

SABBATARIAN ANABAPTISTS OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

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PART I

Sabbatarian Anabaptism has received little attention from scholars apparently because of a lack of source materials.¹ Within the last eighty-five years a rediscovery of important Anabaptist primary sources has taken place. These source materials also enlighten the almost unknown origin, rise, and development of Sabbatarian Anabaptism within the framework of the radical Reformation.

This study will proceed to discuss first the evidence of Sabbatarian Anabaptists from without the left wing of the Reformation; then attention will be turned to the testimony, history, and teachings of Sabbatarian Anabaptism which comes from the radical Reformation itself.

I. *Lists of Sects*

There have come down to us four lists of so-called sects which enable us to receive a deeper insight into the complex

¹ The term "Sabbatarian" is used throughout this article to refer to observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, rather than of Sunday as it is frequently employed in the Puritan tradition; cf. p. 117, n. 97. The only treatment of Sabbatarian Anabaptists as such is a short one-column article by William Klassen, "Sabbatarian Anabaptists," *Mennonite Encyclopedia* (Scottsdale, Penna., 1959), IV, 396, which appeared in German by Klassen and G. Hein, "Sabbatarier," *Mennonitisches Lexikon* (Karlsruhe, 1959), IV, 3-4. Sabbatarians are also briefly treated by D. Zscharnack, "Sabbatharier," *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (2d ed.; Tübingen, 1931), V, cols. 8-9; and again by O. Eggenberger, "Sabbatarier," *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (3d ed.; Tübingen, 1961), V, cols. 1260-61. The former does not identify the Sabbatarians of the sixteenth century as Anabaptists while the latter states that they are *Täufer* (Anabaptists).

nature of the radical Reformation. Some of these lists originated with radical champions of the Counter-Reformation.

The first list under discussion is from Georg Eder (1523-1586), a learned Catholic jurist and humanist and one of the most radical champions of the Counter-Reformation in Austria and Bavaria.² Eder enumerated not less than forty so-called "Anabaptist" sects in a chapter entitled "Ketzer-tanz" (Dance of Heretics) in a polemical book which he published in 1573.³ He does not confine any sect to a specific location but adds to each notice a short description as to that sect's peculiarity. The fourth "Anabaptist" sect of the forty listed is "Sabbatarians" with the description that they observe the Sabbath and accept only the Father of the Trinity.⁴

The second catalog is from Christopher Erhard, a Catholic parish priest at Nikolsburg, Moravia, during the years 1583-1589.⁵ He too was an aggressive representative of the Counter-Reformation and a polemical writer who produced four books. In Nikolsburg he had the special task of re-establishing the Roman Catholic faith and suppressing the "Anabaptist heresy" under the support of the local ruler Adam von Dietrichstein.⁶ In a violent book printed in the year 1589⁷ Erhard also listed some forty sects, expressly

² On Eder see the article by Christian Neff, "Eder, Georg," *Mennonitisches Lexikon* (Frankfurt, 1913), I, 504-507.

³ Georg Eder, *Evangelische Inquisition wahrer und falscher Religion, wider das gemeine unchristliche Klaggeschrei, dass schier niemand mehr wissen könnnt wie oder was er glauben sollt* (1573, 2d ed. 1580), pp. 57-60. The list is reprinted by Henry A. DeWind, "A Sixteenth Century Description of Religious Sects in Austerlitz, Moravia," *MQR*, XXIX (1955), 48, 49.

⁴ In this condensation of the description of the Sabbatarians the present writer has followed DeWind, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

⁵ On Erhard see articles by Johann Loserth, "Erhard, Christoph," *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, I, 606-608; and R. Friedmann, "Erhard, Christoph," *Mennonite Encyclopedia* (Scottsdale, Penna., 1956), II, 243, 244.

⁶ Loserth, *op. cit.*, pp. 607, 608; cf. "Catholicism and Anabaptism," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, I, 532-534.

⁷ Christopher Erhard, *Gründliche kurtz verfaßte Historia. Von Münsterischen Widertauffern: vnd wie die Hutterischen Brüder so auch*

locating them in the southern part of Moravia. Thirty-five of these names were taken *verbatim* from Eder's list, and he added five more ⁸ of whom he apparently knew personally at Nikolsburg. "Sabbatarians" are again listed as fourth. Erhard gives, however, no description of any sect.

A third enumeration, from 1600, comes from Stredovsky of Bohemia, listing eleven sects. ⁹ Stredovsky appears to list other Protestants as well as Anabaptists. ¹⁰ "Sabbatarians" take the third place after Lutherans and Calvinists.

The fourth and earliest list is given by a Venetian weaver of taffetas and painter of battle standards, Marcantonio Varotto (or Barotto), ¹¹ who in May, 1564, began a series of journeys that took him to Lyons, Geneva, Vienna, and subsequently to Austerlitz, Moravia, where he arrived in August, 1567, and listened to Anabaptist teachings. One year later he returned to Venice and decided again to join the Roman Catholic Church. He made a vivid deposition on his geographic and spiritual peregrination. He tells us:

I left Moravia because during the two months I spent there I saw so many faiths and so many sects, the one contrary to the others and the one condemning the other, all drawing up catechisms, all desiring to be ministers, all pulling this way and that, all wishing to be the true church. In one place alone, and that small enough, called Austerlitz, there are thirteen or fourteen kinds of sects. ¹²

He continues a little further on:

In Moravia are the following [sects]: the Picards [Bohemian Brethren], the Lutherans, the Calvinists, the Austerlitzians, the

billich Widertauffer genent werden (München, 1589). The only copy in the United States is found in the Mennonite Historical Library at Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana.

⁸ *Ibid.*, fol. Bij.

⁹ Reprinted by Josef Beck, ed. *Die Geschichts-Bücher der Widertäufer in Österreich-Ungarn* ("Fontes Rerum Austriacarum," XLIII, 2te Abth.; Wien, 1883), p. 74, n.c.

