

Concordia Seminary - Saint Louis

Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary

Bachelor of Divinity

Concordia Seminary Scholarship

5-1-1947

The First Ninety Years of Lutheranism in Slovakia

Milan A. Ontko

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, ir_ontkom@csl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv>



Part of the [History of Christianity Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Ontko, Milan A., "The First Ninety Years of Lutheranism in Slovakia" (1947). *Bachelor of Divinity*. 201.
<https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv/201>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Concordia Seminary Scholarship at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Bachelor of Divinity by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

THE FIRST NINETY YEARS OF
LUTHERANISM IN SLOVAKIA

A Thesis Presented to
The Faculty of Concordia Seminary
Department of Historical Theology

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Divinity

by
Milan A. Ontko
May 1947

Approved by

George Dolak
George B. Schick

TOURIST MAP OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA



THE MAIN
CONNECTIONS
Scale:

EXPLANATIONS:
Places:
Cities with 100,000 inhabitants and over.
Towns with 25-100,000 inhabitants.
Towns with 10-25,000 inhabitants.
Towns with 5-10,000 inhabitants.
Other places.
Railway lines.
Motor roads.
Frontiers.
Political boundaries.
Headquarters of the political administration authorities.
Mines.
Naphtha.
Castle ruins.
Ruins and preserved ruins.
Scale: 1:1,000,000

- PLACES OF INTEREST FOR FOREIGNERS:**
- Spas.
 - Towns and cities of historical and cultural importance.
 - Nature peculiarities.
 - Winter sports centres.
 - Towns of special economic importance.
 - Climatic resorts.
 - Summer resorts.

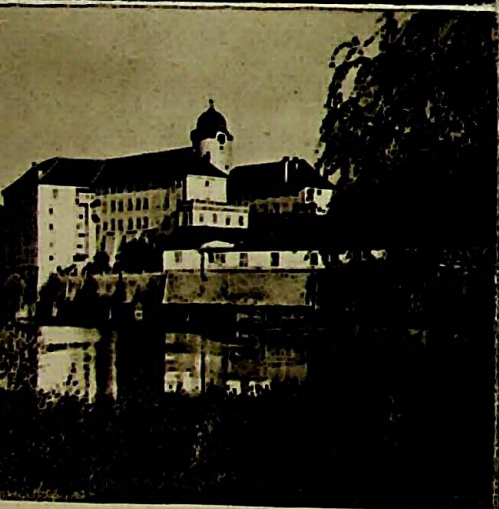
Scale: 1:1,000,000
0 50 100 150 200 km

RIST MAP of Czechoslovakia

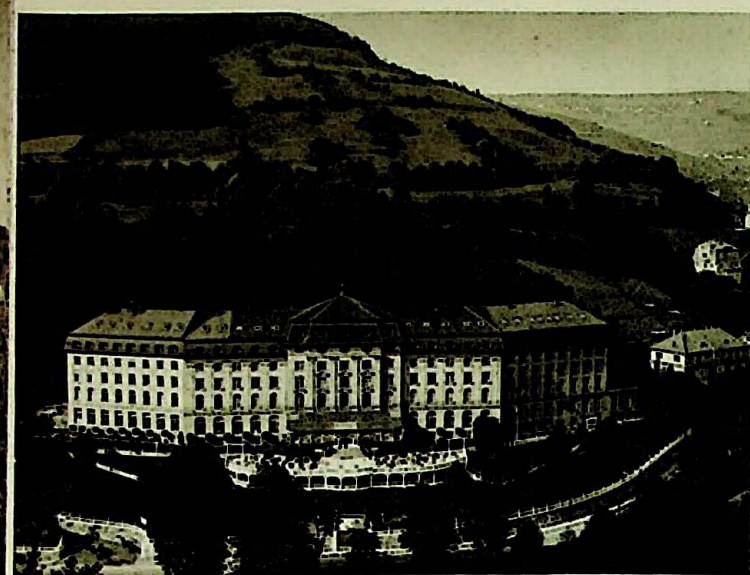
MADE IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA



PRAHA



PODEBRADY SPA.



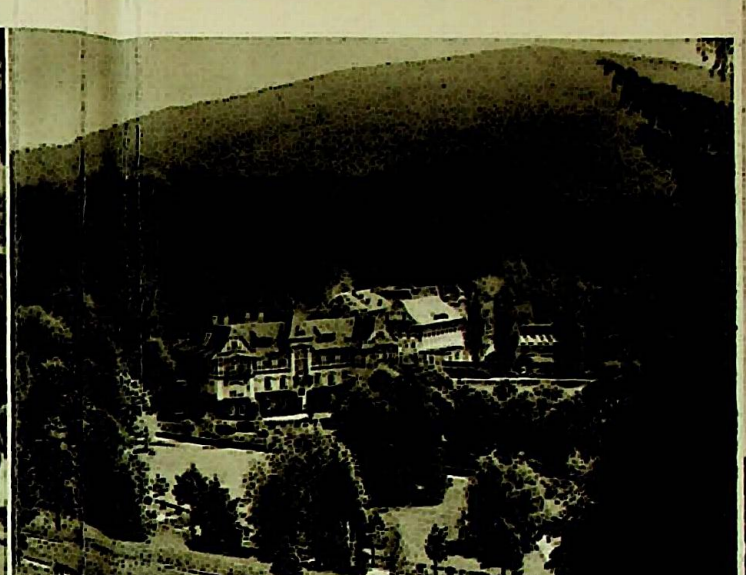
JÁCHYMOV, FAMOUS RADIUM SPA.



KARLOVY VARY (CARLSBAD) SPA.



MAR. LÁZNĚ (MARIENBAD) SPA.



LUHAČOVICE SPA.

The Czechoslovak Republic occupies an area of 140,389 sq. kilometres and has over 15,132,000 inhabitants; 66.5% are of Czechoslovak nationality, 22% German (mainly on the N. W. frontier), 5.2% Magyar (on the S. E. frontier), 0.5% Polish (in the Těšín district) and 3.5% Russian (in Carpathian Ruthenia). In all the more important places the German, French or English languages are understood. From the point of view of political administration, Czechoslovakia is divided into four territories: Bohemia, Moravia-Silesia, Slovakia and Carpathian Ruthenia.

The foreign visitor will be interested in the following main features (consult the map on the front page):

1. Five Hundred Mineral and Medicinal Springs.

Czechoslovakia may justly be called a land of spas and medicinal springs, for in all parts of the country there are numerous spas and health resorts where every year many thousands of sick persons find relief and curative treatment.

Anaemia and chlorosis: Mariánské Lázně (Marienbad), Frant. Lázně (Franzensbad), Poděbrady, Sliač, Johannisbrunn, Tatranská Lomnice, Štrbské Pleso, Lubochňa, Lučky, Rájecké Teplice and Karlsbrunn.

Basedow's disease: Tatranská Lomnice, Štrbské Pleso, Smokovce, Tatranská Polianka (Sanatorium Dr. Guhr).

Complaints of the digestive organs: Karlovy Vary (Karlsbad), Mariánské Lázně (Marienbad), Františkovy Lázně (Franzensbad), Luhačovice, Korytnica and Bilina.

Metabolic complaints and gout: Jáchymov, Karlovy Vary (Karlsbad), Mariánské Lázně (Marienbad), Luhačovice, Františkovy Lázně (Franzensbad), Dolní Lipová (Nieder-Lindewiese), Bilina, Poděbrady, Piešťany and Trenčianské Teplice.

Women's complaints: Karlovy Vary (Karlsbad), Františkovy Lázně (Franzensbad), Mariánské Lázně (Marienbad), Luhačovice, Sliač, Jánské Lázně (Johannisbad), Konstantinsbad, Liebwerda, Darkov, Velké Losiny (Gross Ullersdorf), Johannisbrunn, Čiz, Sklenné Teplice, Bohdaneč, Mšené near Budyně, Bělohrad and Velichovky.

Bladder and urethral complaints: Františkovy Lázně (Franzensbad), Karlovy Vary (Karlsbad), Mariánské Lázně (Marienbad), Teplice-Šanov (Teplitz-Schönau) and Korytnica.

Diseases of the bones, muscles and joints: Jáchymov, Trenčianské Teplice, Piešťany, Františkovy Lázně (Franzensbad), Teplice-Šanov (Teplitz-Schönau), Velichovky, Mšené, Bohdaneč, Bělohrad, Velké Losiny (Gross Ullersdorf), Rájecké Teplice, Štubňanské Teplice, Sklenné Teplice and Smerdžonka.

Constitutional diseases: scrofula, rachitis: Darkov, Luhačovice and Čiz.

Leukaemia: Jáchymov.

Bronchial catarrh (excluding tuberculosis): Františkovy Lázně (Franzensbad), Mariánské Lázně (Marienbad), Luhačovice, Lubochňa and Herlany.

Tuberculosis of the lungs: Matliary, Nový Smokovce and Polianka.

Diseases of the nose and larynx: Jáchymov, Luhačovice, Poděbrady and Bilina.

Nervous disorders and post-hemiplegic conditions: Jáchymov, Sliač, Teplice-Šanov (Teplitz-Schönau), Piešťany, Trenčianské Teplice, Sklenné Teplice, Rájecké Teplice, Štubňanské Teplice and Smerdžonka.

Convalescence: in the majority of Czechoslovak health resorts, especially in the High Tatras.

Schroth's dietetic cure: Dolní Lipová (Nieder Lindewiese).

Priessnitz hydropathic cure: Gräfenberk.

2. Towns and Castles of Historical and Cultural Importance.

Bohemia: Praha (Prague), Tábor, Kutná Hora, Písek, Prachatic, Litomyšl, Pardubice (architecture); Stará Boleslav (memorials of St. Venceslas); Vyšší Brod (monastery); Karlův Týn, Hluboká n. Vlt., Český Krumlov, Rožmberk, Rábi, Konopiště, Jindřichův Hradec, Střekov, Mnichovo Hradiště, Bezděz, Český Šternberk, Orlik, Zvíkov, Křivoklát, Lány (castles); Kuks and Betlem near Dvůr Králové (architecture, plastic work by M. Braun); Domažlice (folklore).

Moravia: Brno, Olomouc, Telč, Znojmo, Třebíč (architecture), Uherské Hradiště (folklore); Bousov, Bítov, Vranov, Buchlov, Pernštýn, Velehrad (castles); Slavkov (the battlefield of Austerlitz, Napoleon's famous victory).

Slovakia: Bratislava, Kežmarok, Levoča, Zvoleň, Prešov, Nitra, Turčanský Sv. Martin (architecture); Trenčín, Čachtice, Beckov, Orava, Spišský Hrad, Strečno, Dévin, Bojnice (castles); Čičmany, Detva (folklore).

Carpathian Ruthenia: Užhorod, Mukačevo, Chust

and Hoverla in Carpathian Ruthenia (mountains); Průhonice, Žehušice, Červený Hrádek, Lednice, Kroměříž and Mlýňany (parks and botan. gardens); Poprad-Velká (Tatra museum).

4. Winter Sports Centres.

Klínovec, Bouřňák, Nový Svět, Jilemnice, Špindlerův Mlýn, Jánské Lázně, Čerchov, Špičák, Železná Ruda, Králický Sněžník, the Praděd region, Nové Město (in Moravia), Radhošť, Štrbské Pleso, Tatranská Lomnice, Starý and Nový Smokovce (details see Map).

5. A Number of Towns of International Economic Importance. Coal: Moravská Ostrava, Karvinná, Most and Kladno. **Metal Industry:** Vítkovice, Třinec, Kladno (ironworks), Prague (automobiles, railway carriages, aeroplanes, patent fasteners), Plzeň (Škoda Works), Brno, Bratislava, Roudnice, Brandýs n. L., Prostějov (agricultural machines). **Textiles:** Aš, Warnsdorf, Liberec, Trutnov, Náchov, Dvůr Králové, Šumperk, Brno, Jihlava, Krnov, Bratislava, Žilina, Ružomberok. **Glass:** Bor near Česká Lípa and other towns. **Porcelain:** the neighbourhood of Karlovy Vary. **Ceramics:** Horní Bříza, Rakovník, Znojmo and Hodonín. **Chemicals:** Ústí n. L., Kolín, Morav. Ostrava, Sušice (matches), České Budějovice (pencils). **Hides and Footwear:** Prague, Chrudim, Brno, Zlín (Baťa), Třebíč, Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš. **Paper:** Český Krumlov, Hostinné, Ružomberok. **Cement:** Králové Dvůr, Čížkovice. **Sugar:** Mělník, Neštěmice. **Beer:** Plzeň, Prague, Brno. **Wine:** Mělník, Berehovo, Bratislava. **Hops:** Žatec. **Salt:** Akna Slatina.

6. Summer Health Resorts and Climatic Resorts.

Babylon, Česká Kubice, Vyšší Brod, Rožmberk, Turnov (Bohemian Paradise), Písek, Bechyně, Doksy (the Czechoslovak Lido), Železná Ruda, Vranov (artificial lake on the famous river dam), Bítov, Krkonoše (the Giant Mountains), Znojmo, Rožnov, Radhošť, the Tatra Mountains, Oravský Podzámok, Báňská Bystrice, Kremnice and Lubochňa.

