

## CHAPTER 37 : PROTESTANTISM IN HUNGARY AND TRANSYLVANIA

Crossing the frontier of Bohemia, we enter those far-extending plains which, covered with corn and the vine, watered by the Danube, the Theiss, and other great rivers, and enclosed by the majestic chain of the Carpathians, constitute the Upper and Lower Hungary. Invaded by the Romans before the Christian era, this rich and magnificent territory passed under a succession of conquerors, and was occupied by various peoples, till finally, in the ninth century, the Magyars from Asia took possession of it. The well-known missionaries, Cyrillus and Methodius, arriving soon after this, found the inhabitants worshipping Mars, and summoning their tribes to the battlefield by sending round a sword. In the tenth century, the beams of a purer faith began to shine through the pagan darkness that covered them. The altars of the god of war were forsaken for those, of the "Prince of Peace," and this warlike people, which had been wont to carry back captives and blood-stained booty from their plundering excursions into Germany and France, now began to practice the husbandry and cultivate the arts of Western Europe. The Christianity of those days did not go deep into either the individual or the national heart; it was a rite rather than a life; there were 150 "holy places" in Hungary, but very few holy lives; miracles were as common as virtues were rare; and soon the moral condition of the nation under the Roman was as deplorable as it had been under the pagan worship. Hungary was in this state, when it was suddenly and deeply startled by the echoes from Luther's hammer on the church door at Wittenberg. To a people sunk in physical oppression and spiritual misery, the sounds appeared like those of the silver trumpet on the day of Jubilee.

Perhaps in no country of Europe were the doctrines of the Reformation so instantaneously and so widely diffused as in Hungary. Many causes contributed to this. The spread of the doctrines of Huss in that country a century previous, the number of German settlers in Hungarian towns, the introduction of Luther's tracts and hymns by the German soldiers, who came to fight in the Hungarian armies against the Turk, the free civil constitution of the kingdom — all helped to prepare the soil for the reception of the Reformation. Priests in different parts of the land, who had groaned under the yoke of the hierarchy, appeared all at once as preachers of the Reformed faith.

In 1523 we find Grynæus and Vieszheim both in the Academy of Ofen (Buda-Pesth), in Hungary, teaching the doctrines of Luther. Two years afterwards we find them in exile — the former in Basle, teaching philosophy; and the latter at Wittenberg, as professor of Greek. John Henkel, the friend of Erasmus, and the chaplain of Queen Mary — the sister of Charles V, and wife of Louis II — was a friend of the gospel, and he won over the queen to the same side. We have already met her at the Diet at Augsburg, and seen her using her influence with her brother, the emperor, in behalf of the Protestants. She always carried about with her a Latin New Testament, which was afterwards found to be full of annotations in her own handwriting. In several of the free cities, and among the Saxons of Transylvania, the reception given to the Reformed doctrines was instant and cordial.

Merchants and hawkers brought the writings of Luther to Hermanstadt. The effect which their perusal produced was greatly deepened by the arrival of two monks from Silesia, converts of Luther, who, joined by a third, John Surdaster, preached, sometimes in the open air, at other times in the Elizabethan church, to great crowds of citizens, including the members of the town council. After dismissing their congregations they held catechizing in the public squares and market-places.

Thus was the fire kindled in the heart of the mountains of Transylvania. Many of the citizens began to scoff at the Popish ceremonies. "Do our priests suppose God to be blind," said they, when they saw the magnificent procession of Corpus Christi sweeping past, "seeing they light candles to him at midday?" Others declared that the singing of the "hours" to Our Lady in the cathedral was folly, for the Lord had taught them to pray, "Our Father who art in heaven." The priests were occasionally ridiculed while occupied in the performance of their worship; some of them were turned out of office, and Protestant preachers put in their room; and others, when they came to gather in their tithes, were sent away without their "ducks and geese."

Rome saw the thunder-cloud gathering above her, and she made haste to dispel it before it should burst. At the instigation of the Papal legate, Cajetan, Louis II issued the terrible edict of 1523, which ran as follows: — "All Lutherans, and those who favor them, as well as all adherents to their sect, shall have their property confiscated, and themselves be punished with death, as heretics, and foes of the most holy Virgin Mary."

A commission was next appointed to search for Lutheran books in the Transylvanian mountains and the Hungarian towns, and to burn them. Many volumes blazed in the public squares; but these spectacles did not stop the progress of the "heresy". "Hermanstadt became a second Wittemberg. The Catholic ministers themselves confessed that the new doctrine was not more powerful in the town where Luther resided." It was next resolved to burn, not Lutheran books merely, but Lutherans themselves. So did the Diet of 1525 command: — "All Lutherans shall be rooted out of the land; and wherever they are found, either by clergymen or laymen, they may be seized and burned." These two decrees appeared only to inflame the courage of those whom they so terribly menaced. The "heresy", over which the naked sword was now suspended, spread all the faster. Young men began to resort to Wittemberg, and returned thence in a few years to preach the gospel in their native land. Meanwhile the king and the priests, who had bent the bow and were about to let fly the arrow, found other matters to occupy them than the execution of Lutherans.

It was the Turk who suddenly stepped forward to save Protestantism in Hungary, though he was all unaware of the service which he performed. Soliman the Magnificent, setting out from Constantinople on the 23rd of April, 1526, at the head of a mighty army, which, receiving accessions as it marched onward, was swollen at last to 300,000 Turks, was coming nearer and nearer Hungary, like the "wasting leaven." The land now shook with terror. King Louis was without money and without soldiers. The nobility were divided into factions; the priests thought only of pursuing the Protestants; and the common people, deprived of their laws and their liberty, were without spirit and without

patriotism. Zapolya, the lord of seventy-two castles, and by far the most powerful grandee in the country, sat still, expecting if the king were overthrown to be called to mount the vacant throne. Meanwhile the terrible Turk was approaching, and demanding of Louis that he should pay him tribute, under the threat of planting the Crescent on all the churches of Hungary, and slaughtering him and his grantees like "fat oxen."

