

VERMONT TELEGRAPH.

TWO DOLLARS PER ANNUM.]

"I AM SET FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE GOSPEL."

[PAYABLE WITHIN FOUR MONTHS

BY ORSON S. MURRAY.

BRANDON, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 1840.

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VERMONT TELEGRAPH.

BRANDON, SATURDAY, JAN. 25, 1840.

The article in last week's paper, on the subject treated of below, was mistaken for this article. A friend had written to me, asking to have an article copied from the Watchman, which was to appear soon, on this subject. On the appearance of this latter article, I discover the mistake in copying the former.

From the Christian Watchman.

BAPTISM

A PRE-REQUISITE TO COMMUNION.

[By Rev. Peter Simonson.]

The following observations are addressed particularly to such persons as believe that immersion is the only mode of baptism.

In our researches after truth, in divinity as well as in philosophy, much assistance is often derived from analogy.—When we have collected all the evidence of any truth which the scriptures afford, our conviction of that particular truth may be strengthened by comparing the evidence of it with that of other truths which are not doubted. We assert that baptism is a pre-requisite to communion. If we can prove that this proposition is as well sustained from the scriptures as other truths generally admitted, then we are bound to receive it as one of the established principles of the Gospel. It is generally admitted by all Baptists, that faith is a pre-requisite to baptism. It is also generally admitted that baptism is a pre-requisite to church membership. These two principles are sustained by the same evidence which proves that baptism is a pre-requisite to church communion. The evidence that either of these three principles is true, is derived from the example of the Apostles. The communion which Christ gave to his Apostles, implies a rule for communion, equally explicit with the rule of baptism, or the rule for the admission of members into the church. "Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." In this communion, the order of faith, and baptism, and communion, as was recognized by the apostles, is announced: First, they were commanded to teach or disciple all nations; secondly, they are required to baptize all such as were so taught; thirdly, they were enjoined to teach them all things whatsoever Christ had previously commanded. And he had previously commanded them to observe the Lord's Supper; for he had said, "This do in remembrance of me?" Now if this be the order of the gospel institutions, then certainly baptism precedes the communion. This is the order in which the institutions of the gospel are given in the commission; and the practice of the apostles is a perfect commentary upon the meaning of this commission. If they uniformly regarded this order in administering baptism and the Lord's Supper, then we have no scriptural right to deviate from this order, when we observe these institutions; for the example of the apostles constitutes an obligation, as binding upon all the churches of Christ as any obligation inculcated by expressed precepts. On this account, the conduct of the primitive Christians, in relation to the ordinances, constitutes our rule for the admission of communicants at the Lord's table. Let us therefore learn our duty concerning baptism and the Lord's Supper, from the practice of the apostolic churches. We learn from the scriptures, that it was the practice of their members to be baptized before partaking of the communion. All who composed the communion. All who composed the communicants, when the Lord's Supper was instituted, were baptized persons. These consisted of the Lord Jesus Christ and the twelve apostles. No one need doubt that the apostles were baptized. Upon the election of an apostle to fill the place from which Judas by transgression fell, Peter said— "Wherefore of these men who have accompanied with us all the while, beginning from John's baptism until now, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection." This implies that all the apostles commenced their religious profession near the time of John's ministry; and of course must have been baptized, either by him or by some of the other followers of Christ. It was the practice of Christ, to baptize by means of his disciples, all that believed on him, while he was yet in the world; and certainly the apostles were not excepted. It is expressly said that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, though Jesus baptized not, but his disciples. It is therefore abundantly evident that the first communicants at the Lord's table were baptized persons. Another instance of communion recorded in the scripture, was after the day of Pentecost. Those who participated in this communion were the disciples of Christ, some of whom believed before his crucifixion, and others were among the three thousand who were converted on the day of Pentecost, and who complied with the exhortation of Peter, which was, "Repent and be baptized;—and the same day they were added to the church." Of these it is said they continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine, and in breaking of bread. Therefore in this instance also, we see that those who were baptized, were the first communicants at the Lord's table, which is a rule for communion, equally explicit with the rule of baptism, or the rule for the admission of members into the church. 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ceived of the Lord Jesus Christ. In every other instance in which the celebration of the Lord's Supper is mentioned in the times of the apostles, there is no evidence that any communicant who had not been previously baptized. We learn also, that baptism preceded the communion with the primitive Christians; because baptism was the first external act of obedience which they performed. When the Samaritans believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, they were baptized, both men and women. As soon as Ananias was satisfied that Saul of Tarsus was a Christian, he said— "And now why tarriest thou; arise and be baptized." And he arose and was baptized. When the Jailor and his household believed, the same hour of the night they were baptized. Thus in numerous instances in the scriptures, we find that in primitive times, the first public act in a believer was to be baptized.— And why should the writers of the scriptures be so particular in stating this circumstance, if it be not to teach us that baptism is the first public act of duty required in making a profession of religion? Hence baptism precedes the communion and all other privileges of the church, and it is a pre-requisite qualification for the Lord's Supper. The evidence of this truth is interwoven through all the acts of apostolic example. Now in order to satisfy ourselves that this evidence is sufficient for all practical purposes, let us compare it with the evidence which may be derived from the scriptures, that faith is a pre-requisite to baptism. The evidence of this proposition, like that which shows that baptism is a pre-requisite to communion, is derived from the example of the apostles and primitive Christians. We maintain that faith is a pre-requisite to baptism, because it was evidently the uniform practice of the apostles to require a profession of faith before baptism.— Hence when the Eunuch said to Philip, "See here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip said, "If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest." And he said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God." We may safely deem this profession a fair specimen of what the apostles required of all persons whom they baptized. Thus it is said that many of the Corinthians believing, (that is manifesting their belief,) were baptized. It was so with the Philippian Jailor, Saul of Tarsus, and the Samaritans, who all expressed their faith before baptism. In like manner, when the baptism of any other individuals, or any number of persons, is mentioned in the time of the apostles, their faith in Christ is usually expressed or implied. And from these scriptural facts, we derive the principal evidence that faith is a pre-requisite to baptism. All Baptists deem this evidence amply sufficient to sustain them in the practice of requiring the evidence of faith as an indispensable qualification for this ordinance. And we have precisely the same evidence to sustain us in the opinion that baptism is a pre-requisite to the communion. Both practices are in accordance with the uniform example of the apostles, and both are founded upon the same nature of evidence. If we be asked why we baptize none but believers, we confidently reply, because the apostles baptized believers, and there is no evidence in the scriptures that they ever baptized any except believers. And if we be asked, why we ought to admit to the communion, none but baptized persons, we as confidently reply, because the apostles communed with baptized persons, and there is no evidence from the scriptures that they ever communed with any who were not baptized. Here we may safely rest the whole controversy. If it can be shown that the apostles and primitive Christians ever admitted one single individual to the institution of the Lord's Supper previous to his baptism; then we will admit that we ought to commune together without any reference to the ordinance of baptism. But until this is done, and as long as the example of the apostles is deemed sufficient to authorize us to require a profession of faith as a pre-requisite to baptism, we must also deem the example of the apostles sufficient to authorize us to require baptism as a pre-requisite to communion.