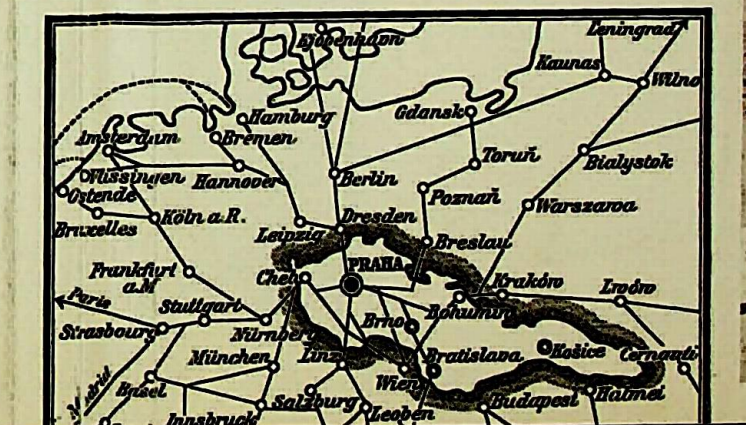
7. Periodical or Occasional Cultural Enterprises and Festivals.

Moravian and Slovak folk festivities (folklore); regional exhibitions; Sokol physical training exhibitions (a Pan-Sokol Congress will be held at Prague in 1938); Passion Plays at Hořice (1936), every kind of sporting events; many-sided artistic life in Prague. A special list is published every year.

Railway Transport. In Czechoslovakia railway transport is comparatively cheap. For one dollar the visitor can travel by express train on the Czechoslovak railways a distance of 85 kilometres, as compared with 75 km in Germany, 70 km in Austria, and 62 km in Switzerland. In addition, the Czechoslovak railways offer holiday advantages: 1. Reduction of 20-40% on the circular tickets from the minimum distance of 300 km; 2. Reduction of 50% to the visitors of Czechoslovak spas after a stay of at least 10 days. 3. After a stay of at least 6 days in the country every foreign visitor is entitled to claim a reduction of 66.7% on the return fare (free choice of direction) from May 15. to October 31: Praha and many Czechoslovak spas have direct through-carriage connections with all the large towns of Europe, esp. Vienne, Budapest, Bucarest, München, Zürich, Paris, Berlin, Frankfurt, Warsaw etc.

Czechoslovakia (Prague) has very good international connections by air; 4 inland and 14 international lines run services over Czechoslovak territory. There is also a well developed local autocar service in all sections of the country.

Full particulars on all questions of stay and travel in Czechoslovakia may be obtained through all travel agencies. Details on spas through the Union of Czechoslovak Spas (Praha I.) or the Central office of the Czechosl. State Spas (Praha VI.), on hotels through the Union of Czechoslovak Hotel Proprietors (Praha II.). All kind of information can also be obtained through the Tourist Department of the Ministry of Commerce (Praha II.).



I.

THE SLOVAKS: WHO ARE THEY?

The terms Czechoslovaks, Czechoslovakia, were coined in 1918, when on October 28 of that year the Czechs (Bohemians) and Slovaks proclaimed their independence of the Austro Hungarian monarchy and announced to the world their establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic.

There are four theories as to the origin of the Slavs, one of the tribes of which were the Slovaks, a collective name probably derived from the old "Slav" or "Slavian" or "Sloveni". Some writers claim that the word "Slav" is derived from "sláva", glory, but most probably it is traced to the word "slovo", word, thus meaning speech, as distinguished from "mutes" or "Nemci", as the Slavonians called the Germans. Many Slovak writers¹ believe that the Slovaks are autochthonous, claiming origin from the soil on which they dwell.² Others claim that they were tribes or sister clans of closely related Slavic tribes who already prior to the Christian era were moving southward and southwestward from the native territory of all Slavs, the great Vistula watershed region, which today is the heart of modern Poland, to the central portion of Europe and below the Carpathian Mountains.³ Some claim that one division of the tribes came from the Black Sea region; these probably being the fore-

1. Šafárik, Ludovít Štúr, Pavel Križka, Fr. Sasinek, Palácky, Joz. Lud. Holuby; also the Russian chronicler, Nestor.

2. Samo Czembel, Slováci a ich reč, p. 1.

3. Ibid., p. 6.

bears of the Bulgars.⁴ Still others believe that they were tribes which migrated from the West.⁵ The second theory is the one which is being accepted more and more today.

The earliest settlements of the Slovaks were peaceful, but toward the close of the sixth century their territory was invaded and for a time under the rule of the Avars. In the seventh century they were invaded by the Germans. The history of the Czechoslovak tribes has been, since the sixth century, one of perpetual struggles against invaders -- the Avars, Huns, and Magyars (Hungarians) on the southeast; the Germans on the west, southwest, and northwest.

The Slovaks up to 906 formed a unit with the Greater Moravian kingdom, which was organized on the territory of present day Western Slovakia and Moravia. In 1029 the Slovaks were driven by the Magyars, a Finno-Ugrian nomadic tribe which had come from the upper Volga, from the fields in the warm lowlands of Moravia eastward to the mountainous regions which they now occupy. Till 1918 they were largely under the domination of the Hungarians. However, despite foreign dominations, their language even to this day remains very near to the original language of the early Slavic tribes. Their cultural advance has been restricted by their isolation, repression, and rude mountainous environment, but they have preserved much of their wonderful folk art and individuality.⁶

4. Ibid., p. 18.

5. Ibid., p. 25.

6. Robert J. Kerner, Czechoslovakia Twenty Years of Independence, pp. 3-7, under The Czechoslovaks - Anthropological Notes, contributed by Aleš Hrdlička.

The physical Slovak is a "type characterized by good stature; strong, well-proportioned body, mostly rounded head (brachycephaly); face medium or rounded rather than narrow and long; physiognomy frank, smiling, intelligent, attractive; hair varying from blond to brunette and eyes ranging from blue to medium brown; absence of prognathism. Their principal mental characteristics are cordiality, sensitiveness, idealism, valor, love of family, love of country, love of music and the dance, love of friendly social amenities. Also, they exhibit considerable individualism, ingrained love of the soil and all that goes with it, of order and cleanliness. And there is a universal hunger for knowledge, which leads to higher education of many of the children. The Czechoslovaks are industrious and thrifty. Their sense of humor and their idealism are above the general average, their criminality is virtually restricted to the mentally abnormal. They are not good money-makers, nor in general good politicians, or large-scale traders, having but infrequent inclination in this direction; but they excel in music, art, science, and literature. They enjoy good living, but not luxury."⁷

How early were the Slavs Christianized? In rewriting the Russian Nestor's "Letopis", Pavel Jozef Šafárik quotes him in his "Slovanské Starožitnosti" (1837) pp. 190-192 as stating that St. Andronicus, a disciple of St. Paul, worked among the Slavs, and that the Apostle Paul himself was a missionary in Moravia and used the Slav language in his teaching.⁸

7. Ibid., p. 5.

8. Czambel, op. cit., p. 2.

In the eighth century, when the Slavs were under Frankish domination, Bishop Arno of Salzburg, upon orders from Charlemagne, conducted a regular mission for their conversion. Somewhere between the years 824 and 836, Pribina, a prince in Western Slovakia, had a Christian church built at his seat, the Castle of Nitra, and consecrated by the Archbishop of Salzburg, though he himself was still a pagan.

Slovakia was again partly Christianized during the reign of Mojmir I (? -846), first king of the Greater Moravian kingdom, who himself adopted Christianity. During this period Roman Catholic missionaries from the neighboring German dioceses began their work among the Slavs, but since the Slavs did not understand the German nor the Latin liturgy, they were dissatisfied and demanded Christian teachers who spoke the Slavic language. The Slavic leaders also feared the Roman-Germanic political influence of these "foreign" teachers. Rastislav (846-870), who freed his country from the Frankish yoke and deprived the German bishops of all their influence, petitioned the Byzantine court to send him a few missionaries. In 863 Emperor Michael III sent him two brothers, Constantine and Methodius, Greek priests and natives of Salonica (Thessalonica), a city of mixed Greek and Slavonian inhabitants.⁹

These two missionaries, with the aid of assistants, Naum, Gorazd, and Angelár, taken from among the Slovak natives,¹⁰ brought Christianity to the majority of the Slovaks and estab-

9. Thomas Čapek, The Slovaks of Hungary, p. 11.

10. Stefan Krčmery, Prehľad dejín slovenskej literatúry a vzdelanosti, p. 14.

lished the Church on their territory. They introduced a liturgy and public worship in the language of the Slavs, and by preaching in the Slavic tongue won their way to the hearts of the heathen people. Constantine taught the Slavs the art of written speech, inventing an alphabet which consisted of 41 letters. This alphabet is commonly referred to as the "cyrilika" - the Cyrillic alphabet, but there is some question as to whether it was not the "hlaholica" - the Old-Slavonic script, the former being an adaptation of the latter by the disciples of Constantine and Methodius. These two missionaries also introduced a Slavic translation of the Bible, together with some religious books.

But despite their success, they found themselves harassed by the German bishops, who resented the entry of the Eastern Church upon their territory. They were accused of heresy, and realized that only by attaching themselves to the Roman pope, they could continue undisturbed in their work. Therefore, upon invitation of pope Nicholas I in 867, they went to Rome, and upon examination by pope Hadrian II, Nicholas having died while they were making the trip, they were ordained bishops. By this action the connection of the Western Slavs with the Western Church, with all its important political and cultural consequences, may be traced to these two missionaries.

Constantine, because of illness, remained in Rome, took the name of Cyril and joined a monastery, where he died on February 14, 869. He is said to be buried in the Basilica of St. Clement in Rome.

Methodius now returned to Slovakia as an archbishop in 871. Again the German bishops accused him of heresy and suspected his fidelity to the Roman pope and even imprisoned him for two years. Methodius vindicated himself in 879 before pope John VIII, who permitted him to continue the use of the Slavic liturgy. The intrigues of the German clergy, however, did not cease and rather embittered the last days of the good and brave Apostle of the Slavs. Methodius died on April 6, 885, and is buried in Velehrad.

---O---
This period of the Lutheran Reformation to the Synod of Zilina (Sillein, Szolna), 1610, which was the first attempt at the organization and supervision of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church, finds the Slovaks under the domination of the Hungarians. When dealing with the history of the Slovaks of this period, we deal primarily with the history of the north-western counties of pre-war Hungary (1918), which were the home of the majority of the Slovaks and which today are incorporated in eastern Czechoslovakia.

The beginnings of Luther's reformation by passing on to the Slovaks church rites, liturgies, ceremonies and religious songs in the Czech language.¹¹ The entire liturgy and terminology of the present-day Slovak Ev. Lutheran Church in Slovakia, as well as here in America, is still in the Czech language. Since the Reformation up to the present day the Slovak Lutherans have used the old Czech "Kralická" translation of the Bible.

We note the influence in Slovakia of Luther's reformation

11. Prof. Karel Těsnohlavský, *Česká evangelická církev v Uhersku*, Praha, 1911, s. 10.

II.

BEGINNINGS OF THE REFORMATION IN SLOVAKIA

Slovakia early received reports of the reformatory efforts begun by Dr. Martin Luther, and she was well-prepared to receive such a movement. The Hussites, followers of the reformer John Hus, because of persecutions in Bohemia, settled in this territory in the middle of the fifteenth century under the leadership of John Jiskra and promulgated the true Gospel of Christ and the teachings of their Czech reformer. Upon the request of Queen Elizabeth, widow of King Albert, the famous general, John Jiskra of Brandýs, for nearly a quarter of a century (1440-1462) occupied and ruled Slovakia for her son, Ladislav Posthumus, the child-king. Žižka and priest Prokop the Bald invaded and for about seven years occupied Western Slovakia. They built churches, schools, printed religious books and literature and had laid the groundwork for the beginnings of Luther's reformation by passing on to the Slovaks church rites, liturgies, ceremonies and religious songs in the Czech language.¹¹ The entire liturgy and hymnology of the present-day Slovak Ev. Lutheran Church in Slovakia, as well as here in America, is still in the Czech language. Since the Reformation up to the present day the Slovak Lutherans have used the old Czech "Kralická" translation of the Bible.

We note the influence in Slovakia of Luther's reformatory

11. Belo Klein-Tesnoskalský, Obrazy z dejín prešovských evanjelikov, p. 6.

movement especially after June 1520 when the papal Bull *Exsurge Domine* was announced against Luther. The appearance of Luther's three great works of the Reformation during the latter part of this year also had its influence. Directly as a result of the Leipzig Debate Luther published three small booklets which began a little war of pamphlets. The first of these, appearing in October, 1520, was "The Letter to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation" which was written to the laity and which was directed against what we today call sacerdotalism. About a month later he wrote "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church" in which he attacked the sacramentalism of the Church, undermining the power of the pope by showing the people and the pope that they no longer had to fear the interdict of the pope. The third, "The Freedom of a Christian Man" is a summary of Christian doctrine. As a result of these pamphlets the Catholic clergy had to publicly oppose Luther and thereby the laity was given an opportunity to consider whether they would follow Luther or Rome.