The edict of death passed against the Protestants still remained in force, and the monks, in the face of the black tempest that was rising in the east, were stirring up the people to have the Lutherans put to death. The powerful and patriotic Count Pemflinger had received a message from the king, commanding him to put in execution his cruel edicts against the heretics, threatening him with his severest displeasure if he should refuse, and promising him great rewards if he obeyed. The count shuddered to execute these horrible commands, nor could he stand silently by and see others execute them. He set out to tell the king that if, instead of permitting his Protestant subjects to defend their country on the battlefield, he should drag them to the stake and burn them, he would bring down the wrath of Heaven upon himself and his kingdom. On the road to Buda, where the king resided, Pemflinger was met by terrible news.

While the count was exerting himself to shield the Protestants, King Louis had set out to stop the advance of the powerful Soliman. On the 29th of August his little army of 27,000 met the multitudinous hordes of Turkey at Mohacz, on the Danube. Soliman's force was fifteen times greater than that of the king. Louis gave the command of his army to the Archbishop of Cologne — an ex-Franciscan monk, more familiar with the sword than the chaplet, and who had won some glory in the art of war. When the king put on his armor on the morning of the battle he was observed to be deadly pale.

God indeed repaid the Hungarian king for the wickedness he perpetrated against the Protestants in his realm, using the rod of the Muslims. By evening the plain of Mohacz was covered with the Hungarian dead, piled up in gory heaps. Twenty-eight princes, five hundred nobles, seven bishops, and twenty thousand warriors lay cold in death. Escaping from the scene of carnage, the king and the Papal legate sought safety in flight. Louis had to cross a black pool which lay in his course; his horse bore him through it, but in climbing the opposite bank the steed fell backward, crushing the monarch, and giving him burial in the marsh. The Papal nuncio, like the ancient seer from the mountains of Aram, was taken and slain. Having trampled down the king and his army, the victorious Soliman held on his way into Hungary, and slaughtered 200,000 of its inhabitants.

This calamity, which frightened all Europe, brought rest to the Protestants. Two candidates now contested the scepter of Hungary — John Zapolya, the unpatriotic grandee who saw his king march to death, but sat still in his castle, and the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria. Both caused themselves to be crowned, and hence arose a civil war, which, complicated with occasional appearances of Soliman upon the scene, occupied the two rivals for years, and left them no leisure to carry out the persecuting edicts. In the midst of these troubles Protestantism made rapid progress. Peter Perenyi, a powerful noble, embraced the gospel, with his two sons. Many other magnates followed his example, and settled Protestant ministers upon their domains, built churches, planted

schools, and sent their sons to study at Wittenberg. The greater number of the towns of Hungary embraced the Reformation.

At this time (1531) a remarkable man returned from Wittenberg, where he had enjoyed the intimacy, as well as the public instructions, of Luther and Melancthon. Matthias Devay was the descendant of an ancient Hungarian family, and having attained at Wittenberg to a remarkably clear and comprehensive knowledge of the gospel, he began to preach it to his countrymen. He commenced his ministry at Buda, which, connected by a bridge with Pesth, gave him access to the population of both cities. Only the year before (1530) the Augsburg Confession had been read by the Lutheran princes in presence of Ferdinand of Austria, and many Hungarian nobles; and Devay began his ministry at a favorable moment. Other preachers, trained like Devay at Wittenberg, were laboring in the surrounding districts, and nobles and whole villages were embracing the gospel. Many of the priests were separating themselves from Rome. The Bishops of Neutra and Wesprim laid aside rochet and miter to preach the gospel. Those who had bowed before the idol, rose up to cast it down.

Devay, anxious to diffuse the light in other parts, removed to Upper Hungary; but soon his eloquence and success drew upon him the wrath of the priests. He was thrown into prison at Vienna, and ultimately was brought before Dr. Faber, then bishop of that city, but he pleaded his cause in a manner so admirable that the court dared not condemn him. On his release he returned to Buda, and again commenced preaching. The commotion in the capital of Hungary was renewed, and the wrath of the priests grew hotter than ever. They accused him to John Zapolya, whose sway was owned in this part of the kingdom, and the Reformer was thrown into prison. It happened that in the same prison was a blacksmith, who in the shoeing had lamed the king's favorite horse, and the passionate Zapolya had sworn that if the horse died the blacksmith should pay the forfeit of his life. Trembling from fear of death, the evangelist had pity upon him, and explained to him the way of salvation. As the Philippian gaoler at the hearing of Paul, so the blacksmith in the prison of Buda believed, and joy took the place of terror. The horse recovered, and the king, appeased, sent an order to release the blacksmith. But the man would not leave his prison. "My fellow-sufferer," said he, "has made me a partaker with him in his faith, and I will be a partaker with him in his death." The magnanimity of the blacksmith so touched the king that he commanded both to be set at liberty.

The powerful Count Nadasdy, whose love of learning made him the friend of scholars, and his devotion to the gospel the protector of evangelists, invited Devay to come and rest awhile in his Castle of Satvar. In the library of the count the evangelist set to work and composed several polemical pieces. He had no printing-press at his command. This placed him at disadvantage, for his enemies replied in print while his own writings slumbered in manuscript. He went to Wittenberg in search of a printer.

Truly refreshed was he by seeing once more in the flesh his old instructors, Luther and Melancthon, and they were not less so by hearing the joyful news from Hungary. He passed on to Basle, and among its learned and munificent printers, he found the means of issuing some of his works. He returned again to Buda, in the end of 1537, and found his

former patron, Nadasdy, occupied in the reformation of the old schools, and the erection of new ones. The Reformer asked Nadasdy for a printing-press. The request was at once conceded, and the press was set up by the side of one of the schools. It was the first printing-press in Hungary, and the work which Devay now issued from it — a book for children, in which he taught at once the rudiments of the language and the rudiments of the gospel — was the first ever printed in the language of the country.

