

A History of the Baptists

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CHAPTER XII THE PRACTICE OF DIPPING IN THE NETHERLANDS, POLAND, LITHUANIA AND TRANSYLVANIA BAPTIST CHURCHES

THE Waldenses entered Holland in 1182 and by the year 1233 Flanders was full of them. Many of them were weavers, and Ten Cate says that at a later date all of the weaving was in the hands of the Baptists. Ypeij and Dermunt say: "The Waldenses scattered in the Netherlands might be called their salt, so correct were their views and devout their lives. The Mennonites sprang from them. It is indubitable that they rejected infant baptism, and used only adult baptism" (Ypeij en Dermunt, *Geechieddenis der Netherlandische Hervormde Kirk*, I. 57, 141). The Reformation in the Netherlands was practically synonymous with the Baptist movement.

Here, as everywhere, the Baptists were good citizens; paid taxes; and advocated liberty of conscience. The fires of persecution were frequently lighted in Holland. The Baptists had assisted the Prince of Orange in his struggle against Spanish tyranny; and he steadfastly resisted all efforts to persecute them. Two Baptists, J. Cortenbosch and Peter Bogaert, a minister, brought to him a considerable sum of money as an offering from the Baptists. They performed this task at the risk of their lives. The Prince assured them that they would be treated as equals (Ottii Annales, ad ann., 1572).

Motley says of the Prince of Orange:

He resolutely stood out against all meddling with men's consciences or inquiring into their thoughts. While smiting the Spanish Inquisition into the dust, he would have no Calvinist Inquisition set up in its place. Earnestly a convert to the Reformed religion, but hating and denouncing only what is corrupt in the ancient church, he would not force men, with fire and sword, to travel to heaven upon his own road. Thought should be free. Neither monk nor minister should burn, drown, or hang his fellow-creatures when argument or expostulation failed to redeem them from error. It was no small virtue, in that age, to rise to such a height. We know what Calvinists, Zwinglians, Lutherans have done in the Netherlands, in Germany, in Switzerland, and almost a century later in New England. It is therefore, with increased veneration that we regard this large and truly catholic mind (Motley, *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, II. 362).

In regard to his relations to the Baptists the historian continues:

It was impossible for the Prince thoroughly to infuse his own ideas on the subject of toleration into the hearts of his nearest associates. He could not hope to inspire his deadly enemies with a deeper sympathy. Was he not himself the mark of obloquy among the Reformers, because of his leniency to Catholics? Nay, more, was not his intimate counselor, the accomplished Saint Aldegonde, in despair because the Prince refused to exclude the Anabaptists from Holland? At the very moment when William was straining every nerve to unite warring sects, and to persuade men's hearts into a system by which their consciences were to be laid open to God alone—at the moment when it was most necessary for the very existence of the Fatherland that Catholic and Protestant should mingle their social and political relations, it was indeed a bitter disappointment for him to see wise states-men of his own creed unable to rise to the idea of toleration. "The affair of the Anabaptists," wrote Saint Aldegonde, "has been renewed. The Prince objects to excluding them from citizenship. He answered me sharply, that their yea was equal to our oath, and that we should not press the matter, unless we were willing to confess that it was just for the Baptists to compel us to a divine service which was against our conscience." It seems hardly credible that this sentence, containing so sublime a tribute to the character of the Prince, should have been indited as a bitter censure, and that, too, by an enlightened and accomplished Protestant (Motley, *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, II. 206).

But William of Orange held on his way. When the Union of Utrecht, the foundation of the Dutch Republic was formulated, it was expressly provided that "every individual should remain free in his religion, and that no man should be molested or questioned on the subject of divine worship" (Ibid, 11.412).

It is interesting to note that Rembrandt, the greatest painter of Holland, was a Baptist. Professor H. Weizaeker, in his chapter on Holland (Protestantism in the Nineteenth Century, I. 295) says of him: "Little is known of the religious character of Rembrandt, but an Italian biographer of the seventeenth century says he was brought up a Baptist and belonged to their fellowship. How can we think him of such a community?" he asks. "His whole life was in the world. Yet he painted many portraits of preachers, some of his best. That of Sylvius, bending over the pulpit, Bible in hand, and that of Anseo, the Baptist pastor with the saintly face, are well known. In days of adversity, when his personal effects were sold, among them were found five books. One of these five books was a Josephus and another a copy of the Bible. When he died he left one book as an heirloom, and that was a Bible."