¹⁰ This becomes obvious since he includes Lutherans, Calvinists, Hussites, Zwinglians, Cornelians, Adamits, Picards in his list.

¹¹ Varotto Marcantonio in S. Uffizio, Busta, No. 22, Venetian State Archive, Venice, Italy, cited by DeWind, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-53.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 45.

Cornelians, the Cappellarians [Hutterians], the Josephines, the Sabbatarians, the Arians, the Samosatians, the Swiss (whose minister is one Vidal, a Savoyard), and three others whose names I do not know because they have few followers and are excommunicated by the other eleven sects. . . . All these sects agree together on many things, but each has some particular article different from the others and they all have different catechisms. ¹³

Varotto adds no explanations to his list of sects. He does, however, give one highly significant piece of information:

The Picards [Bohemian Brethren], Lutherans, and Austerlitzians accept infant baptism; the other sects do not accept it but baptize adults only. . . . ¹⁴

This statement offers the key for the grouping of the Protestants in Austerlitz in 1567. With the exception of the Lutherans, Picards, and Austerlitzians all other sects belonged to the Anabaptist movement because of the adult baptism which they practiced. Thus Varotto places the Sabbatarians among the Anabaptists. This is very significant for the identification of the Sabbatarians in Austerlitz.

At this point we need to discuss the reliability of the lists of sects. How reliable are the lists of the two champions of the Counter-Reformation, Eder and Erhard? First of all we must keep in mind that Eder had no personal experience whatever with the sectarians whom he lists and describes. He relied on other Catholic sources, some of which he acknowledged. ¹⁵ Erhard, in turn, drew the bulk of his list from Eder ¹⁶ and, thereby, must be judged on a similar basis.

Secondly, the portions of the lists which Eder and Erhard

¹³ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

¹⁵ The following three sources are mentioned by Eder: (1) Dr. Johann Eck (the well-known opponent of Martin Luther), *Contra Confess. Zwinglii* (1530); (2) Friedrich Staphylus (1521-1564); Eder quoted this book as *Genealogia Lutheranismi*, and *De concordantia Lutheranorum*; (3) Wilhelm D. Lindanus (1525-1588), Catholic bishop of Roermund, Holland. Of his numerous works Eder quotes *Dubitantius de vera . . .* (Cologne, 1565), and *Antilutheranorum* (date unknown).

¹⁶ Erhard, *op. cit.*, fol. Bij.

have in common¹⁷ supply an example of the methods used by the Counter-Reformation. Eder and Erhard, for example, group together without discrimination the names of sects which existed neither at the same time nor at the same place. A few examples of some sects listed will illustrate this point. The David Georgians (Jorists) existed only in the Netherlands,¹⁸ the Hofmannites (Melchiorites) were active in Holland and around Strassburg up to about 1545,¹⁹ the Münsterites were active only around Münster (1533-1535) and the adjacent parts of the Low Countries,²⁰ the Adamites or Naked Runners existed only in the Netherlands around 1530-1550,²¹ etc. This shows that Eder and Erhard must be

¹⁷ Erhard took verbatim all names of Eder's list with the exception of Nos. 33 (a, b, c), 36, and 37, then adding five new ones in their place.

¹⁸ See articles on Joris by Christian Neff, "Joris, David," *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, I, 235-236; and Gerhard Hein, "Joris, David," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, I, 17-19; and the biography by Roland H. Bainton, *David Joris: Wiedertäufer und Kämpfer für Toleranz im 16. Jahrhundert* (ARG, Ergänzungsband IV; Leipzig, 1937).

¹⁹ Melchior Hofmann worked mainly in Holland and Strassburg, but preached also in Denmark and Sweden. In 1530 he formally joined the Anabaptists by baptism; see W. Neff, "Hofmann, Melchior," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, II, 778-785. Hofmann had a large following in Holland; he himself, however, was arrested in Strassburg in 1533 and died there in prison in 1543. The majority of the Dutch "Melchiorites" joined the Münster movement (1534/5); after the tragic fiasco of Münster (1535) the "quiet" Dutch Melchiorites followed the path of Northern Mennonitism. See especially A. L. E. Verheyden, *Anabaptism in Flanders 1530-1650: A Century of Struggle* ("Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History," IX, Scottsdale, Penna., 1961), pp. 15-20; of importance are also F. O. zur Linden, *Melchior Hofmann, ein Prophet der Wiedertäufer* (Haarlem, 1885); B. N. Krohn, *Geschichte der fanatischen und enthusiastischen Wiedertäufer, Melchior Hofmann und die Secte der Hofmannianer* (Leipzig, 1758); Peter Kawerau, *Melchior Hofmann als religiöser Denker* (Haarlem, 1954).

²⁰ Verheyden, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-23; H. Schiedung, *Die Münsterischen Wiedertäufer* (Münster, 1934).

²¹ F. Cohrs, "Pastor, Adam," *PRE*, XIV (Leipzig, 1904), 759, 760; K. Vos, "Pastor, Adam," *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen* (1909), pp. 104-126; A. H. Newmann, "Adam Pastor, Antitrinitarian, Antipaedo-Baptist," *Papers of the American Society of Church History*, V (1917), 75-99; S. Cramer and F. Pijper, ed., *Bibliotheca Neerlandica Reformatoria* (Den Haag, 1903-14), V, 317-359; DeWind, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

read with caution. The purpose of their catalogs is clearly polemical. The authors wish to show the disorganization of the Anabaptist movement and to discredit the sober and pious groups by listing them with eccentric or immoral sects.²²

On the other hand, Varotto's list seems to be relatively credible.²³ He has no reason to distort the situation at Austerlitz; he enumerates the sects as they existed at this particular time (1567) at this place. The very fact that at least five names of Varotto's list are found also in Stredovsky's compilation seems to point to a high degree of reliability of the latter in at least these instances.

