

# A History of the Baptists

By John T. Christian

## CHAPTER XVI THE EPISODE OF JOHN SMYTH

It is now necessary to return and consider a movement which has made a great noise in the world. It is a review of the Rev. John Smyth and his work in Holland, and the connection of the English Baptists with that work.

John Smyth has been the occasion of many violent controversies. An episode in his life, for it can scarcely be called more than that, has been the provocation for the writing of many books and to this day authors find a perennial interest in his doings. Some assert that while he lived in Gainsborough, in 1606, he turned Baptist, and was baptized by John Morton in the river Don; others assert that the manuscript which gives this account is a forgery; some assert that, at a later date, in Holland, he baptized himself; others declare that he was baptized by Helwys; some say that the first General Baptist churches of England originated with him and his company; while others declare that there were Baptist churches in England long previous to this date. Such are some of the contradictions which arise in the investigation of the details of the life of this singular and gifted man.

The date and place of his birth have not been ascertained. It is certain that he was educated at Cambridge. He entered the University, March 15, 1586, in Christ's Collage, and graduated as Master of Arts, 1593 (Burgess, *Smyth the Se-Baptist* 42. London, 1911). He was ordained a clergyman of the Church of England by William Wickham, in 1594. He was elected preacher of the City of Lincoln, September 27, 1600 (Lincoln Records, f 5b) and ended his services there October 13, 1602. It is certain that while in this place he rejected the doctrines of the Anabaptists and believed the slanders alleged against them (Smyth, a paterne of true Praye, Works, 1.164. Cambridge, 1915).

He remained in Lincoln till 1606, when he became pastor Of an Independent Church in Gainsborough. He remained there to some date preceding March, 1608, when he removed to Holland (Smyth, *The Character of the Beast*, 71. Bodleian Library, n p Pamp.). While he was pastor at Gainsborough a manuscript which purports to be the minutes of the Baptist Church at Epworth and Crowle (Dr. John Clifford, *The General Baptist Magazine*, London, July, 1879, vol. 81), was found. d. It records:

1606, March 24. This night at midnight Elder John Morton baptized John Smith, vicar of Gainsborough, in the River Don. It was so dark we were obliged to have torch lights. Elder Brewster prayed, Mr. Smith made a good confession; walked to Epworth in his cold clothes, but received no harm. The distance was over two miles. All of our friends were present. To the triune God be praise.

The occasion for the publication of these extracts was the reopening of the chapel at Crowle, June 8, 1879. Many more of these records were printed at the time.

On its publication this document was violently assailed in the United States as a forgery; because of the alleged immersion of Smyth by Morton.

There are many things recorded in these minutes of Epworth and Crowle which are not easily understood, other things which are improbable, and still others which seem to be impossible. But when one remembers that there was a veil of secrecy thrown over all of the doings of the Separatists; that some of the most influential men secretly sympathized with and possibly belonged to them; the deeper one reads into the history of those times the more clearly he is convinced that dissent was widespread. When one remembers all of this he is not likely to be dogmatic in his assertions. It is possible that these minutes were compilations, but one had better not lean too heavily on unauthenticated manuscripts.

Shortly after Smyth arrived in Holland he repudiated his former baptism. This was probably about the year 1609. He remained a Baptist a short time and was then excluded by the church which he had organized and Thomas Helwys became pastor and leader. At a later date Smyth applied to the Mennonites for membership, but after much discussion and disturbance among them, his application was rejected. It was the occasion of a great debate and much acrimony among the Mennonites. Letters were written by many parties and some of the Mennonite churches went so far as to formally condemn the union in severe terms. Two Mennonite preachers, Ris and Gerritz (L. F. Reus, *Aufrichtige Nachrichten Mennoniten*, 93, A. D. 1748), wrote Confessions which were favorable to the Mennonites and had Smyth and others to sign them. The Confessions only dissatisfied both parties and failed to bring union. of the forty-two English who signed one of them, eleven erased their names, and the gravest dissatisfaction arose over it among the Mennonites themselves. The result was that Smyth was not received by the Mennonites and the remnant of his company was only received after years of waiting, and then not without friction.

The subject of Anabaptism was not new among the Separatists in Holland.

Francis Johnson testified in 1606 that a little while after 1593, when his church emigrated "divers of them fell into the heresies of the Anabaptists (which are too common in these countries), and so persisting were excommunicated by the rest" John Payne (Payne, Royall Exchange, Haarlem, 1597) mentions the English Baptists bred in the Low Countries; and Henoch Clapham, the same year, had trouble with some Anabaptists in his Separatist church in Amsterdam (Clapham, Little tractate entitled the Carpenter, dated July 7, 1597).

Extraordinary animosity has been developed by a discussion on the point whether Smyth baptized himself or was baptized by Helwys. He was surrounded by the Dutch Baptists but he did not apply to them for baptism. The Pedobaptist story goes that he first baptized himself, then Helwys, and then the remainder of the company. He has since been called a Se-Baptist. The story has been used with uncommon gravity by the opponents of Baptist principles, and replied to with no small amount of indignation as a calumny on the man (Hanbury, Historical Memorials, I. 179). Baptist writers have usually taken strong ground against Smyth having baptized himself. It is difficult to see what difference it makes whether Smyth baptized himself or was baptized by Helwys. It is certain that Smyth and his church thought they had the right to originate baptism among themselves and quoted the example of John the Baptist to sustain it. Their real trouble was not baptism, but church succession. Smyth was led to doubt whether there were any baptized churches in the world and hence any true succession.

It may be of moment to remark that the baptism of Smyth did not affect the baptism of the Baptist churches of England. It has been affirmed that the General Baptist churches of England originated with this church of Smyth's; that this was the mother church of Baptists; and even that the Baptist denomination originated here in the year 1609. After prolonged investigation, we are unable to find the evidence that any Baptist church grew out of this one. We are able to find that after Helwys settled with this church in London, some churches affiliated with it in a certain correspondence with some Mennonites in Holland; but that they had a common origin is nowhere manifest. If such proof exists it has escaped our attention.