From these more private, but fundamental and necessary labors, Devay turned to put his hand once more to the work of public evangelization. He preached indefatigably in the district between the right bank of the Danube and Lake Balaton. Meanwhile his former field of labor the Upper Hungary, was not neglected. This post was energetically filled by Stephen Szantai, a zealous and learned preacher. His success was great, and the bishops denounced Szantai, as they had formerly done Devay, to the king, demanding that he should be arrested and put to death. Ferdinand, ever since his return from Augsburg, where he had listened to the famous Confession, had been less hostile to the new doctrines; and he replied, to the dismay of the bishops, that he would condemn no man without a hearing, and that he wished to hold a public discussion on the disputed points. The prelates looked around for one competent to maintain their cause against Szantai, and fixed on a certain monk, Gregory of Grosswardein, who had some reputation as a controversialist. The king having appointed two umpires, who he thought would act an enlightened and impartial part, the conference took place (1538) at Schasburg.

It lasted several days, and when it was over the two umpires presented themselves before the king, to give in their report. "Sire," they said, "we are in a great strait. All that Szantai has said, he has proved from Holy Scripture, but the monks have produced nothing but fables. Nevertheless, if we decide in favor of Szantai, we shall be held to be the enemies of religion; and if we decide in favor of the monks, we shall be condemned by our own consciences. We crave your Majesty's protection in this difficulty!" The king promised to do his utmost for them, and dismissed them.

The king was quite as embarrassed as the umpires. In truth, the only parties who saw their way were the priests, and they saw it very clearly. On the afternoon of that same day, the prelates and monks demanded an audience of Ferdinand. On being admitted to the presence, the Bishop of Grosswardein, acting as spokesman, said: "Sire, we are the shepherds of the flock, and it behooves us to guard from wolves the sheep committed to our care. For this reason we demanded that this heretic should be brought here and burned, as a warning to those who speak and write against the Church. Instead of this, your Majesty has granted to this wretched man a public conference, and afforded opportunity to others to suck in his poison. What need of such discussions? has not the Church long since pronounced on all matters of faith, and has she not condemned all such miserable heretics? Assuredly our Holy Father, the Pope, will not be pleased by what you have done."

The king replied, with dignity, "I will put no man to death till he has been proved guilty of a capital crime."

"Is it not enough," cried Startitus, Bishop of Stuhlweissenburg, "that he declares the mass to be an invention of the devil, and would give the cup to the laity, which Christ meant only for priests? Do not these opinions deserve death?"

"Tell me, my lord bishop," said the king, "is the Greek Church a true Church?" The bishop replied in the affirmative. "Very well," continued Ferdinand, "the Greeks have not the mass: cannot we also do without it? The Greeks take the Communion in both kinds, as Chrysostom and Cyril taught them to do: may not we do the same?" The bishops were silent. "I do not defend Szantai," added Ferdinand, "his cause shall be examined; I cannot punish an innocent man."

"If your Majesty do not grant our request," said the Bishop of Grosswardein, "we shall find other remedies to free us from this vulture." The bishops left the royal presence in great wrath.

The king passed some anxious hours. At nine o'clock at night he gave an audience, in presence of two councilors, to Szantai, who was introduced by the Burgomaster of Kaschau. "What really is, then, the doctrine that you teach?" inquired the king. The evangelist gave a plain and clear exposition of his doctrine, which he said was not his own, but that of Christ and his Apostles, as recorded in the scriptures of truth. The king had heard a similar doctrine at Augsburg. Had not his confessor too, when dying, acknowledged that he had not led him in the right path, and that it was the truth which Luther taught? Ferdinand was visibly disturbed for some moments. At last he burst out, "O my dear Stephen! if we follow this doctrine, I greatly fear that some calamity will befall both of us. Let us commit the matter to God. But, my friend, do not tarry in my dominions. If you remain here the princes will deliver you up to death; and should I attempt to save you, I would but expose myself to danger. Sell what thou hast, and go; depart into Transylvania, where you will have liberty to profess the truth."

Having given the evangelist some presents towards the expenses of his journey, the king turned to the Burgomaster of Kaschau, and desired him to take Szantai away secretly by night, and to conduct him in safety to his own people.

In this transaction all the parties paint their own characters. We can read the fidelity and courage of the humble evangelist, we see the overgrown insolence of the bishops, and not less conspicuous is the weakness of Ferdinand. Of kindly disposition, and aiming at being upright as a king, Ferdinand I nevertheless, on the great question that was moving the world, was unable to pursue any but an inconsistent and wavering course.

Ever since the day of Augsburg he had halted between Wittemberg and Rome. He was not, however, without some direction in the matter, for something within him told him that truth was at Wittemberg; but on the side of Rome he saw two lofty personages — the Pope and his brother the Emperor Charles — and he never could make up his mind to break with that august companionship, and join himself to the humble society of Reformers and evangelists. Of double mind, he was unstable in all his ways.

One very remarkable characteristic of the progress of Protestantism in Hungary was its silence and its steadiness. No one heard the fall of the Roman hierarchy. There was no crash as in other countries, and yet it was overthrown. The process of its removal was a dissolution rather than a destruction. The uprising of the new fabric was attended with as little noise as the falling of the old: the Bible, the pulpit, and the school did their work; the light waxed clearer every hour, the waters flowed wider around every day, and ere men were aware, the new verdure covered all the land.

Young evangelists, full of knowledge and faith, returned from the Protestant schools in Germany and Switzerland, and began to publish the gospel. Some labored among the mountains of Transylvania, others evangelized on the plains and amid the towns of Hungary; and from the foot of the Carpathians to the borders of Turkey and the confines of Germany, the seeds of truth and life were being scattered. As Luther, and Zwingle, and Calvin had been the teachers of these men, they in their turn became the instructors of the curates and priests, who lacked the opportunity or the will to visit foreign lands and learn Divine knowledge from those who had drawn it from its original fountains. In proportion as they discovered the way of life, did they begin to make it known to their flocks, and thus whole parishes and districts gradually and quietly passed over to Protestantism, carrying with them church, and parsonage, and school. In some instances where the people had become Protestant, but the pastor continued to be Popish, the congregation patiently waited till his death, and then called a preacher of the Word of God.

