

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *The Evangelical Quarterly* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_evangelical\\_quarterly.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_evangelical_quarterly.php)

## THE INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMED CHURCH ON THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF TRANSYLVANIA

### I

TRANSYLVANIA is an area enclosed by the South-East Carpathian Mountains, the whole territory covering altogether 102,787 square kilometres. Until 1918 it belonged to Hungary; at present it is a part of Roumania. Its inhabitants are Hungarians, Roumanians and Germans belonging to very different denominations. The number of Protestants in Transylvania is 1,057,191, of whom 720,967 are Reformed (Hungarians), 264,224 are Lutherans (Hungarians and Germans), 72,000 Unitarians (Hungarians). The other part of the Hungarian population is Roman Catholic, the Roumanians belong to the Orthodox Greek and the United Greek Churches. So the Hungarian population, and among these the Reformed people, because of its number and political weight played here a prominent role. We can say that during the period in which Transylvania was an independent country (1542-1848) its whole policy was influenced by Reformed personalities and institutions, so *its history is an example which shows how Calvinism can influence and penetrate the political life of a country*. In order to be made acquainted with this, we have to mention one or two points without which the political life of this country cannot be understood.

1. The Reformed Church on coming to Transylvania found here already a Christian life and civilization. The people of the country were Christianized by the great organizer of Hungarian Christianity, St. Stephen. This king having won the victory over the pagan elements of the Hungarian nation compelled the whole population to take up the Christian religion and founded the Transylvanian Bishopric (1005) in Gyulafehervar (Alba Julia). Under his successors there came into the country several orders: Benedictines, Franciscans; and these were the first forerunners of Christian civilization, centuries before the Reformation came on this territory.

2. After the great national tragedy in the battle of Mohács (1526) the Turkish power extended without any difficulty in the Hungarian lowland and *the development of the independent Transylvanian principality* began. John Zapolya, the rival of Ferdinand I, is still a crowned king of Hungary but after his death on August 29th, 1541, his residence city Buda will be taken by Soliman from his widow Isabel and from his infant son John Sigismund. Queen Isabel comes to Transylvania, residing in Gyulafehervar. Her chancellor Frater George Martinuzzi, although a monk, is obliged to *sacrifice the interest of the Romish Church to that of the country* and, in order to gain the German population, takes no notice of the extension of the Lutheran Reformation, and even confiscates the properties of the vacant bishopric for the royal court. So if the development of the new principality is the result of outward circumstances, on the other hand the extension of the Reformation was possible because of the inward organization of the country. This was the time when the greater part of the Germans and Hungarians became Protestants, the Reformer of the former being Joh. Honterus and of the later Gaspar Heltai.

3. *In the second half of the sixteenth century, in 1550, in this country there was no privileged or state-religion.* On June 22nd of the same year the Parliament passed an Act in which we read: "*conclusum erat ita nunc quoque qui libet in fide sua ipsi a Deo data et concessa permaneat ne alter ab altero praevia ratione infestetur.*" This decision acknowledging the equal rights of Romish and Lutheran Churches at this time was unprecedented in the history of Europe. Even Holland sets up such a foundation during the fight against the Spaniards only (in the Union of Gent) in 1576. The reason of such an act we find not in a spirit of liberalism—for at that time we cannot speak of such a term—but in the public interest. Transylvania—as well as Holland—was obliged to keep together different peoples and Churches in order to secure the independence of the country. So it can be understood that Transylvania accepted the Reformed (in 1564) and even the Unitarian Churches (in 1571), as was the case in Holland where the Puritans driven away from England and the Remonstrants condemned by the synod of Dordrecht were tolerated.

The independence of Transylvania and the declaration of the religious freedom is therefore not the merit of the Reformed

Church. However, if we look into the history of this small country we see this Church appearing in each important moment in defence of *independence and religious freedom*.