The information found in these four lists of sects is highly significant for the present investigation concerning Sabbatarian Anabaptists. Taking Varotto's statement in which he distinguished between those who do "accept infant baptism" and those who "do not accept it, but baptize adults only"²⁴ as a key with which he implies that the latter ones are Anabaptists, supported by Eder's compilation of "Anabaptists,"²⁵ we may conclude that the Sabbatarians mentioned in these four lists constitute Sabbatarian Anabaptists, possibly having many followers.²⁶

Secondly, Varotto's list locates Sabbatarian Anabaptists in Austerlitz, Moravia,²⁷ in the year 1567.

II. Erasmus' and Luther's Testimonies Concerning Sabbatarians

Erasmus (1466-1536) reported on Sabbatarians in Bohemia:

²² DeWind, *op. cit.*, p. 51; cf. George H. Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia, 1962), p. 676.

²³ This is the view of Williams, *loc. cit.*

²⁴ Varotto cited by DeWind, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

²⁵ Eder, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-60.

²⁶ Stredovsky gives Sabbatarians the third place in his list of eleven sects, preceded only by obviously large groups such as Lutherans and Calvinists; Eder and Erhard place Sabbatarians as No. 4 out of forty different so-called "Anabaptists." These early enumerations seem to indicate that Sabbatarian Anabaptists were considered to be an important and strong group.

²⁷ Varotto in DeWind, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

Now I hear that among the Bohemians a new kind of Jews are springing up, whom they call Sabbatarii, who serve the Sabbath with great superstition. . . .²⁸

Because of this simple and short reference it is difficult to identify these Bohemian Sabbatarians with Sabbatarian Anabaptists, although it is a possibility.

Martin Luther (1483-1546) reported on Sabbatarian groups in Moravia and Austria:

In our time is found in Moravia a foolish group of people, who call themselves Sabbatarians [Sabbather] and say one should keep the Sabbath according to Jewish manner and custom.²⁹

Luther remarked further, "Recently the Sabbatarians [Sabbather] have been arising in Austria."³⁰ Most important, however, is Luther's *Brief wider die Sabbather* (1538)³¹ in which he attempts to refute the keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath, of which he had already known since 1532;³² he argues his point from the Bible and tries to convert the Sabbatarians from their error.

It seems unlikely that Luther had Sabbatarian Anabaptists in mind in his letter against Sabbatarians,³³ but definite judgment must be suspended until conclusive evidence may be adduced.

III. Oswald Glait

The most famous representative of Sabbatarian Anabaptists was Oswald Glait³⁴ (Glayt, Glaidt, sometimes also called

²⁸ Desiderius Erasmus, "Amabili ecclesiae concordia," *Opera Omnia*, V, cols. 505, 506.

²⁹ *D. Martin Luthers Werke* (Weimar ed.), XLII, 520; cf. p. 603; *Tischreden*, III, 600.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, XLIV, 411.

³¹ Joh. Georg Walch, ed., *Dr. Martin Luthers sämtliche Schriften* (St. Louis, 1910), XX, cols. 1828 ff.

³² Zscharnack, *op. cit.*, V, col. 8.

³³ Zscharnack, *loc. cit.*, seems to imply that Sabbatarian Anabaptists are meant, which view is held by Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 410. It seems however that this letter was written by Luther against proselytizing Jews who also demanded circumcision.

³⁴ On Glait see articles by Christian Loserth, "Glait, Oswald,"

Oswald von Jamnitz after his last place of sojourn), who was born in Cham, Upper Palatinate, Germany. Formerly, he was a priest or monk. In the 1520's he joined the Lutherans in Austria and became a Lutheran minister in Löben, Styria, but was expelled from "all of Austria for the sake of the Word of God."³⁵ He turned to Nikolsburg, Moravia, in the year 1525, and became the assistant minister of the Lutheran congregation which was led there by Hans Spittelmaier.

The important position of Glait in Nikolsburg may be seen by the fact that he attended and participated in the important "synod"³⁶ which the Moravian nobleman Johann Dubčansky³⁷ called to convene in Austerlitz, Moravia, on March 14, 1526,³⁸ to unite the evangelical parties of Moravia and Bohemia. Glait printed a report which contains seven articles agreed upon.³⁹

In July of 1526, Balthasar Hübmaier,⁴⁰ theologian and able

Mennonitisches Lexikon, (Weiherhof/Pfalz, 1937), II, 117-119; R. F. Loserth, "Glait, Oswald," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, I, 522-523; W. Wiswedel, "Oswald Glait von Jamnitz," *ZKG*, LVI (1937), 550-564; Samuel Geiser, "Ein Lied des Märtyrers Oswald Glait," and J. P. Classen, "Zur Melodie des Liedes," *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter*, XVII (1960), 10-14. The Hutterian Chronicle gives important pieces of evidence on the life of Glait, see R. Wolkan, ed., *Geschicht-Buch der Hutterischen Brüder* (Ft. Macleod, Alta., 1923), pp. 37, 43, 125, 154, 201, 202.

³⁵ Wiswedel, *op. cit.*, p. 550.

³⁶ Wiswedel, *op. cit.*, p. 551; Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

³⁷ J. T. Müller, *Die Geschichte der Böhmischen Brüder* (Herrnhut, 1922), I, 447.

³⁸ On March 19, 1526, every participant added his signature to the agreement which was finally reached between the two sides of more than one hundred "Utraquist" ministers and the Lutherans, who were even more. See R. F. Loserth, *op. cit.*, p. 522.

³⁹ The title of this report is, *Handlung, yetz den XIV. tag Marcij dis XXVI jars so zu Osterlitz in Merhern durch erforderte Versammlung viler pfarrer und priesterschaften, auch etlicher des Adels und anderer, in Christlicher lieb und ainigkeyt beschehen und in syben artickeln beschlossen, mit sambt derselben artickel erklärang. I Cor. 1*. The only known copy is in the National Library in Vienna, Austria.