Three things at this time contributed to the progress of Protestant truth in Hungary. The first was the conference at Schasburg. The news spread through the country that the priests had been unable to maintain their cause before the evangelist Szantai, and that the king had stood by the preacher. After this many began to search into the truth of the new doctrines, who had hitherto deemed inquiry a crime. The second favorable circumstance was the publication, in 1541, of an edition of the New Testament in the Hungarian language. This was the work of John Sylvester, assisted by Count Nadasdy, to whom Melancthon had given Sylvester a letter of recommendation. The Epistles of Paul had been published in the Hungarian vernacular at Cracow in 1533, but now the whole New Testament was placed within reach of the people. The third thing that favored the Reformation was the division of the country under two rival sovereigns. This was a calamity to the kingdom, but a shield to its Protestantism. Neither Ferdinand I nor John Zapolya dared offend their great Protestant nobles, and so their persecuting edicts remained a dead letter.

It seemed at this moment as if the breach were about to be closed, and the land placed under one sovereign, whose arm, now greatly more powerful, would perchance be stretched out to crush the gospel. In the same year in which the conference was held at Schasburg, it was arranged by treaty between the two kings that each should continue to sway his scepter over the states at that moment subject to him; but on the death of John Zapolya, without male issue, Hungary and Transylvania should revert to Ferdinand I. When the treaty was framed Zapolya had no child. Soon thereafter he married the daughter of the King of Poland, and next year, as he lay on his death-bed, word was brought him that his queen had borne him a son. Appointing the Bishop of Grosswardein

and Count Petrovich the guardians of his new-born child, Zapolya solemnly charged them not to deliver up the land to Ferdinand. This legacy, which was in flagrant violation of the treaty, was equally terrible to his son and to Hungary.

The widow, not less ambitious than her deceased husband, caused her son to be proclaimed King of Hungary. Feeling herself unable to contend in arms with Ferdinand I, she placed the young prince under the protection of Soliman, whose aid she craved. This led to the reappearance of the Turkish army in Hungary. The country endured, in consequence, manifold calamities; many of the Protestant pastors fled, and the evangelization was stopped. But these disorders lasted only for a little while. The Turks were wholly indifferent to the doctrinal controversies between the Protestants and the Papists. In truth, had they been disposed to draw the sword of persecution, it would have been against the Romanists, whose temples, filled with idols, were specially abhorrent to them. The consequence was that the evangelizing agencies were speedily resumed. The pastors returned, the Hungarian New Testament of Sylvester was being circulated through the land, the progress of Protestantism in Hungary became greater, at least more obvious, than ever, and under the reign of Islam the gospel had greater quietness in Hungary, and flourished more than perhaps would have been the case had the kingdom been governed solely by the House of Austria.

A conflict arose in the Protestant Church of Hungary itself. A visit which Devay, its chief Reformer, made at this time to Switzerland, led him to change his views on the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. On his return he let his change of opinion, which was in the direction of Zwingle, or rather of Calvin, be known. From this time dates the formation of two Protestant Churches in Hungary — the Reformed and the Lutheran. In 1545 a synod was held in the town of Erdoed, Comitatus of Szmathmar, in the north of Transylvania. It consisted of twenty-nine ministers who were attached to the Helvetic Confession, and who met under the protection of the powerful magnate Caspar Dragfy. They confessed their faith in twelve articles, of which the headings only are known to us. The titles were — Of God; The Redeemer; Justification of the Sinner before God; Faith; Good Works; The Sacraments; Confession of Sin; Christian Liberty; The Head of the Church; Church Government; The Necessity of Separating from Rome. To this statement of their views they added, in conclusion, that in other matters they agreed with the Augsburg Confession.

In the following year (1546) five towns of Upper Hungary convened at Eperies for the purpose of drawing up a Confession of their faith. They drafted sixteen articles, the doctrine of which was substantially that of the Augsburg Confession. This document became famous in Hungary as the Pentapolitan, or Confession of the Five Cities. The synod added to their Confession several regulations with the view of guarding the soundness of the ministers, and the morals of the members of the church. A pastor who should teach doctrine contrary to that set forth in the Pentapolitan was to be deposed from office; no one was to be admitted to the Communion-table without examination; and in order to render the exercise of church discipline, especially excommunication, the less necessary, the magistrate was exhorted to be vigilant in the repression of vice, and the punishment of crime.

We now see two Protestant communions on the soil of Hungary, but the separation between them was, as yet, more in name than in reality. They felt and acted toward one another as if still members of the same church, though differing in their views on the one question of the Eucharist, and not till an after-period did the breach widen and heats arise. This epoch is, too, that of the formal separation of the Protestants of Hungary from the Church of Rome. Up to this time their clergy had been ordained by the Popish bishop of the diocese, or appointed by the professors at the German universities; but now the Hungarian Protestants themselves chose superintendents, by whom their ministers were ordained, and they convoked assemblies from time to time for the regulation of all matters appertaining to their church.

The progress of Protestantism in Transylvania was henceforward rapid indeed. The Diet of 1553 declared by a majority of votes in favor of the Reformation. One consequence of this was that the neighboring free city of Huns, at that time an important fortress, became entirely Protestant, and in the following year (1554) the last Popish priest left the town, as a shepherd who had no flock. The Palatine, Thomas Nadasdy, and others of nearly as exalted a rank, were among the accessions to Protestantism at this time. Nor must we omit to mention the impulse given to the movement by the conversion of the powerful and learned bishop, Francis Thurzo, from the Church of Rome; nor the yet greater aid contributed by Francis Cis, or Szegedin, who was equally great as a theologian and as an orator. His activity and success drew upon him the wrath of the Romanists, and after being set upon and nearly beaten to death by an officer of the Bishop of Grosswardein's body-guard, he was driven out of the country. This great preacher was recalled, however, by Count Peter Petrovich, a zealous friend of the Reformation, who now governed Transylvania in the name of the young son of King Zapolya. Petrovich, wielding for the time the supreme power in Transylvania, took steps for completing its Reformation, and in the prosecution of this great object he found Szegedin a most efficient ally. The preacher proclaimed the faith, and the governor removed all hindrances to the reception and profession of it. Petrovich took away all the images from the churches, converted the monasteries into schools, removed the Popish priests from their parishes, coined the gold and silver vessels into money, appropriated the church property in the name of the state, and secured three-fourths of it for the salaries of the Protestant clergy. Thus was the whole of Transylvania, with the consent and co-operation of the people, freed from the jurisdiction of the Romish hierarchy, and the vast majority of its inhabitants passed over to the Protestant Confessions.