The evidence we have adduced from the example of the apostles to prove that baptism is a pre-requisite to communion, fully confirmed by a comparison with the evidence that may be derived from the scriptures, that baptism is a pre-requisite to church membership. We have no better evidence from the scriptures, that none should be admitted into the church who are not baptized, than we have that none should be admitted to the communion before they are baptized. The only evidence we have that baptism is a pre-requisite to church membership, is the example of the apostles in the constitution of the primitive churches. We learn from the scriptures, that the church at Jerusalem was composed of such persons as had been previously baptized. When three thousand were added to this church on the day of Pentecost, those persons were all baptized. So we find the Corinthian church was composed of such persons as had been baptized. And we believe, in common with other denominations, that all the primitive churches were composed of baptized persons; because it was the invariable practice of the apostles, to baptize such as professed faith in Christ, before they admitted them to the privileges of church membership. Now this evidence, all will agree, is abundantly sufficient to teach us that none should be admitted to membership in the church, except such as have been baptized. It would be superfluous, with this evidence, to have a precept prohibiting us from receiving any person into the church who had not been baptized; because the example of the apostles is an implied prohibition. And we have, in all respects, just such evidence as this, to teach us who are the proper subjects of communion. We have, as we have already shown, the example of the apostles, evincing that baptism is a pre-requisite to communion;—and this is all that we have to prove that baptism is a pre-requisite to church membership. The two cases are in all respects perfectly parallel, and the evidence for both is precisely similar, and is sufficient for our directory in the way of duty. If, therefore, we act upon the evidence we have from the example of the apostles, that baptism is a pre-requisite to church membership; then for the same reason, we must act upon the evidence given in the scriptures, that baptism is a pre-requisite to communion. This will be the duty of every professor of religion, until he can show that there is some difference in these two cases. And we call upon every one who is disposed to commune with such as are not baptized, when he would reject the same persons from the privilege of church membership, to show what authority he has for this inconsistent practice. Communion is one of the greatest privileges in the church. Every other duty devolving upon a church member, compared with this, is of minor importance. Now let it be candidly considered by every Christian, whether it be consistent to deny one who we believe is a true follower of Christ, the least privilege in the church because he is not baptized, when we do not admit that his neglect of baptism ought to prevent him from enjoying the greatest of church privileges. And if any of us hold a sentiment which involves us in such gross inconsistency, is not that inconsistency one of the strongest evidences that the sentiment is erroneous? Besides, what precept or example have we to admit any one to the communion, whom we would not admit to church membership? Every one must be satisfied that we have none at all.— And what, then, are those Baptist churches doing, who are in the habit of inviting to their communion such Christians as are not baptized, and such as they would not admit into the church, unless they would consent to be immersed? Such churches are practising what they are authorized to do from the word of God. Now let it be remembered, that whatever is not taught, either by precept or example, in the gospel, is contrary to the scriptures, and to the fundamental principles of every true Baptist. Therefore to admit a person to the communion, whom we will not admit to church membership, is contrary to the scriptures and must be altogether erroneous. If this practice be thus inconsistent and contrary to the scriptures, then baptism must be a pre-requisite to communion.

