

The Origin of the Baptists

By George B. Taylor

Almost all the anti-papist denominations in existence date, either directly or indirectly, from the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century, and came out from the Roman Catholic Church. The Reformation which brought these denominations into existence was one of the most glorious events in history; and much of what has been effected by these denominations may well rejoice both angels and saints.

The Baptists, however, do not date from the Reformation. Though anti-papists, they are not, in the technical and historical sense of the word, Protestants; for though they have ever protested, and do now protest, against the heresies and abominations of Rome, they did not come out from Rome, having never been identified with the Roman hierarchy. Sir Isaac Newton says, as quoted by *Appleton's American Cyclopaedia*: "The Baptists are the only body of Christians that has not symbolized with the Church of Rome."

But if the Baptists did not come out from Rome with the other denominations, what *is* their origin? It has not been uncommon to speak of them as beginning with the madmen of Munster, who committed in that city, in 1635, so many abominations. But, herein are several grand mistakes.

Anabaptist means rebaptizer. The term has some-

times been applied to Baptists because they reject infant baptism, and insist that those who have received that rite should be baptized upon a profession of faith, when they come personally to believe on Christ. They also insist upon immersion as the only Scriptural baptism. The Anabaptists, on the other hand, not only rebaptized all who came to them from the Papal Church, but, according to the historian Ivimy, repeated baptism among themselves when they removed from one society to another, and even in the same community when an excommunicated person was received again; and they practiced sprinkling far more than immersion. Moreover, they held views in regard to allegiance to government, marriage, and the Bible, such as not only the Baptists of these times repudiate, but as were repudiated by those of that time who correspond to the Baptists of the present day. This is the testimony of the Dutch historians, Ypeig and Dermont, and Brandt in his "History of the Reformation." Even were it true that the scenes of Munster were ascribable mainly to Anabaptists, it were as absurd to confound them with the Baptists as it would be now to confound Mormons with Baptists, merely because Mormons immerse. In fact, it would be more absurd, because, as has been said, those Anabaptists

were, as a general rule, not even immersionists.

But even were it granted that we are the successors of the Munstermen, and that we ought to bear the odium of those abominations — conclusions which I deny, and have disproved — it would still be utterly untrue that then and there the Baptists originated.

On the contrary, it is true and I propose now to show, that Baptists — not called by that name, but called by first one name and then another, and yet holding substantially Baptist principles and Baptist practices — have existed in all the ages from the Reformation back to Apostolic times. I preface my testimony with two remarks. First, it must be remembered that each Baptist congregation being independent, we do not speak of the Baptist Church being continuous as we do of the Roman Catholic Church or the Church of England. All we mean is that there have been in all the ages men and churches maintaining doctrines and practices such as Baptists and Baptist churches now maintain. Second, and as a corollary from the foregoing, I do not place any stress upon the idea of a succession. While it is true that baptism is to be administered by one who has been baptized and has been set apart to administer the ordinance by a company of believers who have themselves been baptized [a

church], yet I cannot hold an unbroken succession essential to the validity of the ordinance [This editor believes in Baptist Succession]. I will illustrate what I mean. If a person now wishes baptism, it is manifestly proper that he should receive it of one who has himself been baptized and duly authorized by a Baptist church to administer the ordinance. Otherwise, the door is open wide to confusion and irregularity. But suppose the case of a company of persons in an island, and destined to remain there. They have a New Testament. They are led to believe the gospel. Might they not join together as a church, one baptizing the others, and himself receiving baptism from the hands of another? This we know actually occurred in the case of Roger Williams; and the view presented is the one generally obtaining among Baptists. [Editor's Comments: Roger Williams "church" and "baptism" was not recognized by Baptists.] When Luther, on the 10th of December, 1520, burned the Pope's bull without the walls of Wittenberg, severing himself from Rome, and proclaimed the advent of a new order of things, the act was hailed with joy by the Baptists, who immediately engaged in active operations for the spread of the truth. In the language of Dr. Cramp, "Luther had

(See **ORIGIN** on page 19)

ORIGIN...