The Baptist historians of England are singularly unanimous on this point. "If he (Smyth) were guilty of what they charge with him," says Crosby, "'tis no blemish on the English Baptists; who neither approved any such method, nor did they receive their baptism from him" (Crosby, History of the English Baptists, 1.99).

Ivimey had no such an opinion. Referring to the origin of the Particular Baptist churches in the reign of Charles I, he says:

It was during this reign that an event took place among the Baptists, which has been commonly, but erroneously considered as the commencement of their history in this country. This was the formation of some churches in London, which many have supposed to be the first of this denomination in the kingdom. But could it be proved that there were no distinct Baptist churches till this period, it would not follow that there were no Baptists, which however has been confidently stated. We have shown that persons professing similar sentiments with these of the present English Baptists, have been found in every period of the English church and also that as early as the year 1589, from the testimony of Dr. Some, there were many churches of this description in London and in the country. During the reign of James, we have produced unexceptional proof that there were great numbers of Baptists who suffered imprisonment in divers counties, and that a petition to the king was signed by many of their ministers. It is thought that the General Baptist church in Canterbury has existed for two hundred and fifty years, and that Joan Boucher who was burnt in the reign of Edward the sixth was a member of it (Ivimey, A History of the English Baptists, I. 187, 188).

Adam Taylor, who wrote the history of the General Baptists, has a chapter upon: "The History of the English General Baptists, from the Reformation to the commencement of the eighteenth century" (Taylor, A History of the General Baptists, I. 65). A little further on he says: "This (church of Smyth's) appears to have been the first Baptist church composed of Englishmen, after the Reformation" (p.70). Taylor is doubtless wrong in this statement that this was the first church composed only of *Englishmen*. As to the General Baptists, Taylor affirms and traces their history from the Reformation.

It has been assumed by some that Smyth was baptized by affusion. The point has been made that he was surrounded by the Dutch Mennonites, who invariably, it is claimed, practiced sprinkling, and that Smyth learned his practice from them. Smyth was not a Dutchman but an Episcopalian from the North of England. It was the Presbyterians, and not the Church of England, who, from Scottish influences, introduced sprinkling into England. At the very time, and before Smyth left England, the Church of England was using radical measures to prevent the growth of affusion in that country. Proof must be introduced to show that Smyth differed from his fellow Churchmen in this practice. Such proof is unknown.

The difficulty in the mind of Smyth was not to obtain immersion in Holland,

for there were those who immersed there, but the proper succession. The authors who have been the most persistently quoted to prove that Smyth was baptized by affusion are Ashton, the editor of the Works of John Robinson; Evans, the author of a History of the Baptists; Muller, a Mennonite, and Barclay, a Quaker. Ashton was a Congregationalist, a partisan for pouring, who invariably gave the worst reason for Smyth and the best for Robinson. Muller was a Mennonite who never passed an opportunity to justify pouring. Barclay was a Quaker, who did not believe in baptism at all, and his effort was to invalidate all baptism, especially as practiced by the Baptists. Evans is conservative and pronounces no decided opinion.

Ashton offers no proof in favor of his position. He thinks there are "incidental allusions" which would indicate "that the baptism which Mr. Smyth performed on himself, must have been rather by affusion or pouring" than by immersion. This cautious statement of an author who advocated pouring, and who was dogmatic on most subjects, is a slender basis for any presumptive proof that Smyth was in the practice of sprinkling.

It is curious, however, that those who have been so careful to quote Dr. Ashton in the above guarded statement that Smyth poured water on himself have been equally careful to pass over the strong statement that the Dutch Baptists, of the time of Smyth, practiced dipping. In one instance he speaks with uncertainty; in the other positively. The first fits the preconceived views of those who find pouring everywhere and is always quoted; the last is fatal to such views and is left unquoted.

It is worth while to see what Ashton does say. His words are as follows:

It is rather a singular fact as zealous as were Mr. Smyth and his friends for believers' baptism, and earnest as were their opponents in behalf of infant baptism, the question of the mode of baptism was never mooted by either party. Immersion for baptism does not appear to have been practiced or pleaded by either Smyth or Helwys, the alleged founder of the General Baptist denomination in England. Nothing appears in these controversial writings to warrant the supposition that they regarded immersion as the proper and only mode of administering that ordinance. Incidental allusions there are, in their own works, and in the replies of Robinson, that the baptism which Mr. Smyth performed on himself, must have been rather by affusion or pouring. Nor is this supposition improbable, from the fact that the Dutch Baptists, by whom they were surrounded, uniformly administered baptism by immersion (Robinson, Works, 111.461).

If silence was worth anything it would prove immersion as readily as pouring. An honest man ought not to quibble. An elaborate statement has been made that all of the Mennonites practiced pouring and that in 1612 immersion was unknown among them; that immersion began in Holland in 1619, among the Collegiants, at Rynsburg. Therefore, it is said, Smyth practiced pouring. As an argument, this is illogical. If Smyth desired to practice pouring, why did he not go to the Mennonites if they possessed the thing he wanted? Smyth was an Englishman, starting baptism on his own account, because he believed all succession was lost, and he did not go to the Dutch for baptism.

It is further claimed: That when the company of Smyth, after it had been expelled by Helwys and the Baptist contingent, applied for membership among the Mennonites that the form of baptism was not raised; and that therefore Smyth performed pouring upon himself. A marvelous argument. Why should the Mennonites raise the question? Why raise the question if the Mennonites practiced pouring and Smyth had been immersed? There are those nowadays who practice affusion and they are quite content to receive persons who have been immersed into their fellowship and raise no questions. Generally, it is those who have been immersed who raise the question of the validity of pouring. As a matter of fact, the Mennonites did not receive Smyth into their church, and it was more than three years (1615) after his death, before the remainder of his company was received into that body. All of this was preceded by a violent controversy, which stirred the Mennonite body throughout Holland. If there was such harmony between Smyth and the Mennonites it would be difficult to explain this extraordinary proceeding. Ashton, as a witness, is not faithful to those who quote him.