News of his teachings, his writings, and his Bible were brought into Slovakia by traveling German merchants, members of the German army sent to fight against the Turk, German officials in the king's court, and by many students from Slovakia attending the university of Wittenberg, who, upon their return and visits to their native soil, brought reports of the great religious upheaval in Germany. Among the first students at Wittenberg in 1522 from Slovakia were Baumheckel

from Banská Bystrica and Martin Cyriak from Levoča.¹² Between the years 1522-1564 two-hundred Slovak students¹³ of theology were registered at Wittenberg alone.¹⁴ Among the more noted ones who studied in Wittenberg under Luther were Devaj, Quendel, Stoeckel, Andrew Fischer, Leutscher, Bogner, Transylvanus, Radan, Siklosy and Kopaczy.¹⁵ Lutheranism first appeared in the mountain towns of Slovakia. Already in 1529-1530 the pure Gospel was being preached in the mining towns of Slovakia.¹⁶ Probably the first to preach in favor of the Reformation, about the year 1520, was Thomas Preussner of Kežmarok, who is said to have publicly announced his agreement with the teachings of Luther.

The opposing factions in Slovakia were the higher clergy and the lesser nobility pitted against the followers of Luther, the lower clergy, the higher nobility, and the inhabitants of the cities. The former wanted control of the country, were opposed to foreign rule and domination and feared the onslaughts of the Turk. The latter wanted reform in the Church, which was attempting to control the political and economical reins of the country.

Protestantism was accepted variously by the nationali-

12. Ján Kvačala, Dejiny Reformácie na Slovensku, p. 45.

13. Johannes Borbis in his Die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche Ungarns in note on page 6 mentions 250 students, but undoubtedly he includes in this figure also students of Hungarian extraction.

14. Janko Čajak, Dejepis Slovákov, p. 61.

15. J. Melintock and James Strong, Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature, Vol. IV.,

16. Otto Skrovina, Z historie turčianskeho evanj. seniorátu a jeho sborov, p. 5.

ties of Hungary. The German and Slovak inhabitants accepted the teachings of Luther. The Hungarians, especially later, mainly followed Calvinism. Undoubtedly, because the work of Luther was of German origin, the Reformation found acceptance first in the German cities of Hungary.

Credit for the early success of the Reformation in Slovakia must be given also to Count George Brandenburg, who was a personal friend of Luther and the teacher of King Louis II, ruler of Slovakia from 1516-1526. Queen Maria, sister of Emperor Charles V and of King Ferdinand I, ruler of Slovakia, 1526-1564, even communicated personally with Luther and publicly gave evidence of her sympathy with the Reformation movement.¹⁷ She is called the first "Patron of the Evangelicals of Hungary."¹⁸ On her estates at Banská Bystrica, Stiavnica, and Kremnica men regularly preached in the spirit of Luther.

Under the protection of George of Brandenburg and Maria, who openly sided with the new faith, John Cordat (Cordatus) of Hranic, Moravia, and John Henckel of Levoča, confessor of Maria, carried on their work.¹⁹ John Cordat studied at Wittenberg and for his evangelical preaching the primate of Ostrihom (Gran) jailed him for three-quarters of a year. Queen Maria used her influence to have him freed. John Henckel was the successor of Cordat as court preacher of Buda. However,

17. Julius Bodnár, Dejepis cirkvi kresťanskej, p. 71.

18. Kvačala, op. cit., p. 47.

19. Jozef Macúrek, Dejiny Maďarů a Uherského státu, p. 140.

he was more inclined toward the teachings of Erasmus. He was present at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530.

Others mentioned in history as outstanding supporters and promulgators of the Reformation in Slo^ovkia are Leonard Stoeckel (Stöckel) and Michael Radušíⁿ who worked in Šariš -- Stoeckel among the Germans, Radušíⁿ among the Slo^oaks; Nikodem Sartorius and George Lovčáⁿ in the mining towns; Andrew Jakobei and Stanislav Mokosius (Makosinus) in Liptov; Bartholomew Bogner in Spiš, John Horak (Silvan) of Nitra, a composer of religious hymns;²⁰ John Zeisel, Gašpar Kolárik, John Šindler, Paul of Hunišov, George Bohemus, Jaroslav Urbanovič, Anton Philadelphi, Basilius Modonius, Michael Marcellus and A. Fischer.²¹ The last man worked chiefly among the Germans.

Among the main cities which in the 30's and 40's of the sixteenth century became the fortresses of Lutheranism were Trenčín, Žilina, Trnava (Tyrnau, Nagy-Szombat), Košice, Prešov, Bardiov, known as the Wittenberg of Slovakia, Bánovce, and Levoča.²² In the 50's Bratislava and Šoproⁿ, the latter now in Hungary, became Lutheran fortresses in Western Slovakia, and Tisa and Debrecín in Eastern Slovakia.

One of the main reasons why the Reformation spread so rapidly in Slo^ovkia was that the adherents of Lutheranism saw a great need for parochial school education as the life-

20. Bodnár, op. cit., p. 72.

21. Jan Pelikán, Historia Reformácie, p. 160.

22. Macúrek, op. cit., p. 141.

line of the church and therefore immediately established schools where churches were founded. Latin and the mother-tongue were taught in these schools. An interesting fact to note is that when the Catholics saw the results of these parochial schools, they began establishing their own. Already in the sixteenth century there were 121 Protestant and 34 Catholic schools in Slovakia and Sedmohrad (Zahor). The first schools were in Bánovce, Trenčín, Iláva, Mošovce, and Prievidza. The following schools overshadowed all others: Bratislava, Ban, Banská Bystrica, Štiavnica, Prešov, Bardiov, Košice and Levoča.²³

The Lutherans early began to edit books and religious works for the enlightenment of the people. At the beginning of the seventeenth century there were 21 printeries in Slovakia. Most important of the printeries were found in Bardiov, Ban, Banská Bystrica, Levoča, Košice, Prešov, Hlohovec, Skalica, Komjatice and Šintava (Sempte).²⁴

23. Jozef Koreň, Dejepis, p. 93.

24. Gustáv Kadlecík, Dejepis pre V. a VI. ročník škôl ľudových, p. 26.

During this period popes Adrian VI (1522) and Clement VII (1523) occupied the Vatican throne. It was during the reign of Louis XI that Siskary (Siskary), the archbishop of Gatriham, ordered the papal bull, Exurge Domine, of

25. Nichols Publ. Co., New Large History, Vol. V., p. 4149.

III.

THE REFORMATION UNDER LOUIS II (1516-1526)

During the reign of the Jagellon Dynasty the lot of the common people became worse, almost unbearable, and as a result there were many uprisings among the lower masses. Morals were on the downgrade, so that the Turk was able to vanquish Slovakia without much effort.

Vladislav Jagelovský II (1490-1516), of the Jagellon Dynasty, was succeeded by his ten-year old son, Louis II, as King of Bohemia and Hungary. The reign of this child-king is summed up in two catastrophies: the loss of Belgrade (1521) and the defeat at Moháč (Mohacs) in 1526. Louis was married in his cradle; he at the age of 10½ and his Queen, Maria, 11, and as a ruler was corrupt and dissolute, incapable of governing. Conditions in his realm were not heartening. The finances of his kingdom were in great disorder, the leaders in the realm were quarreling over the remnants of sovereignty still left, and the Turk was lurking at the borders.²⁵

During this period popes Hadrian VI (1522) and Clement VII (1523) occupied the Vatican throne. It was during the reign of Louis II that Sakmárý (Sathmárý), the archbishop of Ostrihom, ordered the papal bull, Exsurge Domine, of

25. Nichols Publ. Co., New Larned History, Vol. V., p. 4149.

pope Leo X against Luther and his followers to be read in all the churches in Slovakia.²⁶ But this was of little value, for entire villages and cities continued to turn to the pure teaching of Luther.

The first Evangelical²⁷ Church in the city of Nové Mesto nad Váhom in the county of Nitra was founded in 1522. Together with Nové Mesto, Bardiov is mentioned as one of the earliest cities to accept the Lutheran teaching - a church being established there in 1522.²⁸ In the same year Banská Bystrica asked for the services of the Lutheran pastor Simon Bernhardt.²⁹ In a short period of time congregations were founded in Čachtice, Vrbové, Kostolany, Stará Tura, Bzince, Sobotište, and Senica.³⁰

To offset this rapid growth, the papal legate, Cajetan, in 1523, instigated King Louis to issue the horrible edict of April 24 at the Council of Buda that all Lutherans in the country and their protectors, as well as all heretics and enemies of the "Blessed Virgin Mary", be deprived of their property and be put to death, either by the ecclesiastical courts or by the civil authorities.³¹ In 1524 the Council renewed its edict of 1523. Shortly thereafter archbishop Ladislav Szalkay issued this edict, in his own name, against

26. Nitriansky seniorát, Školník, p. 35.

27. Refers to both Lutheran and Reformed. The Lutherans were called the "Evangelicals of the Augsburg Confession".

28. Pelikán, op. cit., p. 158.

29. Bodnár, op. cit., p. 71.

30. Kvačala, op. cit., p. 35.

31. J.N. Lenker, Lutherans in All Lands, p. 471.

the inhabitants of Šopron'. A similar law, that the Lutherans be hunted out and burned to death, was passed at the Diet of Rákoš in 1525.³²

These laws of 1523, 1524, and 1525, were not carried out too intensively, for the Turk was lurking at the very door of Hungary. Also, internal national intrigues tended at times to cool the royal feelings toward the Roman Church. When pope Clement VII in 1525 joined the movement against the Emperor Charles V, Queen Maria did not exactly appreciate this move. She is said to have openly stated that if Rome would continue along these lines, the royal family would join the Lutheran movement.³³ Unfortunately, this move on the part of the royal family never took place.

History does, however, record the martyrdom of the Slovak, Juraj (Georg), a bookmerchant of Buda, in 1524.³⁴ Two other bookmerchants were burned during this period at the border of Hungary and Germany.³⁵

By 1521 the Turk had entered Belgrade and was gradually entering upon the soil of Hungary. Louis began to look for aid. In 1522 papal courier Thomas de Vio came with 50,000 ducats which Louis had petitioned from pope Leo X. His successor, Hadrian VII, sent an abundance of grain. On February 4, 1524, Louis wrote to pope Clement VII from Bratislava asking again for the pope's aid.³⁶ However, the Turk

32. Bodnár, op. cit., p. 72.

33. Kvačala, op. cit., p. 44.

34. Bodnár, op. cit., p. 72.

35. Kvačala, op. cit., p. 43.

36. Franko V. Sasínek, Stručný dejepis Uhorska, Vol. III., p. 163.

was looking for an excuse to declare war upon the Hungarian Empire. In 1526 war was declared upon the pretext of the Turk that his ambassador had been insulted by the Hungarians - that he had been arrested as a spy. This war was to last until 1532.

War was declared, but Hungary was unprepared for it. No one here was worried about the defense of the country. However, as the Turk approached closer to the borders, Louis hurriedly gathered what he could into a small army. But what were his 25,000 soldiers compared to the Turk's 300,000 with 300 cannon?³⁷ The Hungarian forces, so hastily gathered together and so pitiful in their appearance that the Sultan could not believe they constituted the national army, were defeated on August 26, 1526, in the battle at Moháč.³⁸

King Louis, in attempting to escape, was thrown from his horse and drowned in the swamp-river Cele at the age of only twenty. Besides the king, 20,000 soldiers, 500 landlords, 28 barons, and 7 bishops were left lying on the field. More than 100,000 innocent people were taken captive and an enormous amount of loot was confiscated by the Turk.³⁹ The independent existence of Hungary ended at Moháč. The line of independent kings of Hungary became extinct by the

37. Dr. Michal Múdry-Šebík, Stručné dejiny Slovákov, p. 48.

38. Edward Muslin Hulme, Renaissance and Reformation, p. 512.

39. Ján Bežo, Tretia Čítanka a Mluvnica pre ev. a. v. počiatocné školy, p. 150.

death of Louis II.

The defeat at Moháč[✓] at the hands of the Turk was a blessing for the Reformation in Slovakia. The chief Catholic opponents of Lutheranism were left lying on the battlefield, and the large estates of the fallen bishops were then taken over by the Protestant lords. Upon the death of Louis II the Turk took control of the central part of the country, and as long as the taxes were forthcoming, he did not meddle into the religious affairs of the conquered.

The political situation which arose after Louis' death -- the country finding itself with two crowned heads and bloody battles over the throne -- aided the Reformation in Slovakia. No time was found for the enforcement of the edicts of 1523 and 1525. Greater importance was placed on the political field of events. Religious differences were temporarily forgotten, for each wanted to have in his good graces the Protestant cities. Whoever held the majority of the cities in his favor, he also was financially and politically ahead in the battle for the throne.

The papal curia, because of personal whims and tendencies toward political and economical patronage, was in no special hurry to fill the vacant bishoprics caused by the defeat at Moháč.