⁴⁰ On Hübmaier, see articles by Christian Loserth, "Hübmaier, Balthasar," *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, II, 353-363; A. Hegler, "Hub-

writer, who had joined the Anabaptists in the previous year (1525),⁴¹ arrived as a refugee in Nikolsburg and changed the newly organized Lutheran congregation (1524) there into an Anabaptist brotherhood,⁴² with the approval of Lord Leonhard von Lichtenstein who was himself converted to Anabaptism.⁴³ Oswald Glait, one of the ministers of the Lutherans, was won over to Anabaptism by Hübmaier.⁴⁴ The Anabaptist congregation at Nikolsburg grew rapidly and had for a short time a membership of some 6,000 to 12,000.⁴⁵

Glait was assistant minister of this young Anabaptist congregation,⁴⁶ and on July 21, 1526, in his room Hübmaier finished his baptismal tract, *Der uralten und neuen Lehrer Urteil, dass man die jungen Kinder nit taufen soll, bis sie im Glauben unterrichtet sind.*⁴⁷ (This tract was published in 1527 at Nikolsburg by Simprecht Sorg, called "Froschauer," who had followed Hübmaier and published all his books.) This stimulated Glait to do more writing. In 1527 he published his second work, *Entschuldigung Osbaldis Glaidts von Chamb. . . etlicher Artickel Verklärung so ihnen von Misgönnern falschlich*

maier, Balthasar," *PRE*, VIII, 418-424; Johann Loserth, *Doctor Balthasar Hübmaier und die Anfänge der Wiedertaufe in Mähren* (Brünn, 1893); Wilhelm Mau, *Balthasar Hübmaier* (Berlin, 1912); Carl Sachsse, *D. Balthasar Hübmaier als Theologe* (Berlin, 1914); F. Westin, *Der Weg der freien christlichen Gemeinden durch die Jahrhunderte* (Kassel, 1956), pp. 63 ff. The most recent evaluation is by Wilhelm Schulze, "Neuere Forschungen über Balthasar Hubmaier," *Alemannisches Jahrbuch* (1959), pp. 224-272.

⁴¹ Hegler, *op. cit.*, p. 420.

⁴² J. Loserth, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-129; Wiswedel, *op. cit.* p. 555.

⁴³ Josef Beck, ed., *Die Geschichts-Bücher der Wiedertäufer in Oesterreich-Ungarn* ("Fontes Rerum Austriacarum," XLIII, 2te Abth.; Wien, 1883), p. 48. Wolkan, *op. cit.*, p. 37; cf. Hegler, *op. cit.*, p. 422; Williams, *op. cit.*, pp. 205, 218, 219.

⁴⁴ Beck, *op. cit.*, pp. 160 f.; cf. R. F. Loserth, *op. cit.*, p. 523; Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

⁴⁵ J. Loserth, *op. cit.*, p. 149; cf. J. Loserth, "Nikolsburg I," *Mennonitisches Lexikon* (Karlsruhe, 1958), III, 256.

⁴⁶ Wolkan, *op. cit.*, p. 37; cf. R. F. Loserth, *op. cit.*, p. 523.

⁴⁷ Wiswedel, *op. cit.*, p. 555; R. F. Loserth, *op. cit.*, p. 522; Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

*verkehrt und also nachgeredt worden ist.*⁴⁸ In this tract Glait defends himself against attacks from the Barefoot Friars of near-by Felsberg and their charge that he taught heresy. The booklet is directed to "all believers in Christ" and discusses fourteen points of faith.⁴⁹ From this booklet we gain information on two pertinent points for our discussion: (1) Glait was already won over to Anabaptism, since he defends the baptism of adults and rejects infant baptism as unscriptural.⁵⁰ (2) Glait was at this time, January, 1527, not yet a Sabbatarian,⁵¹ because in point seven he explains that "all days are a holiday of the Spirit" and "thus Sunday, Monday, Tuesday is all the same, since we honor and praise God in our hearts on all days."⁵²

In March, 1527, a dispute broke out in Nikolsburg, mainly concerning the use of the sword, which was defended by Hübmaier with Hans Spittelmaier and rejected by Hans Hut with Jacob Wiedemann and Philip Jäger.⁵³ Glait sided with the latter.⁵⁴ Leonhard von Lichtenstein decided for the use of the sword on the side of Hübmaier.⁵⁵ The latter, however, was imprisoned this very year by the Austrian authorities and he offered to "stand still" as regards the practice of baptism and the Lord's Supper,⁵⁶ points which were also disputed. The "stand still" caused the congregation of Nikolsburg to split⁵⁷ with the result that the rest of this large Anabaptist

⁴⁸ This tract was published at Nikolsburg by Simprecht Sorg, called "Froschauer" and is dated January 26, 1527. See Wiswedel, *op. cit.*, p. 556, n. 10; R. F. Loserth, *loc. cit.*

⁴⁹ These fourteen points are discussed by Wiswedel, *op. cit.*, pp. 557-561 and summarized by R. F. Loserth, *op. cit.*, p. 523.

⁵⁰ Wiswedel, *op. cit.*, p. 561.

⁵¹ Klassen, *op. cit.*, p. 396.

⁵² Wiswedel, *op. cit.*, p. 559.

⁵³ P. Dedic, "Nikolsburg," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, III, 883-886; Wolkan, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

⁵⁴ Wiswedel, *op. cit.*, p. 562; R. F. Loserth, *op. cit.*, p. 523.

⁵⁵ Ch. Loserth *op. cit.*, pp. 117, 118; Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

⁵⁶ John Horsch, *The Hutterian Brethren 1528-1931* (Goshen, Ind., 1931), p. 5.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6; Beck, *op. cit.* pp. 49, 50.

community united with the later Sabbatarians of this city.⁵⁸

Glait had to leave Nikolsburg sometime before Pentecost, 1527, because of his stand for non-resistance, and went with Hans Hut⁵⁹ to Vienna, Austria, where he preached and baptized.⁶⁰ In the same year we find Glait in Regensburg, Bavaria,⁶¹ with the former priests Wolfgang Brandhuber and Hans Schlaffer.⁶² They possibly went to the Martyrs' Synod⁶³ in Augsburg, Bavaria, which met there beginning on August 20, 1527.⁶⁴ Hans Schlaffer testifies to Glait's devout Christ-like life.⁶⁵ The latter apparently returned to Nikolsburg,⁶⁶ and it may be here that he for the first time began to promulgate Sabbatarian teachings among Anabaptists.