(Continued from page 3)

freed himself from the Pope; they proclaimed freedom from Luther, and from all other human authority so far as religion was concerned."

Again he says: "When Luther blew the trumpet of religious freedom, the Baptists came out of their hiding-places to share in the general gladness and to take part in the conflict. For years they had lived in concealment, worshipping God by stealth." They agreed with the Reformers in the leading doctrines of the gospel, such as justification by faith and the necessity of the Spirit's influence. But they went further according to Cramp: "The sole authority of Scripture in matters of religion was carried out to its legitimate issues, and everything which could not stand the test was rejected, so that all rites and observances which were not expressly enjoined in the word of God were swept away at once. Steadfastly maintaining that believers, and believers only, were the proper subjects of baptism, they pleaded for a pure Church."

Other points may be alluded to: They sternly asserted the rights of conscience. They would not take an oath. While they obeyed the magistrate's office as needless among Christians, who, they said, would not commit crime. They abjured war and the use of carnal weapons. The spirit of brotherhood so prevailed among them, and they so abounded in acts of kindness, that they were even regarded as advocates of community of goods. On these accounts, they were treated as the enemies of

civil society, fit only to be exterminated. But though they were more scrupulous than most religionists are now, their very peculiarities sprang from the love of peace. Such men could not be dangerous. All they asked was to be let alone, that they might serve God according to their consciences, And yet they were hunted like wild beasts, and poured out their blood like water. Still they spread astonishingly. Leonard Bouwens, an eminent Baptist minister in Holland, who died in 1578, left in writing a list of upwards of 10,000 persons whom he had baptized. In the same century, in England, more than 70,000 Baptists suffered by fine, imprisonment, banishment, or burning [This paragraph is taken substantially from Cramp's History].

We have thus seen how, in the sixteenth century, Baptists abounded, both in England and on the continent.

We proceed next to inquire as to their existence *before* the sixteenth century — before the Protestant Reformation — before any of the other denominations had an existence.

The following remarkable and conclusive testimony is furnished by Dr. Ypeig, Professor of Theology at the University of Groningen, and Dr. J. J. Dermont, Chaplain to the King of Holland. These gentlemen are not Baptists, but learned and pious members of the Dutch Reformed Church, and wrote a History of Dutch Baptists at the request of their sovereign.

"The Mennonites (i.e. the Dutch Baptists) are descended from the tolerably pure evangelical Waldenses,

who were driven by persecution into various countries, and who, during the latter part of the twelfth century, fled into Flanders, and into the provinces of Holland and Zeeland, where they lived simple and exemplary lives, professing the most pure and simple principles, which they exemplified in a holy conversation. *They were, therefore, in existence long before the Reformed Church of the Netherlands.*" Again: "We have now seen that the Baptists, who were formerly called Anabaptists, and in later times Mennonites, were the original Waldenses, and who have long in the history of the Church received the honor of that origin. *On this account*, the Baptists may be considered as the only Christian community which has stood since the days of the Apostles; and as a Christian society which has preserved pure the doctrines of the gospel through all the ages."

Dr. Cramp, who seems to me to excel in soberness and impartiality as a historian, thus refers to the Waldenses: "Some have represented them as being originally all Baptists. Others, on the contrary, persist in affirming that they were all Pedobaptists. Neither statement is correct . . . A number of them, particularly in the early part of their history, judged that baptism should be administered to believers only, and practiced accordingly; others entirely rejected that ordinance, as well as the Lord's Supper; a third class held pedobaptism. If the question relates to the Waldenses in the strict and modern sense of the term, i.e., to the inhabitants of the valleys of

Piedmont, there is reason to believe that originally the majority of them were Baptists . . . The language of some of their confessions cannot be interpreted except on Baptist principles. One of them, ascribed to the twelfth century, contains the following article: 'We consider the sacraments as the signs of holy things, or as the visible emblems of invisible blessings. We regard it as proper, and even necessary, that believers use these symbols of visible forms, when it can be done. Notwithstanding which, we maintain that believers may be saved without these signs, when they have neither place nor opportunity of observing them.' Here, the use of sacraments is limited to believers; and they add in another article: 'We acknowledge no sacraments as of divine appointment but Baptism and the Lord's Supper.' " Dr. Cramp adds: "It is sufficiently manifest that their views harmonized with ours in the early stages of their history."