Rembrandt was moved by the spirit of liberty. It must be borne in mind that in the beginning of the seventeenth century Holland had risen to a great power. Though not yet formally free from the Spanish yoke, she had broken the fetters by the heroic efforts of the former generation, and had entered on her grand career of national enterprise. Science and literature flourished in her universities, poetry and the stage were favored by her citizens. It was a time of new ideas. Old conventional forms in religion, philosophy and art had fallen away, and liberty was inspiring new conceptions. Here there was no church influence to fetter Rembrandt in the choice and treatment of his subjects, no academies to prescribe rules. He was thus left to himself to paint the life of the people among whom he lived. The legends of the Roman Church were no longer of interest; and the Bible was read and studied with avidity. Under such influences Rembrandt became "the Shakespeare of Holland."

"During the seventeenth century it became evident," says Dosker, "that men of considerable talent were to be found among the rank and file of the Mennonites. And they were not confined to one learned profession or to one social stratum. There were physicians of more than local reputation: men like A. J. Roscius, doctor of medicine and preacher at Hoorn; the celebrated Bidloo brothers, one of whom was body-physician to Peter the Great, Czar of Russia, and the other similarly employed at the Court of Prince William III of the Netherlands. Another of these famous Mennonite doctors was Galenus de Haan. . . who was equally celebrated as preacher and practitioner of medicine at Amsterdam; and especially A. C. Van Dale, whose works on the science of healing made him a European celebrity.

"Among the men of letters I mention J. P. Schabalje, preacher at Alkmaar, renowned as a scholar and poet. So far as is known he was the first to write a 'Life of Christ.'

"We find poets among them like J. A. van der Goes, celebrated by his *Ystroom*, and Karel van Mander, translator of Virgil and of the Iliad.

"In the world of art they boasted a Mierevelt, especially Ruysdael, the greatest of the Dutch landscape-painters, and the greatest of all, perhaps, Rembrandt. For science they could claim, J. A. Leeghwater, who drew the plans for the reclamation of Haarlem lake, a marvelous engineering problem; and J. van der Heyden, who first undertook the illumination of the streets of Amsterdam, and who was the inventor of the prototype of the modern fire-engine" (Dosker, *The Dutch Anabaptists*, 244).

In the second and third decades of the Reformation Simon Menno became the leader of the Baptists in that country. He was born in Friesland, in 1492,

and died in Holstein, January 13, 1559. He was ordained a Roman Catholic priest; but he became a convert to the Baptist faith when, in 1531, Seike Feerks or Sicke Snyder was burnt at the stake. On his conversion he at once preached Jesus and soon became a conspicuous leader among the Baptists.

There is no record known of the manner of the baptizing of Menno. Judging from the tenor of his writings, he was baptized by immersion. In a great number of instances, in his writings, he refers to baptism as a dipping in water. In two or three instances in refuting his enemies reference is made to pouring. In answering a scorner he says:

We think that these, and like commands, are more painful and difficult to perverse flesh which is naturally so prone to follow its own way, than to have a handful of water applied; and a sincere Christian must at all times be ready to do all of this; if not, he is not born of God; for the regeneration are of the mind of Christ (Mango, Opera Theologica, 224 Amsterdam, 1651).

The other passages are to the same effect. Menno says these scornors were wrong in heart and "that a whole ocean of water" would not satisfy them. The man might have a handful of water cast on him, or he might be baptized in the ocean, if his heart was not clean he would be a miserable sinner. Water does not cleanse a man from sin. The handful of water did not represent the act of Menno, but the objection of the scorner of baptism. Menno was not expressing his own opinion, he was refuting his opponent,

Menno could not have endorsed "a handful of water" as the proper act of baptism, since these were the very words the Baptists had long been accustomed to hurl at their opponents. To hold that such an act of baptism was valid would have been contrary to every Baptist argument of the times. The Baptists long before, and at the time of Menno, invariably taunted their opponents by calling infant baptism "a dog's bath," "a handful of water," etc. That Menno applied such terms to his own act is incredible. A few instances where Baptists thus taunted their opponents are here given.