Evans has been quoted in the same manner, but he is cautious. On the existence of immersion in Holland, in 1608-1612, he is particularly clear. After quoting Ashton, he says on his own account:

The remark of the editor is equally true of a considerable period of the controversy in this country (England). The all but universal practice in the English Church, rendered the discussion of the mode unnecessary. In Tombes' replies to his many opponents, the claims of infants are the points in dispute. Upon the mode of Smyth's baptism, we shall have more to say presently; and we only add that there was a portion of the Dutch Baptists who uniformly administered baptism by immersion (Evans, Early English Baptists, I. 203 note).

On the same page he adds:

There were Baptists in Holland, those who administered baptism by immersion, as well as those who adopted the mode at present practiced by our brethren of the Netherlands.

It is clear from both Ashton and Evans that had Smyth desired immersion from the Mennonites there were those in the practice who could have immersed him. Smyth was probably immersed in infancy; if the Crowle Records be true, he was immersed in 1606; and was now immersed again. It was the validity of baptism over which he stumbled.

Muller is freely quoted by Evans. He was a Mennonite. The Mennonite brethren are most excellent people, but they are nervous on the subject of baptism. They are unusually anxious to justify their practice of pouring. But even Muller says Smyth was immersed. He thought the Mennonites of the period were in the practice of affusion, but that Smyth immersed himself. Since Muller has been freely quoted, this declaration is of interest, He says:

I, myself, add the following remarks: It appears to me that the persons mentioned in the memorial, who were not yet baptized, were admitted to the Wateriandere by the baptism not of immersion, but of sprinkling. This mode of baptism was, from the days of Menno, the only mode used among them, and still amongst us. The Waterlanders, nor any other of the various parties of the Netherlands *Doopsgezinden*, practiced at that time baptism by immersion. Had they made an exception, in that use, on behalf of the English, who in their country had not yet received baptism, it is more than probable that the memorial would have mentioned the alteration. But they cared only for the very nature of the baptism (as founded in full ages), and were therefore willing to admit those who were baptized by a mode different from theirs, just as they are wonted to do now-a-days (Evans, 1.224).

The other witness is a Quaker, and Barclay always belittles baptism, and takes special delight in his endeavors to invalidate the claims of the English Baptists. He was compelled to admit that the question of the manner of baptism does not come up (Barclay, *The Inner Life of the Societies of the commonwealth*, 70).

When Professor Masson was asked his opinion in regard to this book of Barclay's, he said:

Yes, I know the book well. I was much interested and read the book as soon as it came from the press. Robert Barclay belonged to a family which had long been connected with the religious history of England, and I was led to expect great things of his book; but I was disappointed. It seems to me that he failed to catch the trend of the religious life of the times of which he

wrote. The work is in nowise equaled to the subject with which he deals; or with what we might have expected from him. I suppose he collected some useful information, but the work is not especially valuable.

These are the witnesses and this is the testimony produced to prove that all of the Mennonites practiced sprinkling and that John Smyth was baptized by affusion. All of these are recent writers and they do not pretend that there is a word in the writings of Smyth, his friends, or even his enemies, that would prove that he practiced affusion. They all declare that the act of baptism never comes upon the boards. It is the old Pedobaptist argument of silence. But these authors do not sustain the position assumed. From one or the other of the authors it will be found that all of the Mennonites practiced dipping, some of them practiced dipping, and further that Smyth was dipped. The overwhelming majority, however, of the historians, including many who have given the subject most careful consideration, never intimate that Smyth was baptized in any other way save by immersion.

Since Smyth did not apply to the Dutch Baptists for baptism, had no connection with them till a period after his baptism, and was never in their fellowship, the form of baptism as practiced by the Mennonites had no bearing on Smyth and his baptism. Therefore, at this place, though there is much material on the subject, the form of baptism among the Mennonites is not discussed at length. The two Mennonites with whom Smyth especially dealt were Hans de Ris and Lubbert Gerritz, who belonged to the Waterlander congregations. There are two witnesses at hand, Abram a Doorslaer, and Peter Jacob Austro-Sylvium, writing under date of 1649, by the authority of the North Holland Synod, mentions these persons by name and declares they practiced 'baptism by immersion or sprinkling with water' (Grondige ende Klare Wertooninghe vanhet oderscheydt in the voozamste Hooftrucken, 464). This sets at rest the idea that the Waterlanders did not practice dipping; and Smyth could not have been immersed if he so desired. There is no date between Simon Menno and the year 1700 that immersion was not practiced by some of the Dutch Baptists and by some congregations exclusively. The trouble in the mind of Smyth was not immersion, but the succession of the churches.

In the century in which the baptism occurred, the seventeenth, no writer mentions any form of baptism of Smyth other than immersion. Three authors who reflect the mind of the century are quoted. Beginning with the year 1641, there occurred a controversy on the subject of baptism. The Baptists after the arrest of Archbishop Laud and the destruction of the high Court of Commission came from their hiding places in great droves. It is not the purpose, in this place, to discuss that controversy only so far as it relates to the baptism of John Smyth. The boldness of the Baptists mightily

stirred the Pedobaptists. In a measure liberty of speech had been granted to the Baptists and they took advantage of the privilege. Their enemies thought they must be crushed at once.

The first to attack the Baptists was one P. B., who wrote, in 1641. Edward Barber, who printed his own book in that year, says that the work of P. B. came to his hand while his own was in press. P(raise God) B(arbon) says the Baptists were new, which R. B(arrow) (Briefe Answer to a discourse, lately written by one P. B. London, 1642. Library of Dr. Angus, Regents Park College) resented and said that their form of baptism was old. P. B. refers to some of the Baptists as those "who baptized themselves" "beyond seas" in "the Netherlands." Their trouble, he said, was the want of a proper administrator. He declared that they would not go to the Dutch Baptists, who did not practice "total dipping." He says:

But now very lately some are mightily taken, as having found out a new defect in baptism, under the defection, which maketh such a nullity of baptism in their conceit, that it is none at all. and it is concerning the manner of baptizing, wherein they have espied such a default, as it maketh an absolute nullity of all persons' baptism, but as have been so baptized, according to their new discovery, and so partly as before, in regard to the subject, and partly as regard to the great default in the manner... They want a dipper, that hath authority from heaven, as had John, whom they please to call a dipper, of whom it is said, that it. might be manifested his baptism was from heaven (P. B., A Discourse tending to prove the Baptisme in or under the Defection of Antichrist to be the Ordinance of Jesus Christ).