There came a momentary turning of the tide. In 1557 the reforming Count Petrovich was obliged to give way to Stephen Losonczy. The latter, a mere man of war, and knowing only enough of the gospel to fear it as a cause of disturbance, drove away all its preachers. Not only was the eloquent and energetic Szegedin sent into exile, but all his colleagues were banished from the country along with him. The sequel was not a little remarkable. Scarcely had the ministers quitted the soil of Transylvania, when the Turks burst across its frontier. They marched on Temeswar, besieged and took the fortress, and slaughtered all the occupants, including the unhappy Losonczy himself. The ministers would probably have perished with the rest, had not the governor, with the intent of

ruining them, forced them beforehand into a place of safety.

Again the Protestants found the scepter of the Turks lighter than the rod of the Papists. The pashas were besieged by solicitations and bribes to put the preachers to death, or at least to banish them; but their Turkish rulers, more just than their Christian opponents, refused to condemn till first they had made inquiry; and a short interrogation commonly sufficed to make patent the fact that, while the Romanists worshipped by images, the Protestants bowed to God alone. This was enough for the Mussulman governor. Without seeking to go deeper into the points of difference, he straightway gave orders that no hindrance should be offered to the preaching of that gospel which the great Mufti of Wittemberg had discovered; and thus, in all the Transylvanian towns and plains under the Moslem, the Protestant faith continued to spread.

Scarcely less gratifying was the progress of the truth in those portions of Hungary which were under the sway of Ferdinand I. In Komorn, on the angle formed by the junction of the Wang with the Danube, we find Michael Szataray and Anthony Plattner preaching the gospel with diligence, and laying the foundation of what was afterwards the great and flourishing church of the Helvetian Confession. In the free city of Tynau, to the north of Komorn, where Simon Grynaeus and the Reformer Devay had scattered the seed, the writings of the Reformers were employed to water it, and the majority of the citizens embraced the Protestant faith in its Lutheran form. In the mining towns of the mountainous districts the gospel flourished greatly. These towns were held as the private property of the Protestant Queen Mary, the widow of Louis II, who had perished at the battle of Mohacz, and while under her rule the gospel and its preachers enjoyed perfect security. But the queen transferred the cities to her brother Ferdinand, and the priests thought that they now saw how they could reach their heretical inhabitants. Repairing to Ferdinand, they represented these towns as hotbeds of sectarianism and sedition, which he would do well to suppress. The accusation kindled the zeal of the Protestants; they sent as their defense, to the monarch, a copy of their Confession (Pentapolitana), of which we have spoken above. Ferdinand found it the echo of that to which he had listened with so much interest at Augsburg twenty years before, and he commanded that those whose faith this Confession expressed should not be molested.

Everywhere we find the greatest ferment and activity prevailing. We see town councils inviting preachers to come and labor in the cities under their jurisdiction, and opening the churches for their use. School-houses are rising, and wealthy burgomasters are giving their gardens in free grant for sites. We see monks throwing off the cloak and betaking themselves, some to the pulpit, others to the school, and others to handicrafts. We find archbishops launching fulminatory letters, which meet with no response save in their own idle reverberations. The images are vanishing from the churches; the tapers are being extinguished at the altar; the priest departs, for there is no flock; processions cease from the streets and highways; the begging friar forgets to make his round; the pilgrim comes no more to his favorite shrine; relics have lost their power; and the evening air is no longer vexed by the clang of convent bells, thickly planted all over the land.

"Alas! alas!" cry monk and nun, their occupation being gone, "the glory is departed."

"Only three families of the magnates adhered still to the Pope. The nobility were nearly all Reformed, and the people were, nearly thirty to one, attached to the new doctrine."

As the morning spreads light, and the spring verdure over the earth, so Protestantism, with its soft breath, was diffusing light and warmth over the torpid fields of Hungary. Nevertheless the crown was not put upon the Reformation of that land. The vast majority of the population, it is true, had embraced Protestantism, but they failed to reach the goal of a united and thoroughly organized Protestant Church. The Protestant Church of Hungary had a government — she was ruled by superintendents, seniors, pastors, and deacons — but the vigor and efficiency of this government rested mainly with one man; there was no machinery for rallying promptly the whole force of the body on great emergencies; and so when Rome had had time to construct her opposition and bring it into play, first individual congregations and pastors, and ultimately the whole church, succumbed to the fire of her artillery.

Another defect cleaving to the Hungarian Church was the want of a clear, definite, and formal line of separation from the Romish Church. The hierarchy of Rome was still in the land; the bishops claimed their dues from the Protestant pastors, and in most cases received them, and occasional efforts on the part of Romish dignitaries to exercise jurisdiction over the Protestants were tamely submitted to. This state of matters was owing partly to causes beyond the control of the Protestants, and partly to the quiet and easy manner in which the Reformation had diffused itself over the country. There had been no convulsion, no period of national agony to wrench the Hungarians, as a people, from the communion of Rome, and to teach them the wisdom, not only of standing apart, but of putting their church into a posture of defense against the tempests which might arise in the future. The mariner who has never sailed save on calm seas, is apt to leave matters negligently arranged on board, and to pay the penalty of his carelessness when at last the horizon blackens, and his bark becomes the sport of the mountainous billows.