## II

The *independence* of the country was in 1550 again in danger. According to a former agreement, insisted on by the Pope, George Martinuzzi handed over Transylvania again to King Ferdinand and persuaded the widow queen to abdicate the throne. In 1551 Castaldo, general of Ferdinand, took the country in hand and the queen departed to Poland. The noblemen of Transylvania were convinced by sad experiences of five years, of the ominousness of this policy. On the one hand the unpaid soldiers robbed the country, on the other hand the Turks and, under their leadership, the Roumanian Voivodes were devastating it. Instead of Martinuzzi, who meantime was murdered, a *reformed nobleman* Peter Petrovich was the defender of national interests. Taking advantage of the antipathy against Ferdinand he marched into Transylvania with his army and as governor pronounced the restoration of the Transylvanian principality under the protection of the Turk. The Parliament, besides the declaration of the independence of the country, took measures for the *confiscation of the property* of the Roman Catholic bishopric. In the same year an Act was passed for gathering together the golden vessels of monasteries and Romish churches and for closing the two biggest cloisters to turn them into schools. In these radical deeds the influence of the Swiss Reformation can be obviously recognized. Among the helpers of Petrovich we find *Kalmancsehi*, the minister of Debreczen, the first apostle of the Hungarian Reformed Church. He was preaching his great sermons on the chief square of Kolozsvar (Cluj)—the Church buildings being in the hands of the Lutherans—on the Reformed or, as he puts it, “the *Hungarian faith*.” One year after came the “Hungarian Calvin,” Melius. He succeeded to win the ministers of Kolozsvar and Marosvasarhely (Targu Mures) for Calvinism; he prepared the first Reformed Confessions and he fought the great fight against Lutheranism on the question of the Holy Supper. Melius was the organizer of the three dioceses extending to both banks of the Tisza river and Transylvania which contained until

1918 all the Reformed population living in the eastern part of Hungary. *The organization of the Transylvanian Reformed Church took place on the synod of April 10th, 1564, when this Church, separating herself from the Lutheran, chose her first bishop, Francis David.* The autonomy of the new Church was acknowledged at the diet of the same year which proclaimed that each town or village had the right to decide which religion it prefers to belong to. So the right of the congregation which was the great question of the Scottish Church in the eighteenth century, was here already settled. In the same year the Reformed ministers in Kolozsvár received the Heidelberg Catechism from the Professors of the Heidelberg University (Ursinus, Olevianus, Tremellius) with these encouraging lines: “. . . Nos etiam vobis gratulamur et vobiscum totis pectoribus Deo gratias agimus quia apud vos etiam verae doctrinae lucem accendit. . . . Nec metu periculorum aut gravitate calamitatum ab officii cura, et veritatis confessione et propagatione conterreamur, nosque et universam Ecclesiam mutuis et assiduis precibus Filio Dei commendemus. . . . Nec portae Inferorum nobis praevaleant.” With this the Transylvanian Reformed Church was accepted not only among the other Reformed Churches of the world but even into the spiritual communion with them.

But the powers of the Church must have been engaged in the struggle for her life. Her first bishop, Fr. David, became in 1556 Unitarian and after him several of the bigger congregations (Kolozsvár-Cluj, Des-Dej, Torda-Turda) even the Prince himself, John Sigismund, joined the Unitarian Church. So about 1570 the whole Protestantism of Transylvania was in danger of separating from oecumenical Christianity. In this difficulty Melius, Bishop of Debreczen, defended, with the help of some congregations, the Church, doing their best for upholding the doctrine of Holy Trinity and of the divinity of Christ. About 260 congregations held on to the Reformed principles.

### III

Prince John Sigismund, the only Unitarian Prince of this age, died in 1571 and since that time the *Bathory family* was the ruling one in Transylvania. The first three of the following Princes—among them Stephen, later King of Poland, were Roman Catholics, the last one, Gabriel, belonged to the Reformed

Church. During their time we find the Reformed Church among the supporters of their rule. What is the reason of that ?