Then the position of the Baptists on the subject of dipping is stated at length. A resume of these statements may be given. Smyth and his company rejected the Roman Catholic Church as Antichrist and would not go to it for baptism, though it practiced dipping; they were troubled on the subject of the succession of churches and held that rather than take any chances they would institute baptism among themselves, and claimed the authority of John the Baptist to begin the rite; they refused to be baptized by the Welsh, though they practiced dipping; they did not go to the Dutch Baptists, though they had a succession of more than an hundred years, because they did not always practice total dipping. Such is the testimony of Praise God Barbon to the baptism of Smyth. Barbon was answered by a number of Baptists who discussed the question of succession and the right to originate baptism, but not one in the remotest manner intimated that Smyth was not immersed.

Thomas Wall, A.D. 1691, was an opponent of the Baptists. In examining the immersion of Smyth, he says:

A third devise these people have found to deprive infants to water baptism, persuading people of years they were not baptized at all, if not dipped or plunged in water (Wall, *Baptism Anatomized*, 107).

Giles Shute, in 1696, wrote in a venomous manner against the Baptists. He says:

Now let the wise judge in what an abominable disorder they retain their baptism ever since from Mr. Smyth; and whether it stinketh not in the nostrils of the Lord ever since as the ministry of Corah and his company did. In his table of particulars, wherein this passage is directed to it, is queried, who began baptism by way of dipping among English people calling themselves Baptists? The answer is, John Smyth, who baptized himself. Thus you may see upon what a rotten foundation the principles of the Anabaptists are built and what door that anti-covenant doctrine came in among us in England; therefore it is of the earth, and but a human innovation, and ought to be abhorred and detested by all Christian people (Shute, *A General Challenge to all Pedobaptists*).

The English Baptist historians mention immersion as the form of baptism of Smyth. Crosby refers to Smyth as "among the first restorers of immersion" (Crosby, *the History of the English Baptists*, I.97).

Ivimey Says:

Upon a further consideration of the subject, he saw reason to conclude that immersion was the true and proper meaning of the word baptize and that it should be administered to those only who were capable of professing faith in Christ (Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists*, I.114).

Taylor says:

In reviewing the subject of the separation, Mr. Smyth discovered that he and his friends acted inconsistently in rejecting the ordination received from the Church of England, because they esteemed her a false church, and yet retained her baptism as a true baptism. This led him to examine the nature and ground of baptism; and he perceived, that neither infant baptism nor sprinkling had any foundation in Scripture. With his usual frankness he was no sooner convinced of this important truth than he openly professed and defended his sentiments (Taylor, *The History of the English General Baptists*, I.68).

A long list of Pedobaptist writers could be quoted who state that Smyth was immersed, The following are thoroughly representative: Daniel Neal (History of the Puritans, II. 29. London, 1732); Thomas Price (The History of Protestant Non-conformity in England, I.495) Walter Wilson (history and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches, I. 29); Punchard (The History of Congregationalism from about the year 250 to 1616, 318, 319); Ahead (The Progress of Religious Sentiment, xix. London, 1852); and W. M. Blackburn (History of the Christian Church).

Room must be given for the testimony of Prof. Masson, of the University of Edinburgh. This brilliant scholar, in the preparation of his great Life of Milton, carefully and laboriously went through the mass of material hearing on the subject He says:

Smyth had developed his Separatism into the form known as Anabaptism, not only requiring the rebaptism of the members of the Church of England, but rejecting the baptism of infants altogether, and insisting on immersion as the proper Scriptural form of this rite (Masson, The Life of John Milton, II.540).

In Professor David Masson, A. M., LL. D., we have an exceptional expert. He was Professor in Edinburgh University for thirty years, having previously served thirteen years as Professor in University College, London. He put in forty-three years in active service in the study of English Literature. Perhaps no English speaking scholar gave so much study to the period of the Civil Wars (A. D. 1640-1660), as he did.

His great work on The Life of Milton cost him thirty years of exacting study. He has told something of his studies and processes of work in the British Museum. He say's:

Of the multiplicity and extent of the researches that were required, any general account may be tedious. Perhaps, however, I may allude specially to my obligations to the State Paper Office in London, where there were printed calendars of the State Papers; the task of consulting them is easy: Unfortunately, when I began my readings in the great national repository, the domestic papers of the period which most interested me-from 1640 to 1643-were utterly uncalendered. They had, therefore, to be brought to me in bundles and inspected carefully, lest anything useful should be skipped. In this way I had to persevere at a slow rate in my readings and note papers; but I believe I can now say for. much the greater part for the time embraced in the present volume1640 to 1643- there is not a single domestic document extant of those that used to be in the State Paper Office, which has not

passed through my hands and been scrutinized (Masson, Life of Milton, Preface to Vol.III).

He gave especial attention to the point of dipping among English Baptists. When he was visited at his home at Gowanlea, Juniper Green, Midlothian, he was asked the following question:

Does your reading lead you to believe that the English Baptists before A.D. 1641, practiced immersion? or do you think they were in the practice of sprinkling, and about the date indicated changed their minds and are since immersionists?

A. look of surprise came over his face and he queried: "Does any one believe anything like that?" Then he continued:

Well. I am always open to new light. These gentlemen may know something that I do not in support of their theory; but all my reading is in the direction that the Baptists in England were immersionists in practice. Of course, among the early Anabaptists of Germany, when all kinds of people were called Anabaptists, and the term covered all sorts of religious beliefs, there may have been some who were called Anabaptists who practiced sprinkling, but I know no such in England. When a man puts forth a new opinion like this, no one is under the slightest obligation to believe it or to refute it unless it is supported by the most powerful reasons. All of the literature of the times is in favor of the dipping theory. When I wrote my book I tried to guard every point with ample authority. I had good reason for what I did, much has passed out of my mind. and is very dim to me now.