Luther writing against the Baptists charged them with judging of his baptism from the abuse of the Roman Catholic Church. He says:

But now are they In their madness thinking that baptism is like a thing such as water and salt consecrated, or as caps and leaves carried about; so from this they proceed to call it a dog's bath, a handful of water, and many other such abominable words (Luther, Werke, XVII. 2865. Ed. 1740. J. G. Walsh).

Again Luther remarks:

For the devil knows well, that if the crazy mob should hear a pompeus slander word, that they stumble over it, and faith flies away. Ask no further ground or reason. As when they may hear it said, the baptism is a dog's bath, and the baptizer is a false and villainous bath servant. Thus they conclude from hence; why, if so, let the devil baptize, and let God shame the false bath servant . . . Yes with me such things have been spoken, as these pompous slander words, dog's bath, bath servant, handful of water, etc. (Ibid, 2686).

Once more Luther says:

In the second place, here is also the overthrow of the assertions of the Anabaptists and such like company. Who thus teach . . the beloved baptism to despise, as to be nothing more than plain common water, from hence they indulge to slander it: What can a handful of water help the soul (Luther, Kirchen Postill, 721).

"A handful of water" was the term of reproach that the Baptists used toward their enemies. It is incredible to think that Menno would have used such a term to describe his own baptism.

Baptism in the opinion of Menno was dipping. He refers to baptism as *doop* (dipping). There is no proof that Menno ever used this word in any sense other than to dip; and there is no proof that *doop* meant anything less in the time of Menno. Apart from the word *doop* Menno constantly uses other words to describe baptism by dipping. He devotes several chapters to the *doop* and never mentions pouring.

The symbolic passage Romans 6: 3, 4 is mentioned and enforced more than one hundred times by Menno. In this passage the symbolism of baptism is given as a burial, an immersion, an emersion. He says:

Observe all of you who persecute the word of the lord and his people, this is our instruction, doctrine and belief concerning baptism (*doop*), according to the instruction of the words of Christ, namely, we must first hear the word of God, believe it, and then upon our faith be baptized (*gedoopt* ; we are not seditious or contentious; we do not approve of polygamy; neither do we seek nor wait for any kingdom upon earth. Oh no! No! To God be eternal praise; we will know that the word of the Lord teaches us and testifies to, on the subject. The word of the Lord commands us that we, with sincere hearts, desire to die to sin, to bury our sins with Christ, and with him to arise to a new life, even as baptism (*doop*) is portrayed (Menno, Wercken, 17).

The word "portrayed" represents a portrait, or photograph. As a picture is an exact image of a person so this burial and resurrection is an exact image of the act of baptism. But the exact image of a burial and resurrection is. an immersion in, and emersion out of the water.

The citation of Bemans by Menno, as determining the form of baptism, is characteristic of the literature of the Baptists in the Reformation period. We find in the Protocol of Emden, 1578; in that of Franckenthal, 1571, where it is explained as meaning that "baptism is a symbol of death and a new life;" and in the Miunster Restitution (issued 1634) baptism is described as "the burial of the sinful flesh (*begravinge unses sundtliken fleisches*)." In the Borne Disputation, 1532, the Baptist says: "Baptism is always a symbol of a renewed man entombed (*vergraben*) into the death of Jesus Christ" (Dr. Jesse B. Thomas in *The Western Recorder*, 1897).

Menno quotes 1 Corinthians 12:13 as sustaining the practice of immersion, He says:

Moses believed the word of the Lord, and erected a serpent; Israel looked upon it and was healed, not through the virtue of the image, but through the power of the divine word, received by them through faith. In the same manner salvation is ascribed In scriptural baptism (doope) Mark 16:16; the forgiveness of sins, Acts 2:38; the putting on of Christ, Gal. 8:27, being dipped into (*indoo핑e*) one body. 1 Cor. 12:13 (Menno, Wercken, 14).