It is generally known that the Reformers' point of view was that the source of civil power is God. This is the conservative feature of their doctrine about politics. On the other hand they expressed several times also the principle that it is the duty of the rulers to govern people according to the law and secure the common peace and freedom. In the forty-third thesis of Zwingli it is stated that tyranny is the worst and most wavering kind of government and Calvin declares that it is the holy right of authorities, parliaments and noblemen to withstand the encroaching autocracy of kings. This shows that the Reformed spiritual policy was also *democratic* and strongly emphasized national autonomy. These two features prevailed gradually in the policy of the Transylvanian Princes.

The country at that time showed a picture of denominational and political division. Three different nations are standing side by side, having different political ideas even each of them having its own system of taxation. Any of them, if offended, was always ready to be excited, and to look for the help of foreign powers. This was the case with the Szekelys (a tribe of Hungarians) between 1562-1600, with the Germans (1604-1613), while the Roumanians, at that time only one-fourth of the whole population, were always preparing for the invasion of the Voivoides of Muntenia (the area beyond the Carpathians).

Being situated among those disuniting forces *it was necessary for Transylvania to have a strong central power*. The Bathory family was, because of its riches and energy, fit to possess this power. Although they were obliged to stifle with bloody measures the rebellion of the Szekelys and Germans, and only Gabriel Bethlen was able to suppress with the help of the Turk the aspiration of the Roumanian Voivoides, it is a fact that Transylvania became, under the reign of the Bathorys, a strong and consolidated country. In this work of consolidation the Reformed Church had also a share, and it is strange but true that *this Church owes a debt of gratitude to this Catholic family*. Stephen Bathory was the man who took this Church out from under the suzerainty of the Unitarian bishop and brought educated ministers and teachers into the Reformed congregations. Christoph Bathory gave the permission to elect again a Reformed bishop and helped him in reorganizing the congregations. Under

Sigismund Bathory—although he belonged to the party of the Counter-Reformation—Reformed noblemen were in the chief political and military offices, and these kept the Prince back from a strong Roman Catholic propaganda. The Reformed cities were attached faithfully to the Bathory family against the Austrian army and its leader, the general of the Habsburg king, and against the Roumanian, Voivoide Michael, till one of the Reformed bishops lost his life in the battle fought against the Austrian power. The Reformed noblemen insisted upon Transylvania taking part in the great coalition initiated by the Pope (Clement VIII) against the Turk, and only the want of discipline in the Austrian army was the reason that this undertaking failed. This is again an occasion when the Transylvanian Reformed Church was taking part in an enterprise of oecumenical Christendom.

The antagonism between the Church and Prince Sigismund Bathory can be seen in the question of the Jesuit order when the Prince was going to help their work in the country. At the diet of Megyes (Medias, 1588) the leaders of both Protestant Churches carried out the *law of the banishment of this order* and declared that the noblemen had a right to have Romish priests but nobody had right to force the conscience “of anybody ‘per vim’ even of the poor subditi” (feudal tenants) in order that this way “*religionis libertas in recepta religione*” should stand according to the old Acts. This shows that *the territorial right of the power of Princes, noblemen or towns above the religion of their subjects was by this time abolished in the country.*

#### IV

It is often looked at as a strange and absurd phenomenon that in the eighteenth century till the collapse of Turkish power in Hungary, Transylvania followed a friendly policy towards the Turk. The reason of this is very simple: *the Christian civilization and the life of the Christian Churches could be better developed under the tolerant Turkish power than under the fanatical Habsburg one.* For the Turk the only important thing was the punctual delivery of taxes: he did not interfere with the inner life of the country. The Habsburgs on the contrary were anxious to Catholicize and Germanize the people. So Transylvania under the Turkish protection became the defender of Hungary

and even of Eastern Protestantism. It is interesting to see the problem of co-operation with the Turk in the first Hungarian Confession (*Confessio Debreczeniensis*, 1562) when the question was put this way: "Is it allowed to fight in war on the side of the Turk?" The answer was this: "It is allowed for the righteous and lawful defence of the country when the robbers attack the glory of God and the peace of the country. But it is forbidden to devastate with the wicked the boundaries of another land." The confession mentions here the example of Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus and Artaxerxes, who have been sent by the Lord to defend His people. But the chief reason is the doctrine of predestination: God is Lord over all, even above the heathen who serve His glory even if they do not know Him, so their help can be used *unto a certain point*.