From the twelfth century on to the Reformation in the sixteenth, then, there abounded those who insisted on faith in Christ as a prerequisite to baptism. Four councils, meeting in the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, condemned those who rejected the baptism of children; and be it observed, those who denied it, denied it on the ground of the non-existence of faith in the child.

In the early part of the twelfth century, one Peter of Bruys was preaching in the south of France, with great power and success. He contended that the Church

(See **ORIGIN** on page 20)

ORIGIN...

(Continued from page 19)

should be composed only of converted persons, that all who believed in Christ should be baptized, and that without faith baptism was a nullity. Dr. Cramp says: "Peter was not merely what is called a 'Baptist in principle.' When the truths he inculcated were received, and men and women were raised to newness of life, they were directed to the path of duty. Baptism followed faith. Enemies said this was *Ana*-baptism (a rebaptism). But Peter and his friend indignantly repelled the imputation. The rite performed in infancy, they maintained, was no baptism at all, since it wanted the essential ingredient of faith in Christ. Then, and then only, when that faith was professed, were the converts really baptized."

For twenty years Peter preached, with great success, through a considerable region, and then suffered martyrdom. He was succeeded in that region by Henry of Lausanne, a kindred spirit, under whose labors many souls were converted, and many Baptist churches formed.

Mark! I do not say they had that name, but they were such in fact. They held the principles and practices that we hold, and that were held by the churches in Apostolic times. Wall, in his "History of Infant Baptism," says that Peter of Bruys and Henry were "the first anti-pedobaptist preachers that ever set up a church or society of men holding that opinion against infant baptism, and rebaptizing such as had been baptized in infancy." I deny that they

were the first, and am about to trace such churches and ministers farther back. But Mr. Wall's testimony is very good, if testimony is needed, against any who presume to ascribe our origin to Munster, or the sixteenth century. Even he places that origin four centuries earlier.

I have, so far, spoken principally of the Continent of Europe. But Baptists abounded in England during the centuries preceding the Reformation. Some of these were called Lollards, their origin and the origin of the *name* being matters of dispute. Others were called Wickliffites, from the great man who, by his lectures and books, and specially his translation of the Bible into English, prepared the way for the great Reformation in England. While he never left the Church of Rome, as Luther never *meant* to leave it, he so exposed her corruption's, and so preached truth fatal to her claims and doctrines, that he was again and again "condemned as a heretic by the clergy and the Pope, and would have been sacrificed as a martyr but for the protection of his friends at court and other providential interposition." To adopt an expression used just now, I would say Wickliffe was a "Baptist in principle." Let me give you the proof of this. He held that no doctrine or ceremony was to be received unless "*plainly expressed in Scripture.*" Now, I ask how many would baptize infants, if they had to find it "plainly expressed in Scripture?" It is seldom put on that ground. The great and good Presbyterian, Archibald Alexander, in his early life had such doubts of the propriety of infant baptism, that

he ceased to administer it. After a time his doubts were removed. How? By finding it "plainly expressed in Scripture?" No. But by these considerations: "That the universal prevalence of infant baptism as early as the fourth and fifth centuries was unaccountable, on the supposition that no such practice existed in the time of the Apostles;" and that, "if the Baptists are right, they are the only visible church on earth, and all other denominations are out of the visible church." So I say, the sentiment quoted from Wickliffe, if carried out, would have made Dr. Alexander a Baptist, and would make any man a Baptist now.