Andreas Fischer,⁶⁷ a learned Anabaptist and former priest, who is reported to have known Greek, Hebrew, and Latin,⁶⁸

⁵⁸ The record states, "Aber die zu Nikolsburg behielten das Schwert, daher sy: die Schwertler genant werden, ietz aber Sabather heissen . . ." in Beck, *op. cit.*, p. 73; cf. Horsch, *op. cit.*, p. 6, n. 8; Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 229.

⁵⁹ Wiswedel, *op. cit.*, p. 562.

⁶⁰ There Glait baptized at Pentecost, 1527, the former Franciscan Friar, Leonhard Schiemer, who soon thereafter died a martyr's death. Wolkan, *op. cit.*, p. 43; cf. Wiswedel, *op. cit.*, p. 562; Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

⁶¹ Wiswedel, *loc. cit.*

⁶² R. Friedmann, "Leonhard Schiemer," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, IV, 452-459; see also R. Friedmann, "Leonhard Schiemer and Hans Schlaffer: Two Anabaptist Martyr-Apostles of 1528," *MQR* XXXIII (1959), 31-41.

⁶³ Wiswedel, *op. cit.*, p. 562.

⁶⁴ F. H. Littell, *The Origins of Sectarian Protestantism: A Study of the Anabaptist View of the Church* (New York and London, 1964), pp. 19, 122; Williams, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-180.

⁶⁵ Hermann Nestler, *Die Wiedertäuferbewegung in Regensburg* (Regensburg, 1926), p. 14.

⁶⁶ Klassen, *loc. cit.*

⁶⁷ The fullest recent treatment on Fischer is by Petr Ratkoš, "Die Anfänge des Wiedertäuferturns in der Slowakei," *Aus 500 Jahren deutsch-tschechoslowakischer Geschichte*, edited by Karl Obermann (Berlin, 1958), pp. 41-59; see also articles on Glait by Ch. Loserth, *op. cit.*, p. 117-119; R. F. Loserth, *op. cit.*, pp. 523-524; and the one by Klassen, *op. cit.*, p. 396.

⁶⁸ This is the testimony of Valentine Crautwald in his book, *Bericht vnd anzeigen/wie gar one Kunst vnd guotten verstandt/andreas Fischer.*

appeared in Nikolsburg in 1527/28, where he adopted the Sabbatarian beliefs of Glait,⁶⁹ and became his intimate collaborator.

Glait appeared, along with his co-worker Fischer, in 1528 in Liegnitz, Silesia, promulgating the idea of Sabbath-keeping successfully in Liegnitz and the surrounding villages.⁷⁰ Here Glait met Caspar Schwenckfeld and his co-worker Valentine Crautwald,⁷¹ and engaged with the former in a debate on the Sabbath.⁷² The result of this encounter was the publication of a small book by Glait with the title, *Buchlenn vom Sabbath* (about 1530).⁷³ With this treatise a book-war broke out between Glait and Fischer on the one side and Capito, Schwenckfeld, and Crautwald on the other. The book's far-reaching influence is further seen by the reaction of Lord Leonhard von Lichtenstein at Nikolsburg who was greatly concerned about the new movement and success of its Sabbath teaching so that he wrote a letter to Capito (dated 1531) sending with it a manuscript copy of Glait's book on the Sabbath and asking for a criticism of the same. Capito, being overburdened with work, turned to his friend Schwenckfeld, who was acquainted with Glait and his teaching through the debate on the Sabbath in Liegnitz,⁷⁴ asking

vom Sabbat geschriben | auch Das er Inen wider alles rechten sucht | noch als noettig Im Christenthum zuhalten Hab moegen schuetzen (1532), pp. 2, 3.

⁶⁹ S. D. Hartranft and E. E. Johnson, eds., *Corpus Schwenckfeldianorum* (Norristown, Penn., 1907-), IV, 450. (Hereafter cited as CS); Klassen, *op. cit.*, p. 396.

⁷⁰ CS, IV, 450-451; cf. Wiswedel, *op. cit.*, p. 562; R. F. Loserth, *op. cit.*, p. 523; Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 410.

⁷¹ Schwenckfeld's words are reprinted in CS. See also G. H. Williams and A. M. Mergal, eds., *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers* (Philadelphia, 1957), pp. 65, 161; and R. H. Grützmaker, "Schwenckfeld, Caspar," *PRE*, XVIII, 74.

⁷² Williams, *op. cit.*, pp. 410, 411.

⁷³ No copy of this significant work is known to exist; the title is given by Schwenckfeld, CS, IV, 453. Wiswedel is probably quite right in suggesting that Glait had finished his manuscript already some time before its publication, *op. cit.*, p. 562.

⁷⁴ CS, IV, 454.

Schwenckfeld to make a reply, ⁷⁵ which he produced shortly thereafter. ⁷⁶

Capito, however, later wrote his own reply which indeed was the first one printed. His first refutation is entitled, *Über das Buch vom Sabbath* (December, 1531); ⁷⁷ he later issued a second one in Latin, whose title in English would be *Capito's Critical Remarks to Oswald's Booklet on the Sabbath*. ⁷⁸ A few weeks after Capito's refutation Schwenckfeld gave his criticism of Glait's work in *Vom Christlichen Sabbath vnd vnderscheid dess alten vnd newen Testaments* (dated January 1, 1532).⁷⁹ At the suggestion of Duke Friedrich II, and probably also of Schwenckfeld, Crautwald also composed a critique of the book of Glait, ⁸⁰ which, however, is not extant. Glait then delegated his co-worker Fischer to reply to Crautwald. Fischer's reply to Crautwald is not extant either, but Crautwald's second treatise is preserved and is titled *Bericht vnd anzeigen | wie gar one Kunst vnd guotten verstandt | andreas*

⁷⁵ CS, IV, 454, 451.