When electing the new Prince after the death of Sigismund Bathory, Transylvania had to look for a man who could be able to govern this small country which stands in the middle of two hostile powers: the Habsburgs and the Turk, and which was constituted of heterogeneous elements of peoples and Churches. And *this shows the great influence of the Reformed Church in Transylvania*, that these different nations elected as Prince a Reformed nobleman Stephen Bocskay which proves the fact that *in this century the Reformed religion was the greatest guarantee of the liberty and political life of this country*.

There is much written about the great Reformed Princes of Transylvania in historical books. At present I am going to answer only the question how their government and reign stood on the fundamental Reformed faith and conviction. It is a historical fact already asserted that the policy of these Princes was founded on the Bible and the Reformed Confessions. Under their reign (1606-1660) four editions of the Bible were published in the Hungarian language, themselves being faithful readers of the Scriptures even when in the camp during war. They provided the new edition of the *Heidelberg Catechism* (1612) and the translation of the second *Helvetic Confession* as well as that of the *Institutes* of Calvin. Their belief was that the power of the Prince comes from God in order to serve Him in securing the peace and liberty of the nations. Under their rule the rebellions of the different nations ceased. Gabriel Bethlen, at the first diet after his accession, fixed again the union of the nations in the country, gave back the privileges of the Germans taken away by



Gabriel Bathory. Industry, commerce and the working of mines were prosperous owing to good laws and to the help of foreign experts called into the country. The diet of 1619 declares that "They thank God the country has everything in abundance." It was a difficult task to gain the sympathy of the Roumanians. The first problem was to educate them to be a nation worthy of national rights, culture and independence in church life: only after that could a part be given them in the governing of the country. The first step towards this was *the union between the Roumanian Orthodox and the Transylvanian Reformed Churches* which was started and forwarded on the plan of Cyrillus Lucaris, the Patriarch of Constantinople. This union was upheld during the whole seventeenth century and was broken up only by the persecutions of the Habsburgs (1701). It did not touch the autonomy of the Orthodox Church, which had an independent bishop, synod, church government and court of justice for marriage affairs; only the oath of the elected bishop to the Prince and the supreme superintendence of the state were obligatory for them.

A great German Church historian, Hase, called Transylvania "the classical country of religious freedom." This statement is true in some respects, but this freedom was, of course, not the so-called liberalism of to-day. In the first laws of the country dealing with affairs of religion (1548, 1550) we find an effort put forth that if the disunity of Christianity cannot be avoided, to try *to moderate and to bind to localities the Reformation*. According to the law (1541) the towns and villages had the right to decide which denomination they wanted to belong to. The denominational character of the greater towns was fixed. A new religion could not be introduced except with the permission of Parliament. In villages the Church property belonged to the majority but this obliged them to help the minority to erect their own building. On the other side, Reformation was looked on as completed as regards the confession. The law of 1570 forbade heresy; a later one declares with respect to "innovation" that the *introducing of new doctrines is allowed only with the permission of the Synod*. These laws were carried out by the Reformed Princes. So the Unitarians were forced by Prince Rakoczy I in 1638 to abide by their confession made in 1579. The same happened with the innovators of the Reformed Church. Ministers who brought Puritan ideas from Cambridge, Heidelberg

and Holland were imprisoned or exiled, although at the same time the General Synod accepted many of the ideas of Puritanism. The Romish Church shared the right of autonomy with other Churches except that she could not have bishops in the Romish meaning of the word, only a vicar elected by the Church, for the Transylvanian Principality did not acknowledge the appointment either of the Pope nor of the Habsburg Emperor.