At once he proceeded to mention many well-known authorities and to refer readily to the original sources.

We now turn from the historians to a consideration of the facts concerning the baptism of Smyth gathered from himself and his contemporaries.

The avowed enemies of Smyth affirm that the form of baptism. was immersion. Bishop Hall, who was an open opponent of Smyth, points to the form of baptism by immersion. In his Apology against the Brownists, he speaks of Smyth as one "who had washed off the font water as unclean"; and further on he says: "He had renounced our Christendom with our church, and has washed off his former water with new" (Hall, Works, IX. 384).. Bishop Hall, an Episcopalian, unquestionably refers to immersion. It is impossible to think that these allusions are to pouring, for he would not say that affusion would wash off a former baptism in a font. Such a figure of speech is impossible in the mouth of a Church of England bishop of that

period. Hall was keen to catch a point; and was severe on the Brownists when they opposed Smyth. He says:

You cannot abide a false church, why do you content yourself with a false sacrament? especially since your church, not being yet gathered to Christ, is no church, and therefore her baptism a nullity . . . He (Smyth) tells you true; your station is unsafe; either you must go forward to him, or back to us. All your rabbis cannot answer that charge of your rebaptized brother . If your baptism be good, then is your constitution good . . What need you to surfeit of another man's trencher? ...Show me where the Apostles baptized in a basin (Ibid, 25).

These remarks of Bishop Hall to the Brownists in regard to Smyth as "your rebaptized brother" are significant. In scornful sarcasm he demands of the Brownists, "Show me where the Apostles baptized in a, basin." "What need you surfeit of another man's trencher?" The point of the thrust implies that Smyth had dipped himself, contrary to their practice, and that he had apostolic precedent for his dipping. It further implies that the meat on Smyth's trencher had nauseated them, because, like the Apostles, he had discarded the basin (Armitage, A History of the Baptists, 458).

A statement has been quoted by Dr. Whitley from Joseph Hall to prove that Smyth was in the practice of sprinkling He says:

Joseph Hall challenged Robinson next year. "If your partner, M. Smyth, should ever persuade you to rebaptize, your fittest gesture (or any other at full age) would be to receive that Sacramentall water, kneeling...Shew you me where the Apostles baptized in a Basin . . . as your Anabaptists now do (Common Apologie, XXXVI, XXXVII) (Whitley, works of John Smyth, I. xciv).

Turning to the works of Bishop Hall (X., 69-71, Oxford, 1837), we are scarcely impressed that he said that the Anabaptists baptized in a basin. On page 69 is the following statement

This, therefore, I dare boldly say that if your partner, M. Smyth. should ever, which God forbid, persuade you to rebaptize, your fittest gesture, or any others at full age, would be to receive that Sacramental water kneeling.

Hall said Robinson (not Smyth) received the Lord's Supper kneeling, and it would be well if he received baptism in like fashion. The remainder of the quotation from Dr. Whitley is removed more than two pages and further challenges the statements of Robinson. Bishop Hall further says:

Show you me, where the Apostles baptized in a basin; or where they received women to the Lord's Table; for you *ho anthropos*, 1 C or. xi. will not serve: shew me, that the Bible was distinguished into chapters and verses in the Apostles' time: shew me, that they ever celebrated the Sacrament of the Supper at any other time than evening, as your Anabaptists now do: shew me, that they used one prayer before the Sermons always, another after; that they preached even upon a text; where they preached over a table; or lastly, show me where the Apostles used that, which you used before your last prophecy; and a thousand such circumstances.

Nowhere in this passage is it intimated that John Smyth, or the Anabaptists, baptized in a basin, or practiced sprinkling. What is affirmed of the Anabaptists is that they celebrated the Lord's Supper at other times than the evening. That and nothing more is said. And that is about as good proof as has ever been offered that Smyth practiced sprinkling. It is none at all.

Clyfton, A. D., 1610, speaks of Smyth's church "as a new washed company" (Clyfton, A Plea for Infants, Epistle to the Reader).

This is not compatible with the idea of pouring. Clyfton practiced affusion and would not have used these words if Smyth had agreed with him.

Robert Baillie, in speaking of the ease in which Brownists turned Anabaptists, alluded to Smyth and his company, "as turning into such as readily as snow and ice turn into water" (Baillie, Dissuasive, 30). This language is not consistent with pouring.

I. H., in 1610, wrote a book against this congregation, in which he declares: "For tell me, shall every one that is baptized in the right form and manner (for which ye stand much on) upon the skin be saved?" (I. H., A Description of the Church of Christ, 27). The Baptists differed from their opponents upon "the form and manner" of baptism. The form of the Puritans was pouring; the form of the Baptists was immersion. He further asks: "Has the water of Holland washed ye all so clean?" (Ibid, 25). Such a question is inconsistent with pouring.

Those associated with Smyth declare that the form of baptism was dipping. Mark Leonard Busher was in some wise connected with Smyth and was in Holland at the time. On the subject of dipping he is clear. He says:

And therefore Christ commanded his disciples to teach all nations, and baptize them; that is, to preach the word of salvation to every creature of all sorts of nations, that are worthy and willing to receive it. And such as gladly

and willingly receive, he has commanded to be baptized in the water; that is, dipped for dead in the water (Busher, Plea for Religious Conscience, 50).

Such was the practice of the Amsterdam congregation "dipped for dead in the water" those who believed. Effort has been made to dissociate Busher from the Baptists, but Christopher Lawne bears witness that he was an Anabaptist (Lawne, Prophane Schisme, 56. A. D. 1612)..

Another of this company, scarcely second to Smyth, was Thomas Helwys. In A Declaration of Faith of English People Remaining in Amsterdam in Holland, printed in the year 1611 (York Minster Library, xxi. o 15), supposed to have been written by Helwys, Article 14, is the following language:

The baptism of washing with water is the outward manifestation of dying unto sin, and walking in the newness of life. Rom. 6:2,3. And therefore in no wise appertaineth to infants.