But Wickliffe went even further. He rejected the efficacy of baptism to wash away sins, and denied the perdition of unbaptized infants — the foundation on which infant baptism *then rested*; and I may add, the foundation on which it, to some extent, rests now. Moreover, he was charged by contemporary writers with the express denial of infant baptism itself. Among others, Thomas Waldensis, Confessor to Henry V., who had access to his writings, and published "Fasciculi Zizaniorum, or Bundle of Tares," selected from Wickliffe's writings, says, "He doth positively assert that infants are not to be sacramentally baptized."

It is, however, certain that many of his followers carried out his views practically, and to their legitimate consequences. Many of those known as Lollards, Wickliffites, and Picards were Baptists; and multitudes sealed their testimony with their blood.

I have thus indicated the existence, and despite persecution, the prevalence and increase of Christian churches holding Baptist principles during the four centuries preceding the great Protestant Reformation — the period well called the "Revival Period," since it was characterized, not only by great religious movements and progress, but also by the general awakening of the human mind, and by great advances in politics, science, and civilization. It was the period — to quote in part Cramp's enumeration — of Magna Charta; the establishment of the House of Commons; and invention of the mariner's compass, of gunpowder, of linen paper, of the printing press; several of the great battles of the world; the discovery of America, and of the passage to the East Indies round the Cape of Good Hope. We may well ask, with Cramp, if those were not times of activity and progress? — if that was not a Revival Period in things earthly, as well as things heavenly?

But now, in our backward march, we are coming to a period of comparative stagnation, of greater darkness; in which, for that reason, rather than because it is farther removed, we may have greater difficulty in finding such clear marks of the existence of our people. And yet, even in that "Obscure Period," from the seventh to the eleventh century, we do find those who not only practiced believers' baptism and rejected infant baptism, but rejected it on the very grounds in which we reject it, and the grounds,

(See **ORIGIN** on page 21)

ORIGIN...

(Continued from page 20)

on which Peter de Bruys rejected it, *viz.*, that the Scriptures require faith first.

One remark is proper here. I have said little of the act of baptism, and shall say but little; and for two reasons. Not only do Baptists — contrary to the popular impression — hold it to be, though important, subordinate to the *subject* of baptism, but, for thirteen hundred years, immersion was so well nigh universal that it was nothing distinctive. So far as the *act* goes — often improperly called the *mode* — the whole Christian world was for thirteen hundred years Baptist; inasmuch as immersion, whether of adults or infants, was the almost universal practice.

With these explanatory remarks, I come to the inquiry as to the existence of Baptists in the Obscure Period of Church History, extending say from the seventh to the eleventh centuries. Here I should have an easy task, did I choose to quote from certain Baptist writers who have written loosely upon the subject, or even to quote second hand from Church historians to whose works I have not access. I prefer to rely on Cramp, who, claiming less, is much more to be relied on for what he does claim. I repeat, that I have been greatly impressed with his soberness, impartiality, and truthfulness as a historian. He is, in the first place, careful to state that he considers as Baptists only those who hold baptism as an ordinance binding on all believers, and refuse it to all other persons. Hence he not only does not claim, but he

does not admit all opponents of infant baptism as Baptists; for there were many in the period under consideration who rejected baptism altogether. They were in this like the Quakers of our day, and were probably led to the extreme of rejecting ordinances altogether, from seeing the abuses and ceremonies which had come to be connected with them. At the same time it seems probable that there were some who did not go to that extreme. It must be remembered that the accounts we have are mostly the accounts of enemies, who deal mainly in negatives, telling us what things held by the Roman Catholics these people denied, but not telling us in many important particulars what they believed and practiced; and in some cases attributing to them sentiments which they disclaim and repudiate. This is the case with reference to the Paulicians, who appeared about the beginning of the period under consideration, and who are claimed by many as Baptists. Their enemies accused them of Manicheism, a system of mysticism named from Manes, a Persian. But the Paulicians repelled this accusation. Cramp admits what some individuals may have been tainted with these views, but insists that their distinction was an adherence to Scriptural truth and spiritual worship, and their rejection of the superstitions of the age and the ecclesiastical hierarchy — as he calls them, “Protestants before the Reformation, and even before those generally reckoned its precursors.” He also, while declining to say with Joseph