There are direct passages where Menno mentions his own practice as dipping. For example he says:

In short, had we forgiveness of sins and peace of conscience, through outward ceremonies and elements, so that we must have that true sinking down (*ondergaen*) and with his merits to yield and give way. Behold, this is the only true foundation of baptism (doope) maintained by the Scriptures, and none others. This we teach and practice though all the gates of hell rise up against us; for we know that this is the word of God, and the divine ordinance, from which we dare not take away, nor add thereto, lest we be found disobedient and false before God (who alone is the Lord and God of our consciences) for every one of the Lord is pure; he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him (Ibid, 15).

Baptism is here described as a "sinking down," and thus portrays immersion. He further says, this "we teach and practice." Again he says:

In the third place, we are informed by the historians, ancient and modern, also by the decrees, that baptism was changed both as to its mode and time

of administering. In the beginning of the holy church, persons were dipped in common water (*gedoopt in inbezwoeren water*) on their first profession, upon their own faith, according to the Scriptures (Ibid, 16).

It is not readily to be believed that a man who says that the mode and time of baptizing has been changed, and severely criticizes those who wrought the change, and calls the people back to the primitive practices, would be found in the use of affusion. Menno plainly says the Scriptures teach dipping, says the mode has been changed, and that men ought literally to obey the commandments of God.

In passages too numerous here to mention Menno refers to baptism "as dipping in the water." Three instances are given where the word must mean immersion. He says:

Again Paul calls baptism (doop) a water bath of regeneration, O Lord, how lamentably the word is abused. Is it not greatly to be lamented, that men are attempting, notwithstanding these plain passages, to maintain their idolatrous invention of infant baptism, and set forth that infants are regenerated thereby, as if regeneration was simply a thrusting into the water (*induckinge in't water*) (Menno, Wercken, 18).

Again

O Lord, Father, how very broad, easy and pleasing to the flesh is the entrance into the miserable, carnal church; for it is all as if one said, no matter who, or what, or how he is, it is all right, if he has been but sworn before the fountain, and washed and dipped in It (*ende in de fonte gewaschen ende gedoopt is*) (Ibid, 411).

Once more:

Do you think, most beloved, that the new birth consists in nothing but in that which the miserable world hitherto has thought that it consists in, namely, to plunge into the water (*in te duycken in den water*), or say thus: I baptize (doope) thee in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Ibid, 419).

The Mennonites of our day reject infant baptism and practice believers' baptism by affusion. Menno and his immediate followers were in the practice of dipping. but later the Mennonites did not strenuously insist upon this form of baptism. At length some practiced dipping and others sprinkling; and in the course of. time affusion became the normal act and immersion the exception among them.

At the close of the sixteenth century and at the beginning of the seventeenth dipping was considered, in the Netherlands, as the meaning of the Greek word *baptizein*. There is an example of this found in the Commentary of Jeremiah, Bastingius on the Heidelberg Catechism which was then used in the Low Countries. He says:

The word baptism is a Greek word, and cometh of *baptizen*, and signifieth properly dipping into water, etc. (Bastingius, An Exposition or Commentarie upon the Catechism, 138).

The historian Backus explains the change of the Mennonites from immersion to affusion in the following manner: "The Mennonites are also from Germany and are of like behavior, but they are not truly Baptists now. Their fathers were so in Luther's time, until confinement in prison brought them to pour water on the head of the subject, instead of immersion; and what was then done out of necessity is now done out of choice, as other corruptions are" (Backus, History of the Baptists).

There were those in Holland, who, for a long time, continued in the practice of dipping. At the close of the sixteenth century full toleration was given to the church at Altona. The following account is taken from the "History of the Different Religious Denominations in Altona" by John Adrian Boltens, published in Altona, 1790:

The free exercise of religion being now obtained in Altona, many Mennonites resorted thither, particularly prior to the breaking out of the thirty-years war in Holstein, as well as prior to that event. Thus their numbers kept continually increasing, to which increase the intolerant decrees of Hamburg did not a little contribute. In course of time a difference of opinion arose as to the mode of baptism. This was the cause of the Mennonites now in Altona, which were one church, separating into two interests. The one maintained the mode of pouring the other adopted that of immersion, and were, therefore, distinguished by the name of Immergenten. This separation continued until the year 1666, though efforts had been made towards a union, but without the desired effect. Of the two. the Immergenten were the most numerous, and a new church was erected by them out of the profits of the whale fishery, in which many of their members were engaged (*The Baptist Magazine*, XV. 290. September, 1823).