The political decline of Hungary in the reign of Louis II was accompanied by the decline of its religious life. The secular lords grew more and more daring in their seizure of church property, and the education of the clergy

sank steadily, Therefore, already in the first half of the sixteenth century the weakened condition of the Roman Church in Slovakia offered a favorable opportunity to the Lutheran Reformation. The Lutheran religion gained adherents and followers especially in the cities where the bishops had been obliged to give the management of ecclesiastical affairs to laymen. Owing to the laws of 1523, 1524, and 1525, Lutheranism did not gain very much headway in Slovakia before 1526. However, in the confusion which followed the death of Louis II, Lutheranism steadily began to come to the fore and to establish itself among the Slovaks.

his marriage with Anne, sister of the late Louis II and daughter of Vladislaw Jagellovsky II. In Bohemia, at first, the nobility would not recognize his claim. The archduke made various promises to the nobles and also agreed upon a popular vote which turned in his favor because of the impending danger from the Turk.

In Hungary he fared worse. John Zapolya (Zapolyai), a Croatian by birth and duke of Transylvania, whose family had unassumed large estates, also laid claim to the throne. He had many supporters in this territory, and even pope Clement VII wished him success, for Zapolya was known to be an opponent of the Lutherans. To secure himself of the throne, Zapolya also proposed marriage to the Widow-Queen Mary. She, however, rejected his proposal. Both men had themselves crowned. On November 11, 1526, Zapolya was crowned, but this was contested on December 28, 1526. Civil war broke out.

IV.

FERDINAND I AND THE REFORMATION (1526-1564)

With the sudden death of Louis II, who left no heir, both thrones, the Czech and Hungarian, were now vacant. Louis' wife, Mary, archduchess of Austria, was unwilling to enter the field as competitor for the crown and handed over her role to her brother, Ferdinand I of Austria. Archduke Ferdinand made claims to both thrones, saying that he acquired this right to the crowns of Bohemia and Hungary by his marriage with Anne, sister of the late Louis II and daughter of Vladislav Jagelovský II. In Bohemia, at first, the nobility would not recognize his claim. The archduke made various promises to the nobles and also agreed upon a popular vote which turned in his favor because of the impending danger from the Turk.

In Hungary he fared worse. John Zapolya (Zápoľský), a Croatian by birth and duke of Transylvania, whose family had amassed large estates, also laid claim to the throne. He had many supporters in this territory, and even pope Clement VII wished him success, for Zapolya was known to be an opponent of the Lutherans. To assure himself of the throne, Zapolya also proposed marriage to the Widow-Queen Mary. She, however, rejected his proposal. Both men had themselves crowned. On November 11, 1526, Zapolya was crowned, but this was contested on December 26, 1526. Civil war broke out.

To win the favor of the Roman Church Zapolya persecuted the Protestants, but in order not to arouse their complete displeasure, he did it only sparingly and then ceased altogether.⁴⁰ Ferdinand also counted on the support of the Protestants and so hesitated to persecute them.

However, both Ferdinand and Zapolya remained enemies of the Reformation. But their enmity aided rather than impeded the progress of the Reformation. Many times these two rulers issued contradictory edicts in regard to churches in various parts of the country, and these only tended to spread confusion in Catholic Church circles. These acts of confusion and their settlement drew upon the ability and time of the clergy which otherwise could have been directed toward the persecution of the Lutherans.⁴¹

Under the pretext of siding with one or the other of the rivals, unscrupulous adventurers of every sort oppressed and took advantage of the peasants from one end of the country to the other. Violence and robbery were every-day occurrences.⁴²

The danger impending from the Turk began to darken the horizon. On August 22, 1528, Ferdinand issued an open letter to entire Christendom, calling on it for aid and support against the Turk, who was threatening the very existence of Christendom on the continent.⁴³ Ferdinand also called upon

40. Nitriansky seniorát, op. cit., p. 36.

41. Kvačala, op. cit., p. 49.

42. Hulme, op. cit., p. 512.

43. Sasinek, op. cit., p. 15.

Germany for assistance, but his brother, Emperor Charles V, was himself engrossed at the time with Luther and his followers at the Diet of Spires. Meanwhile, Ferdinand's troops eventually pursued Zapolya to Poland. Receiving no encouragement or aid from his father-in-law, the king of Poland, Zapolya petitioned the Turk to come to his aid. Nothing could have pleased the Turk more, and on February 28, 1528, Zapolya received a written guarantee of the Sultan's aid.⁴⁴ For thus betraying Christendom pope Clement VII excommunicated Zapolya from the Catholic Church on December 21, 1532.⁴⁵

In 1533 the successor to Clement VII, pope Paul III, advised both Ferdinand and Zapolya to make a treaty and join in the war against the Turk, if the Turk would threaten Hungary. Both men refused to heed the advice of the pope.⁴⁶

During one of the lulls in the war against the Turk, in 1538, Ferdinand and Zapolya reached a compromise on the division of the Hungarian land not yet in possession of the Turk. One-third of the country, the sector adjoining Austria, was to go to Ferdinand. The remaining two-thirds, the chief part of which was the principality of Transylvania, together with the title of King of Hungary, was to be kept by Zapolya.⁴⁷

The Turk again proceeded with his war and marched into Ostrihom and Buda in 1541 and moved unopposed to the walls of Vienna. "It seems he did not dare do this immediately

44. Ibid., p. 12.

45. Ibid., p. 17.

46. Ibid., p. 27.

47. Hulme, op. cit., p. 512.

after Moháč⁴⁸ in 1526. Buda remained the seat of a Turkish pasha until 1686.

Meanwhile, John Zapolya died in 1540, leaving a two-week old son. The Turk now took matters into his hands. He divided Hungary into three parts: Eastern, so-called Sed-mohrad, went to the infant son of Zapolya, John Sigismund, who under regents served as a vassal of the Turk; South-Central, where the majority of the Hungarians lived, he kept for himself; Northern, which is the Slovakia of today, and a narrow strip in the west, he left to Ferdinand as King of Hungary for a yearly payment of 30,000 ducats. This division lasted for 145 years.⁴⁹ Bratislava became the center of Hungary, which was left to Ferdinand, and Trnava again became the seat of the archbishop.

The Turk ruled over part of what is now southern Slovakia: the entire county of Novohrad and Hont, and southern sectors of the counties of Gemer, Zvolen, Tekov, Nitra, and Bratislava. The vanquished peoples suffered under the rule of the Turk. Instead of money, the Turkish soldiers received remunerations in the form of land and with this land the people who lived on it and whom they mistreated. They helped themselves to the cattle and the fruit of the harvest according to will and massacred those who resisted. Frequently they invaded and raided the non-Turkish sectors of southern Slovakia, taking captive the Slovaks and selling them as slaves in the open market-place. Young boys who

48. Koreň, op. cit., p. 88.

49. F. Kulháněk, Ludové Dejiny Československé, p. 127.

were captured were trained into fearless warriors known as the janisaries, who later fought more fearlessly against their own flesh and blood than did the Turk.⁵⁰ The German soldiers, hired to fight the Turk, moved about in this territory also. These were more cruel towards the population than they were toward the Turk.⁵¹

In what was left of the country after the Turkish conquest the Hapsburg monarch ruled, surrounded by foreign counselors. And during all this period the landlords treated their serfs like cattle.

The main outcome of the triple political division of Hungary was the almost complete disappearance of public order and of a systematic conduct of national affairs; another was the evident decline of Catholicism and the rapid advance of Lutheranism. The growth of Lutheranism was encouraged by the existing unsettled political conditions in Hungary; the quarrels over the succession, with the accompanying civil war; the lack of a properly educated Catholic clergy; the transfer of a large amount of church land to the laity; and the claims made upon the Catholic episcopal domains by both aspirants to the throne.

In the wars with the Turk which, with pauses, lasted to 1562, the lands of Slovakia bore the main roles and were the shield of western Christian civilization against the onslaughts of the Turk. The Turk did not cease to plunder

50. Kadlečík, op. cit., p. 28.

51. Joseph Skultěty, Sketches from Slovak History, translation by O.D. Koreff, p. 86.

Slovakia so that the Slovaks, during the reign of the Hapsburgs, gave not only monetary support, but sacrificed also their lives, for they formed the core of the Christian army in all the battles against the Turk. Georgius Sirmiensis, a contemporary historian, writes that one-third of the Hungarian forces consisted of Slovaks.⁵² In fact, the commander-in-chief of these forces was a Slovak Evangelical, Peter Perényi (Perin). Peter Perényi, who was the defender of the crown, and his friend, Alex Thurzo, confidant of Ferdinand, were among the first of the nobility to be brought to the side of the Lutherans. Perényi founded a school and instituted Protestantism on his estates. Both of these men disappear from the historical field in 1542.⁵³

Ferdinand I was raised as a strict Catholic who zealously supported the Jesuits. He brought them with him to Praha in Bohemia and Trnava in Slovakia to defend Catholicism against the Hussites, Protestants, and Bohemian Brethren. In Trnava, as well as in Praha, they established institutions of theology and philosophy.⁵⁴

It was the aim of Ferdinand I to create one grand German state, an absolute kingdom. In order to attain this goal, in which he was unsuccessful, he encroached upon the rights and privileges of the landlords and barons and opposed religious freedom.⁵⁵ How absolutely he did reign can be

52. Sasínek, op. cit., p. 44.

53. Kvačala, op. cit., p. 51.

54. Kulhanek, op. cit., p. 127.

55. Ibid., p. 139.

seen from the fact that he was crowned as a poor man without power and died a rich monarch, an absolute ruler who had united the kingdoms of Bohemia, Hungary and the lands of Austria, and who had impoverished the nation.

During the reign of Ferdinand I, there are two outstanding Slovak martyrs, who fell victim to the anti-Lutheran laws of 1523 and 1525. Teacher Gregori and pastor Philip Nikolai, both of Zvolen, were burned to death in 1527.⁵⁶

Philip Nikolai was a pastor in Ľubietov in the county of Zvolen. Teacher Gregori was his assistant. The local miners threatened to revolt unless they received the remuneration which was due them. An army was sent to quiet them and some of the miners were seized and taken before the director of mines, who was a staunch Catholic. This director persuaded the miners to accuse Nikolai and Gregori of the uprising, and this in turn was announced to John Zapolya.

Zapolya sent his agents to bring Nikolai and Gregori before him. Upon the refusal of the villagers to give them up, the soldiers seized Gregori and six of the miners, putting them in irons. The Catholic priests tried to persuade Gregori to recant his faith. For refusing to do so he was burned at the stake on August 22, 1527.

In the meantime, fellow-citizens came to intercede for the six miners seized with Gregori. The Catholic priests promised to release them if the hiding-place of Nikolai were

56. Pelikán, op. cit., p. 158.

revealed, promising Nikolai safe conduct to Zapolya. However, they changed their minds about the safe conduct after they had brought him to the city of Dobronivá. Upon Nikolai's refusal to recant his teachings, they pierced him with a dagger and threw his corpse into a fire. This took place on August 24, 1527, only two days after the death of his assistant, Gregori.⁵⁷

The hierarchy of the Roman Church in Hungary opposed the spread of Protestantism in every way possible. Already in April, 1530, archbishop Várdy wrote to the mining towns in Slovakia to beware of Luther's errors and heresies, sending a commissioner to investigate the conditions prevailing in these towns. In his letter he emphasized the fact that the Roman Church holds solely to the teaching of the Word of God and the teachings of Christ, but as taught by the ancient fathers who are acknowledged by the Church. He continues that the Church condemns heresy and sycophants, among whom he mentions the Hussites, Anabaptists and Oecolampadius. He commands that 1) the priests lead a celibate life, not touching women; 2) honor be given to the saints; 3) faith alone is not sufficient, deeds are also necessary, for salvation; 4) fasting is obligatory; 5) church holidays must be observed; 6) people must go to confession and do penance at least once a year; 7) prayers and rites must not be shortened.⁵⁸ The teachings of Luther must have taken hold in these

57. Author unknown, also title of book unknown. Probably it is a Cirkevna historia, pp. 9-11.

58. Kvačala, op. cit., p. 55.

districts, if it became necessary for an archbishop to emphasize the rules of the Church. However, these towns, in their reply to the archbishop, claimed that violations of the type mentioned in his letter were not in existence in their midst.

But as the majority of the towns, nearly the entire nobility, and many of the most powerful magnates became favorable to the Reformation, the persecution of Protestantism began to subside. Many of the priests themselves joined the Reformation with their entire flocks. Several bishops as Kechery of Veszprém, Thurzo of Nitra, and Andrew Dudith, who had attended the Council of Trent, openly became Protestant.⁵⁹ In other instances the congregations waited until the death of their Catholic priest and then called a Lutheran successor. And although Ferdinand I was raised as a strict Catholic, at times it appears that he, too, favored the Protestants, for he permitted the election of a patron of the Reformation, Thomas Nádašdy, as palatine of Hungary.