We now ask the reader to decide whether in his opinion the evidence here presented is not sufficient to sustain the truth of our proposition. If this evidence does not prove that baptism is a pre-requisite to communion, let us see what consequences must unavoidably follow. If the example of the apostles is not sufficient to show that baptism is a pre-requisite to communion, then their example is not sufficient to show that faith should always precede baptism. For we have shown that the principal evidence to sustain both these sentiments is derived from apostolic example. If, then, we give up the principle that baptism should always precede the communion, for the same reason we must also give up the principle that faith is a pre-requisite to baptism. And when this principle is relinquished we shall have no more Baptist churches. The whole superstructure of our denomination will then be demolished, and we shall have nothing left which is superior to Pædo-baptism. We need not therefore wonder that Pædo-baptists are usually so vociferous in their praises of open communion. The most intelligent among them, know very well that in this manner they are contending most effectually, though indirectly, for their own views of baptism. And if we join with them, we take the most effectual step to subvert the principles of every Baptist church in the world; whether it be Free-will or Calvinistic, Independent or Associated. Nor is this all: for if apostolic example is not sufficient evidence that baptism is a pre-requisite to communion, then it is not sufficient evidence that baptism is a pre-requisite to church membership. Therefore if any still contend that they must admit unbaptized persons to the communion, then for the same reason they must admit such persons into the church. And if any may be admitted into the church, though they neglect baptism, then for the same reason they may be permitted to remain in the church, though they neglect the communion; and thus the ordinances of the gospel might be finally suppressed in our denomination. These consequences must follow, upon the supposition that the practice of the apostles does not show conclusively that baptism is a pre-requisite to communion. We cannot admit the truth of these consequences; therefore we must admit that the example of the apostles does prove that baptism is a pre-requisite to communion. And hence we shall act according to the scriptures, while we commune only with baptized persons. Let such as desire to commune with us, prove that they are baptized, and we will cheerfully admit them to the Lord's table. Here is the point where the controversy must close. For the disagreement regards the subject of baptism rather than the communion. All Baptists are agreed upon the subject of baptism, and of course they can have no disagreement upon the terms of communion, if they are willing to imitate the example of the apostles, by restricting the communion to such as according to their belief have been baptized.