There was in Friesland in the beginning of the year 1600 a party of Mennonites who would receive none but those who dipped. Of these people Stark says:

Some of them have again introduced among themselves entire immersion; and on this account, they have been called immersers by other congregations. Still with most, only the pouring of water on the head has been introduced (Stark, Geschichte der Täufer und Taufgesinnten, II. 848).

These statements are important in many respects. They show that the original form of baptism among the Mennonites was immersion, that in some instances it had been set aside in favor of pouring, that dipping was still used in some congregations, and that there were some Mennonite congregations who would not receive any form of baptism save immersion.

There was a book printed in the year 1649 showing the differences between the Reformed Church of the Netherlands and the Baptist churches. Of baptism it said:

As formerly the circumcision, so now is baptism a symbol of the spiritual uncleanness of man. For circumcision taught by taking away the foreskin, and baptism by immersion or sprinkling with water, that man is unclean by nature and, therefore, guilty before God (Abraham Dooreslaar and Peter Jacobi Austro-Sylvium, Grondige ende lare Wertoeninghe, 464).

Even the Reformed Church in the Netherlands, in 1649, held that immersion was baptism. Indeed, immersion was preferred to sprinkling. Van Braght, who held to sprinkling, affirmed that immersion was the practice in the Netherlands, "Yes, to our present time," A. D. 1659 (Van Braght, Martyrs' Mirror of the Baptists) Hooke, in 1701, says that immersion was practiced among the Baptists of the Netherlands (Hooke, A Necessary Apology for the Baptist Believers, 122, 133. London, 1701).

The historian of the Mennonites, Schyn, points out that in his day, A. D. 1729, while sprinkling was the ordinary form of baptism among the Mennonites that immersion was also practiced. It was declared to be the primitive practice, but that it had been generally, but not completely superseded by "an abundant sprinkling." Another witness is Cornelius Ris, who says as late as 1776, the year of American Independence:

What concerns the holy baptism, we thus understand thereby, one dipping in, or under, of the whole body in the water, or an abundant sprinkling of the same. Which last method in these Northern regions we almost generally hold to be more convenient, while the same facts may be signified thereby (Cornelius Ris, Von die Heilige Wasseer-Taufe, Art. 25. sec 96).

About the year 1619 there had been a revival of immersion in Holland, under three brothers van der Kodde. These persons were called Collegiants, and

they were organized into societies near Leyden at Rhynsburg. They practiced immersion having received it from the Silesian Baptists, who had it from the Swiss (Heath, *The Anabaptists and their English Descendants*, 390. *The Contemporary Review*, March, 1891).

Van Slee (*De Rijnsburger Collegianten*, 371. Haarlem, 1891) shows all along, in the Netherlands, there had been a family by the name of Geesteranus which was in sympathy with the practices of the Poland Baptists. The presidency of the great Baptist school, at Cracow, was offered to a member of this family; and one of the first persons to be immersed at Rhynsburg was John Geesteranus. One of the members of the Collegiants gives a record of the procedure of baptism as follows:

The candidate for baptism makes publicly his profession of faith on a Saturday in the morning, before an assembly of Rhynsburgers, held for that purpose; a discourse is pronounced on the excellency and nature of baptism; the minister and candidate go together to a pond, behind the house belonging to one of the number. In that pond the neophyte, catechumen, is baptized by immersion; if a man, he has a waistcoat and drawers; if a woman, a bodice and petticoat, with leads at the bottom, for the sake of decency. The minister, in the same dress as the men wear, is also in the water, and plunges them in it, pronouncing at the same time, the form used by the most of the Christian communions. This being over, they put on their clothes, go back to the meeting, and hear an exhortation to perseverance in complying with the precepts of Christ. A public prayer is said, and canticles or psalms sung (Picart, *Religious Customs of the Various Nations of the World*. English Translation In 1787 in 6 volumes).