Around 1530 the demand for Lutheran preachers and Slovak theological students was so great that, because of a lack of sufficient students at Wittenberg, the churches in Slovakia turned for aid to Silesia, Moravia and elsewhere.⁶⁰

In 1530 important work for the Protestant cause was carried out in the Slovak counties of Orava and Trenčín by Nicholas Kostka, wealthy landowner, captain of Orava and proprietor of castles Rajec, Lietava, and others. His fore-

59. McIntock and Strong, op. cit., Vol. VIII., p. 993.

60. Ceskoslovenská Vlastiveda, Vol. IV., p. 354.

fathers had been Hussites. At first his allegiance was to Zapolya but soon he joined the ranks of Ferdinand. The bastion of his Lietava castle still bears the words, "The Word of the Lord endureth forever", engraved at his command. Because of his stand against the Catholic hierarchy, he was called "depopulator et tyrannus cleri" of Orava and Spiš.⁶¹

On September 30, 1531, the king himself sent an order from Spires that both ministers in Košice, the German pastor as well as Matej Biró Devaj, be punished for their anti-Roman preaching. He threatened with loss of life and property those who would grant them protection.

Matej Biró Devaj (Divinský) was one of the earliest outstanding sowers of Lutheran doctrine in Slovakia. He is often given the title of "Lutherus Ungaricus",⁶² the Luther of Hungary. But actually he is not worthy of the name, for later he taught Calvinism. He bears the name Divinský because he came from a town of that name situated in either the county of Hunyad or Novohrad. In 1523 and 1524, at the age of about twenty-three, we find him registered as a student of theology at the University of Cracow. Shortly thereafter he became a Catholic monk and was an outstanding Roman priest.

He began to take interest in the work of Luther, and in 1529 we find him sitting at the feet of the reformers in Wittenberg. Returning to his native land, he fought for the cause of the Reformation. He began his reformatory work

61. Kvacala, op. cit., p. 52.

62. Lars P. Qualben, History of the Christian Church.

in Buda and spread the teachings of Luther by preaching and writing. Two of his writings were Rudimenta salutis (1531) where he compiled the main thoughts of Luther in fifty-four articles, and De dormitione sanctorum, where he condemns the practice of calling upon the saints, who not knowing us, cannot help us.⁶³

In 1531 he was called to Košice and here began to taste the persecutions of the Roman Church. Bishop Thomas Szalaházi, upon orders from King Ferdinand, had him imprisoned for two years. He was accused of 27 points, three of which were that he 1) does not believe in the seven sacraments, 2) preaches that the blessed Virgin was a sinner, and 3) denies that the Catholic Church is a church. However, when the time came to condemn him, Ferdinand set him at liberty.

Devaj returned to Buda, where he was seized by Zapolya and imprisoned in the castle prison. Again he was set free. In 1534 he went to Sárvár to one of the estates of Thomas Nádašdy, where he again began to preach and write. In 1536 we again find him in Wittenberg whence he returned in 1537 to the estates of Nádašdy with a letter of recommendation from Melanchthon. Nádašdy established a printery for him. In 1541, when the Turk entered Sárvár, Devaj again fled to Wittenberg. Little is known of Devaj after this period, except that we hear of him in 1544 preaching Calvinism in Debrecin. In vain did Luther and other friends caution and admonish him. He remained a Calvinist. When and where he

63. Kvačala, op. cit., footnote on p. 55.

died we do not know. But it is certain that in 1547 he was no longer among the living. His body is said to be buried in Debrecín.⁶⁴

The most active reformer in Eastern Slovakia during this period was the leader of the Protestants of Bardiov and administrator of schools, the Rev. Leonard Stoeckel. On the basis of the Augsburg Confession he wrote a new confession which was subscribed to by the five royal free cities of Košice, Sabinov, Prešov, Levoča and Bardiov, and for that reason called the Confession of Five Cities or Pentapolitana.⁶⁵ This Pentapolitana, based upon the Augsburg Confession, and worked out in the conciliatory style of Melanchthon, was presented to King Ferdinand in 1549, and was approved and confirmed not only by him, but also by the primate Nicholas Oláh (Oláhus). It was printed in Košice in 1613.⁶⁶

In Prešov, already in 1531, we find that when priests Anton and Bartolomej accepted the Protestant faith, the entire city changed from Catholicism to Protestantism. Anton, also known as Antonius Transilvanus, became a minister to the Germans; Bartolomej, to the Slovaks. In the archives of the city of Prešov a Slovak minister, Laurentius, is mentioned as early as 1538.⁶⁷

It is interesting to note that during this period the first New Testament in the Magyar language - the first book ever printed in Hungary - was published by Erdoesy in 1541.

64. Author unknown, op. cit., pp. 16-20.

65. Bodnár, op. cit., p. 73.

66. Československá Vlastiveda, Vol. IV., p. 368.

67. Belo Klein-Tesnoskalský, op. cit., p. 6.

Entire families became patrons and defenders of the Protestant cause in Slovakia. Among the more outstanding were the families of Révay, Thurzo, Radván, Dubrav, Benic, Perényi, and the Balasses of Trenčín and Nitra. The Révays of Turec owned large estates and held firmly to the axiom "cuius regio, ejus religio". On record is a letter dated August 4, 1539, which Fraňo Révay received from Luther, clarifying for him the doctrine of the Lord's Supper.⁶⁸

Among the outstanding Protestant individuals of this period are Lazar Schwendi and John Rueber, leaders of the Emperor's armies; Gašpar Drágfy (Drákfi) of Eastern Slovakia, under whose protection the Evangelical Synod of Erdőd (1545) was held; Thomas Nádašdy, the richest magnate of Hungary and later palatine; Peter Révay, Alex Thurzo and Peter Perényi, all three confidants of King Ferdinand; Fr. Nyáry, who labored in Turec and Fraňo Dersfy in Šariš.⁶⁹

Even the Roman Catholics saw the need for and awaited the correction of the Church. The Catholic rulers urged the pope to call a council for the purpose of correcting the evil in the Church. In 1545 a Council, which lasted, with interruptions, for eighteen years, was called to the city of Trent. Ferdinand sent three Hungarian bishops to this Council to ask for the Lutherans that they be allowed to celebrate the Lord's Supper under both species and that the priests be permitted to enter holy wedlock. Although the latter request, which was repeated in 1565 by Maximilian II,⁷⁰ was not grant-

68. Škroviná, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

69. Kvacala, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

70. *Československá Vlastiveda*, Vol. V., p. 299.

ed, some of the lower clergy and bishops married, and when reprimanded, many left the Church rather than their wives. The pope granted, for a time, the celebration of the Lord's Supper under both kinds, but this did not bring back the Lutherans to the Roman Church.⁷¹

The firmer establishment of Lutheranism in Slovakia was also aided by the fact that many of the leading Lutheran citizens frequently met with their spiritual leaders. At these meetings or assemblies various confessions were discussed, errors were analyzed, and church disciplinary methods and rites were established. In this manner they strengthened themselves in faith and unity of spirit. The first such assembly was held in Erdőd in 1545, where twenty-nine ministers met in synod and adopted twelve articles of faith in agreement with the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and organized the Lutheran Church. Another such assembly was called in 1546 to Prešov, where again the Augsburg Confession was accepted as embodying the true teaching of the Word of God.⁷²

Already in 1550 at a pastoral conference southwest of Košice the Lutherans discussed organizational questions such as the office and power of superintendents. At a later meeting in 1552 in Berehove important confessional questions came up for discussion.⁷³

Conditions for the Roman Church became so bad that in 1559 the archbishop of Transylvania, Nicholas Oláh, founded a

71. Nitriansky seniorát, op. cit., p. 40.

72. Pelikan, op. cit., p. 161.

73. Ceskoslovenská Vlastiveda, Vol. IV., p. 368.

seminary at Trnava and put the Jesuits in charge of it.⁷⁴

Oláh performed the solemn obsequies over Ferdinand I in 1563 and crowned Maximilian King of Hungary. As chancellor and confidant of Ferdinand I, he possessed much political influence, which he exercised in the special interests of the Catholic religion.⁷⁵ Roman historians consider Oláh the defender of the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary.⁷⁶ However, the death of Ferdinand I put an end for a time to the efforts for reform in the Roman Church.

We observe that during Ferdinand's reign, Lutheranism advanced virtually unchecked in Slovakia, nor was it till a few years after his death that a successful effort was made in Slovakia by the Catholic Reaction to arrest Lutheranism.

Evangelical churches, still existing in Slovakia today, were built in Turčiansky Sv. Martin in 1544, Vrútky in 1559, and Slovenské Pravno in 1560.⁷⁷

74. The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. VII., p. 553.

75. Ibid., Vol. IX., p. 234.

76. Podnár, op. cit., p. 73.

77. Skrovina, op. cit., p. 7.

V.

THE REFORMATION DURING THE REIGN OF MAXIMILIAN II
(1564-1576)

Maximilian II, born in Vienna, raised in Spain, the oldest son of Ferdinand I and who had married Maria, the daughter of Emperor Charles V, came to the throne in 1564, but proved as impotent a ruler in Hungary as his father had been. The pasha of Buda held the reins over the greater part of Hungary, and John Sigismund, son of John Zapolya, continued as vassal of the Turk in Transylvania. The sectarian spirit had also found its course into this land of blood. Considerable bodies of Calvinists, besides a smaller number of Anabaptists and Socinians had taken root. Among the Magyars, Calvinism obtained the ascendancy over Lutheranism when in 1557 at the Synod of Czenger the Reformed Church was organized, and in 1566 all the Hungarian Reformed Churches signed the Helvetic Confession.

The war with the Turk continued. Two years after ascending the throne, Maximilian, encouraged by subsidies received from his German subjects, reopened hostilities against the Turk and against Sigismund. The Turk invaded the land, but was stopped at the fortress of Sihot (Szigeth) by a small garrison of about 1,500 men under the heroic leadership of Nicholas Zríny (Zríni). For almost 30 days Zríny resisted the entire Turkish horde with his men and 18 cannon and then

on September 7, 1566, perished, to a man, without surrendering. Soliman, hearing that he lost 20,000 men during this seige, died of apoplexy.⁷⁸ Maximilian then signed a peace with Selim II, son of Soliman and, like his father, had to pay a yearly tribute of 30,000 ducats.

Shortly after this war, John Sigismund, the rival of Maximilian, suddenly died and all his territories and possessions in Hungary reverted to Maximilian.

Maximilian II was a man of unstable character, of whom it is claimed that, because of his religious indifference to the Roman Church, he was a secret Protestant. For that reason, immediately at the beginning of his reign, the Protestants hoped that he would take the lead among them and uphold religious freedom.

However, they came in for some disappointments. Maximilian included the "influence of the planets" in his maxims of government. He was an ardent student of the art of star-gazing and had an astrologer for his private secretary.⁷⁹ He was both a shrewd and calculating Hapsburg who, from fear of losing his Spanish inheritance, which his royal line could have inherited upon the extinction of the Spanish Hapsburgs, did not openly take his position at the head of the Reformation, but neither did he persecute other faiths. In so far as his royal authority extended, Protestantism was allowed to advance unhindered. Verbally he sanctioned religious freedom but did not hinder the Jesuits in their de-

78. Bežo, op. cit., p. 153.

79. Hulme, op. cit., p. 406.

structive work.

Yet, he tried to gain the Protestants by wise concessions. He even allowed them to administer the Lord's Supper under both species. During his reign there were about 2000 Evangelical congregations under his domain.⁸⁰ Thus they found time to develop their Church constitutions, to hold assemblies and synods, and to regulate and control their church and school affairs under the protection of the Evangelical magnates. A large majority of the inhabitants belonged to the Lutheran faith. Only three magnates continued to be Roman Catholic. Santo, a Jesuit historian, has recorded of his reign, "In 1559 only three Roman Catholic magnates . . . , of the nobility hardly any Roman Catholics."⁸¹ Besides the Ostrihom archbishop and the Vasov archbishop there were no higher Roman Catholic dignitaries in the country. In the county of Nitra alone there were 130 Lutheran churches.⁸² There is no doubt that probably Protestantism would have forever established its ascendancy had not the Lutherans and the Calvinists hated each other, so that the picture given us is that they hated each other more than perhaps other religious denominations.

Since with the spread of the Reformation the Roman Catholic Church was losing ground and prestige in Hungary, she began to focus more attention on the persecution of the Evangelicals. She called upon the Dominican Order to aid her

80. Bodnár, op. cit., p. 73.

81. Anonymous, Historie církve křesťanské, p. 281.

82. Nitrianský seniorát, op. cit., p. 39.

in supressing the Reformation. But since they themselves were on the whole morally corrupt, they were of little value to the Roman Church, and the better ones of the Order turned to the Evangelical faith.⁸³

Maximilian also failed them. From 1554 his court-preacher was John Sebastian Pfauser, a married priest who showed his hatred for the Jesuits and did not hide his concessions to the Lutheran doctrines.⁸⁴ Maximilian's failure to fill the archiepiscopal See of Ostrihom, which fell vacant in 1573, caused a further decline of the Catholic religion; nor did his successor, Rudolph II, fill the vacancy until some time after ascending the throne.⁸⁵

The position of the Evangelicals was not helped by the split in their ranks in 1567 when the Hungarians organized the Reformed Church in Hungary. Up to this time those who adhered to the teaching of Calvin hid under the name of Evangelicals, but from the year 1558 they began to openly separate themselves from the Lutherans and in 1567 finally organized the Reformed Church in Hungary. They accepted the teachings of Calvin, Calvin's Catechism, substituted bread for wafers at the Lord's Supper, confessed absolute election to salvation, and dropped the vow at marriages.⁸⁶

During this period, Evangelical churches, still existing today, were built in Piargy (1566), Mošovce (1570), Ivančína (1570) and Sučany (1570).⁸⁷

83. Ibid., p. 37.

84. Československá Vlastivěda, Vol. IV., p. 380.