Milner, that they were “simply scriptural in the use of the sacraments,” suggests the probability that they may by their enemies have been called rejecters of the ordinances, simply because they rejected “the unauthorized additions made to the ordinances, and the current opinions respecting their design and efficacy.”

He also presents the consideration that “the Paulicians were not altogether agreed among themselves;” and says in conclusion, with great moderation: “It may possibly be that Photius and Petrus Siculus designedly referred to those of them whose opinions were in their judgment the farthest removed from Catholic verity; and that, while some wandered into errors and excesses, the remainder pursued a Scriptural course. Photius himself states that some of them observed the Lord’s Supper; though, as he affects to believe, they did it ‘to deceive the simple.’ This indicates the existence of two parties. Those who observed one ordinance were not likely to neglect the other. I am therefore not indisposed to believe that there were among the Paulicians many who preserved the truths and worship of Christianity, as derived from the New Testament.”

It may be added of this people, that they were remarkable, both for the terrible persecutions they suffered, and also for the rapidity with which they increased in numbers, spreading over a vast extent of country.

One Sergius, an educated young man, but ignorant of religion, was led by a woman who was a

Paulician to read the Scriptures. He became a Christian, an eminently holy man, and a most laborious minister. He spent thirty-four years traversing a large part of Western Asia, accomplishing a mighty work. So general was the defection from the established Church that the severest measures were adopted against them. They had been persecuted before, but now extermination seemed imminent. It was stated that, under Theodora, 100,000 Paulicians were put to death “by the sword, the gibbet, or the flames,” Sergius himself being one of the sufferers. Are not some of these to be numbered among our *Baptist martyrs*?

In reference to the period which I have just considered, I would say, that the general conclusion of eminent Baptists, who have written upon it, is, that during it Baptists in large numbers existed and spread. This conclusion seems to be immensely probable. But of this period it is specially true that Baptist History is yet to be written. Great light has been thrown on the Munster matter by modern researches. Doubtless the same will be true of the Paulicians. We might suppose that the passage of time would render historical investigation more difficult and less satisfactory. This is not always the case. Documents that have existed for centuries are not likely to pass out of being, while sources of information not before examined are brought to light, and new canons of historical criticism are reached. Thus, Niebuhr has within this century thrown floods of light upon the his-

(See **ORIGIN** on page 22)

ORIGIN...

(Continued from page 21)

tory of ancient Rome. And it is not improbable that God will raise up a Baptist Niebuhr, and that after we have gone to our rest our children may know more than we do of the principles and practices of these slandered martyrs of the dark ages.

The remainder of my task is easy. I labor only under the awkwardness that has troubled me throughout — the awkwardness inherent to the method, which still it seemed well to adopt, of going backward with my investigation.

About the middle of the third century, infant baptism was introduced. But it was nearly two hundred years before it became general. More than one hundred years after, there were men born of Christian parents who were not baptized till they reached adult age. "Gregory Nazianzen, Archbishop of Constantinople, who died in 389, and whose father was Bishop of Nazianzen, was not baptized till he was nearly thirty years old. Chrysostom, also Archbishop of Constantinople, and born of Christian parents, received baptism at the age of twenty-eight. He died in 407. Basil of Cesarea, though he could boast of Christian ancestry for several generations, was not baptized till he was twenty-seven years old ... Ephraim of Odessa, a learned writer of the Syriac Church in the fourth century, was born of parents who, as Alban Butler remarks, were ennobled by the blood of martyrs in their family, and had themselves both confessed Christ before the persecutions under Diocletian and

his successors. They consecrated Ephraim to God, from his cradle, like another Samuel, but he was eighteen years old when he was baptized. They would be called good Baptists nowadays. They 'consecrated' their child, that is prayed for him and trained him in the 'nurture and admonition of the Lord;' but they did not think of his being baptized till he was a believer." Do not such instances prove that as late as the middle of the fourth century, infant baptism was not regarded as of binding force in the church?