The allusion to the burial and resurrection of Christ would indicate immersion; and affusion cannot be described as "a washing with water." There is a like expression which occurs in a letter written by Helwys and others, Amsterdam, March 12, 1610, which is as follows:

And whosoever shall now be stirred up by the same Spirit to preach the same word, and men being thereby converted, may, according to John his example, wash them with water, and who can forbid? (MSS. in Amsterdam Library, No.1351).

The evidence all points to the immersion of Helwys. The historians are quite unanimous in regard to his baptism. Brook says: Helwys received baptism by immersion (Brook, Lives of the Puritans, 11.279).

Prof. Masson says:

For this Helwys returning to England shortly after 1611, drew around him, as we saw, the first congregation of General or Arminian Baptists in London; and this obscure Baptist congregation seems to have become the depository for all England of the absolute principle of Liberty of Conscience expressed in the Amsterdam Confession as distinct from the more stunted principle advocated by the general body of the Independents. Not only did Helwys' folk differ from the Independents on the subject of Infant Baptism and Dipping; they differed also in the power of the magistrate in matters of belief and conscience (Masson, The Life of Milton, II. 544).

John Norcott was associated with Smyth; and he wrote a book to substantiate dipping. Many editions of this book were printed (Ivimey, History of the English Baptists. III. 299). He succeeded Spilsbury in the pastorate of Gravel-lane. He was associated with Hanserd Knollys, William Kiffin, and other heroes of those times. His funeral sermon was preached by Benjamin Keach. The book was dedicated to the church at Wapping. An edition of this book was edited and published by Charles H. Spurgeon. He used a reprint of the fifth London Edition. This edition has an introduction by Kiffin. The first edition has as yet escaped our attention. A portion of Chapter IV is as follows:

1. The Greek word *baptizo* means to plunge, to overwhelm. Thus Christ was plunged in water, Matt. 3: 16. Thus he was plunged or overwhelmed in his sufferings, Luke 12:50. "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and now I am straightened till it be accomplished."

2. The Dutch translation reads, In those days came John the Dipper, Matt. 3: 1. And in John 3:23, that version reads, John was dipping in Aenon because there was much water there. What need much water were it not for dipping.

3. They did baptize in rivers. They came to John, and were baptized in Jordan, Matt. 3: 6. John was baptizing in Aenon because there was much water there, John 3: 25. What need it be in a river, and where there was much water? Would not a little water in a basin serve to sprinkle the face?

4. Baptism signifies the burial of Christ. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, Rom. 6: 4. Buried with him in baptism, Col. 2:12. Now we do not reckon a man buried when a little earth is sprinkled on his face, but he is buried when covered; we are buried in baptism.

5. Christ's sufferings are called a baptism, Luke 12 :50. I have a baptism to be baptized with; and now am I straightened till it be accomplished. When Christ suffered he was plunged into pains. Did his sufferings lie only on his head or his forehead? No, no; there was not one part free; he was from head to foot in pain; his head was crowned with piercing thorns, his hands and feet were nailed to the cross; and his whole person was so stretched on the cross that a man might have told all of his bones, Ps. 22: 17. There was not one part free. Man hath sinned body, soul and spirit, therefore the whole Christ must suffer for sin. Christ was baptized into pain, plunged into sorrow, not any part free; this he called his baptism. Thus one baptized is plunged under water, to show how Christ was plunged into sorrow for our sakes.

6. Baptism is the putting on of Christ As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ, Gal. 3: 27. The text means as a servant

wears his Lord's livery, a garment which demonstrates him to be a servant to such a great personage, so in baptism we put our Lord's livery on, and he himself clothes us from head to foot. It is thus that by baptism we put on Christ.

7. When Christ was baptized, he came up out of the water, Matt. 3: 16. Was his baptism performed by having a little water thrown on his face? Then he had not been plunged in the water, and could not have come out of it; but because he was baptized in the water, therefore, being baptized he came up out of the water. Philip and the Eunuch went down into the water, (and being there in the water) Philip baptized the Eunuch. Both of them went up out of the water, Acts 8: 39; but to what end had they gone down if Philip did merely sprinkle the Eunuch, or pour water upon his head?

Thus you see the place where these persons were baptized was a river, or a certain water; their action was on this wise—they went down into the water, they were baptized. This was done in places where there was much water. The end was to show Christ's burial; but now if there be not a burial under water to show Christ's burial, the great end of the ordinance is lost; but burial is well set forth by dipping under water (Norcott, *Baptism Discovered Plainly and Faithfully*, according to the Word of Cod, 28-41).

Then there follows some questions and answers to show that sprinkling is "strange fire" on the altar of God.

John Morton was a member of this church and subscribed to many of the articles. He practiced dipping. Benjamin Brook says of him:

John Morton was one of John Smyth's disciples at Amsterdam from whom he received baptism by immersion. He afterwards came to England, was a zealous preacher of the sentiments of the General Baptists, etc. (Brook, *The Lives of the Puritans*, III.517).

In the Bodleian Library is a copy of the book of E. Jessop and there are marginal notes supposed to have been made by John Morton. Jessop says:

That the baptism of children neither is nor can be the mark of the Beast spoken of in Rev. XIII. 16, for that . . . is such a thing (in-deed) as young children are not capable of.

To this Morton rejoins:

(Ye) baptisme of Christ is (such a) thing whereof (infant)s are not capable. (If) it were (use)d and practised on them they wold (be dro)wned as many

(have) been in historys (not)es thereof a new (mo)tion is found for them (name)ly to sprinkle theyr (head) Instead of dipping (which) ye word baptisme (signi)fieth (Burgess, John Smyth, the Se-Baptist, 827).

John Robinson, the Pilgrim Father, in reply to Morton, affirms that the latter and his congregation practiced dipping. He says:

In the next place they come to baptism, in which they think themselves in their element, as filth in water. And beginning with John's baptism, etc. (Robinson, Defense of the Doctrine Propounded by the Synod of Dort, 147).

Here is a positive assertion that Morton and his church practiced dipping.