We will now answer the principal objections which are often made against restricted communion. 1. It is objected that such a practice makes a division among the professed followers of Christ. But if immersion only is baptism, as we believe it is, and if according to the scriptures we are required to practice baptism previous to communion, then those who adhere to the prescribed order of the divine institutions are not accountable for this division.— Nothing is more manifest than that if all Christians had kept the ordinance of baptism as it was delivered by the apostles, there would have been no division among them, relative to the pre-requisites for the communion. If all Christians in the present time, believed and practised alike, upon the mode and subjects of baptism, there would be nothing in the ordinance about which they could be divided. The church commenced with the practice of immersion only for baptism; and they were bound by the command of Christ, and the example of the apostles, to continue in this practice. And in this manner they ought now to be united. This practice preserved the union of Christians for more than three hundred years from the time of Christ. When, however, sprinkling was substituted for baptism, this substitution was a legitimate cause of division. Now whatever was the original cause of the division, is still the cause. Therefore, those only who pervert the ordinance of baptism, are accountable for the division which this perversion has made among Christians. Mixed communion, will not produce unanimity among Christians of opposite views upon the subject of baptism. If they are not united in their belief, they will come to the Lord's table and leave it with the same variance in their views, which prevailed before they came to the communion. Hence this objection against restricting the communion to such only as are baptized, is of no force. But if any contend that the objection is a valid one, let them remember that it is just as applicable to church membership as to the communion. None of us will contend that unbaptized persons ought to be admitted into the church to prevent division; nor ought we to contend that unbaptized persons should be admitted to the communion to prevent division; because neither of these unauthorized practices will ever effect a union among Christians of different sentiments. 2. It is sometimes objected that although baptism is a pre-requisite to communion, yet there are some who think they have been baptized by being sprinkled; and therefore we should invite them to communion. This objection shows the true reason why such as believe sprinkling to be baptism, are willing to commune with us. It is not because they do not believe baptism to be a pre-requisite to communion as well as we; but because they believe we are baptized persons. They are therefore consistent with themselves in inviting us to commune with them; but if their opinion of us is a rule for them in communion, our opinion of them is a rule for us in communion. Now we sincerely think they are not baptized, and we must act upon this opinion if we invite them to the communion. Therefore, altho' they may be consistent with themselves in communing with us, yet we do not act consistently with our principles in communing with them; because we commune with such as we think are not baptized, while we believe that baptism is a pre-requisite to the communion. The rule of communion is imperative upon all the churches. Baptism is a pre-requisite to communion for all believers without any exceptions. Hence, until it can be shown that the scriptures have made some exceptions in favor of such as have neglected baptism, through a misconception of its mode, we can have no authority to invite unbaptized persons to the communion, merely because they think they are baptized. 3. Others object that although it is inconsistent to commune with unbaptized persons, whom we will not receive into our churches, yet there are many other things in our practice which are inconsistent, and therefore they deem it right in us to practice mixed communion. To this it may be replied that one inconsistency does not justify another. If we are inconsistent with our principles as Baptists, in inviting unbaptized persons to our communion, then we ought to abandon the practice, notwithstanding we may hold other inconsistencies. But we are not conscious of holding any other sentiment which is inconsistent with our general practice; if we were, we should be bound to abandon that also. Those other inconsistencies, therefore, are only imaginary, and certainly every one must be sensible that we would do wrong in continuing a known and acknowledged inconsistency, merely because we may be unconsciously practicing some other inconsistencies. 4. Another very common objection is that the communion is the Lord's table, and therefore we ought not to prevent any of his children from partaking of it.— We observe in reply to this objection that because the communion is the Lord's table, therefore the churches are bound strictly to observe his directions concerning its pre-requisites. Therefore it is not we who prevent any of the Lord's children from partaking of his table; it is the rule which he has given for communion; or rather it is the disobedience of his children to this rule. It is the duty and privilege of all Christians to commune at the Lord's table; but it is their duty according to the Scriptures, first to comply with the ordinance of baptism. And as long as they neglect this, God has given us no Scriptural authority to invite them to his table. This objection is just as applicable to restricting the privileges of church membership to baptized persons as to restricted communion. The church is the Lord's as well as the communion. But we all say, Christians should be baptized before we have a right, according to the Scriptures, to admit them to the privileges of the Lord's church; and for the same reason, we ought not to invite unbaptized Christians to the Lord's table. 5. Another objection often urged is, that all Christians will commune together in heaven, and therefore they ought all to commune together on earth. To this we observe, that if we take the conduct of the inhabitants of heaven as the pattern of our works upon earth, we shall, like the glorified spirits, regard strictly all the commandments and all the directions of God concerning his institutions. Therefore the example of the saints in heaven does not teach us to violate the prescribed order of his institutions, by inviting unbaptized persons to the communion. Besides, there is no Lord's Supper in heaven.— This institution, as well as baptism, belongs only to the church militant. A knowledge of this fact effectually does away all the force of this hackneyed objection. It is certain, however, that the inhabitants of heaven have no kind of communion with any who are not admitted into the heavenly church. Hence we act contrary to the spirit of heaven, to which the objection points us, whenever we commune with any whom we will not admit into the gospel church. Notwithstanding all the objections which may be urged against the sentiments of this tract, we learn that there are three important principles which must stand or fall together, viz:—1. Baptism is a pre-requisite to communion. 2. Faith is a pre-requisite to baptism; and 3. Baptism is a pre-requisite to church membership. If, therefore, the reader believes that baptism is a pre-requisite to church membership; and that faith is a pre-requisite to baptism; then he must also believe that baptism is a pre-requisite to communion.

