

Meanwhile conscience was not silent: his restlessness increased; and he at length resolved to give the New Testament a serious perusal. He had not proceeded far before he discovered the errors of popery, and especially that transubstantiation had nothing to support it in the word of God. All this was effected by the instrumentality of the Bible alone, without any human aid. He acknowledges himself, however, in other respects, to be much indebted to the writings of Luther.

He continued to discharge his duties as a parish priest, and shewed just that degree of religious feeling and conduct which led all men to speak well of him. His society was generally courted. He was admired as a preacher. The world loved him, and he confesses that he loved the world.

About this time, a person named Sieke Snyder, one of the thousands who suffered under the name of Anabaptists, was beheaded at Lewarden. Menno had heard of no other baptism than that of infants; and it was with no small surprise that he heard of the firmness with which the martyr adhered to his sentiments, and of his preferring death to recantation.— Having burst the trammels of Popish bigotry, and learned to judge for himself, his mind was opened to conviction; and the fact that had occurred so near him, suggested an immediate and sedulous investigation of the Scriptures respecting the ordinance of Baptism. The result was his ultimate adoption of the views and sentiments of the persecuted Baptists, though he for several years struggled to suppress his secret convictions on account of the odium and suffering the avowal must incur. "By the gracious favour of God," he observes, in reviewing these enquiries, "I have acquired my knowledge, as well of baptism as of the Lord's supper, through the enlightening

influence of the Holy Spirit, attendant on my much reading and contemplating the Scriptures, and not through the efforts and means of seducing sects," as had been falsely imputed to him. He affirms that he had no communication whatever with the Baptists until he had been led by the word and spirit of God to adopt their principles. After this, he says, "I besought my God with sighing and tears that to me, a troubled sinner, he would grant the gift of his grace; that he would endue me with wisdom, spirit, frankness, and manly fortitude, so that I might preach his worthy name and holy word unadulterated, and proclaim his truth to his praise." On examining the ancient fathers, and the writings of the most eminent among the reformers, as Bucer, Bullinger, and especially Luther, he found no satisfaction in the variety of their opinions, but felt himself confirmed in the conclusion to which he had been led, that the Baptist who had so lately suffered in defence of his opinions, had truth and Scripture on his side.

For some time, however, no real change had been effected in his character, except a slight improvement in moral conduct. He was still the slave of a love of popularity, and laboured with the greatest ardour to obtain and preserve the praise of men. Being invited to exercise the priestly office at Witmarsum, the place of his nativity, worldly gain, and an increase of popular applause, were the motives which induced him to accept the invitation. "There," he remarks, "I preached and said much from the word of God, but without any influence from the Spirit, or any proper affection for the souls of men; and I made, by these my sermons, many young persons, like myself, vain boasters, and empty talkers; but they had very little concern for spiritual things." He had a considerable acquaintance with the