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## THE ONE BAPTISM.

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By Elder John Kaler.

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# THE ONE BAPTISM.

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The subject for consideration is this: "Is water baptism essential to salvation, and if so which one of the three modes, commonly taught and practiced by Protestantism, is the scriptural one?" I also told you that I would answer the question, "What is baptism for, and who are proper subjects for baptism?" If sprinkling and pouring are authorized in God's Word as well as immersion, we should know it, and if neither are warranted in Holy Writ, then we should know that and refrain from believing and practicing such things in our religious systems, as have their origin only in superstition, creedism, or priestcraft. I don't want you to believe what I say simply because it is in harmony with

your tradition or creed; but believe only such things as I shall prove to you from the Word of God, which is the only standard by which we can square our lives in spiritual things.

In all temporal matters men have standards or tests, by which they can arrive at a just conclusion and learn the truth. If one of you ladies should go to the merchant and tell him that you desired ten yards of dress goods and he would simply guess you off ten yards, how would you determine whether you obtained what you paid for or not? Why, you say, "I would take the yard stick and measure it myself and then I could tell if it was even one inch short." Very well, why would the yard stick settle the difficulty? You answer, "Because it is the government standard and therefore recognized by law as a true criterion." Now kind friends, be just as consistent on the subject of religion, for God has a standard in his government by which you can test the truthfulness of all

things, so that you need not be deceived by the traditions of men or doctrine of devils.

In this light I expect to examine the subject under consideration. Now for the standard. In Deut. 19:15, God tells Moses how to determine the truthfulness of difficult matters. He says, "At the mouth of two or three witnesses, shall the matter be established." In John 8:17, Jesus says, "It is written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true," and he uses this standard to prove his divine mission. Paul also accepts this divine test and writes to the church that, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established."—2 Cor. 13:1, now I shall only use such witnesses as protestantism admit to be truthful men of God. Some people earnestly contend that either one of the three forms commonly practiced as baptism is scriptural and therefore right. I remember of hearing a minister say, when I was a boy, that the New Testament was not

clear on this subject, and therefore it was impossible to determine just what mode was taught in apostolic times. Some tell us that they do not believe that natural water baptism was ever commanded; but that all such scripture as mentioned baptism, evidently referred to a spiritual birth. I will now introduce three competent witnesses to prove that water baptism was commanded and obeyed in the days of Jesus. Matthew says: "John the Baptist came preaching saying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand, \* \* \* Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, came to him and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins."—Matt. 3:1, 2, 5, 6. Again, in verse 11 John says: "I indeed baptize you with water unto [or upon your] repentance, but he [Christ] that cometh after me is mightier than I, \* \* he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." Mark also says, that John came preaching repentance and baptizing in the river Jordan those who

confessed their sins, and he declares this to be, “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ,” and John tells them to believe in Jesus who shall come and baptize them with the Holy Ghost. (Mark 1:1–9) In Luke 3:16 we find precisely the same testimony, with reference to John the baptist baptizing in water; as we do in the two former writers. Jesus himself positively declares that John’s baptism was “the counsel of God.” He endorsed it in both words and works, when he went and was baptized of John in Jordan saying: “Thus [in this manner, form or way] it becometh us [who believe God] to fulfill all righteousness.”—Luke 7:29,30.

Now in accord with God’s standard that, “In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established,” I have proven that water baptism was preached, believed in, and obeyed by men of God in ancient times. Some will say, “Oh yes, I agree with you that water baptism was taught anciently, but then the Bible is not plain in

regard to the mode, and in fact there is just as much scriptural evidence in favor of sprinkling and pouring, as immersion, therefore all three modes are right." Those people who believe in three forms, usually say that neither are essential to salvation. Then why practice them at all, if not necessary? Such persons are as inconsistent reasoners as those who deny that water baptism is taught in the word. John the Baptist says, in John 1:33, that God sent him to baptize with water, and in verse 31 he declares: "But that he [Christ] should be made manifest [or known] to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water." In what way did water baptism make Christ manifest or known to Israel? Simply in this way. Those who received and obeyed the "counsel of God," through John, that is: believed, repented and were baptized, were the only ones, who were entitled to the greater baptism—the Holy Spirit—which Jesus said 'would testify of him, or in other words, manifest or



reveal to their minds that he was the Christ. See John 15:10, 26; 1 Cor. 12:3; Luke 10:22. But we are told that the words: "Were all baptized of John in the river of Jordan," does not disprove pouring or sprinkling because the water might have been only shoe top deep which would have made immersion impossible. The M. E. Sunday School quarterly explains the words "in Jordan" this way: "The words 'in Jordan' do not prove immersion for nearly every farmer's boy has rode his horse into the river without even getting wet." Very well, I'll grant you that part of the argument and look elsewhere for proof regarding the mode of baptism.

