

A  
VIEW  
OF THE  
EVIDENCES  
OF  
*BELIEVERS BAPTISM.*

IN FOUR PARTS,  
By JOHN MARTIN.

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I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT WITHIN YOU, AND  
CAUSE YOU TO WALK IN MY STATUTES.

EZEK. xxxvi. 27.

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## PREFACE.

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IT is said, that the Jews at Berea were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, to see whether those things were so. Acts xvii. 11.

The things spoken of, were those things which Paul had preached at Thessalonica; where, as his manner was, he went into a synagogue of the Jews, and three sabbath days reasoned with them

them out of the scriptures; opening and alledging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead. Acts xvii. 2, 3.

Some at Thessalonica believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas ; but the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar. Acts xvii. 4, 5.

On this account, the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night to Berea ; who coming thither, went into another synagogue of the Jews. Acts xvii. 10.

Here

Here they met with due respect: and the noble, and ingenuous behaviour of the Jews at Berea, has justly obtained the applause of all parties that have heard of their becoming conduct.

To receive the word with all readiness of mind, to be cautious what we retain of human expositions, and to search the scriptures daily, to see whether things are so as they were stated to us, argues an excellent disposition: and of this temper, (a temper which very few at that time possessed) the Bereans gave a fine example.

It is said, therefore, many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men not a few. Acts xvii. 12.

But

But, let it be remembered, that the preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, are from the Lord. Prov. xvi. 1. Otherwise the Jews at Berea, would have been as perverse as those at Thessalonica: and this, I doubt not, the noble Bereans often acknowledged, and gave to God the glory of their conversion.

From what has been said of them, it appears that the doctrine of preachers must be judged of by the scriptures, and that it is the duty of all men, who have that book in their possession, to search the scriptures for themselves.

Whatever objections may be raised against this practice, or whatever inconvenience may occasionally be connected with

with it, if, on any pretence, it is given up, or laid aside, nothing will counter-vail the damage.

But ministers of the gospel should not only search the scriptures for themselves, but for others also: and when they have done this, in the fear of God, and to the best of their ability, they are allowed to say, Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know it for your good. Job v. 27.

I have long been engaged in this service; and of late, have once more turned my attention to an unpopular subject: I mean believers baptism. For that practice, without entering into any local dispute, I have collected a body  
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of evidence chiefly from the New Testament ; such as is not every day produced.

This I have been advised to publish : and if those who read the following pages, will do what the Bereans did, perhaps, they will reap some advantage from this production.



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V I E W  
OF THE  
EVIDENCES  
OF  
BELIEVERS BAPTISM.

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PART I.

ON THE BAPTISM OF JOHN.

**J**OHN was the son of a certain priest named Zacharias: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Luke i. 5. John was born in the days of Herod the king of Judea; and both his parents were righteous before God; walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. Luke i. 5, 6.

Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor

vernor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, the word of God came unto John, the son of Zecharias in the wilderness: and he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins. Luke iii. 1, 2, 3.

The baptism of John, was from heaven, and not of men. Matt. xxi. 25. The chief priests and elders could not deny that fact. And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and Lawyers, rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him. Luke vii. 29, 30.

Before John baptized he preached, saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. John thus preached, not only in Judea, but to the children of Abraham, saying unto them, Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones  
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to raise up children to Abraham. Matt. iii. 2—8, 9.

From such courage, and conduct in John, we may conclude, that he would not baptize them that rejected his ministry, nor them that did not believe his testimony of Jesus Christ, nor them, whoever they were, that refused to make a serious profession of their faith.

John baptized in Jordan, in Bethabara beyond Jordan, and in Ænon, near unto Salem, because there was much water there. Matt. iii. 6. John i. 28. John iii. 23.

John had but one way of baptizing, to which even Jesus himself submitted. He came from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. Matt. iii. 13, 14, 15.

The number of John's disciples must have been great: for there went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. Matt. iii. 5, 6.

John's disciples were not brought to him as children are brought to a pædobaptist minister, nor were they any of them, dumb in his presence: no, they went out to John of their own accord, and before they were baptized, they made a confession of their sins. Matt. iii. 5, 6.

The Jews were not offended with John for his baptizing in the river Jordan nor at the manner in which he baptized his disciples: but John being only a Levite, they questioned his authority to baptize, and thought him too severe when he required of them fruits meet for repentance, and when he rejected their favourite plea, We have Abraham to our father. Matt. iii. 8, 9.

John obtained a new name from his baptizing in Judea. This shews, that to baptize in water, as John baptized, was a new thing in that country; and that what he did was not done in conformity to any established, or previous custom in the land of promise.

John, however, was not called JOHN THE BAPTIST, only because he had a commission from heaven to baptize; but chiefly, because his baptism immediately preceded the kingdom of God, and was very closely connected with it. Isa. xl. compared with Matt. iii.

John the baptist was a friend to the civil government, and to the civil governors of Judea; though in his days, the sceptre had departed from Judea, and they who then presided over the Jews were extremely corrupt. Luke iii. 2.

The temper, prudence, and fidelity of John, on popular questions, often appeared,

and always much to his credit, and to the repute of his peculiar mission.

When an oppressed and turbulent people asked him saying, What shall we do? He said unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. When the publicans said unto him, Master, What shall we do? He said unto them, exact no more than that which is appointed you. And when the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? He said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages. Luke iii. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

Such was the wholesome advice of John the baptist to a discontented people in troublesome times; over whom he had great influence. Nor did he give this advice, fearing the wrath of the king, but reproved him boldly, for taking Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done. Luke iii. 19.

