

the language of inspiration. The modern "medium" answers to the ancient wizard or witch that had a "familiar spirit." That there are various modifications in the machinery of the system of spiritualism, as compared with ancient necromancy, is freely conceded. But for substance, both are the same; and both are to be rejected with abhorrence, on the same ground, by all who acknowledge God's word as an infallible and sufficient rule of faith and practice. The preacher may believe that spiritualism is all jugglery and legerdemain. But when he condemns it on this ground alone, he relinquishes the high vantage ground on which it is both his privilege and his duty to stand. Let him, as far as he is able, expose the cheats of spiritualist manipulators. But let him also demonstrate to his people that whatsoever reality any one may claim for the system is only claiming reality for witchcraft. If it be impossible to reclaim those who have gone through the gateway of spiritualism into practical infidelity — the rejection of God's word, if not wholly, yet as an *infallible* and *sufficient* rule of faith and practice, — he may at least hope to save some from entering that gateway.

ARTICLE V.

INFANT BAPTISM AND A REGENERATED CHURCH-MEMBERSHIP IRRECONCILABLE.

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Two remarkable Articles on the subject of Infant Church-membership appeared during the past year — the first, in the "Methodist Quarterly Review" for January, from the pen of the late Rev. B. H. Nadal, D.D., Professor in the Drew Theological Seminary, New Jersey, entitled, "The Logic of Infant Church-membership"; and the second in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for April, written by the Rev. Lewis Grout, formerly missionary of the A. B. C. F. M., entitled, "The Church-membership of Baptized Children." The appearance of these two Articles on the same topic, in two prominent and widely circulated quarterlies, written by men (members of large, influential, and growing denominations) who, in all probability, knew nothing of each other's views on the subject, and who reached their conclusions by indepen-

dent investigation, is, we say, remarkable. The coincidence in time, in argument, and in the main conclusion, is striking.

We are aware that Dr. Nadal and Mr. Grout do not speak for the denomination they respectively represent. We do not believe the majority, nor even a large minority, of the Methodists would accept Dr. Nadal's conclusion. In fact, the editor of the Methodist Quarterly Review, in a foot-note at the close of his Article, says: "We insert the above Article in cordial respect for the eminent character of the lamented writer, and not from any coincidence with his views." As for our Congregational brethren, neither do we think a large proportion of them are prepared to accept the position stated and defended by Mr. Grout. Yet we cannot but regard the nearly simultaneous appearance of these two Articles, — one in January, and the other in April of the same year, — as a most significant fact. They appear as the views of individuals, it is true, and their authors alone are responsible for the presentation and advocacy of those views before the religious public; still, we regard their authors as representative of a class, more or less numerous, among our Paedobaptist brethren, who are *thinking* deeply on the question relative to the *status* of baptized children, and who are not satisfied with the present indefiniteness. The significance, therefore, we attribute to the Articles we have referred to is, that they indicate most decidedly a state of uncertainty, and hence of unrest and dissatisfaction, in the minds of many Paedobaptists on the relation of baptized children to the church. That there exists this feeling of indefiniteness on the subject, Mr. Grout concedes at the outset, and evidently he designs his Article to be a contribution toward the solution of this pressing and perplexing problem.¹ He finds the opinions of many of the "clergy and laity vague and diversified" respecting it. He says:

¹ Mr. Douglass, an English Paedobaptist Non-conformist, in his racy, and eminently suggestive volume, entitled, "The Pastor and his People," in the chapter on "Uses of Infant Baptism," corroborates what Mr. Grout asserts. Mr. Douglass, it should be noticed, speaks for England, and Mr. Grout for America. They state the same fact: "Not one in a hundred can tell you any-

“Some will admit that they belong to the church, yet seem to doubt or deny that the church belongs at all to them; that is, the church has a claim upon the children and an interest in them, but the children have as yet no interest or place in the church. Some hold that they are in the church, yet not of it; as though to be in it in any sense worthy of the name is not to be of it. Not a few seem to regard them as neither in it nor out of it, but as occupying some sort of middle ground; as though this were either scriptural or tenable.” He continues: “On this point [the relation of baptized children to the church] our Congregational churches, many of them,—at least many members in most of them,—have departed from the teachings of the divine word, from the faith and practice of the primitive church, from the faith and practice of the Puritan fathers, and from the faith, at least, of other branches of the catholic church of the present age; the Baptists alone excepted.”

To what extent this vagueness of conception of which Mr. Grout complains exists among Congregationalists, and others as well, we have no means of determining; but evidently among Congregationalists it must be considerable; for he says: “Inquiring of one and another as to their thoughts on this subject, what they believe to be the proper ecclesiastical standing of baptized children,—whether they belong to the church, are in it and of it, or out of it, or where they are,—the writer has been somewhat surprised at the variety of views that prevail, even among those who are supposed to be of the same general faith in respect to the duty and import of infant baptism.” Evidently, he regards it as somewhat wide-spread, and that his opinion might not be conjectural, he made inquiry, in order that he might form an intelligent judgment. We most naturally infer that Mr. Grout did not make inquiry of the masses, but rather

thing about the matter. They comply with the custom; may consider it decorous, respectable and religious, but that is all” (p. 164). Again, in the same chapter, he says: “Generally speaking, the members of our churches cannot see that infant baptism is of any use whatever. They comply with it from custom, but not one in a thousand can tell you the *cul bono* of the matter.”