

V. THE DANGERS OF SPIRITUALISM

In our former addresses we have examined the claims of Spiritualism, its methods of working, and what it has to offer us in the place of, or in addition to our present faith. We have seen that while many of its advocates are learned and honorable men, there is much fraud and deception connected with it; most of its supposed revelations are trivial, and of little interest, being of a very materialistic character, while some are even ludicrous when reasoned out to their conclusions.

What Harm is There?

But, it may be said, after all what harm is there in making use of spiritualism to learn something of the life beyond the grave? There may be persons who use their psychic powers for their own mercenary gain, there may be many things connected with it, which we as Christians, may hesitate to accept as true, but when all is said and done, has it not helped many to believe in a future life? Has it not comforted mourners and brought solace and hope to thousands of bereaved? What harm is there in it?

It is Unfair to the Departed.

Admitting for the moment that it may be possible to communicate with those in the spirit world, it would still be unfair to them to disturb their repose except in cases of very great necessity. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord. . . . that they may rest from their labors" was the message St. John heard in his vision of heaven. (Rev. 14, 15). "Entered into rest," is the familiar expression when speaking of the departed. "Rest eternal grant them, O Lord," has been the prayer offered for them from the earliest days of Christianity. And how can they rest from their labors if they are continually being called back to earth to be interviewed? When

King Saul sought to speak with Samuel after his death, the prophet appeared to him and said, Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up? (1 Sam. 28, 15.)

From this point of view it is important to consider the facts with regard to the Myers' contest given by Sir Oliver Lodge. Myers was an exceedingly keen and competent investigator into psychical facts. He gave his life to the research. His book, *Human Personality*, has certainly influenced English psychology. He promised that after death he would, if possible, communicate with his friends. About a month after his death messages purporting to be from him began to arrive through several mediums. He testified to his survival, and that it was difficult to communicate. Very significant are the pleas that came from him that he should not be compelled to communicate.

Thus a message came through Mrs. Thompson, "Make one appeal to them to let me be at rest for two or three weeks. After Hodgson hears that I have tried, however badly, ask him not to call me, and tell him if he does they will not let me hear him." Again, "They keep on calling me. I am wanted everywhere. Do appeal to them not to break me up so. How easy to promise! How difficult to fulfil! Make one appeal to them to let me be at rest for two or three weeks." Through Miss Rawson a message came purporting to come from E. Gurney, a friend of Myers, "I have come to warn you for my friend, to implore you not to let them call him. He gets no rest night or day! At every sitting, 'Call Myers! Bring Myers!' There is not a place in England where they do not ask for him. It disturbs him. It takes away his rest. For God's sake, do not call him. It is all right for him to come of his own accord. . . . What we want for him now is to rise and forget earthly things. He cannot help any more. His