85. The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. VII., p. 554.

86. Anonymous, op. cit., p. 282.

87. Skrovina, op. cit., p. 7.

VI.

THE REFORMATION UNDER RUDOLPH II (1576-1611) AND
MATTHIAS (1608-1619)

Rudolph II, born in Vienna on July 18, 1552, was the son of Maximilian II. He, too, was a weak ruler, untrustworthy, and at times floundered in the spiritual fog which was an inherited disease of the Hapsburgs. For that reason he could not cope with religious anarchy. He had not the ability for it, nor the time, nor the will. He was raised up by a Spanish mother, receiving his education in Madrid at the Jesuitical court of Philip II, and for that reason favored the Catholics. Growing up under the influence of a superstitious and intolerant spirit, at an early age he gave his promise that, in whatever way possible, he would make Catholicism the ruling faith in his empire.⁸⁸

He preferred to spend the greater part of his time with the arts and sciences, and with astrology and alchemy, leaving the government in the hands of the leaders of the Counter-Reformation. At his court lived the famous astronomers, John Kepler and Tycho Brahe.

The Slovak Lutherans suffered greatly during his reign, for in religious disputes Rudolph was a staunch partisan of the Catholic cause, and his reign coincided with the militant activities of Catholicism. Also, internal dissension, which

88. Belo Klein-Tesnoskalsky, op. cit., p. 9.

weakened them, reigned among the Protestants during this period.

At his coronation Rudolph vowed to uphold religious toleration, but his actions spoke more truthfully than his words. Beginning with the persecution of the Bohemian Brethren, he turned then upon other faiths. Proof of this is his Counter-Reformation mandate in Slovakia where, however, the Protestants answered it in 1604 with the uprising of magnate Stephen Bocskay (Bocskai), Duke of Transylvania.⁸⁹

Up to this time Lutheranism had made tremendous gains in Slovakia; the Catholics suffering losses. In the first few years of Rudolph's reign the position of the Catholic clergy began to improve, for the Jesuits, who had been unable to do anything under the tolerant reign of Maximilian II, once more took a hand in their education and began to display a great activity for the restoration of the Roman Church. During these early years of the seventeenth century began also the reclaiming of churches, originally founded by the Catholics, which had been occupied by the Protestants. Although very slowly, the Jesuits nevertheless began to convert some of the Protestant nobility. But the revolt of Stephen Bocskay again led to a decline of Catholicism.⁹⁰

Rudolph was forever in need of money. To obtain it he introduced a small lottery and sold offices and titles. Finally he seized private properties and began to sell those. And when this did not suffice, charges were brought against

89. Kulhanek, op. cit., p. 133.

90. The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. VII., p. 554.

the magnates, chiefly the Protestant magnates, that they were disloyal and had offended the king. This was done in order to lay heavy fines upon them or to take away their rights and properties. The zealous Protestant, Stephen Illésházy, was persecuted in this manner.⁹¹

Rudolph began to persecute the Lutherans and the other Protestant bodies mainly with the aid of the papal army sent against the Turk. The leaders of this papal army were the cruel Jacob Barbian (Barbiano or Belgioso) and Basta. With a sanction from Rome they turned their armies against the Evangelicals instead of the Turk and forcibly took away their churches, schools and church property. In 1604, when the Protestants complained of these persecutions to Rudolph, instead of redressing the grievances, he had additional laws passed against the Protestants, calling their conduct scandalous, declaring their grievances to be unfounded, and he had Barbian persecute them more viciously.

Thereupon Stephen Bocskay, the Duke of Transylvania, arose against these laws to protect the Protestants as well as his own properties. When the Protestant (Calvinistic) Church in Košice was seized and the ministers and teachers of other Protestant churches were driven out and forbidden under a strict penalty to hold church services, Bocskay formed an army in Potisie, began war, and was soon joined everywhere by malcontents. He easily captured Košice and started for Vienna. At the Diet in Krupina the entire Protestant nobility

91. Tranovsky Evangelický Kalendár, 1907, p. 97 in article "Stefan Bocskay a viedenský pokoj."

joined his movement when they saw the success of his uprising.⁹² He also called upon the Turk to aid him in this war against the religious intolerance of Rudolph. Bocskay and his allies, Stephen Illésházy and George Thurzo, insisted that when it came time to signing the peace, it would be signed only under one condition: that religious freedom be safeguarded. Rudolph, however, would not even listen, for he feared the papal interdict.⁹³

Rudolph, like his forebears, carried on the war against the Turks, for in 1596 the Turk again invaded Hungary. But like his grandfather, Ferdinand I, he spent more time persecuting the non-Catholics than in liberating the Christians from the yoke of the Turk and, like him, was as unsuccessful against the Turk. Soon he saw another danger looming across the horizon. Suddenly he found the Slovaks rallying to the side of Stephen Bocskay. When he saw that they were penetrating Moravia, and that his imperial general, Basta, was defeated, he ~~seized~~ ~~was~~ with fear and called upon his brother Matthias (Matyáš), King of Hungary, 1608-1619, to attempt a peace with Bocskay. After a long period of negotiations with Bocskay's commissioner, Illésházy, the Peace of Vienna was concluded on June 23, 1610.⁹⁴

Bocskay died suddenly in Košice on December 29, 1606. He did not live to see the Peace of Vienna ratified. It is claimed that upon the instigation of the Jesuits he was poisoned by his chancellor, Katay, who was later quartered in

92. Koreň, op. cit., p. 94.

93. Tranovsky Evanjelický Kalendár, 1907, p. 98.

94. Kulháněk, op. cit., p. 134.

the Košice city-square by the followers of Bocskay.

Bocskay's was the first of five such uprisings in Slovakia. His was the first in a long chain of events which fill out the history of Slovakia to the beginning of the eighteenth century. The nobility was now rising against the kings in defense of their precious freedom.

The Peace of Vienna guaranteed to the Protestants throughout the kingdom complete religious freedom, and promised that the king would never allow any violation of this promise. All former anti-Lutheran laws were to be invalidated. However, the Jesuits were successful in inserting the conditional clausula "but without offense to the confessions of the Roman Catholic Church", (*absque tamen praejudicio Catholicae Romanae religionis*). With this clausula the peace was devaluated. For that reason the Protestants in 1608 petitioned the Diet at Bratislava, where the peace was to be ratified, that this clause be omitted. At this Diet the peace was violently protested in the name of the clergy by the Catholic bishops. However, the firmness of archduke Matthias overcame the opposition of the Catholic party, and the peace, with the omission of the debated clausula, was unanimously ratified on October 22, 1608, by all except cardinal Forgách. The Diet further resolved that the Protestants are no longer subordinate to the Catholic bishops, but have the right to elect their own administrative heads, their own congregational representatives, i.e., superintendents. There was to be no religious discrimination in filling the higher

and lower offices of the country. Furthermore, it was resolved that not only were the aristocracy and landlords to enjoy religious freedom, but so were the inhabitants of the cities and villages. "The Peace of Vienna became the cornerstone of religious freedom for the Protestant Church in Slovakia."⁹⁵

Despite the wishes of the Diet, Rudolph declared its resolutions regarding the Peace of Vienna invalid. This breach of faith cost him the throne, for his brother Matthias, in order to safeguard the power of the Hapsburgs, did not hesitate to join against him with the Austrian, Hungarian and Moravian nobility. Rudolph by now had sunk into a hypochondria which he neither controlled nor was capable of controlling. Becoming increasingly subject to attacks of depression, which bordered on insanity, he was ruled by an insane suspiciousness and perversity of judgment. This hereditary tendency to insanity made him very haughty and intolerant and consequently very unpopular with his people. He feared assassination, and it is claimed that because of a prediction that his murderer would be a monk, he adopted a violent prejudice against the Roman Church and clergy. He especially fell into a hateful distrust of the Jesuits.

Matthias succeeded in dethroning Rudolph and was crowned King of Hungary on November 8, 1608, although, officially, Rudolph was not deposed till 1611. On November 6, 1608, just two days prior to the coronation, Count Illésházy, a Luther-

95. Tranovsky Evanjelický Kalendár, 1907, p. 98.

an, had been elected palatine by a large majority. Through his liberality, for he was a man of immense riches, the Protestants received a large number of churches and schools. He served as palatine for only six months, for he died on May 6, 1609. However, his successor, Count George Thurzo, was an equally zealous Protestant, a Slovak Lutheran.

Under Thurzo's leadership a synod was held in March, 1610, at Žilina. At this synod, which will be treated in a special chapter, the Slovak Lutheran churches of the ten Upper Hungarian (Slovak) counties were organized into three superintendentships, the duties of the superintendents, seniors and inspectors defined, and many rules adopted for the regulation of Church government, discipline and rites. Upon the order of palatine George Thurzo the resolutions of this Synod were printed and circulated among the Lutheran congregations in the country. This Synod aroused the Catholic clergy in Slovakia to extraordinary efforts against the further spreading of Lutheranism in Slovakia.

From the reign of Rudolph II on we see a more determined position taken by the Roman Church against the Protestants. Here is the beginning of the Counter-Reformation. Already in 1609, Cardinal Forgách, together with his clergy, protested against the ordinances of the Diet of 1608 which favored the Protestants. The Diet of 1609 rejected this protest. It also opposed Peter Pázmány, a member of the Society of Jesus, later archbishop of Ostrihom, and one of the leading figures of the Counter-Reformation in Slovakia.

During this period, Protestant churches, still existing in Slovakia today, were erected in Haj (1580), Turany (1580), St. Peter (1580), St. Mara (1580), St. Michal (1580), St. Helena (1582), Kláštor (1585), Jaseno (1585), Sklenô (1590), Necpaly (1592), Blatnica (1597) and Horná Štubňa (1600).⁹⁶

96. Škrovina, op. cit., p. 7.

VII.

THE SYNOD OF ŽILINA.

The Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in Slovakia did not actually have her own organization until 1610. Until the year 1610 the Protestant clergy, lacking their own representation, willingly remained dependent upon the higher Roman Catholic dignitaries. Since the Lutherans received no support from the civil government, they sought it where it could be found. At the outset of this arrangement there was harmonious agreement between the two parties and in many instances they used the same church buildings for their services. In many cases the only difference in church services was that the Lutherans held theirs in Slovak and the preaching of the Word of God was the climax, or center, of the service. The Lutheran ministers did not withdraw from under the power of the Roman bishops. They willingly gave them a voluntary fee, assessment, the so-called "census cathedraticus". Where the priest had the right of the tithe (the tenth part of the harvest), that reverted to the Lutheran pastor, if the congregation became Lutheran. At many places the Roman priests also administered the Lord's Supper, under both species, to Lutherans.

When the Catholic hierarchy began to come out openly against the Protestants, these conditions changed. In 1604 the Roman Church prohibited Protestant church services, persecuted the ministers and teachers, and confiscated Protes-

tant churches, parsonages, schools and properties. The climax of this persecution was reached in Košice. When the Calvinistic church was seized in this city, all the Protestants complained of these persecutions to Rudolph II. But when neither he nor his advisors gave them any satisfaction, they rallied to the side of Stephen Bocskay, who arose against and defeated Barbian, the leader of these persecutions. In 1606 Rudolph was ready to consider a peace, which was signed the same year in Vienna.

On October 22, 1608, at the Diet of Bratislava, the provisions of the Peace of Vienna were embodied into the laws of Hungary. The clause "in order that all jealousies and disputes be avoided between parties, it is hereby decreed that each religion have its (own) representatives or superintendents",⁹⁷ was especially emphasized.

The Slovak Lutherans immediately took advantage of the results of the Peace of Vienna. Attention was directed toward purer teaching, simple and common services, and a more consecrated, sanctified, God-pleasing life. All unnecessary elements in worship were discarded and the use of the mother-tongue, Slovak, was introduced into more and more of the services. Churches were built with greater earnestness and great sacrifices were made toward the establishment of schools. Besides elementary schools, secondary schools were founded. Yes, one can thank the schools for the promulgation of Lutheranism in Slovakia.

97. Tranovsky Evanjelický Kalendár, 1907, p. 98.

On November 6, 1608, Count Stephen Illésházy, who zealously worked for the cause of Lutheranism, was elected palatine of Hungary. It was another blessing for the Lutherans that, when this devout palatine passed away on May 6, 1609, in Vienna, another devout Lutheran, Count George Thurzo of Orava, was elected to this office. Thurzo can rightly be called the 'watch-dog' of the Peace of Vienna, for he saw to it that it was strictly upheld, despite Jesuitical attempts to the contrary. Under his protection the Slovak Lutherans could pay more attention to the internal life of the Church. They knew that, above all else, it was becoming more necessary to make a clean break with the Roman Catholic Church and to make themselves completely independent of the influence of the Roman Church.