The Baptists of Poland and Transylvania all held that "dipping in water and a personal profession of faith and repentance, are essential to baptism" (*Catechesis Ecclesiarum Poloniarum*, sec. vi. cap. iii). These Baptists received their form of baptism from Switzerland and transferred it to Poland. This origin is now quite generally admitted and all historians state that it was by immersion (Barclay, *The Inner Life of the Commonwealth*, 12 note).

The testimony to the practice of immersion among the Baptists of Poland is quite satisfactory. Sandius, in his vindication of the Baptists of Poland, says that the Baptists of that country rejected infant baptism, and that believers, according to the symbolism of the primitive church, were baptized by immersion of the whole body in the water (Sandius, *Bibliotheca Anti-Trinitatorum*, 268 note). There is an anonymous manuscript, written by one of the Baptists of Poland, which declares that there is no other baptism save that which is performed by immersion. The title may be consulted in Bock (*Historia Anti-trinitatorum*, I. Pt. 1. 19). Fock likewise states that the baptism

of Poland was by immersion (Fock, *Der Socialismus*, 588). These are the principal authorities on the conditions in Poland, and these writers are unanimous in the statement that the Baptists of that country practiced dipping.

The Unitarian Baptists, as they have been called, originated, for the most part in Italy (*Speculum Anabaptistica Furoris*, 1808). They have frequently been called Socinians, deriving the name from the illustrious house of Sozini, which long flourished in Sienna, a noble city of Tuscany. There were a number of distinguished men born to this family. One of that number was Faustus Socinus who became a leader among the Baptists of Poland.

The Unitarians were among the most cultured of men. The peculiar tone of the belles-lettres culture that followed upon the revival of learning was quite congenial with their opinions. They called in question the foundations of the state religions and were disposed to sift all creeds. There were not less than forty educated men at Vicenza who were united in a private association who held these views. These men were mostly banished from Italy, many of them fled to Switzerland, and afterwards found refuge in Poland. One of these, Blandrata, a learned physician, fled to Geneva, and afterwards became an influential propagator of Baptist principles in Poland. The Italian and Swiss Baptists sought refuge in Poland about A. D. 1550 and carried with them the idea of dipping from the earlier Baptists of Switzerland. The reason that the Baptists selected Poland as a place of refuge lay in the fact that Poland was so strongly attached to liberty in religious matters.

Probably the first to introduce Baptist views into Poland was Peter Gonesius. He fell in with the Baptists of Moravia and was led to reject infant baptism (Lauderbach, *Polnisch Arianischen Socianismus*).

Baptist views rapidly spread among the people. The Synod of Wengrow, December 25, 1565, was composed of forty-seven ministers and eighteen noblemen, besides a great number of lesser people. It was acknowledged by the churches of a number of districts as far as the Carpathian mountains. The Synod declared in favor of adults as the subjects and immersion as the form of baptism. At this meeting Czechovicus baptized James Niemojawski by immersion (Count Valerian Krasinski, *The Reformation in Poland*, I. 361).

Gregory Paulus was a noted Baptist and an immersionist. He was pastor at Cracow. On May 30, 1566, John a' Lasco represented him as denying "that infants ought to be admitted to baptism as the fountain of life and the door of the church." He impressed men that baptism belonged to adults and not to crying children, and when he had done this he led "them to the river and immerses them." He claimed that these things were the first "rudiments of

the ancient religion about to be restored" (Letter to Beza, May 30, 1556. In Museum Helveticum, Part XIV. 282).

The Baptists of Poland and Siebenburgen, in 1574, were a numerous and aggressive people. In that year they issued a Catechism (*Catechesis et Confessio fidei coetus per Poloniam congregati*) which contains one hundred and sixty pages, but copies of it are now rare. The printer was Turobinus, and it was issued at Cracow. The writer of the Catechism was the celebrated George Schomann (*Schomann, Testamentum. Jo. Adam Muller, de Unitatorum, XXI. 758*). Baptism is confined to adults and defined as "the immersion in water and the emersion of a person who believes the Gospel and repents, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, or in the name of Christ only, whereby he publicly confesses that by the grace of God the Father, in the blood of Christ, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, he is washed from all his sins, in order that being inserted in the body of Christ he may mortify the old Adam, with the assurance that after the resurrection he will attain unto eternal life" (*Roes, Racovian Catechism, LXXI*).