⁷⁶ Williams *op. cit.*, p. 410, says that "Schwenckfeld was requested by Lord Leonhard of Lichtenstein in Nicolsburg to refute Glait on his Sabbatarianism"; however according to Schwenckfeld's own testimony it was Capito who sought his help; he writes, "Therefore I let your Honor know that I received from W. Capito, my dear friend and brother. the letter and copy [of Glait's book] and since he is at this time overloaded with big and important things . . . he has considered to ask me to give my judgment." CS, IV, 454.

⁷⁷ The full heading is, *Capito an [den Prediger] des Leonhard von Lichtenstein. — Über das Buch vom Sabbath [von Oswald Glait]*. It was published before the middle of December, 1531, *i.e.*, before Dec. 21. The work is incomplete, but that which is extant is reprinted by M. Krebs and H. G. Rott, eds., *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer, VII: Elsass, I. Teil* ("Quellen und Forschungen der Reformationsgeschichte," XXVI; Gütersloh, 1959), pp. 363-385.

⁷⁸ Reprinted in German by Krebs and Rott, *op. cit.*, pp. 386-393.

⁷⁹ Reprinted in CS, IV, 452-518. The only publication known is the print of 1589. This work was originally sent to Leonhard von Lichtenstein in the form of a letter dated New Year's Day, 1532. No trace of this letter has been found, but Schwenckfeld's original handwritten manuscript with his own corrections and additions is preserved in the Königliche Landes-Bibliothek at Stuttgart, Codex, theol. et philos. 4°, No. 18 and is the basis of this reprint.

⁸⁰ CS, IV, 450; cf. Wiswedel, *op. cit.*, p. 562.

Fischer. vom Sabbat geschriben | auch Das er Inen wider alles rechten sucht | noch als noettig Im Christentum zuhalten Hab moegen schuetzen (1532).⁸¹ The Sabbatarian teachings of Glait and Fischer as they are found in these refutations will be discussed later in this study.

In the year 1532 the Duke of Silesia ordered Glait out of his territory.⁸² Glait planned then to enter Prussia to work there for his faith, but he met the Anabaptists Johann Spittelmaier, formerly of Moravia, Oswald von Griesskirch, just come from Liegnitz, Silesia, and Johann Bänderlin, who were expelled from Prussia through a mandate of Duke Albrecht under date of August 16, 1532.⁸³ It is supposed that Glait now turned to the Falkenau territory in Bohemia, and that he founded a Sabbatarian Anabaptist congregation in Falkenau, for we find there Sabbatarians as late as 1538.⁸⁴ Not much is known of Glait's later apostolate.

Andreas Fischer is believed to have gone to Nikolsburg,⁸⁵ most likely in 1532,⁸⁶ where he promulgated his and Glait's Sabbatarianism. Some time in 1532 he turned to Slovakia, but in 1534 was back again in the territory of Lord Leonhard von Lichtenstein, and stayed there till 1536.⁸⁷

Later Glait must have become the leader of an Anabaptist congregation around the city of Jamnitz, Moravia.⁸⁸ The Hutterian Chronicle gives this account of his last days:

In 1545 Brother Oswald Glait lay in prison in Vienna for the sake of his faith. . . . Two brethren also came to him, Antoni Keim and Hans Staudach, who comforted him. To them he commended his

⁸¹ The only extant original copy is kept in the Staatsbücherei of Berlin; but in the United States the Schwenckfelder Library in Pennsylvania, contains a handwritten manuscript copy, which was available to the present writer.

⁸² Wiswedel, *op. cit.*, p. 562.

⁸³ CS, IV, 450.

⁸⁴ CS, IV, *loc. cit.*

⁸⁵ Wiswedel, *op. cit.*, p. 563.

⁸⁶ Ratkoš, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

⁸⁸ R. F. Loserth, *op. cit.*, p. 523.

wife and child in Jamnitz. After he had been in prison a year and six weeks, they took him out of the city at midnight, that the people might not see and hear him, and drowned him in the Danube.⁸⁹

Thus in the year 1546 ended the life of the most prominent leader of the Sabbatarian Anabaptists. Glait was honored in song after his death; his services to the Brethren were willingly recognized during his life. Balthasar Hübmaier in his *Ainfeltiger Unterricht* (1526) gives him the praise that he "proclaimed the light of the holy Gospel so bravely and comfortingly, the like of which I know of no other person."⁹⁰

Still another record of Sabbatarian Anabaptists comes from Hans von Ölbronn, an Anabaptist from Württemberg. He made the following statement in the court at Strassburg on August 23, 1536:

He states, too, that many of them are of different opinions, namely the Schwertler who carry the sword, use it and swear, the Sabbatarians, who have established the Sabbath again, and the Münsterites.⁹¹

Hans von Ölbronn does not inform us where these Sabbatarians were located, but the time of his testimony and the mention of Sabbatarians adds one more bit of evidence to Sabbatarian Anabaptists.

The cumulative evidence of Roman Catholics, Protestants, and Anabaptists leads to the conclusion that Sabbatarian Anabaptists existed early in the sixteenth century. The date of birth of Sabbatarian Anabaptism seems to have been in the year 1527 or 1528. Its place of birth appears to have been Nikolsburg, Moravia, which was a temporary haven of refuge

⁸⁹ A. J. F. Zieglschmid, ed., *Die älteste Chronik der Hutterischen Brüder* (Philadelphia, 1943), pp. 259, 260, 266; cf. Wolkan, *op. cit.*, pp. 201, 202.