Morton testifies to his own belief. He declares that John baptized his disciples in the Jordan, and adds:

This was indeed the practice of the primitive churches, It cannot be destroyed (Morton, A Description of what God hath wrought, 129. A. D. 1620).

I. Graunt is another witness to the position of Morton. He declared that Morton differed from some on Free Grace, but he agreed with the rest of the Baptists on immersion. His words are in the form of a conversation. He says:

*Heres.* But we have found a rule of truth in God's word, plainly directing us to the making matter of the Church of Christ, none but such as are qualified by faith, are fit subjects of baptism, which faith is wrought by teaching and then baptism of dipping admits and gives entrance unto such believers to have communion in church fellowship with us in the holy ordinances of God; which church ordinances are not understood, but neglected and contemned of all the heretics you have named and conferred with before, therefore we are the true church, for we profess but one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. Ephes. 4: 5.

*Truth.* Sir, I perceive you are an Anabaptist, and therefore I shall speedily make good my late promise, and indeed, some thirty years since, Mr. Morton, a teacher of a church of the Anabaptists, in Newgate, then his confession comprehended all the errors of the Arminians which now of late, many that go under your name, in and around London dissent from, as seems to you (I. G(raunt), Truth's Victory, 19).

The affirmation is that Morton, in 1615, was in the practice of dipping. He differed with some on Free Grace, but not on the act of baptism.

Smyth is himself a witness to the practice of dipping. The extract from the Confession, as quoted above from Helwys, described baptism as "a washing with water" and a burial and a resurrection was likewise signed by Smyth. In a Short Confession of Faith (MSS. in the Amsterdam Library, No. 1352), signed by Smyth, and some forty others, Article 30, he says of baptism:

The whole dealing in the outward visible baptism of water, setteth before the eyes, witnesseth and signifieth, the Lord Jesus doth inwardly baptize the repentant, faithful man, in the laver of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, washing the soul from all pollution and sin, by the virtue and merit of his blood; and by the power and working of the Holy Ghost, the true, heavenly, spiritual, living water, cleanseth the inward evil of the soul, and maketh it heavenly, spiritual, living, in true righteousness or goodness. Therefore, the baptism of water leadeth us to Christ, to his holy office in glory and majesty; and admonisheth us not to hang only upon the outward, but with holy prayer to mount upward, and to beg of Christ the good thing signified.

By no proper exegesis can this be interpreted to mean anything but immersion. In another Confession of Faith signed by Smyth (Amsterdam Library, No. 1348), he says:

That baptism is the external sign of the remission of sins, of dying, and being made alive, and therefore does not belong to infants.

In the Confession of himself and friends, published after his death, article 38, he says:

That all men in truth died and are also with Christ buried by baptism into death (Rom. 6: 4; Col. 2: 12), holding their Sabbath with Christ in the grave.

And article 40 says:

That those who have been planted with Christ together in the likeness of his death and burial shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection.

These articles savor of immersion. In a book (Amsterdam Library, No. 1354), by John Smyth, not generally known, written in Latin, the following occurs:

He preaches to deaf ears who sets forth to children the doctrine of the church. And thus he consults a blind man about colors, who washes children in baptismal waters . . . Do they not misuse their labor who plunge (*tingeat*)

infants in baptismal waters, before they instruct them in the knowledge of the church . . . Hence it is surely established that repentance is the condition of baptism, so thus a comparison between the sign and the thing signified is set forth, for repentance in the mind is the same thing as washing in water is of the body. Baptism cleanseth filth from the body, and so real repentance washes away sin. Baptism is the symbol of the remission, and destruction of sin, for as the washing of water taketh away the filth of the flesh, so the sin of the soul is purged, remitted, destroyed.

He quotes Hebrews 10:22, 23, and clearly distinguishes between the dipping of the body and the sprinkling of the heart. He says:

Both the sign and the thing signified are coupled by the Apostle and in turn united in one another. The sign is the washing of the body, in the element of water, the thing signified is the sprinkling, that is, the cleansing of the heart from an evil conscience through the blood of Christ, where the comparison must be seriously observed, the analogy of the figure and of the truth, or of the sacrament and of the thing of the sacrament.

This is a clear distinction. He further says:

Baptism, however, does not signify the remission of another's imputed sin, because not the filth of others, but their own filth is washed from the bodies of those baptized.

Another statement (Amsterdam Library, No. 1364), says that "the critic casts into my teeth the proverb, He washes his garment of sin, he does wet it, says he." Surely this refers to dipping. There are two additional manuscripts (Nos. 1556A and 1556B), which have not been hitherto quoted. They were written by Smyth or some member of the company against infant baptism. If the writer did not understand immersion to be the form of baptism it is impossible to comprehend the argument he is making. Every reference is to immersion. The author is discussing original sin and that on that account the baptism of infants is not needed. He remarks that "water does not wash away the uncleanness of other persons from already cleansed bodies, but his own." "Cleansing by water belongs to baptism." "The washing softens." "Baptism is the symbol of communion with Christ, for God has not seen fit to baptize the babes but the adult believers, partly that he might lift them by this outward token, when~ they are so apt to fall into so many sins, that he might comfort them, that he might strengthen them for the struggle, partly to exhort them to surrender to sin considering baptism as a symbol of the washing of sin, partly because never does God do anything in vain, which they should have done, if they had imparted baptism to children, who do neither receive the token nor that which is signified, nor the meaning of

it, nor the use nor the profit." That such passages refer to immersion is plain even to the casual reader.

It has been vigorously asserted, as already noticed, that Smyth owed his change of views to the Mennonites, and that he was influenced by them to baptize himself by pouring, since the Mennonites practiced affusion. Very great emphasis has been placed upon this point by some writers. It has been regarded by some as eminently conclusive that Smyth practiced affusion. As a matter of fact, the Mennonites widely differed from Smyth in many things.

If this had been true Smyth would have applied for baptism to the Mennonites in the first instance. Taylor says:

There were indeed, many churches, in Holland who practiced immersion; but, as they differed widely in sentiment from him, he did not choose to receive baptism from them. This completely refutes Dr. Mosheim's supposition that the English Baptists derived their origin from the German and Dutch Mennonites; and that in former times, they adopted their doctrines in all of its points (Taylor, The History of the English General Baptists, I 70).

