The question of baptism has long troubled Christianity in that there are many differing opinions on what the Bible teaches on this important subject. We as students of the Rightly Divided Word of Truth must not be swayed by the traditions and teachings of men but always look to the Scripture as our rule book of faith and practise.

Among the words written near the time of the beginning of Christianity the new Hebrew believers were exhorted "to leave" not "lay again", laws and ordinances including "the doctrine of baptisms" Heb. 6:2, these being among the elements that were to be left behind as the believer pressed on unto perfection

The N.T. teaching concerning baptism is distributed thus:

1. John the Baptist. This baptism falls under two headings:

(a) It was a baptism unto repentance, in view of the near approach of the kingdom of heaven Matt. 3:1-2
(b) It was the work of John as the forerunner prophesied of by Isaiah in the fortieth chapter of his prophecy.
(c) It was concerned only with Israel or with those who joined themselves to Israel, as the words "Comfort ye" of Isaiah 40 were concerned.
(d) It was a baptism in water, that spoke of a future baptism with Holy Ghost and with fire.
(e) It was specifically designed to make manifest to Israel the One Who was sent to be their Messiah John 1:30-34

2. The baptism with the Holy Ghost promised by John was fulfilled at Pentecost Acts 1:5.

3. During the Acts, water baptism and the baptism of the Spirit went together Acts 2:38, 10:47

4. During the first ministry of the Apostle Paul, baptism by water was practised I Cor. 1:16, but baptism never held the place in Paul's commission I Cor. 1:17 that it did in that of Peter (Acts

2:38). Peter could never have said: "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel" as Paul did.

Baptism during the early ministry of Paul:

(a) united the believer by burial with the death of Christ 1 Cor. 1:17
(b) united Jew and Gentile making them "all one in Christ and Abraham's seed" Gal. 4:27-29 .
(c) baptizing these believers into one body, with particular reference to the exercise of spiritual gifts 1 Cor. 12:13

5. After Acts 28, and the revelation of the Mystery we enter into a calling where shadows give place to the reality of the fulness of Christ Col. 2:17.

Baptism in the epistles of the Mystery is either that which unites the believer with the death and Resurrection of Christ Col. 2:12 or by which the believer becomes a member of the Church which is His body Eph. 4:5.

Owing to the failure on the part of expositors and teachers to discern the change of dispensation consequent upon the setting aside of Israel at Acts 28, there has been a failure to discern the extreme difference that exists between baptism as taught in the earliest part of the N.T. or even in the earlier epistles of Paul and as it is taught in the epistles of the Mystery.

Galatians 3:19 asks a question: "Wherefore then serveth the law?" and the answer is: "It was superadded" (prostithemi). The Galatians were turning back to the weak and beggarly elements of the ceremonial law. "Now this law was not promulgated in the first instance to the Jewish people, but was a superaddition to the antecedent moral law is a matter of universal notoriety. It is well-known (says Whitby) that all these ancient fathers were of the opinion, that God gave the Jews only the Decalogue, till they made the golden calf, and afterwards He laid the yoke of ceremonies upon them." "The law was superadded in behalf of transgressions being ordained in the hand of a mediator".

The Christian Church has fixed its attention so much upon these superadded carnal ordinances

and have modelled their doctrine of baptism so much upon these things which were imposed until the time of reformation that they have given little or no place to the one great baptism, which was not added because of transgressions but was an integral part of the Redemption of the nation, namely the baptism of the whole nation unto Moses at the Red Sea. That is the type that remains for us today, all others are carnal ordinances that have no place in the present economy of pure grace.

The baptism of Colossians two is not likened to anything that was introduced into the Aaronic priesthood or tabernacle service, it is likened to the initiatory rite of circumcision. Now in Colossians two this circumcision is the spiritual equivalent of that practised by the Jew, it is explicitly said to be "the circumcision made without hands", and repudiates "the body of the flesh" (sin is not in question, the revised text omits the words "of the sins"), and this is accomplished "by the circumcision of Christ". Now until it can be proved that the circumcision here emphasized is the literal carnal ordinance, the consequential burial by baptism will have to be understood of the spiritual equivalent too, and finds its type, not in the many baptisms of the ceremonial law, but in the one baptism of the whole nation at the crossing of the Red Sea. This "one baptism" forms an integral part of the Unity of the Spirit, which those who are blessed under the terms of the Mystery are enjoined to keep. The seven parts of this unity are so disposed, as to throw into correspondence the One Baptism in the One Spirit, thus:

One Lord	
One Hope	One Faith
One Spirit	One Baptism
One Body	One God and Father

This sevenfold unity is composed of seven units-and to tamper with the repeated word "one" is to deny inspiration and to destroy the Apostle's insistence. We can no more believe that "one" baptism means two, i.e., "water and spirit" than we can import plurality into the realm of faith, hope or the Lordship of Christ. It is the custom of those companies of Christians who stress baptism in water, to call themselves "baptized believers". It is also, unfortunately the habit of many who see the spiritual nature of baptism in Colossians and Ephesians to allow this claim, but such are wrong. Members of the One Body are "baptized believers" for without this one-baptism membership of the One Body is impossible. To speak otherwise is to magnify the carnal ordinance that pertains to the ceremonial act, above the spiritual reality. The truth is that no company in the N.T. has ever known what true baptism really is, except that Church where baptism in water is absent and unknown.

While much more could be said, we are necessarily limited, but we believe every essential feature has been considered so that the reader can pursue the matter in detail with every hope of attaining unto fuller light.