⁹⁰ Balthasar Hübmaier, *Ainfeltiger Unterricht* (1526) cited by R. F. Loserth, *loc. cit.*

⁹¹ Hans von Ölbronn quoted in Gustav Bossert, ed., *Quellen zur Geschichte der Wiedertäufer: Markgrafentum Brandenburg* ("Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte," XIII; Leipzig, 1930), p. 52. "Er erklärte auch, dass ihrer viel anderer Meinung seien, nämlich die Schwertler, die das Schwert tragen und schwören, die Sabbather, die den Sabbath wieder aufgerichtet haben und die Münsterischen."

for persecuted Anabaptists. The most prominent leader of the Sabbatarian Anabaptists was Oswald Glait, who was supported by his convert, the learned Andreas Fischer. Glait promulgated his Sabbatarian Anabaptist teachings with a considerable degree of success⁹² as the concern of the local rulers in this matter shows. Sabbatarian Anabaptist congregations soon flourished in Moravia in the cities of Nikolsburg and Austerlitz, in Bohemia at Falkenau and possibly at Jamnitz, in Silesia probably in the area of Liegnitz. Glait sealed his faith with a martyr's death in 1546, but the work he began continued.

IV. *Glait's Sabbatarian Teaching*

Glait's own book entitled *Buchlenn vom Sabbath* is not extant. In order to learn what Glait taught, we must turn to his opponents and investigate their refutations of his influential work and teaching.

Wolfgang Capito, who published his German refutation shortly before December 21, 1531, under the title, *Über das Buch vom Sabbath*,⁹³ does not yield much information on Glait's Sabbatarian teaching. The outline of his refutation as stated in his book is to show "firstly, the difference of the law of Moses and our Gospel; secondly, what or how far the entire Moses pertains to us who are now under the glorified Lord Jesus Christ, and thirdly, to open the main argument of the booklet [of Glait] and to exhibit its fault."⁹⁴ The last part of Capito's book, which presumably would yield the most important information for our investigation, is missing.

Caspar Schwenckfeld's critique of Glait's book and teaching provides sufficient evidence to give a relatively representative picture of the latter's Sabbatarianism. Schwenckfeld was not only acquainted with Glait and his Sabbath teachings through

⁹² Wiswedel, *op. cit.*, p. 563, thinks that Glait's Sabbatarianism did not find entrance in Moravia and that Glait soon gave it up. In view, however, of the evidence of the sources this can not be accepted.

⁹³ *Supra*, n. 77.

⁹⁴ Krebs and Rott, *op. cit.*, p. 367.

this book but also through a "friendly debate" ⁹⁵ which he had with Glait on his teaching at Liegnitz, Silesia, about 1528. Thus it is mainly through Schwenckfeld's critique ⁹⁶ that we learn of Glait's Sabbatarian teachings.

Schwenckfeld considered Glait as the founder and "teacher" of Sabbatarian Anabaptists in Moravia. ⁹⁷ His book gives the impression that he advances a relatively fair and comprehensive treatment of Glait's arguments for the Sabbath. This is supported by Schwenckfeld's own statement in which he says that he wishes to "examine" Glait's "reasons or arguments wherewith he tries to introduce the Sabbath," ⁹⁸ and by the fact of the many references to Glait and his "booklet." ⁹⁹

There is ample evidence that Glait understood the Sabbath to be celebrated on the "seventh day" of the week, that is, Saturday. ¹⁰⁰

At this point it is important to state the basic presupposition of Glait's Sabbatarianism. Glait based the "arguments" for his Sabbath teaching solely on the authority of "Scripture" and its "literal" interpretation. He firmly believed in the validity of the Old Testament and its law; only those parts of the Old Testament and its law which "refer to the priesthood are a shadow . . . and have ceased in Christ as the letter of the New Testament witnesses about the entire Old Testament, both law and covenant." ¹⁰¹ Glait, as appears, maintained the unity of Old and New Testaments, believing the former to be relevant and valid as pertains to the Decalogue.

⁹⁵ CS, IV, 454.

⁹⁶ CS, IV, 451 ff.

⁹⁷ This is especially evident from the fact that Schwenckfeld substituted the term "Sabbatarian(s)" for the personal name "Osswald [Glait]" in his original manuscript when he submitted it for publication. See CS, IV, 455, 457, 458 ff.

⁹⁸ CS, IV, 479.

⁹⁹ There are over sixty instances in which "Osswald [Glait]" is mentioned by name in Schwenckfeld's book.

¹⁰⁰ CS, IV, 457, 467, 483, 485, 491, 492, 500, 506, 507, 512, 518; also Capito in Krebs and Rott, *op. cit.*, p. 365.

¹⁰¹ CS, IV, 485; cf. pp. 456, 499.

Glait's chief argument for the necessity of keeping the Sabbath was the Decalogue.

The strongest argument of Osswald [Glait] is the number of the Ten Commandments, of which we have heard before. He holds irrevocable that God did not give eight or nine but ten commandments, which he wants to have kept by everyone. . . . Herewith he [Glait] wants to make understood that either the Sabbath must be kept too or all the other nine commandments must also be rejected. ¹⁰²

Glait expressed the same thought this way: "If the Sabbath [commandment] is free, then all the other [commandments] are free." ¹⁰³

This view of the validity of the Decalogue was supported by Glait with the observation that "neither Christ nor his apostles have attempted to change and have never annulled" ¹⁰⁴ the Ten Commandments. Christ is not the end of the law. Glait went so far as to say that if Jesus of Nazareth "had abolished the Ten Commandments that he would not believe that he is the truly promised Messiah and Christ." ¹⁰⁵ But on the contrary, Christ stressed the keeping of the law by his "word, 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep God's commandments,' with which he intends to preserve the Sabbath as the Jewish Young Ruler himself understood with whom the Lord spoke. Matt. 19: 17." ¹⁰⁶ Glait further taught that Christ "has never broken or abolished the Sabbath, but instead he has established, indeed founded, and adorned it with miracles." Christ, in his Sabbath miracles, attempted "to confirm and to adorn the Sabbath," but not to "break or abolish" it. ¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, the apostles kept the Sabbath, and even the apostle Paul, who rejected circumcision.