John

John, therefore, for conscience sake, thus taught an impatient and misguided multitude; and many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people. Luke iii. 18.

They whom John instructed, were such as came to him to be baptized: and, from his counsel to these different classes of men, it appears, that a power to suffer well for well doing, is of much greater importance in the kingdom of God, and of much greater use in this world, than that imperious courage, which is often only a power to exalt ourselves by injuring other people. Yet this mischievous power, under fine names, and plausible pretences, seems to be that kind of courage which most men admire, applaud, and endeavour to possess.

But human energies should always be valued, just as they are, more or less subservient to the will of God; and as, in that connection, they are more or less, conducive to the happiness of mankind in this world,



world, and are connected with a due concern for that which is to come.

If we form our judgment of John the baptist according to these notions, our opinion of him will be raised, and he will be high in our esteem. He was not a reed shaken with the wind; nor a man clothed in soft raiment; no, he was a prophet, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.—So Christ himself spake of John, when he was in prison, even to John's own disciples; adding these memorable words: Verily, I say unto you, among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the baptist. Matt. xi. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

## PART II.



ON BAPTISM, AS APPROVED AND FINALLY SETTLED  
BY JESUS CHRIST.

WHEN John had baptized our Lord in Jordan, Jesus went up straightway out of the water; and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Matt. iii. 16, 17.

This testimony from heaven to the sonship of Christ, and this proof of his being accepted with his Father as incarnate, and fulfilling all righteousness, was soon obscured. For no sooner was Jesus baptized, than he was led up of the spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. Matt. iv. 1.

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His sudden departure from John, his long absence in the desert, and probably, the idle reports which were circulated at that time, concerning his temptations, seemed to be inconsistent with that honor which he received at Jordan.

John in the mean while, being present with his numerous disciples, being also zealous and popular, increased in fame, just in such proportion, as the character of Christ was traduced or concealed.

In this hour of temptation, some of John's disciples began to form unfavourable notions of his Lord and master, and to suppose that he was of less consequence in the kingdom of God than the son of Zacharias.

But John himself seems to have remained stedfast, under all the rumours that then prevailed. He continued to bear witness of Jesus, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me, is preferred before me ; for he was before me.—And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from  
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from Jerusalem, to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not, but confessed, I am not the Christ. John i. 15—19, 20.

When some of his own disciples came to him and said, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness, behold the same baptizeth, and all men come to him. John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.—He must increase, but I must decrease. He that cometh from above is above all :—He that hath received his testimony, hath set to his seal that God is true. John iii. 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 33.

When our Lord knew the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John; (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) he left Judea, and departed again into Galilee. John iv. 1, 2, 3.

Now

Now, though the number of these converts to christianity, might not be so great as had been reported, yet from this report it appears, that the gospel was then preached with success in Judea by our Lord's disciples; that they who believed the gospel were baptized, and that this advancement of the visible kingdom of Christ, vexed and alarmed the unbelieving Jews.

HAVING observed what attention our Lord paid to the ordinance of baptism while he was in this world, let us now observe, in what manner that ordinance was finally settled by him after his resurrection.

From the narrative of this settlement, given us by St. Matthew, it appears, First, that our Lord had no sooner risen from the dead, than he appointed his disciples to meet him in Galilee. Secondly, that the great object of this meeting was to assure them, that all power was given unto him in heaven and in earth, and to command them to teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

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On this narrative, to the end of the chapter, we may further observe, First, that the administrators of baptism were to be such as they had been, ministers of Christ. Secondly, that their commission to teach, and to disciple by teaching, extended to all nations; to one as well as another, without excepting any nation which might, at any time, be willing to hear and receive the gospel of Jesus Christ. Thirdly, that the persons they were to baptize were those only, in any nation, that believed in him, and seriously avowed that belief. Fourthly, that the manner in which such subjects were to be baptized, in any country, and at any time, was in water, with their own consent, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Fifthly, that after they were thus baptized, they were to be taught to observe all things whatsoever Christ had commanded them. Sixthly, that such teachers, and such disciples, might expect his presence and blessing to be with them always, even to the end of the world. AMEN. Matt. xxviii. 7—20.

It may not be improper in this place, to add the following remarks :

First, we may observe, that an ordinance settled with so much solemnity, and by such authority, as Matthew has stated concerning baptism, cannot, in my opinion, be perverted, changed, trifled with, or neglected, from any commendable motive, or to answer any good purpose.

Secondly, that whatever abuses may at any time exist, or whatever offences may be suffered to abound, in reference to water baptism, the perpetuity of this ordinance, as it was finally settled by our Lord himself, is effectually secured. For, the promise of his presence to them that obey his will unto the end of the world, supposes, there must be a succession of such people in every age, however they may, in any period, or in any place, be misrepresented, and unhandsomely treated, on account of their stedfast obedience to the Son of God. Having therefore, such a promise, let us be of good courage, and say  
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to succeeding believers: Be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. 1 Cor. xv. 58.

So long as we live under the influence of such a promise, and of such an exhortation, what should make us afraid of following our Lord in this ordinance, and of following them who were best acquainted with his will? If there is any thing which should make us hesitate a single moment, I own, it has not yet come within the reach of my understanding.