Taylor mentions many differences between Smyth and the Mennonites. Smyth himself indignantly denied that he learned his doctrines from Menno. Some persons of the Reformed Church had criticized Smyth and said that he imitated the doctrines of Menno. In a document (Amsterdam Library, No. 1364), not hitherto mentioned, he makes answer:

In this article the opinion of Menno is presented to us as if we echoed the sentiments of any master you please. Perhaps the critic notes down our contradiction and opposition. Why are you Reformed ones unanimous in all of your dogmas? Is it not with them as many heads, so many senses. Is it right for us to depart from Menno, when Menno departs from the truth?

Previous to his baptism, so far as the evidence goes, he never attracted the attention of the Mennonites. It was only after his baptism and a discussion had sprung up between Smyth and his opponents, Clyfton and Ainsworth, that the attention of the Dutch Baptists was directed to him. They were greatly pleased with his brilliant and scholarly defense of believers' baptism, and after that they began to court his approval. Bradford says this in so many words. He says:

But he (Smyth) was convinced of his errors by the pains and faithfulness of Mr. Johnson and Mr. Ainsworth and revoked them; but afterwards was drawn away by some of the Dutch Anabaptists, who finding him a good

scholar and unsettled, the easily misled the most of the people, and others of them scattered away (Young, Chronicles of the Pilgrims, 451).

There were divisions, rather than harmony, in Amsterdam, among the many English people who were there. Every little group had its own opinions, and no two of them agreed. This could be illustrated at great length. Only two competent authorities are here quoted.

Howell (Familiar Letters, 26. See Evans, Early English Baptists, II 24) says:

I am lodged in a Frenchman's house, who is one of the deacons of our English Brownist Church here. I believe in the street where I lodge there be well near as many religions as there be houses; for one neighbor knows not, nor cares not much, which religion the other is of: so that the number of conventicles exceed the number of churches here.

Brereton (Travels, 1634, p. 13. Cheetham Society), says:

Here also is a French church (Dort) ; Arminians, Brownists, Anabaptists, and Mennonites do lurke here and also swarm, but not so much tolerated here as at Rotterdam.

The differences between the Baptists and Smyth on the one hand, and the Mennonites on the other, are set forth in a book probably written by Helwys (An Advertisement or Admonition unto the Congregations, which Men Call the Kew Fryerlings, in the Lowe Countries, written in Dutch, published in English and printed in 1611). The book was addressed to Hans de Ris, Reynier Wybranson, and the Congregation whereof they are. The book forever dispels any illusion that the Baptists and Mennonites in Amsterdam were agreed. The whole book of about one hundred pages is taken up with the differences. Helwys says:

Having long desired to publish our faith unto this nation and in particular unto the congregations which you are, (as we have formerly done to our nation) ; and also to make know,, the things wherein you, and we differ, and are opposite. We have now through the mercies of God, thus far, brought our desires to pass, being only unsatisfied for our own insufficiency that we are no better able to manifest your errors unto you. We have divers causes from good grounds to do this. First, because we are bound to discover the mystery of iniquity, by all good means that we can; and in the cup that she hath filled for us, to fill her the double. Secondly, that we might through the grace of God (if your willing minds be thereunto) be instruments of good in discovering divers of our errors unto us, which we acknowledge to the praise of God, and with thankful hearts to you. Now in that we do this by way of

opposition and proof publicly, which you did by instruction privately; for our defense herein, we answer; You came publicly amongst us; and advanced your error of succession and order, from the proportion of the Scriptures, and have destroyed the faith of many thereby, who for sinister respects were willing to follow you we have dealt divers times with divers of you privately, but you have lightly regarded our loving admonitions esteeming all as nothing we have said; some of you going on in your sin seeking to make this people one with you, who are justly cut off from God and his people for their falling away from grace. We have written privately to the whole congregation. You are of them to prevent you in this evil, we have written particularly unto you H(ans) de R(is) but all in vain, in that you esteem the truth we profess, as us herein as vain. Thus we are constrained (for the defense of the truth of God we profess and that we may not seem to justify you in your evils, and to make it known unto all that we have good cause to differ from you) to publish these things in the number as we do; and that it may appear unto all, and to your consciences that we have strong grounds for these things wherein we differ from you, though we be weak in the maintaining of them If any shall oppose part or all that is here written, we desire this equal kindness, that it may be set over into English for all of your understandings, as we have caused this to be set over in Dutch for all yours, and if there be any cause of reply, we will by the assistance of God answer with all of the ability wherewith God shall make us able.

As troublesome as Smyth was to all parties he was conscientious. In the latter days of August he fell on sleep and was buried in the New Church, Amsterdam, September 1, 1612, as the records of that church show.

After the exclusion of Smyth, in 1609, Helwys became pastor and leading man of the Baptist church in Amsterdam, There was no effort at reconciliation between Smyth and Helwys, for they considered their differences vital. Between Helwys and the Mennonites there was never an effort for union.

Thomas Helwys, Elwes, Helwisse, Helwas, as the name was variously spelt, was probably the son of William Helwys. He seems to have been born about the year 1550, and was a man of some wealth. He had long been associated with Smyth. He had cared for Smyth when he was a young man. He worked with Smyth before he left England and accompanied him to Holland. He was by far the most active man among the Separatists (Robinson, Religious Communion, Works III. 159).

Helwys became convinced that the English sectaries ought not to have left England for Holland to avoid persecution; and he returned to England late in the year 1611 or early in 1612, accompanied by a greater part of the

church. He established his church in London (Flight in Persecution by John Robinson. Works, III.160). Shortly after his return he justified his course in a book which he wrote. The church met for worship in Pinner's Hall. Helwys was extremely successful as a preacher, attracted large congregations and made many converts. This church has sometimes been called the first General Baptist congregation in England; but it has been abundantly shown that there were many Baptists in England before the return of this congregation to England.