It was a yet greater calamity that a bitter intestine war was weakening the strength and destroying the unity of the Hungarian Church. In its early days, the Lutherans and Calvinists had dwelt together in peace; but soon the concord was broken, not again to be restored. Ferdinand I had gone to the grave: he had been followed first on the throne, and next to the tomb, by his son Maximilian II, the only real friend the Protestants ever had among the kings of the Hapsburg line: and now the throne was filled by the gloomy and melancholy Rudolph II. Engrossed, as we have seen, in the stark studies of astrology and alchemy, he left the government of his kingdom to the Jesuits. The sky was darkening all round with gathering storms. At Vienna, in Styria, and in other provinces, Cardinal Hosius and the Jesuits were initiating the persecution, in the banishment of pastors and the closing of churches. But, as though the violence which had begun to desolate neighboring churches were to be restrained from approaching them, the Hungarians continued to convoke synod after synod, and discuss questions that could only stir up strife. In 1577 the famous "Formula of Concord" was drafted and published, in the hope that a general concurrence in it would end the war, and bring in a lasting peace.

What was that Formula? It made the subscriber profess his belief in the ubiquity of Christ's human nature. So far from healing the breach, this "Formula of Concord" became the instrument of a wider division.

These various evils opened the door for the entrance of a greater, by which the Protestantism of Hungary was ultimately crushed out. That greater evil was the Jesuits, "the troops of Hades," as they are styled by a writer who is not a Protestant. With quiet foot, and down-east eyes, the Jesuits glided into Hungary. In a voice lowered to the softest tones, they announced their mission, in terms as beneficent as the means by which it was to be accomplished were gentle. As the nurse deals with her child — coaxing it, by promises which she has no intention to fulfill, to part with some deadly weapon which it has grasped — so the Jesuits were to coax, gently and tenderly, the Hungarians to abandon that heresy to which they clung so closely, but which was destroying their souls. We have already seen that when these pious men first came to Vienna, so far were they, in outward show, from seeking riches or power, that they did not care to set up house for themselves, but were content to share the lodgings of the Dominicans. Their rare merit, however, could not be hid, and soon these unambitious men were seen at court. The emperor ere long was kneeling at the feet of their chief, Father Bobadilla. They first entered Hungary in 1561. Four priests and a lay brother settled in the town of Tyrnau, where they began to build a college, but before their edifice was finished a fire broke out in the city, and laid their not yet completed fabric in ashes, along with the neighboring dwellings. Their general, Father Borgia, not having money to rebuild what the flames had consumed, or not caring to expend his treasures in this restoration, interpreted the catastrophe into an intimation that it was not the will of Heaven that they should plant themselves in Tyrnau, and the confraternity, to the great joy of the citizens, left the place.

Thirteen years elapsed before a Jesuit was again seen on the soil of Hungary. In 1579 the Bishop of Raab imported a single brother from Vienna, whose eloquence as a preacher made so many conversions that the way was paved, though not till after seven years, for the establishment of a larger number of this sinister community. The rebellion of Stephen Botskay, the dethronement of Rudolph II, the accession of his brother Matthias — mainly by the arms of the Protestants — restrained the action of the Jesuits for some years, and delayed the bursting of the storm that was slowly gathering over the Protestant Church. But at last Ferdinand II, "the Tiberius of Christianity," as he has been styled, mounted the throne, and now it was that the evil days began to come to the Protestant Churches of the empire, and especially to the Protestant Church of Hungary.

Ferdinand II was the son of the Archduke Charles, and grandson of Ferdinand I. After the death of his father, he was sent in 1590 to Ingolstadt, to be educated by the Jesuits. These cunning artificers of human tools succeeded in making him one of the most pliant that even their hands ever wielded, as his whole after-life proved. From Ingolstadt, Ferdinand returned to his patrimonial estates in Styria and Carinthia, with the firm resolve, whatever it might cost himself or others, that foot of Protestant should not defile the territories that called him master. He would rather that his estates should become the abode of wolves and foxes than be the dwelling of heretics. Soon thereafter he set out on a pilgrimage to Loretto, to invoke the protection of the "Queen of Heaven," visiting Rome by the way to

receive grace from the "Holy Father," to enable him to fulfill his vow of thoroughly purging his dominions. In his fortieth year (1517) he made a pilgrimage to a similar shrine; and as he lay prostrate before the image of Mary, a violent storm came on, the lightning flashed and the thunders rolled, but above the roar of the elements Ferdinand heard, distinct and clear, a voice saying to him, "Ferdinand, I will not leave thee." Whose voice could it be but Mary's? He rose from the earth with a double consecration upon him. This, however, did not hinder his subscribing, on the day of his coronation as King of Bohemia (16th March, 1618), the article which promised full protection to the Protestant Church, adding that "he would sooner lose his life than break his word" — a gratifying proof, as his former preceptors doubtless regarded it, that he had not forgotten the lessons they had taught him at Ingolstadt.

On his return from the Diet at Frankfort (1619), clothed with the mantle of the Caesars, he held himself as elected in the sight of Christendom to do battle for the Romish Church. What did the imperial diadem, so suddenly placed on his brow, import, if not this, that Heaven called him to the sublime mission of restoring the empire to the pure orthodoxy of early days, and its twin-institute, the Pontifical chair, to its former peerless splendor?

Protestantism had fulfilled its century; for it was rather more than a hundred years since Luther's hammer had summoned from the abyss, as Ferdinand deemed, this terrible disturber of the world — this scourge of Rome, and terror of kings — which no sword seemed able to slay. Charles V had staked empire and fame against it; but the result was that he had to hide his defeat in a monastery. A life of toil had he undergone for Rome, and received as recompense — oh! dazzling reward — a monk's cowl. Philip II had long battled with it, but worn out he at last laid him down in the little closet that looks into the cathedral-church of the Escorial, and amid a heap of vermin, which issued from his own body, he gave up the ghost. Leaving these puissant monarchs to rot in their marble sepulchers, Protestantism starts afresh on its great career. It enters the dark cloud of the St. Bartholomew, but soon it emerges on the other side, its garments dripping, but its life intact. It is next seen holding its path amid the swimming scaffolds and the blazing stakes of the Netherlands. The cords with which its enemies would bind it are but as green withes upon its arm. But now its enemies fondly think that they see its latter end drawing nigh.