I may mention, before passing on, that at first baptism had been "administered in rivers, pools, baths — wherever a sufficient quantity of water could be conveniently obtained. In the fourth century, baptisteries began to be erected. They were large buildings contiguous to the churches. There was usually but one in a city, attached to the bishop's or cathedral church. The baptistery proper, or font, was in the center of the building, and at the sides were numerous apartments for the accommodation of the candidates. Several of these baptisteries yet remain."

Along with infant baptism, many corruption's and superstitions crept in. Scripture gave way to tradition. The Church began to be allied with the State. Now, too, the Church government began to degenerate into a religious monarchy, and those who had been simple pastors aspired to high power and authority, therewith to plunge into luxury and vice. The doctrine of baptismal regeneration began to prevail.

We may well say with the historian, that the

progress of religion in the Church was now downward, and to find gospel truth and ordinances we must look out of the Church among those whom she called heretics and schismatics.

During this period two sects existed, known as the Novatians and the Donatists. The Novatians contended for a pure spiritual church. "Novatianism and infant baptism," says Dr. Cramp, "were diametrically opposed" to each other. It was impossible to preserve the purity for which they contended in any Church which has admitted the novel institution. He says, with a decision all the more gratifying in view of his usual caution, "We may safely infer that they abstained from compliance with the innovation, and that the Novatian churches were what are now called Baptist churches, adhering to the apostolic and primitive practice."

The Donatists held principles inconsistent with infant baptism. In practice, Dr. Cramp thinks they were divided, the majority adhering to the New Testament order. But the rejecters of infant baptism were sorely persecuted. The imperial sword and the anathemas of councils went forth against them; and numbers suffered confiscation of their goods, imprisonment, death. They were not the *first* Baptist martyrs. For were not Stephen and the Apostles, and those who in the first two centuries suffered — were not these Baptists? But these Novatians and Donatists of the fourth and fifth centuries — were they not the first Baptist martyrs who suffered for their distinctively Baptist principles and practices?

We have thus gone back

to the middle of the third century, at which time infant baptism was introduced. And during all the centuries, from the Reformation to the middle of the third century, we have found evidence, more or less convincing, of the existence of Christians refusing to baptize infants, and insisting that only believers in Christ should receive that ordinance.

During the first two and one-half centuries, we claim that no traces of the existence of infant baptism are to be found; but that personal faith in Christ was universally required as a condition of the ordinance. Hence, as immersion was universally practiced, and as each church was independent, we claim that the churches then existing were Baptist churches, though not without error, which was creeping in, even in Apostolic times. And thus, ancient as is the Roman hierarchy, going back sixteen hundred years, we claim that Baptist are more ancient still, going back to the very Apostolic age, and finding their origin there.

I disclaim all arrogance. I appeal to history for the truth of what I have said. There are few facts of history better established than that immersion generally prevailed, not only for two and one-half, but for thirteen centuries; so that clearly, during those two and one-half centuries, all Christians were Baptists, so far as the *act* of baptism is concerned. And that only believers' baptism prevailed in that period is also now generally conceded.

Some have laid hold of expressions used by Justin

(See **ORIGIN** on page 23)

ORIGIN...


(Continued from page 22)

Martyr, and Irenaeus, and Origen, and Tertullian in the second and early in the third centuries, as evidence of the existence of the rite. But the best scholars now abandon such claims; and Baron Bunsen, formerly Prussian ambassador in England, and distinguished for his investigations in Church history, declares that "Pedobaptism in the more modern sense, meaning thereby the baptism of new born infants with the vicarious promised of parents and other sponsors, was utterly unknown to the early Church, not only down to the end of the second, but indeed to the middle of the third century."