## V

In *foreign politics*, Transylvania took the opportunity to join with the great European nations in defence of Protestantism. Stephen *Bocskay*—whose statue can be seen on the Reformation Monument in Geneva—was the first to attack the Counter-Reformation (1604-1605) and the result of his liberty-war was that the Emperor was obliged to secure religious freedom also for the Austrian, Bohemian and Silesian noblemen (*Maiestats-brief*, 1609) and in Hungary such a measure of religious freedom was given to the Reformed Church as was gained only for the other European ones by the Peace Treaty of Westphalia (1648). *Gabriel Bethlen*, the greatest Prince of Transylvania, was a member of the Protestant League, the leader of which was James I, King of England. The result of his three campaigns was the securing of religious freedom for Hungary and a territorial growth of Transylvania. At the same time he saved the country from the horrors of the religious war which at that time covered the whole of Europe. Prince *Rakoczy I* cautiously awaiting the end of the Thirty Years War, then (1644) took up arms and secured such freedom for religious practice from Emperor Ferdinand III (in 1645) as included even the right of feudal tenants to use of Church buildings, cemeteries and bells. This success was one reason for the Westphalian Treaty.

In these wars the Princes availed themselves of the help of the Turk but *only in the measure it was allowed in the Reformed Confession* mentioned above. *Bocskay* declined the crown offered to him by the Sultan, *Bethlen* executed Turkish generals because of want of discipline in their army. In the army of *Rakoczy I* there were only five hundred Turkish troopers, and he rendered it impossible for them to rob the country during the war. This enables us to understand the opinion which is expressed in a letter of a Reformed general: "The people

everywhere bless with clasped hands God for us," and it was not in vain that the slogan of Rakoczy I was taken from Romans ix. 16—"Neque volentis, neque currentis sed miserentis Dei"—for his campaign was marked by the utmost sparing of human life.

In these wars the Transylvanian Princes were supported with military forces by the French, Germans and Swedes, financially by the French (Louis XIII and XIV), in diplomacy by the British people. The British ambassador, Th. Roe, did not at first understand the manifold ways of Bethlen's policy and he sent an unfavourable opinion of him to King James. But some time after, he and his successors warmly took up the cause of the Princes. This is contained in a letter of King James—which letter is looked on by some as apocryphal—where we read: "It is in the interest of ourselves and of whole Europe that Hungary should stand on the one hand as *a solid defender of Christianity*, on the other hand as *a bridle for Germany*." This thing—*defender of Christianity in the east and a bridle for the imperialistic aspirations of the Habsburgs* for the west—this was at that time the mission of Transylvania.

The effort to be able to fulfil this mission was the reason that the Transylvanian Princes were anxious to draw into their circles those small countries (Muntenia, Moldova) which lay around their country. Rakoczy I succeeded in taking these Roumanian Voivoides under his influence, which fact was the first step towards their long-desired independence of Turkish rule.

After the Peace of Westphalia (1648) Transylvania was one of the strongest and richest countries of the European Continent. No wonder that George Rakoczy II tried to weaken the Habsburg power with his aspiration for gaining the Polish throne, which effort, however, led to an unfortunate war. The reason of this was that he was mistaken in his opinion about the European situation as he *thought that the religious ideas were still the leading forces of peoples, although these ideas already gave place to the national interests of the states*. Cromwell welcomed the ambassador of Rakoczy and assured him of friendship (in June, 1655), but two years later when the Transylvanian army was destroyed and the Prince abdicated, he was not able to do anything for him. The British ambassador, Thomas Bendyshe, was heartily supporting the Swede-Transylvanian alliance in Constantinople, but the Sultan was very angry against Rakoczy who, with his

ambition, drew him into conflict with the Habsburgs. It is also true that this plan of the Prince for securing for himself the Polish throne *was objected to by the leaders of the Reformed Church*. The man after whose counsel the Prince made this plan was the famous educationist (John Comenius) who had no political abilities.