From the harbors of Spain rides forth galley after galley in proud array, the "invincible Armada," to chase from off the earth that terrible thing which has so long troubled the nations and their monarchs. But, lo! it is the Armada itself that has to flee. Careering specter-like, it passes between the Protestant shores of England on the one hand, and Holland on the other, hastening before the furious winds to hide itself in the darkness of the Pole.

No one has been able to weave a chain so strong as to hold Protestantism fast; but now Ferdinand believes that he has discovered the secret of its strength, and can speak the "hitherto, but no farther." The Jesuits have furnished him with weapons which none of his predecessors knew, to combat this terrible foe, and long before Protestantism shall have completed the second century of its existence, he will have set bounds to its ravages. The

nations will return to their obedience, kings will sleep in peace, and Rome will sway her scepter over a subjugated Christendom.

We have already seen after what terrible fashion he inaugurated his attempt. The first act was the scaffold at Prague, on which twenty-seven magnates, the first men of the land, and some of them the most illustrious of the age, poured out their blood. This terrible day was followed by fifteen terrible years, during which judicial murders, secret torturing, banishments, and oppressions of all kinds were wearing out the Protestants of Bohemia, till at last, as we have seen, the nation and its Protestantism sank together. But in the other provinces of his dominions Ferdinand did not find the work so easy. In Austria proper, the states refused to submit. The Hungarians felt that the circle around their religious and civil rights was being drawn tighter every day. The Jesuits had returned. Something like the Spanish Inquisition had been set up at Tyrnau. The Romish magnates were carrying it with a high hand. Count Stephen Pallfy of Schutt-Somerain erected a gallows, declaring that he would hang on it all Protestant clergymen called to churches in Schutt without his leave. In this state of matters, the Prince of Transylvania, Gabriel Bethlen, a zealous Protestant, and a general of equal bravery and skill, took up arms. In the end of 1619 he took the towns of Kaschau and Presburg. In the castle of the latter place he found the crown of Hungary, with the state jewels; and had he worn them as king, as at an after-stage of his career he was urged to do, the destinies of Hungary might have been happier.

Passing on in his victorious career toward the southeast, Bethlen received the submission of the town and castle of Oldenburg. He finally arrived at Gratz, and here a truce was agreed on between him and Ferdinand. In the following year (1620) a Diet was held at Neusohl. On the motion of the Palatine Thurzo, the Diet unanimously resolved to proclaim Bethlen King of Hungary. He declined the crown; but the earnest entreaties of the Diet, seconded by the exhortations of his own chaplain, were powerless to induce him to alter his resolution. At this Diet toleration was enacted for all creeds and confessions; tithes and first-fruits were to fall to the Roman and Protestant clergy alike; three Popish bishops were recognized as sufficient for the country: one at Erlau for Upper Hungary; a second at Neutra, for Hungary on this side the Danube; and a third at Raab, beyond the river. The Jesuits were banished; and it was resolved to complete the organization of the Protestant Church in those districts where it had been left unfinished. The Protestants now breathed freely. They thought that they had, as the infallible guarantees of their rights, the victorious sword of the Prince Bethlen, and the upright administration of the Palatine Thurzo, and that they were justified in believing that an era of settled peace had opened upon them.

Their prosperity was inevitably short-lived, for it was built upon the false foundation of toleration of false religion. First the Protestant Palatine, Count Thurzo, died suddenly; and the popular suspicion attributed his death to poison. Next came the cry of horrors which had opened in Bohemia. Prince Bethlen again grasped the sword, and his bravery and patriotism extorted a new peace from the persecutor, which was arranged at Nikolsburg in 1621. On this occasion Bethlen delivered up to Ferdinand the crown of Hungary, which had remained till now in his possession. The jewel which Bethlen had

declined to wear passed to the head of the spouse of Ferdinand, who was now crowned Queen of Hungary.

Scarcely had the joy-bells ceased to ring for the peace of Nikolsburg, when crowds of wretched creatures, fleeing from the renewed horrors in Bohemia, crossed the frontier. Their cries of wrong, and their miserable appearance, excited at once compassion and indignation. Bethlen reproached the king for this flagrant infraction of the peace, before the ink in which it was signed was dry; but finding that while the king's ear was open to the Jesuits it was closed to himself, he again girded on the sword, and took the field at the head of a powerful army. He was marching on Vienna when the new Palatine was sent to stop him with renewed offers of peace. The terms were a third time accepted by the Prince of Transylvania. They seemed as satisfactory, and were destined to be as fruitless, as on the two former occasions. Had Bethlen cherished that "distrust of tyrants" which Demosthenes preached, and William the Silent practiced, he would have turned the achievements of his sword to better account for his countrymen. There was no amount of suspicion which would not have been justified by the character of the man he was transacting with, and the councilors who surrounded him. Nor were the signs on the social horizon such as foreboded a lengthened tranquility.

The Jesuits were multiplying their hives, and beginning to swarm like wasps. Flourishing gymnasiums were being converted into cow-houses. Parsonages were unreeled, and if the incumbent did not take the hint, he and his family were carted out of the district. Protestant congregations would assemble on a Sunday morning to find the door and windows of their church smashed, or the fabric itself razed to the ground. These were isolated eases, but they gave sure prognostication of greater oppressions whenever it would be in the power of the enemy to inflict them.

This latter peace was agreed on in 1628 at Presburg; and Prince Bethlen bound himself never again to take up arms against the House of Hapsburg, on condition of religious liberty being guaranteed. The Thirty Years' War, which will engage our attention a little further on, had by this time broken out. The progress of that great struggle had brought Ferdinand's throne itself into peril, and this made him all the readier to hold out the hand of peace to his victorious vassal. But Ferdinand's promise was forgotten as soon as made, and next year Prince Bethlen is said to have been secretly preparing for war when he was attacked with indisposition. Ferdinand, professing to show him kindness, sent him a physician chosen by the Jesuits. The noble-minded prince suspected no evil, though he daily grew worse. "The hero who had taken part in thirty-two battles without receiving a wound," says Michiels, "soon died from the attentions paid him."

