore with the theories and dogmas of men, but I will pour out my spirit upon the people, and instruct them in the principles of righteousness, that I may have a people who will listen to me and will pursue the course I shall dictate.

We are here to-day, that we may be instructed in relation to all things pertaining to our associations with each other, our intercourse with the world, our political organization, in things pertaining to our welfare, our blessings, our rights, our endowments, sealings and covenants, and the building up of the Kingdom of God upon the earth. We have not gathered here to merely possess the honor of this world only; but that we may have the blessings of eternity, and enjoy the spirit of truth; that we may be so led as to secure to ourselves the favor and approbation of the Almighty. Hence we are taught some of the smallest things that men can think of and also the greatest and most sublime principles that have ever entered into the heart of man. We are taught all principles that are necessary to the interest, peace and happiness of society here, and that will prepare us for associations with Gods in the eternal worlds.

We have here our Schools of the Prophets in which we are taught how to manage our temporal affairs and how to avoid the snares that exist in the world; whom to deal with and whom to let alone; how to raise stock, how to cultivate our farms, and how to conduct all the affairs incident to human existence. We are also taught about God and eternity; about our associations with Him; about our relationship to God at the present time, to the things of this and other worlds and everything pertaining to this life and that which is to come.

The fact is the gospel of Christ embraces all truth. It found us when first revealed, ignorant, dark, benighted, besotted, depraved, corrupted and degenerated, ignorant of God and of almost every true principle. It is humiliating to reflect that after all our boasted intelligence and knowledge of correct principles, government, morals and religion, that we should be found so weak, ignorant, degraded and debased. It is humiliating in the highest degree to reflect that after all the boasted intelligence of men we can scarcely find one true principle in existence. Men say "we have been taught good morals." To a certain extent good morals are taught, but even their teachers did not know them correctly, they exist in most instances in principle only, and not in practice. They think they have had some tolerably good religion, but their religion is little better than that of the ancient heathen who used to bow down to stocks and stones. What knowledge do men possess of God? None whatever. The most intelligent among the most enlightened nations of the earth when you come to scan their ideas what are they? A God without body, parts and passions. And this is the God they worship and adore, a being that exists every where and yet is nowhere, no personal presence or associations. Remember a few evening ago one of us said, "I am on this subject. He was a very learned man. Among other things he was almost afraid to mention the name of Deity; but he spoke of Him as being everywhere, but as having no personal presence. He could not conceive the idea of a being having an existence like a man, and having a body, parts and passions, and yet at the same time being felt everywhere." I said "here is a candle is there not?" "Yes," is that light connected with that candle?" "Yes." "Has that a shadow and position?" "Yes, it is light there?" "Yes." "What is this light all around here, it emanates from that candle does it not?" "Yes." Then why can't God exist on the same principle as that candle, or as the sun and other things exist? But yet that is the achme of perfection, the sum total of the intelligence of the nations of the earth in relation to the being of a God. They have no ideas of Him. How can they have? They have been without revelation. He has not communicated His will nor revealed Himself; and then how can they have any ideas of that of which they have had no opportunity of obtaining knowledge? It is impossible. Faith, we are told, comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. And how can they hear without a preacher, and how can he preach except he be sent? And as they have had nobody sent among them by God to communicate His will they were all ignorant together. We were part of them; we were dug from the same pit and hearn from the same rock, and had no more knowledge than they and if we have any knowledge of God and correct principles now it is because God has revealed them to us through the medium of this gospel which He has made manifest in these last days through Joseph Smith. What knowledge have we, of ourselves, of our relationship to eternity? None. Where is the man on the face of the wide earth who has a claim to a wife in eternity? There is not one outside of this church. They do not profess it, they know nothing of such a principle. The extent of their covenants is that they are married until death parts them, and that ends the matter. Who is there who has any idea of associating with their children in the eternal world? They think about it. There is nature, or a kind of instinct that leads to reflections of this sort. But they have not the privilege of entering into covenants of this kind. There are a great many other principles connected with this gospel of which, as the scriptures say,

they are as ignorant as brute beasts that were made to be taken and destroyed.

Do they have any correct ideas at all in relation to matrimony? None in the least. Their actions, feelings and propensities are corrupt, depraved and brutalized. They are ignorant alike of religious, social and political matters, and they know not how to manage anything committed to their care. What do they know about governing the world? Who knows how to regulate the affairs of the nation? The man cannot be found; but anarchy, disorder and confusion prevail to a very great extent throughout the nations of the earth, and the seeds of dissolution are sown among the whole of them. The rulers of the earth know not how to unite and cement their people or to regulate their affairs, for it can only be done on the principle of revelation. What are the armies and navies of the nations for? Why is it that England, France, Portugal, Spain, the United States and the various nations of the earth must have their armies and navies? Why is it that they need millions of men and a vast amount of treasure for their protection? Because the nations regard their neighbors as bands of robbers who will commit acts of aggression upon them unless they have a sufficient force to repel them. And yet they wipe their mouths and say "we are very civilized, enlightened and intelligent."

This is the condition of things among the nations of the earth. They watch one another with the greatest scrutiny. The various officers who manage their national affairs want to know how many thousand soldiers there are in the ranks of their neighbors, and whether it is safe for them to reduce their armies or not, just the same as we do here when we have hundreds of blackies in our midst, and have had to increase the number of the police to guard ourselves against their inroads and aggressions. They know it is the nature of men to aggress upon and take advantage of their fellows, and to rob, plunder and destroy, and that to preserve their nationality they must maintain a force sufficient to repel the inroads of their neighbors. This is the position, without saying anything about the debauchery, fraud, corruption and wickedness that abound to so great an extent among them. And this is civilization, this is Christianity; this is the height of the glory and intelligence of the 19th century.

Now, something is needed to regulate these things. We read of a time when Jesus shall rule and when the Saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom and have the dominion, and when He shall rule from the rivers to the ends of the earth. People are afraid when they hear the Saints talk about rule and dominion that they too, are going to turn national robbers, and take the sword to slay and destroy and lay waste wherever they have the opportunity. Such is not their feeling, nor desire, nor purpose. He will make the wicked and the ungodly men, and will turn and overtake them until He reach his purposes. He has introduced the wedge of truth. It begins to penetrate among the people, and many begin to quell in consequence of it. It will continue to spread, grow and increase until it will cover the whole earth. He desires in the first place to impart to us some of the leading first principles of the gospel of life, truth and intelligence that we may be the honored instruments in His hands in establishing truth, in rooting out iniquity and bringing to pass His purposes upon the earth.

This is what we are aiming at. This is why we meet together, why we are gathered together, why we preach. This is why we have our Schools of the Prophets, why we administer in the ordinances of the House of God. This is why we build our temples and endowment houses that we may be taught and instructed, sanctified and set apart; that we may be full of the Holy Ghost and the power of God, that we may stand forth as the elect of God, as the chosen of the Most High, to bear the things spoken of by the prophets. This is the aim of all our associations and operations in life and in everything pertaining to the holy priesthood. If God placed formerly in His church apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the Saints, the work of the ministry and the edifying of the body of Christ, He has placed in His church in these last days, presidents, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, bishops, high councilors and all the various organizations of His church for the perfecting of His Saints, the establishing of righteousness, the building up of His Kingdom, the triumph of peace, the overthrow and destruction of wickedness and the powers of darkness, and for the introduction of everything calculated to exalt and enable man in both time and eternity. May God bless us to be faithful in the name of Jesus, Amen.

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