The tragical campaign of Rakoczy II and his early death (1660) found the Reformed Church in serious internal difficulties and disunion. The half-way solution of the Synod of Szatmar (Satmar) on the question of Presbyterianism caused a great difficulty. The Presbyterian ministers stood on the side of the new Prince Barcsay and the Turkish alliance, the Episcopalians supported another pretender and were insisting on politics being put upon a new orientation towards Austria. In this confusion the Sultan's army devastated three times (1558, 1560, 1661) the country, destroying many churches, schools and archives. Some parts of the country became depopulated and lost for the Church. The situation was not yet ripe for a final blow to the Turk, so the Western powers did not come to help the country. At last the subjected and intimidated people accepted as Prince, *Michael Apaffy*, who had been appointed by the Turk (1661).

Apaffy was the last Orthodox (Reformed) Prince of Transylvania. Although he was a true patron of his Church and a good scholar of theology, he was unable to follow the policy of his predecessors. The country was short of necessary military forces and financial means, and the Prince lacked energy. The country owes the preservation of its Reformed character to two distinguished statesmen: the chancellor *Michael Teleky* and the counsellor *Nicolaus Bethlen*. The former was doing his best to renew its old strength and power; the latter, foreseeing the great event of the collapse of the Turkish power, looked for Western protectors for his country and with this aim he visited the Palatinate, Holland, Great Britain and France. It was a tragic feature of this age that even inside the country the people were in uncertainty facing the quickly approaching crisis: the loss of the Turkish help and the European alliance for expelling the Turk from Hungary. This period brought forth the strong guarantees of independence for Transylvania: the chief Consistory of the Reformed Church and the Diploma Leopoldinum.

## VI

The *chief Consistory* was the chief authority of the Church, which body contained *the Reformed magistrates, estates, governors, deputies and patrons*. It was set up beside the chief legislative body of the Church, the Synod for defending the Church against the tyranny of the Prince and in order to secure the support of civil authority. The chief Consistory provided and looked after the financial and school affairs, took these before the Prince and before the diet. This body was defending the autonomy of the Church, and beside that the constitution of the State in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The *Diploma Leopoldinum* given out by Emperor Leopold I secured the validity of the old laws and constitution of Transylvania. Bethlen says that for providing this Diploma the ambassadors of the foreign powers are to be thanked: Dankelmann of Brandenburg, Paget of Great Britain, Henshirken of Holland. So European Christendom recognized the service rendered by Transylvania in the Thirty Years War.

Transylvania stood under the Habsburg rule as *an independent principality* from 1690 till 1848. Against the re-catholicizing and denationalizing efforts of the Habsburg dynasty the Reformed Church was unable to do anything except to resist passively and to protest. To the chair of the chief governor were appointed Roman Catholic noblemen, and Protestants were left outside of state offices—the surest way of success was the changing of religion. The new reign destroyed also the traditional Transylvanian unity. The Roman Catholic Church hastened to make use of the favourable situation. Some years later the Counter-Reformation intensified its efforts in Transylvania. Church buildings and schools were taken away from the Protestant Churches in Gyulafehervar (Alba Julia) and in Kolozsvar (Cluj). In villages where the population was confessionally mixed the quarrel for the Church buildings was continuous. The Jesuit order gained power. A new decree was given out that if one of the parents was Roman Catholic, each child had to follow this religion. Conversion to the Reformed Church was severely punished. The result of this was that the Unitarian Church lost two-thirds of its adherents—the Reformed Church had

the absolute majority in the country—and the Romish Church, which had only one-fifth of the population, became the second great Church of the country.