From the Monthly Miscellany of Religion and Letters.

NON-RESISTANCE.

Mr. Editor:—The spirit of non-resistance is the highest attainment of the soul. To suffer injury and still be kind, never to return evil for evil, to love an enemy, a man must attain the entire possession of himself: his appetites and passions must be in complete subjection to his moral sense. A true non-resistance must have the same mind that was in Christ. He must have become a dear child of God. Jesus gave it as an evidence of the perfection of God, that he caught his sun to shine upon the evil, sendeth his rain upon the unjust, and is kind to the wicked and unthankful. God is love, and they only are his children, in whose hearts love reigns supremely. The crowning excellence of Christ, that which made him the dearly beloved Son of God, was that he loved his enemies; loved them without dissimulation; blessed them that cursed him, did good to them which despitefully used and persecuted him. That he withheld himself under the highest provocation, from committing any violence upon his foes, or allowing others to do it for him, is the fact, which stands out and above all others in his life, and has awakened more than all the rest that which is felt for him. Jesus was able to defend himself, as he intimated. He could have summoned twelve legions of angels to his rescue. Or he could have roused his disciples, and many thousands more of the Jewish people, who were ready enough to believe him to be their long promised Messiah; and they would have gladly fought to protect him. But suppose he had done so? Suppose that, animated by that spirit which so many of his professed disciples regard as noble,—as the heaven-ordained instinct in the soul of man, as the first law written upon his heart by the finger of God—suppose he had defended himself, had snatched to the ground the first one who offered to lay hands upon him, and had encouraged those who were with him to fight; what would have been the effect? Would the name of Jesus have been exalted, as it now is, above every name? No. It might not have survived the generation to which he belonged. Or it would have lived only in the vulgar list of heroes. Who can think, without a shudder, of the holy Jesus raising his hand to strike a blow even in self-defence? Not the moral son, but the moral son, the Son of Righteousness, would have been threatened. Who does not feel that the purpose of his mission would have been defeated? And yet I would