Glait did not accept the charge of his opponents that the Sabbath commandment is a ceremonial law and done away

¹⁰² CS, IV, 479; cf. pp. 468, 484.

¹⁰³ CS, IV, 480.

¹⁰⁴ CS, IV, 479.

¹⁰⁵ CS, IV, 490.

¹⁰⁶ CS, IV, 468, 469.

¹⁰⁷ CS, IV, 508, 509.

with as is circumcision. Circumcision had its origin with Abraham, but the Sabbath existed long before there were any Jews in existence: "Oswald [Glait] maintains that the external Sabbath is commanded and kept from the beginning of creation." ¹⁰⁸ God commanded "Adam in paradise to celebrate the Sabbath." ¹⁰⁹ Thus "the Sabbath and other laws" were not first given through Moses but "were given orally at the beginning of the world." ¹¹⁰ Therefore "the Sabbath and other laws" are "an eternal sign of hope and a memorial of creation," ¹¹¹ "and an eternal covenant . . . and that God wants the Sabbath to be kept as long as the world stands." ¹¹²

Oswald [Glait] is teaching one is obligated to celebrate the eternal Sabbath, which is Saturday, because such is God's word, will and commandment. Because it is written in Exodus 20 : 8, 'Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy,' and again, 'The children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is an eternal sign between me and the children of Israel.' Exod. 31 : 16, 17. Here is God's word, he says, from which one sees that God wants the Sabbath to be kept as long as the world stands. ¹¹³

Glait rejected the argument that the Sabbath originated with Moses on Mt. Sinai by pointing out that the Sabbath "was not first given through Moses, but was given orally at the beginning of the world and was celebrated and sanctified by Abraham." According to Gn 26 : 5 Abraham obeyed God's voice, commandments, statutes, and laws which included the Sabbath. Likewise, the children of Israel kept the Sabbath in the wilderness as Ex 16 testifies, and this they did "before the other commandments were given in written form." ¹¹⁴

The Old Testament, however, was not the only basis for Glait's teaching on the Sabbath. It has already been pointed out above in what sense Glait understood Christ to have

¹⁰⁸ CS, IV, 458; cf. pp. 460-467.

¹⁰⁹ CS, IV, 491.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ CS, IV, 458; cf. Capito in Krebs and Rott, *op. cit.*, p. 365.

¹¹² CS, IV, 457.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ CS, IV, 491.

established the Sabbath. He took a further argument from Heb 4: 3, 9: "Osswald [Glait] says, Since we did not yet enter completely into the eternal rest, we still have to keep the Sabbath." ¹¹⁵ This thought is further pursued:

Osswald [Glait] now says, Paul speaks in this text [Heb 4 : 3] about the eternal Sabbath which is to come, which is not yet come in any other way but in hope. ¹¹⁶

In this sense Glait understood the observance of the literal or typical Sabbath as not yet fulfilled but as pointing forward as a "shadow and sign of the eternal Sabbath," ¹¹⁷ which is going to be realized when "the sign [Sabbath] becomes fulfilled at the Second Coming of Christ." ¹¹⁸ Glait held firmly to the *literal* obligation of keeping the Sabbath against the *spiritual* keeping of the Sabbath of Schwenckfeld, who considered the Sabbath to be kept on every day of one's life. Glait argued that "... the Sabbath must also be kept by oxen and asses and they could not celebrate it spiritually," ¹¹⁹ and therefore must be kept literally. In this sense "the Sabbath is for us that which it was for the ancient Jew." ¹²⁰

The book of Glait also contained instruction on the preparation for the celebration of the Sabbath and as to the "how, where, and when" ¹²¹ of the celebration of the Sabbath.

Glait taught that it is an absolute necessity that Christians keep the weekly Sabbath, because it is a requirement of the law and "whoever offends it in one point becomes a transgressor of the law. James 2: 11. He will not enter paradise which Jesus Christ obtained for us." ¹²² Only punishment awaits the transgressor of the commandments: "No one remains unpunished who disobeys the divine commandments." ¹²³

¹¹⁵ CS, IV, 501.

¹¹⁶ CS, IV, 503.

¹¹⁷ CS, IV, 500; cf. p. 489.

¹¹⁸ CS, IV, 504.

¹¹⁹ CS, IV, 502.

¹²⁰ CS, IV, 501.

¹²¹ CS, IV, 511.

¹²² CS, IV, 492.

¹²³ CS, IV, 457.

As to the origin of Sunday, only one short reference is found: “. . . Sunday is the pope’s invention. . . .” and the abrogation of the Sabbath is “the Devil’s work.”¹²⁴

Glait, as we gather mainly through Schwenckfeld’s refutation in corroboration of Capito’s sparse information, based his Sabbath teaching solely on the literal interpretation of Scripture. The following points of Glait’s teaching emerge: (1) The Sabbath as one of the commandments of the Decalogue must still be kept by Christians. (2) The Sabbath is a memorial of creation and an eternal covenant. (3) The Sabbath was kept from the beginning of the world by Adam, Abraham, and the children of Israel, even before the giving of the law on Mt. Sinai. (4) The Sabbath was not changed, annulled, or broken by Christ, but He Himself established, confirmed, and adorned it. (5) The Sabbath was observed by the Apostles and by Paul. (6) The Sabbath must be observed on the seventh day of the week which is Saturday. (7) The Sabbath is a sign of the eternal Sabbath and must be kept literally as long as the world stands, until we enter the eternal rest at the Parousia. (8) The keeping of the Sabbath is a necessity for the Christian who wants to enter the heavenly paradise. (9) Those who do not observe the literal Sabbath will be punished by God. (10) The Pope invented Sunday.

(To be concluded)

¹²⁴ CS, IV, 513.