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### MENNO SIMON,

ONE OF THE REFORMERS, AND FOUNDER OF THE MENNONITES  
IN HOLLAND.

To the name and character of this exemplary man, the student of Ecclesiastical History is no stranger; but neither the one nor the other is so well known as it deserves to be by readers in general. He was a foreign divine, contemporary with Luther and his colleagues, and with them adopted the principle of the sufficiency of the Scriptures, without human tradition, for instruction in all matters of religion. He was born in the year 1496 in Witmarsum, a village of Friesland, one of the United Provinces of Holland. He was educated for the ministry of the Popish church, on which he entered in 1524, being then in the 28th year of his age. His first cure was in a village called Pinnington, the residence of his father. He found there two other young men about his own age; one of them, the pastor of the village, possessed a tolerable share of learning, and both had some slight acquaintance with the sacred volume; but Menno had never touched a Bible, fearing, as he said, lest he

should be seduced by a perusal of the Scriptures.

After he had been two or three years engaged in the ministry, he began to entertain scruples respecting the Popish doctrine of Transubstantiation. Whenever he celebrated mass he was deeply impressed with the thought, "This bread and wine cannot be the real body and blood of Christ." He imputed the impression, however, to Satan, who, he thought, thus endeavoured to seduce him from the faith of the holy church. He therefore resisted it with all his might, but in vain: the impression remained with unabated force upon his mind. No moral change, however, at present appeared. In company with his two clerical friends, his days and nights were spent in sports, drunkenness, and the vain and unprofitable amusements common to young people of a dissipated turn. On these occasions the Scriptures were frequently introduced for purposes of sport: Menno never mentioned them but with ridicule.