inquire, what man can be justified on christian principles, in making self-defence, if the author, and finisher and pattern of our faith would not have been? I submit, whether the fact, that Jesus did not defend himself, nor allow himself to be defended, does not settle the question of non-resistance? No cause, however just and good, no life, however dear and valuable, may on christian principles be defended by violence. This, I am aware, is a hard saying. Few, perhaps, can bear it. But it is the true saying, unless it can be shown, that other lives are more valuable than was the life of the Son of God; or unless it can be made to appear that christians are allowed by their master to act in two opposite characters, to fight for the kingdoms of this world and suffer for the kingdom of Heaven, i. e. to serve Christ and Belial, God and Mammon; unless it can be shown, that they can fight for the body and not harm the soul; or that they can love an enemy while killing him. Were it not for the illustration of the spirit of non-resistance given us in the life of Jesus, it might be difficult to determine the precise meaning of his precepts. It can not be denied that the words used in this, as well as in several other instances, require some limitations and qualifications. And, were it not for what we know of his conduct, we might be at a loss to determine precisely what he intended by these words—"resist not evil," "love your enemies." But what he did is the best commentary we could have upon what he said. If it could be proved that Jesus ever did, or if there were sufficient reason to believe he ever would, kill, or maim, or imprison a man for any cause, then might we safely infer, that a follower of Jesus may do likewise for a similar cause. How would the beloved Son of God act in any supposable case of insult, injury or peril? The answer to this question decides how his disciples should act. And must not the same response to this question come from the depths of every soul, that has ever read his biography? I never saw the person, nor heard of him, I do not believe there ever was one, who did not perceive at a glance the glaring incongruity between the character of Jesus and the act of killing a man in self-defence, or knocking him down, or calling upon others to bind him and cast him into prison. We can conceive of Jesus only as rebuking the wrong doer faithfully and affectionately, and meekly enduring all things from him, that he might overcome his evil passions and reconcile him to his Heavenly Father. Of course those only, who have risen with Christ from the death of sin to the life of righteousness—those who are not conformed to this world, but are transformed by the renewing of their minds—can know what is the good, and acceptable and perfect will of God. Those only can be ready to present their bodies a living sacrifice in his service. Those only will be willing or able to act on the principle of non-resistance. This principle is rejected, despised, hated by worldly minded men, and ever must be. Those only whose affections are set on things in Heaven, and not on things on the earth, can be raised above the temptations to wrath, revenge and murder. Those only, who are persuaded that to die in adherence to a principle would give new and higher life to the soul, can act as if they believed that it were infinitely better for them to be killed under any circumstances than to kill. Those only, who realize what ruin the indulgence of unhalloved passions, envy, hatred, wrath, works in the human soul, can feel such compassion, such love for any enemy as to lay down their own life for him. It is idle therefore to expect that men of the world, those who are living for wealth, for honor, for the pride of life or the lusts of the flesh, will embrace the principle of non-resistance. Such men must be converted, and become as little children, before they can enter the kingdom of Heaven. To use the strong language of Jesus, they must be regenerated, born again, before they will be so Christ-like as to feel no desire to harm those, who harm them. Non-resistance is the primitive doctrine of the Cross. Blessed be God, that it has been so earnestly re-published in our day. But let no one hastily profess it. The disciple of the master who inculcated this doctrine, must deny himself daily, take up the cross and follow him. Until the condition and character of mankind is essentially changed, they may have to suffer much, ay, "endure all things," who are steadfast in their adherence to the principle of the Gospel. But the condition and character of mankind never will be essentially changed, unless christians will be christians indeed, unless the disciples will be like their Master. The church has been overlaid with professions. At best these are but leaves. We have had too many of them.—We want more of the fruits of the spirit. But none can bring forth these fruits except they abide in their true vine. And they, who do, need not proclaim what they are. By their fruits they shall be known. It is better that a man should be more than he professes, much better than that he should profess more than he is. Let no one take upon him the name, who does not deeply feel the spirit of non-resistance living in his heart. It matters little what we are called; it matters everything what we are. Christ desires not to give his name or any name to men, but to inspire us with his