With this in mind, Thurzo immediately undertook the task of organizing the Lutheran Church, and already on July 3, 1609, called a meeting in Žilina for the purpose of electing superintendents. Records tell us only that this meeting was adjourned without results.⁹⁸ A conference was called for August, 1619, to Sučany, and it is almost certain that, as a result of this conference, a synod was called in Žilina in March, 1610. Although Thurzo did not send out a letter until March 13, 1610, calling the synod to Žilina for the 25th of March, the general conference in Bytča on February 11, 1610, elected delegates Eliáš Láni, Samuel Paulini and Štefan

98. Jur. Janoška, O Synode Žilinskej, p. 5.

Krušpíer to the Synod of Žilina.⁹⁹ We see from this that, although officially the Synod was not yet called, many of the congregations were preparing themselves for it for the time when it would become a reality. This Synod was held for only three days, March 28, 29, and 30, but it gave the Lutheran Church in Slovakia its first foundational organization.¹⁰⁰

On the 27th of March, 1610, Palatine George Thurzo made a pompous entry into Žilina from his castle in Bytča. The Rev. John Fabricius, pastor at Hlohoved, welcomed him in an address which was followed by an hour of relaxation and rest. Before George Thurzo gave his resumé of what had been resolved at the Sučany conference, the entire assembly of magnates, landlords, delegates, and spiritual leaders sang the hymn, "Veni Sancte Spiritus". In his resumé Thurzo gave the reasons why the General Synod was called to Žilina. He then called upon those present to consider and ponder ways and means of aiding the Church and gave assurance of his wholehearted support in their undertakings. Since a few of the delegates were not yet present, he considered it only fitting and proper that the discussions be postponed to the next day.¹⁰¹ He was assured by those present that all would be done in their power to grant the fulfillment of his requests. Everyone then looked forward to the following morning, when the business proper of the Synod would come under

99. Ján Moko, Eliáš Lani, p. 25.

100. Janoska, op. cit., p. 5.

101. Ibid., p. 6.

discussion.

Early the next morning all the delegates, consisting of both spiritual and secular leaders from the ten counties of the Cisdanubian region, met in the Žilina Church. Services were begun with the singing of "Veni Sancte Spiritus" and then pastor Eliáš Láni offered a prayer to God, asking for His aid and the gift of the Holy Spirit in the deliberations and proceedings. Following this prayer, Palatine Thurzo addressed the assembly, saying, among other things, that since the administration in spiritual matters of the ten counties is vested in those present, it is high time that steps be taken toward improving the welfare of the congregations and for the administration of their affairs so that in the future the Lutheran Church does not fall into decay.¹⁰² And since at the Diet in Bratislava it was decreed by law that each denomination have its own superintendents, therefore, Thurzo said that Evangelical superintendents, on whom all others are to be dependent, could and must be elected. Only in this way will the Lutheran clergy dispose of the yoke of the pope which has been pressing them. Thurzo also explained that since the ten counties are so large that one individual could not conveniently visit them, nor would be in a position to administrate all affairs which would arise, therefore, it is necessary that they be divided into three districts and that three superintendents be elected, following the example of the Saxon congregations.¹⁰³

102. Ibid., p. 7.

103. Ibid., p. 8.

The Rev. John Fabricius replied in the name of the assembled delegates.

Following the address, Palatine Thurzo presented the matter of 1) the best form of church government, 2) the office of superintendents, 3) the authority of this office, 4) the laws of administration and the oath and, 5) the views of the delegates on the form of administration of the Church. With undivided interest the assembly gave special attention to the addresses of Eliáš Láni, pastor at Bytča, Rev. John Fabricius, and John Ponický, pastor at Čachtice. After the assembly had agreed that the best form of church government would be that of superintendentships, the formulation of the laws of administration was next on the docket.

On the 29th of March, during the afternoon session, secular and spiritual leaders, familiar with public laws, were selected to draw up the laws of administration. Among these were Eliáš Láni, Alexander Socovinus, pastor at Prievidza, Jaroslav Zmeškal, and George Lehotzky of Trenčín. The laws and the oath having been formulated and accepted, nominations were in order for the three offices of superintendents. Three men were nominated for each district - for Trenčín, Liptov, and Orava: Eliáš Láni, John Lazitius, and Nicholas Baticius; for Turec, Zvolen, Hont, and Novohrad: Samuel Melik, Matej Lochman, pastor at Mošovce, and someone from the Novohrad fraternity; for Bratislava, Nitra, and Tekov: Izák Abrahamides, who was not present at the Synod, John Fabricius, and John Ponický. The following were elected

into office: Eliáš Láni, Samuel Melik, and Izák Abrahamides.

Eliáš Lani in a humble and beautiful address hesitated to accept the office. Melik, also. However, Palatine Thurzo undermined all their arguments and excuses, and all three finally accepted their offices.¹⁰⁴

The business end of the Synod came to a close at exactly noon on March 30th, whereupon the entire assembly, accompanied by the ringing of all the church bells, marched in procession through the entire city to the church. The church could not seat all the people who came to see the installation of the three superintendents. The services were begun with the singing of "Veni Sancte Spiritus" followed by another hymn. John Fabricius, who was delegated by the Synod to perform the rite of installation, gave the address. With the laying on of hands he inducted Eliáš Láni, Šmuel Melik, and Izák Abrahamides into office. The services came to an end at 2:00 with the singing of "Te Deum Laudamus". That same night, ~~until~~ 11 o'clock, twenty-five copies of the laws were made, one person dictating, while the others wrote. These were then sent throughout the ten counties.¹⁰⁵

That same evening Palatine Thurzo bid farewell to all the delegates and left for the mountainous regions of Hungary, taking with him a copy of the laws of administration which he then had printed in Latin in the city of Bardiov and sent throughout the country.¹⁰⁶

104. Ibid., p. 11.

105. Ibid., p. 12.

106. Ibid., p. 13.

VIII.

MINUTES, LAWS, AND ANALYSIS OF THE SYNOD OF ŽILINA.

The proceedings and the resolutions of the Synod of Žilina were based upon the Word of God as found in 1 Cor. 14: "Let all things be done decently and in order" and on Psalm 68: 28, "Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us."

The minutes list all the delegates and pastors who were in attendance: twenty-three lay-leaders and twenty-seven pastors. The minutes state that this Synod met at the request of Palatine George Thurzo for the purpose of appointing superintendents and for the purpose of organizing the Lutheran Church of the Augsburg Confession in the ten counties. Then follow the names of the three elected superintendents and the counties and districts they were to represent.

The minutes continue, "Since there are congregations in this kingdom not only of Hungarian and Slovak, but also of German nationality, we have resolved that the Germans, as well as the Hungarians, have their own representatives,¹⁰⁷ who are to communicate by writing with the above-mentioned superintendents, and are to be dependent on them. Simon Heuchelin, pastor at Bratislava, is such a representative for the German congregations in the counties of Bratislava,

107. These were really vice-superintendents.

Nitra, and Tekov; Pavel Lentz, pastor at Štiavnica, for the mining cities; and Štefan Kúrti, pastor in Sereď, for the Hungarian congregations in the counties of Bratislava, Nitra, and Tekov."¹⁰⁸

Provision was also made in the case of a death of a superintendent, or his removal into another district. The two remaining superintendents, after having duly notified the counties in the respective district in which a vacancy in the superintendency has occurred of their intentions, should appoint another man for the office.

In order that the superintendents may receive due remuneration for their labors, an appeal is to be made to the various brotherhoods and counties to allocate a definite sum toward the salaries of these superintendents.

Following these preliminary remarks, the laws of administration are set forth under sixteen points.¹⁰⁹ These, and the oath, the writer has attempted to translate into English as literally as possible.

I. Superintendents, inspectors, and elders (seniors) should in every way be concerned that, by orthodox teaching and impeccability of life and morals, they arrive as closely as possible at the rule prescribed for bishops by St. Paul the Apostle (I Tim. 3), that in such wise they may shine as a light to the rest of the shepherds and flocks -- so that, in case they did otherwise, our religion would not be brought into evil repute and that no cause will be given our oppo-

108. Ibid., p. 16.

109. For Slovak version from the Latin see Kvačala, op. cit., pp. 153-156. For German, see Borbis, op. cit., pp. 48-50.

nents to slander us.

II. Let them annually visit the congregations, either personally, as much as they are able, or through their elders (seniors), if, either through illness or unavoidable misfortune, they would be prevented from doing so. And if they personally would be unable to visit individual congregations, they shall endeavor to arrange the annual pastoral conferences, which are usually held in January and February, in such a manner that they themselves will be able to be present. In such wise they will be able to aid in the work of the brethren, pass judgment upon presented cases, know the status of the congregations, preserve discipline and collect their salary.

III. On visitations let them investigate, what, in what manner, and how faithfully the pastors teach. Do they hold the people to prayers and catechization? Do they live devoutly, soberly, and chastely? On the other hand, are the people grateful and respectful toward their pastor? Do they pay what the parishes are assessed? Do they take care of the church buildings, parsonages, and schools? Likewise, let them investigate what type of teachers the congregations have and what and how they teach the youth. They will examine young pastors, who are rather immature in spirit, and will insist that they increase in learning and morals and will recommend them to the more learned. And they will strive to correct and bring to order everything according to their authority and wisdom with the aid of the elder (senior) of

the respective county and brotherhood.

IV. It will be the duty of the superintendent to guard and care for all incomes of churches, parsonages, schools, such as lands, meadows, mills and the like, together with the church's vestments and jewels, duly recorded, so that nothing will be lost, estranged, nor diminished. And if such lands, meadows, mills and properties be seized, let them have recourse to the civil government (for aid).

V. They should defend the pastors of congregations and teachers of schools, in accordance with the laws, against every injustice and ignominy, for which purpose court actions and legal investigations will be necessary; for which, however, they will from them receive wages.

VI. Let them establish and preserve in all congregations thus united uniformity of rites and functions, with the sole exception of the robe (to the use of which, as a matter of indifference, it would not appear advisable, for certain and obvious reasons, to compel the reverend Hungarian pastors). And this will be attained in no other manner than by the publishing of a single and uniform Agenda. Regarding the celebration of holy days which should be observed, there exist already former regulations of the brotherhood.

VII. It will be the duty of the superintendent, calling upon the nearest inspector and elder (senior) and also several neighboring pastors, to examine candidates of sacred theology, who are by reason of age and impeccability of life suited for it and who are from that neighborhood (diocese)

or will be called into it; and if he deem them to be fit, to ordain them into the holy office of the Church according to the formula of the Church of Wittenberg, and to dismiss them with their testimony and that of the brethren, and what is of greatest importance, to bind them to purity of teaching and to the obedience of the laws. And if anyone, for the purpose of broadening his knowledge, or of visiting countries, or of acquiring books, would desire to attend Wittenberg or some other academy of the Augsburg Confession, as found in the Book of Concord, and there be ordained, let him be permitted to do so; only let it be done without bias or contempt of the native superintendents. But first, before desiring to go there, they must have lawful permission, completed examinations, and must be provided with the recommendation of the superintendents or inspectors. However, each superintendent must keep a list (protocol) of the ordained; and the candidate for ordination must by all means subscribe to the Book of Concord, otherwise he should not be admitted to ordination.

VIII. In questions and matters legally subject to the investigation of the superintendents, if it becomes necessary, let political personages, acquainted with the law, but not connected (with the case) through interest, relationship, or kinship, be invited by the superintendents.

IX. Litigations of greater import, as of false teaching, of adultery, and of other uncommon sins, raised against the ministers, deacons and teachers, should be subject to

the superintendent; he will call from any brotherhood, falling under his administration, eminent men and especially personages acquainted with the law; they should thoroughly investigate the matter and, according to the nature of the guilt, deprive the convicted transgressor of the dignity of minister, excommunicate him, deprive him of his salary and hand him over to the political power for punishment. Other minor matters should be placed before the inspectors and elders (seniors), so that the dignity of the elder does not suffer, nor the superintendent be buried under an avalanche of litigations.

X. A minister, called to a certain pastorate, should first present himself to the superintendent, inspector, or definitely to the elder (senior) of the same county, if the superintendent is absent; and that solely for the purpose of proving his agreement in life and doctrine, and whether he possesses a lawful call.

XI. If either the plaintiff or defendant refuse to be satisfied with the decision and verdict of the elder (senior) and his deans in the brotherhood to which he belongs, and if he should appeal to the superintendent, the superintendent of that district should request the copies of the records and verdict from the respective elder (senior) and investigate whether or not the court action was correct. If he finds that the decision was correct and justifiable, let him confirm the decision; however, should he find that something else is required, let him have the matter restudied in the

same brotherhood, and if necessary, call in reliable men, skilled in judging and of sound judgment, from another brotherhood. Further appeal should not be permitted, and the convicted party bears the expenses.