## VII

In spite of these difficulties the Reformed Church was engaged, even in this difficult period, in the true and faithful service of her mission. Some examples will show this. Nicolaus Bethlen at the time of the insurrection of Rakoczy II prepared a plan for the British and Dutch ambassadors recommending to secure the *neutrality of Transylvania* under the Habsburg dynasty according to Leopold's Diploma. For this he was kept in prison, first in Szeben (Sibiu), afterwards in Vienna till his death. A professor of the college in Nagyenyed (Aiud), which college was founded by Gabriel Bethlen, Fr. Pariz-Papay, and the chief curator A. Teleky, turned to the British Protestants for help in erecting a new building for the college (1709), the old one being burnt down by the Austrian soldiers. In this way £11,000 was raised, which sum was put in the Bank of England, and this capital was used almost during 150 years for the equipment of the college. On this occasion Pariz-Papay presented his big Dictionary in sumptuous binding and Teleky his sword with precious stones, to the King of Great Britain. In 1716, when the students and professors of the same college were driven away by Austrian soldiers, they found a home in Maros-vasarhely (Targu Mures), where the town welcomed them. In 1727, when the Jesuits and the Austrian soldiers were about to take away the Church buildings of a village, five Reformed ministers, accompanied by the congregation, defended them with swords.

In the middle of the century we find two great Reformed personalities. One of them was *Catherina Bethlen*, a great patroness of congregations and schools who, being forced to marry a Catholic nobleman, was deprived of her children and found comfort in embracing and helping the Reformed congregations with her maternal care. The other was a village minister, *Peter Bod* (1702-1769), who was one of the greatest scholars of his age and founder of Hungarian Church history. There was also a professor in the college of Szekelyudvarhely (Odorheiu), who with his work lifted up this college to the rank

of a high school (academy) and with his economy collected for it 32,000 florins. In the same century another Transylvanian nobleman, Samuel Teleky, founded a great library in Marosvasarhely and defended the autonomy of the Reformed colleges against the Austrian dynasty.

These instances show how the Church tried to fight for her life during the eighteenth century but, alas, not with the desired effect. The Habsburg rule got Transylvania totally into its hands, although at the end of the eighteenth century *each nation in the country was disappointed with this reign.*

In the first years of the nineteenth century only the distant waves of the Napoleonic war reached Transylvania. The revolutionary ideas did not find proper soil either in Austria or in Hungary or in Transylvania, and all these countries, in spite of all temptations, remained true to their lawful king. The reward of this loyalty was the introducing of patriarchal absolutism after the congress of Vienna. Between 1811 and 1834 there was no diet in Transylvania, the governor and the officials were appointed by the Emperor instead of being elected by Parliament. The governing officials were almost all Roman Catholics. The spirit which was defending the constitution of the country was fostered inside the Reformed Church. We find the leaders of this Church in the diets of 1834-1848 insisting on liberal, democratic reforms, one of the most prominent among them being *Charles Szasz*, professor at the Nagyenyed College, another being Baron *Nicolaus Wesselenyi*. The former urged the union of Transylvania with Hungary and defended the autonomy of the Protestant Churches, the latter prepared the way with his fight for the free press and for the emancipation of feudal tenants for the liberal laws of 1848. Both of them were punished by the government, but the fruit of their work ripened in March, 1848, when the diet led by Kossuth declared the union of Transylvania and Hungary. This declaration was approved by the representatives of all the nations and Churches of the country. The spirit of this last Transylvanian diet was influenced by Protestantism. The laws passed then included the securing of equal right for the Roumanian nation with the others, settling the question of language, the emancipation of the feudal tenants without any liability on their part, providing the necessary amount for maintenance of Church and schools of each recognized confession from the State budget, full liberty for changing of

religion for anybody—all these were secured by laws of such a liberal spirit as we hardly find anywhere else at that time.

These laws were not carried out as a result of the liberty war of 1848-49 nor because of the absolutism which followed. Only after the treaty which took place between the Habsburg dynasty and the Hungarian nation in 1867 did the Hungarian government try to repay with good laws the debt which Hungary owes Transylvania for its efforts for defence of the whole nation.

G. NAGY.

Kolozsvar, Roumania.