I will introduce the Apostle Paul as a witness, to prove that two of the commonly accepted forms must of necessity be wrong. I do not believe God will tell us to do something and then so mystify his word that we could not understand how to obey. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."—Mark. 16:16. "Go and

teach all nations baptizing them.” Matt. 28:19. About the year A. D. 57, Paul wrote to the church as follows: “Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”—Rom. 15:4. Now among the things written “aforetime” is found the command of Christ to “go preach” and “baptize;” as written by Mark and Matthew at least fourteen years before Paul says that all written aforetime was written for our learning, and in after years Paul writes to Timothy saying: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” This shows us that God expects us to not only understand the necessity of baptism, but also intends for us to know how and when we should be baptized. Now for Paul’s testimony before referred to. In Ephesians 4:5, he

says, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." Now if this be true that there is one baptism, then at least two out of the three modes, taught and practiced, by protestantism are unscriptural and therefore have their origin in creedism, tradition or doctrines of men only, and Jesus said, as recorded in Matt. 15:9, that such worship was vain.

I once heard a minister preach a sermon on this topic, and he said that Paul's conversion was a model conversion and that all people should be converted and come to Christ in a similar way. He then referred to the 9th chapter of Acts, to show that Paul was converted, on his way to Damascus by a light from heaven and the voice of Jesus and that one Ananias by name, afterwards came to him, by command of Christ, and then Paul arose and was baptized. Now, said he, remember that it does not say he went, or that he was commanded to go and be baptized. Therefore in the absence of the word go or went, I shall forever contend that

Paul arose and was baptized there and then, in the house of Judas, by sprinkling or pouring. Now friends this kind of reasoning might appear somewhat logical if Paul did not tell us elsewhere just how he was baptized. Turn with me to the 6th chapter of Romans, where Paul says to the church, "know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we [Paul, with the rest of the Saints] are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we [Paul and the rest of the church] have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."—Rom. 6:3, 4, 5. Again, in writing to the Saints and faithful brethren in Christ at Colosse, he uses the word buried in referring to their baptism. (Col. 2:11,12.) So, I have produced three verses of Scripture as witnesses to prove that

Paul and all of God's ancient saints put on Christ in baptism by being buried or planted in the likeness of his death. Yes just as Jesus was enclosed in the sepulchre or grave and came forth, even so we should be buried or enclosed in the waters of baptism, and rise to walk in newness of life. This is in beautiful harmony with the words of Jesus to Nicodemus; as found in John 3:5, where he says: "Except a man be born of water [brought forth out of the water] and of the Spirit he can not enter into the kingdom [or church] of God." This language of Christ teaches us the nature of the "one baptism" embodied in the "one faith" as authorized of the "one Lord" as referred to in Eph. 4:5, by Paul.

The Savior speaks of only one birth, which is accomplished by two elements, water and Spirit. This teaches me that, as man is dual or double in his nature—body and spirit—which constitutes one man or person, even so the ONE BAPTISM which inducts him into the

ONE BODY OR church of Christ is twofold in its nature—water and Spirit. Jesus evidently referred to water baptism, in the parable as found in the first part of the 10th chapter of John. He said: “He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold [church or kingdom of God] but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth.” The Apostle Peter calls Jesus, “The chief shepherd.” John the Baptist was the porter, who opened the door of baptism to Jesus by baptizing him in Jordan, and then he received the Holy Spirit which inspired him to say: “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life.” Yes, those who desire to follow their Chief Shepherd must enter by the door of baptism into the fold; but some will say does not Christ say: “I am the door, by me if any man will enter in,” etc., Yes, but how was he the door? by reading

the 22nd and 26th verses of the 3d chapter of John; also the 1st and 2nd verses of the 4th chapter, you will see that Jesus and his disciples took John's place in baptizing those who believed the gospel and it says that they made and baptized more disciples than John the Baptist. Yes, it is in God's appointed way, as commanded by the Savior, that we are to enter into covenant relationship with him. Of course, baptism will do us no good, unless we first believe the gospel and repent, which implies a turning away from everything that is forbidden in the divine word, with a determination to live "By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Now friends, I have proven by competent witnesses, that water baptism was administered in New Testament times, to all repentant believers in Christ and his gospel, and that baptism was called a burial in water; such words as: "buried," "planted", "born of water," being used, which plainly signify immersion. Some even deny that the

to God, the shackles are being broken off and human souls are set free from spiritual thralldom; as Jesus said: "The truth shall make you free".