Three years before this (1626) the plan to be pursued in trampling out Protestantism in all the provinces of the empire had been discussed and determined upon at Vienna, but circumstances too strong for Ferdinand and his Jesuits compelled them to postpone from time to time the initiation of the project. Towards the close of 1626 a small council assembled in the palace of the Austrian prime minister Eggenberg, whom colic and gout confined to his cabinet. At the table, besides Ferdinand II, were the ambassador of Spain, the envoy of Florence, the privy councilor Harrack, the gloomy Wallenstein, and one or

two others. Count Agnate, the Spanish ambassador, rose and announced that his master had authorized him to offer 40,000 chosen men for forty years in order to the suppression of heresy, root and branch, in Hungary. He further recommended that foreign governors should be set over the Hungarians, who should impose upon them new laws, vex and oppress them in a thousand different ways, and so goad them into revolt. The troops would then come in and put down the rising with the strong hand, mercilessly inflicting a general slaughter, and afterwards taking off at leisure the heads of the chief persons. In this way the spirit of the haughty and warlike Magyars would be broken, and all resistance would be at an end. The proposal seemed good in the eyes of the king and his councilors, and it was resolved to essay a beginning of the business on occasion of the approaching great fair at Sintau-on-the-Waag. The saturnalia of slaughter were to open thus: disguised emissaries were to proceed to the fair, mingle with the crowd, pick quarrels with the peasants, and manage to create a tumult. Wallenstein and his troops, drawn up in readiness, were then to rush upon the multitude, sword in hand, and cut down all above twelve years of age. It was calculated that the melee would extend from village to town, till the bulk of the able-bodied population, including all likely to lead in a rebellion, were exterminated. A terrible program truly! but second thoughts convinced its authors that the hour had not yet arrived for attempting its execution. Bethlen still lived, and the brave leader was not likely to sit still while his countrymen were being butchered like sheep.

Ferdinand, occupied in a mortal struggle with the north of Europe and France, had discernment enough, blinded though he was by the Jesuits, to see that it would be madness at this moment to add to the number of his enemies by throwing down the gage of battle to the Hungarians. The Jesuits must therefore wait. But no sooner was Prince Bethlen laid in the grave than persecution was renewed. But more lamentable by far than the vexations and sufferings to which the Protestant pastors and their flocks were now subjected, were the numerous defections that began to take place among the nobles from the cause of the Reformation. What from fear, what from the hope of preferment, or from dislike to the Protestant doctrine, a stream of conversions began to flow steadily in the direction of Rome, and the number of the supporters of Protestantism among the Hungarian magnates was daily diminishing. So did things continue until the year 1637. On the 17th of February of that year Ferdinand II died.

"In Magdeburg," say the authors of the History of the Protestant Church in Hungary, "were twenty-six thousand, corpses of men, women, and children, who had perished under the hand of his general, Tilly, with his hordes of Croatian military. Bohemia, Moravia, and a great part of Hungary were miserably oppressed, and morality itself almost banished, by the manner in which the war had been conducted. And what had he gained'. A few stone churches and schools stolen from the Lutherans and Calvinists; a hundred thousand converts brought over to the Church of Rome by the unapostolical means of sword, prison, fine, or bribery; and a depopulation of his monarchy amounting to more than a million of human beings."

Great hopes were entertained by the Protestants of Ferdinand's son and successor, Ferdinand III. These expectations were realized only in part. His reign opened with the

appointment of two converts from the Protestant faith: the one to the palatinate, and the other to the Popish See of Erlau. These were the two posts of greatest influence, civil and ecclesiastical, in Hungary, and the persons now filling them owed their elevation to the Jesuits, and were not likely to be other than subservient to their patrons. The Protestants had been weakened by the secession of thirty magnates to Rome, and of the nobles who still remained on their side many had become lukewarm in the cause of the Reformation. Persecution took a stride in advance. The powerful Romish party utterly disregarded all promises and compacts. The king was unable in many instances to give effect to his own edicts. The churches, schools, and manses in many places were taken possession of, and the pastors and schoolmasters driven away. The Prebend of Neustadt-on-the-Waag, for instance, was forcibly seized by Count Hommono, with all its heritages and fruits. The superintendent, being an old man, was put in a chair, and carried out by the soldiers. But here a difficulty arose. The unhoused minister was unable to walk, and the soldiers were unwilling to transport their burden to a greater distance. What was to be done? They took up the aged man, carried him back, and set him down once more at his own hearth, consoling themselves that he had not long to live. All the property and dues, however, appertaining to the church, which comprehended several villages with their mills, the tenth and sixteenth of the grain grown on the lands, and a tenth of all the fowls, were retained by the count. Hommono's example was followed by other nobles, who freely made a spoil of the Protestant property on their estates.

From the same quarter from which their fathers had so often obtained help in the time of their sore need, came a deliverer to the Protestants. Prince George Rakotzy of Transylvania, unable longer to witness in silence these cruel outrages upon his brethren in the faith, proclaimed war against Ferdinand III in 1644. He was aided by the Swedes, whose armies were then in the field, engaged in the Thirty Years' War. The short but bloody campaign that ensued between Rakotzy and Ferdinand ended with the Peace of Linz, which gave toleration to the Protestants of Hungary, and brought back a great part of the property of which they had been violently dispossessed. There remained, however, 300 churches of which they had been despoiled, and which nothing could induce the Romanists to give up. Four years afterwards (1648) came the Peace of Westphalia, ending the Thirty Years' War.

The era of Protestant Reformation thus concluded in Hungary and Transylvania. Transylvania was enjoying its golden age under Protestant rule, and the Protestants of Hungary were enjoying a new but unstable toleration by the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand III. This was a time when the vast majority of Hungarians were still Protestant- indeed, mainly Calvinistic - and naturally looked upon the Transylvanian princes as their protectors, as they had in the past.

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The on-line resources of Historicism Research Foundation at <http://www.historicism.net/> also proved invaluable for my understanding of Biblical prophecy. Biblical prophecy concerning Christian church history, especially as revealed in the book of Revelation, serves as the foundation upon which all church histories should be based.