I repeat then the conclusion, that no only have there been Baptists in all the ages, but that in the age immediately succeeding the Apostolic, all were Baptists. None other were known.

And now will you be surprised if I say, that I lay little or no stress upon all this as proof that we are right. It has its value, for it is truth, and all truth is precious. It is also well calculated to encourage Baptists of the present day, and specially those who, like ourselves, have much to contend with, to see that our principles have thus fought their way through the ages, conducted by God's own mighty hand. But it is not on the example of man that we depend, but on the word of God. Satisfactory evidence that the principles we hold and the ordinances we administer are taught in the New Testament is worth more than all human testimony or practice in their favor. In fact, the practice

of the churches of the age immediately after the Apostles is worth nothing, except so far as it is presumption that such was the teaching of the Apostles and the practice of the churches reared by their hands. And even this evidence, strong as it may be, is not to be compared with a plain text from the New Testament itself, declaring directly what Christ and the Apostles said and did, and what was done under their direction. What we want as the warrant for our principles and practices is, as Wickliffe said, that they be "plainly expressed in Scripture." And such is my conviction that Scripture is the true, the *only* standard, that if there were not a Baptist on earth, and I had no evidence there had ever been one since Apostolic times, finding Baptist principles and practices in the New Testament, I would leave all Christendom, and leap over the ages, contented to be found in the path of simple obedience to the word of God.

I ask, then, in conclusion, were not the churches of the New Testament Baptist churches? We believe that they *were*, being made up of believers, and believers only, who believing in Christ and confessing their sins were buried with Christ in baptism. I humbly claim that we originated, not at the Reformation, nor in the dark ages, nor in any century after the Apostles; but that our marching orders are the Commission, and that the first Baptist Church was the Church at Jerusalem. And I beg you, calling no man master, like the Berean Jews, to search the Scriptures daily, whether these things be so. 

ary to Mexico, and finally, called as pastor. I was in Mexico for 13 years, and pastor for 26 years until I retired as pastor in 1991 and the church by vote named me "Pastor Emeritus," for my many years of service. But I continued to work with Challenge Press and our mission work in Mexico until May of this year. I have never been a member of any other church, and no one can know the depth of my love for Central Baptist Church.

There have been many "hills and valleys" down through the years, but we have stood firm together in our love for the truth and we have had a mutual love for each other that can only develop over such a long-term relationship. We especially thank the church for the generous love offering and plaque given to us at the last service that I preached at the church. Thanks Central Baptist, we will always remember you in our prayers.

Yet the time has come for us (my wife and me) to move our membership. We have joined the Rogers Independent Baptist Church in Rogers, Arkansas, a church that we organized some years ago, and which Bro.

Larry Potts, their pastor, refers to as a "daughter" church of Central Baptist Church.

Though we again have retired from one phase of our ministry, we have not retired from the ministry itself. I have several books that I would like to write, and I want to complete the "Outline Study Guide" to each of the books of the Bible, several of which have already been published, and others that I have worked on but have not yet finished. I hope to devote more time to finishing these books.

For those who may be interested, we are available for revivals, Bible conferences, seminars, or a series of messages, such as a series on the church or missions, etc. We could also help a church by serving as interim pastor while they are without a pastor.

For the past year Central Baptist Church has provided us with a Motor Home and car to travel in while representing Latin American Baptist Missions. Since I no longer will be doing this work it was necessary for us to purchase an automobile. We do not have the Motor Home, so we will need a place for my wife and me to stay. However, both of our sons helped us purchase a car, and we are considering the purchase of a Motor Home (if we can find one available in our price range and where we can fit it into our budget), and if so, we could stay in the Motor Home wherever the Lord would lead us. Would you pray about this matter with us.

(See **FINAL** on page 24)