A gentleman once said to me, "Do you pretend to say that the word sprinkle is not used in the New Testament?" Now friends, I do deny that either sprinkling or pouring are used in connection with water baptism. Pour or pouring is never so employed, while the strongest and only evidence, in the New Testament, in favor of sprinkling is found in Heb. - 10:22. It reads as follows: "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." You readily see that this verse favors immersion more than any other mode by reason of the words, "And our bodies washed with pure water." Sprinkled water could not reach the heart or wash the body. The words of Christ and his apostles all stand, as witnesses,



word buried proves immersion

If some man would walk into this church to-night, and tell you intelligent people that he saw a man buried to-day, would you understand that the corpse was taken to the cemetery and then had a little dust sprinkled or poured upon it? No, you would understand that if he was buried at all, he must have been covered, planted or deposited in the earth. Well did the Apostle say that, the time would come when men would not endure sound doctrine, and turning away their ears from the truth, should be turned unto fables. Now let those who believe that sprinkling and pouring are valid baptisms, take the New Testament and give me a scriptural reason for such doctrine. Ah, my friends you cannot find it there. No, not even a hint of such a thing can be found in the New Testament. We cannot trace it back farther than the third century. It had its inception during the dark ages, when superstition and priestcraft reigned. But thanks be

in favor of the ONE BAPTISM being immersion, as shown by such expressions as, "Were baptized in Jordan"—Matt. 3:6, "Were all baptized in the river Jordan,"—Mark 1:5, "Born of water," Jesus in John 3:5, "Buried by baptism,"—Rom. 6:4 and Col. 2:12, "Planted in the likeness of his [Christ] death"—Rom. 6:5. While upon the other side you cannot produce one competent witness in favor of any other mode.

Now for the object of water baptism. What is it for? Mark says: "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS"—Mark 1:4. Also Luke, "And he [John Baptist] came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS,"—Luke 3:3. Jesus said to his disciples, after his resurrection: "Thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, THAT REPENTANCE and REMISSION OF SINS should be preached in his name among all

nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”  
 —Luke 24:46,47. How was remission of sins preached at Jerusalem on Pentecost day? All nations must hear it preached in like manner, says Jesus. God is unchangeable, therefore his Spirit will always inspire his servants to preach the same doctrine. The Holy Ghost inspired Peter, on Pentecost day, to preach Christ to the people; and when they were convinced that Jesus was, “both Lord and Christ,” they said: “What shall we do?” “Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”  
 —Acts 2:37–38. Is remission of sins preached in this manner to the nations to-day? If so, who is preaching it, and do those who are baptized receive the Holy Ghost, as was promised and as the obedient received it anciently? (See Acts 8:14 to 18, also 19:5,6) Says one, “How can baptism remit sin?” “What saving virtue is there in

water?" Well I will tell you how baptism remits our sins. In the 5th chapter of 2 Kings we read of one Naaman, captain of the hosts of the king of Syria, who was a leper, and the Prophet Elisha bade him "go and wash in Jordan seven times and he should be cleansed." but Naaman turned away in a rage saying, "Are not the rivers of my country better than all the waters of Israel? I could wash in them, and be clean." You see he made the same mistake that people make these days. The remedy was too simple, so he began to question the virtue or healing power of the water; not realizing that God was able to fulfill his promises, no matter how simple the means that he might choose by which to accomplish the same. But his simple-minded servant came and said, "My father, if the Prophet had bid thee do some great thing, would'st thou not have done it, how much rather wash and be clean?" "Then he went down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according

to the saying of the man of God, and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." Now friends, was there any virtue in the water to cleanse this leper? O, no. If God had not promised him the blessing, it would have done him no good to go and dip in Jordan.

According to the language of Christ, baptism is required of all who are capable of believing the gospel and repenting. Little children who are not old enough to be taught the principles of eternal life, are not fit subjects for baptism; for Jesus said, "go teach," and only those who believed the gospel and repented were baptized. We believe that all the Savior's commands are equally necessary. This is why the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints teaches and believes that God, Christ and the gospel are unchangeable. Yes, if it was necessary for people to believe and repent 1800 years ago and be baptized, and receive the ordinance of the laying on of hands, in

order to obtain a remission of sins and receive the Holy Spirit, which would "guide them into all truth," then how can we expect to obtain eternal life by obeying any less nowadays?

Friends, do'nt believe everything the preachers say, but heed the admonition of Christ, "Take heed that no man [preachers are men] deceive you."—Matt. 24:4. "Search the Scriptures,"—John 5:39. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally".—James 1:5.

May God help you to "search," understand, believe and obey, that you may receive every necessary blessing in this present life, that is needful to help you to overcome all that is sinful, so that you may finally be accounted worthy to obtain the crown of eternal life in the presence of God and the Lamb. This is my prayer for you all in Jesus name. Amen.



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