Stanislaus Farnovius, A. D. 1568-1614, held to adult baptism by immersion. George Schomann, mentioned above, was a great scholar among them. He was born at Ratibon in Silesia, in the year 1530. He was baptized by immersion at Chmelnik in 1572 and in 1573 he became the assistant of Gregory Paulus at Cracow (*Wallace, Antitrinitarian Biography, II. 200*).

The famous Faustus Socinus also held to Baptist views and was a firm believer in the immersion of a converted man in water. He was born at Sienna, 1539, and died at Luclawice, Poland, in 1604. He attempted to unite with the Baptists of Poland but was refused except on condition that he be rebaptized. He refused to permit this since he said it was not necessary in his case. He was a firm believer in immersion (*Socinus, De Baptismo Aquae, 716. Racoviae, 1613*). Many Baptists of that period held lightly to all forms of externals since they believed that the spiritual life was all that was essentially necessary (*Otto Fock, Der Socianianismus, 586*). The views of Socinus mightily impressed the Baptists of Poland, and he became a most influential leader among them. His noble birth, intellectual powers and polished manners commended him to the favor of the Polish nobles; and his influence was augmented by his marriage to a daughter of one of the nobility.

Martin Czechovieus was a Lithuanian. The first heard of him was on September 16, 1661, when he was the bearer of a letter from Calvin to the Synod of Cracow. He contended that baptism by immersion was necessary in the case of all adult believers "whether those born of Christian parents₁ or those converted of heathen nations."

Simon Ronenberg was born at Dantzic on Christmas Day, 1540. He was christened when an infant by sprinkling in the Roman Catholic Church; then he was sprinkled as an adult, and lastly he was immersed when he united with the Baptists. Of this he gives a particular account in one of his books. His being baptized by immersion was regarded as a grievous offense; and being commanded by the Senate of Dantzic, August 17, 1552, to defend himself against this charge, and not choosing to deny what took place, or to recant, he was formally deprived of his office, and immediately left Dantzic with his wife and eight children (Wallace, Antitrinitarian Biography, II. 238).

John Caper, Sr., after officiating as Pastor of the Evangelical Church of Meseritz for about twenty-eight years, changed his views late in life and went over to the Baptists. He was immersed in a pool at Smigel, on the last of July, 1588; on which occasion Valerius Herberger, a popular Evangelical minister, wrote some satirical verses. It is said that Caper presided as a Baptist minister over the church at Smigel, from the time of his conversion to his death; and that about the year 1606 he was drowned by a company of horsemen, probably in the very pond in which he had been immersed (Bock, Hist. Ant, 92, 93).

The Racovian Catechism was written about 1590 but was first published in 1605. It superseded the old Catechism, which was rude and ill digested. It was corrected by some, enlarged by others and more ingeniously stated, and became the creed of the entire communion. The article on baptism is as follows:

It does not pertain to infants since we have in the Scriptures no command for, or example of, infant baptism, nor are they yet capable, as the thing itself shows, of faith in Christ, which ought to precede this rite.

In answer to the question: "What then is the thought of those who baptize infants?" It is replied,

You cannot correctly say that they baptize infants. For they do not baptize them, since that cannot be done without immersion and ablution of the whole body in water; whereas they only lightly sprinkle their heads, this rite not only being erroneously applied to infants, but also through this mistake evidently changed.

Speaking of a profession of faith the Catechism says:

Declaring, and as it were representing by their very ablution, immersion and emersion, that they design to rid themselves with Christ, and, therefore, to

die with him, and to rise to newness of life (The Racovian Catechism, 252, 253. London 1818).

The highest prosperity was now obtained by the Baptists of Poland. James a Sienzo, Lord of Cracow, in the year 1600, renounced the Reformed Church and came over to the Baptists, and two years after caused a famous school, intended for the Seminary of the churches, to be established in his own city which he made the metropolis of the Baptist movement (Wissowatius, *Naratio Unitairorum a Reformatis*, 214).