XII. The superintendent should not administrate and judge according to personal fancy and personal opinion the ministers of God's Word entrusted to his supervision, but on the basis of laws. He should expel the hardened, if after one or two exhortations they obdurately do not want to and refuse to listen, announcing it first to the local political authorities, inspectors and elders (seniors); and if they hold any office, he should depose them from same.

XIII. If any minister is to be summoned at the petition of a plaintiff, the plaintiff, obtaining a summons from the superintendent, should deliver it to his elder (senior) or inspector, who should do the summoning through one or another of the ministers of the Word of God.

XIV. Whereas it frequently occurs that superintendents, inspectors and the ministers themselves are offended by some and need protectors, therefore we decree that a superintendent, inspector, or minister offended by anyone, request the political power in the country, first the local and then, if necessary, also the higher, and let them ask their aid, and these powers by no means are permitted to refuse them protection.

XV. If any brotherhoods have private privileges or some preferential rights and liberties, and they are not opposed

to the orthodox religion and these decrees, let the superintendents leave them to their benefit.

XVI. In order that all these proposals might be more firmly observed and kept, the same superintendents, upon a solemn public induction into office in this congregation at Zilina, took an oath in a manner which also in future times, when necessity arises, should be observed.

OATH: I, N.N., a minister of the Word of God and superintendent in the counties of N., do vow in the presence of the eternal God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and promise, that in my public and private life I will teach and foster no other teaching save that which is found in the prophetic and apostolic writings and which are embodied in the Augsburg Confession, submitted in Augsburg to Emperor Charles V in 1530, and which is found in the Formula of Concord. I will diligently and strictly keep vigil and see to it that this Confession is confessed and taught also by the Elders (seniors) and reverend ministers of God's Word, entrusted to my care. I will endeavor, with the aid of the mercy of the Holy Ghost, to be to the pastors, congregations, and entire flock which have been entrusted to me, such a representative as befits a good and faithful shepherd of souls and a minister of the Word of God. I will endeavor to keep the canons which are also prescribed for the clergy and the individual conferences, counties, and districts, and also for me in this office of superintendent, and I will see to it that they are observed and heeded also by all and by individuals under my supervision. This all I desire to fulfill to the utmost of my abi-

lity, to which end may God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost and my Christian faith be of help to me. Amen.

In the entire proceedings of the Synod of Žilina there is nothing contrary to the Word of God, and since not only spiritual leaders, but also lay-leaders, versed in the laws of government and in politics, helped to draw up these laws, they also conform to the laws of the land, Hungary. Great pains were also taken that these laws of administration, which would free the Lutherans from Roman domination, should contain nothing which would antagonize the Roman Catholic Church.

Of special note is the fact that not one nationality represented at the Synod was overlooked at this Synod. All were considered and provided for: the German and Hungarian congregations receiving their own representatives in order that their representation could better be expedited by their native pastors.

These laws of the Synod of Žilina, although only formulating the main principles of the duties and tasks of the superintendents, seniors, and pastors, became a model for future synods which also elaborated upon them and added necessary changes. The Synod of Spišské Podhradie in 1614, with minor additions, accepted the canons of Žilina in their entirety and organized the counties of Spiš and Šariš. The Synod of Ružomberok in 1707 referred to these laws in many instances.

Yes, a more important date in the history of the reformation in Slovakia would be hard to find. And although the Synod of Žilina was a particular, local affair, the entire

Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary not being represented, still its importance and its results overshadow all Evangelical Synods of Slovakia. It made the Lutheran congregations independent of Rome and united them in faith, for as a basis for the unity of faith they accepted the Book of Concord.

When these proceedings of the Synod of Žilina were later attacked, Palatine Thurzo answered in defense, "We did nothing at the Synod but that which serves to the honor and glorification of the Almighty and gracious Heavenly Father, to the salvation of our souls, also for the defense of our faith, and which pertains to the organization of the congregations, united on the basis of the Augsburg Confession."¹¹⁰

Great opposition from the Roman Catholic faction arose against the decisions of the Synod of Žilina. Cardinal Francis Forgách, who served also as archbishop of Ostrihom, saw a great danger to the Roman Church in the canons of this Synod, and already on April 17, 1610, less than three weeks after the Synod, wrote a sharp letter of protest, full of invectives, against the resolutions of this Synod, stating that they violated the laws of the country, religious freedom of the congregations, the 'holy canons', and even the commandments of God. Among other things, he stated that "against the papal powers not even the Peace of Vienna has any value."¹¹¹ He complains that the palatine has instituted a dangerous innovation, since he has no right to call a synod, at which

110. Janoška, op. cit., p. 25.

111. Mocko, op. cit., p. 27.

matters of a religious nature are discussed, without the knowledge and sanction of the archbishop. He accuses the superintendents of shamming the bishops, thus debasing the dignity of the Roman hierarchy and causing schisms in the Church. Forgách calls upon the bishops, archdeacons, priests, and the entire Roman clergy in general, to fight these dangerous resolutions. He nailed this protest to the door of the Bratislava church and had it printed and circulated.¹¹²

This protest caused great concern among the Lutherans, superintendent Abrahamides and inspector Heuchelin immediately sending a copy of it to Thurzo. Toward the end of May Thurzo acknowledged their letter and in a personal letter reveals a pointed and decisive attitude against the protest and its author, Forgách. He writes: "A dog is for the purpose of barking, and knows nothing else but to bark. Every bird sings as its beak grew and is known by its singing. And so our opponents, foes of peace, country, and laws, will never cease barking against us, neither now nor never. And if they were able, they would definitely ruin us and send us to hell. But as a knight's horse does not pay any attention to the bark of dogs, so we do not worry about their excommunications with which they endeavor to put us out of the Christian Church. We lean on our belief that God guards and defends us despite their intolerance, pride and tyranny, despite their undermining activities."¹¹³ He tells Abrahamides and Heuchelin to expect his return and he desires that the superintendents,

112. Janoška, op. cit., p. 25.

113. Ibid., p. 26.

inspectors, and seniors, with the aid of learned laymen, write a defense against Forgách's letter and that they send him the manuscript. He will have it printed and see to its circulation.

His wish was carried out. The letter of defense was printed in Košice in 1610 under the title, "Apologia pro Synodo Solnensi ejusque constitutionibus."¹¹⁴

All this did not hamper putting into practice the resolutions of the Synod of Žilina. In fact, it added life to the Church and a greater zeal toward the activities in the Church. Under the protection of the palatine the brotherhoods began to organize independently and worked toward the effective organization and administration of the Lutheran Church.

The superintendents aroused the people to action, counseled, visited the congregations in their respective districts, and gave special attention to the establishment of schools. In order to have sources from which to teach and study, superintendent Eliáš Láni perused various translations and revisions of Luther's Catechism and authorized a new revision. He dedicated this edition to Thurzo and his wife, who had the book printed and placed into the schools. The Catholic clergy turned upon this book, confiscated and burned it, so that by 1634 hardly a copy of it was left.¹¹⁵

But the resolutions and results of the Synod of Žilina could no longer be undone by the Roman Catholic Church. From the 30th of March, 1610, to the present day the Lutheran Church in Slovakia was to have its own administrative organi-

114. Ibid., p. 26.

115. Ibid., p. 27.

zation, completely independent of the Roman Church, although not completely free from her stinging persecutions. The great historical significance of the Synod of Žilina cannot be denied. Perhaps much more could have been desired from this Synod, but when we consider that it was a pioneer step in the direction of complete independence of an opposing faction, that it had no former model by which to guide itself, and that it was of such short duration, we must marvel at the foresight which its leaders displayed and at the success which it enjoyed.

After the death of the late pastor of his congregation, he had to resign his pastorate and give up his citizenship, and in his old age had to flee for support to the French and Swiss brotherhoods. After some years of wandering, he settled in the town of Zürich, where he was employed as a schoolmaster. He was a man of great energy and ability, and his work was highly valued. He was also a man of great faith and devotion, and his life was a model of Christian living. He was a man of great influence, and his work was highly valued. He was also a man of great faith and devotion, and his life was a model of Christian living.

After the death of the late pastor of his congregation, he had to resign his pastorate and give up his citizenship, and in his old age had to flee for support to the French and Swiss brotherhoods. After some years of wandering, he settled in the town of Zürich, where he was employed as a schoolmaster. He was a man of great energy and ability, and his work was highly valued. He was also a man of great faith and devotion, and his life was a model of Christian living. He was a man of great influence, and his work was highly valued. He was also a man of great faith and devotion, and his life was a model of Christian living.

IX.

DELEGATES AND IMPORTANT PERSONAGES AT THE SYNOD OF ŽILINA.

Twenty-three lay-leaders and twenty-seven spiritual leaders were delegated to the Synod of Žilina. Pastors present were John Artopaeus of Košeca; Nicholas Baticius of Veličná, Orava; and Andrew Carbonarius, pastor at Turčiansky Sv. Martin from 1607 to 1623. He was a native of Banská Bystrica, a zealous and well-educated man. Due to a dispute in 1618 with the Révay family, patrons of his congregation, he had to resign his pastorate and give up his seniorship, and in his old age had to flee for support to the Trenčín and Zvolen brotherhoods.¹¹⁶ Also Jonáš Černák of Solčany, Nitra; and Florian Duchon, Bratislava court-preacher of Madame Katherine Pálffy, widow of Count Stephen Illésházy, former palatine of Hungary. Duchon is known for his literary work "Antithesis Veteris et Novae Ecclesiae ac Doctrinae Christo-Lutheranae et Apostolicae, ac Novae Romanae."¹¹⁷

Also Ján Fabricius, who already in 1580 was a pastor in Svätý Michal in Hlohovec;¹¹⁸ Simon Heuchelin, German pastor at Bratislava; Izák Hodicskius of Turná; Štefan Kruspier of Nové Mesto; Eliáš Láni of Bytča; Ján Lazicius of lower Trenčín county; Zachariáš Gasparides Leszetan; Christofof Masurkius of Nemecká Ľupča; Samuel Melik of Brezany; Martin Mokošinus of Teplá in Liptov, who was ordained in Wittenberg

116. Škrovina, op. cit., p. 284.

117. Kvačala, op. cit., p. 203.

118. Škrovina, op. cit., p. 250.

on June 12, 1580, and died on April 11, 1619;¹¹⁹ Samuel Paulinus of Bystrica; Michal Petri of Chrenovec; Jur Piskator of Hradna; Jan Ponický, pastor of Čachtice and Branč and provost of Nové Mesto; and Pavel Saladinus of Bánovce. In 1600 Saladinus was called as a teacher to Sučany from where he went as pastor to Bánovce. At the funeral of Peter Révay he read the poetic verses. He died in 1629.¹²⁰

Also Jur Smidelius of Svätá Helena in Turiec. He was a learned, religious, and affable man who died April 26, 1617.¹²¹ Also Alexander Socovin of Prievidza; Baltazar Starozvolenský of Šintava; Martin Szkacsányi of Piešťany; Eliáš Tornarius of Ľupča in Zvolen, and Ján Zubenicius of Zelenica.

Lay-leaders who were present were Martin Beniczky, vice-palatine of Hungary; Nicholas Benkovith of Zvolen; Martin Bosányi of Tekov; Ján Dávid of Svätý Peter in Orava; Benedik Gyurki of Zvolen; Andrew Jakusith of Vrbové; Martin Keszler, delegate from Bratislava; Jur Lehotzky of Trenčín; Rudolph Maurach, delegate from Bratislava; Ján Maythenyi of Tekov; Gašpar Ocskay of Nitra; Michal Okolicsányi of Liptov; Ondrej Ostrosith of Gileťinec; Benedikt Pogrányi; Benedik Pongrácz of Liptov; Peter Révay, administrator of Turiec, councilor of His Imperial Majesty and guardian of the sacred crown of Hungary; Ján Ruttkay of Turiec; Theodos Sirmienses of Šuľa; Ján Sturm of Modra; Mojžiš Szuniogh of Jesenica; Mikuláš Tarnovský of Turiec, landlord in Diviak; George Thurzo, palatine of Hungary, and Jaroslav Zmeskal of Domaňovce.

119. Ibid., p. 248.

120. Ibid., p. 144.

121. Ibid., p. 293.

Among the most important lay-leaders at this Synod was Count George Thurzo,¹²² palatine of Hungary, at whose request the Synod was called. His father was Fraňo Thurzo, bishop of Nitra and president of the Bratislava chamber, who, upon seeing the danger of extinction to his lineage, left the bishopric in 1557, became a Lutheran and married Barbara Kostka who, however, died without leaving an heir. Thereupon he married the daughter of Nicholas Zríni, Katherine, who bore him six children.

George was born in Lietava on September 2, 1567. His father died in 1576 and his widowed mother married Imrich Forgách who took an immediate liking to George and gave him a good education. Among his tutors were Vazil Gerstmann of Silesia, Nikodem Sartorius, pastor at Bystrica, M. Erhard, pastor at Štiavnica, and John Prúno, pastor at Hlohovec.

At seventeen Forgách sent him as courtier to Duke Ernest, brother of Emperor Rudolph II. It was during this period that George's mother died, and he had to return to Slovakia to take over the administration of the Thurzo properties in Spiš and Trenčín. Because he feared the extinction of the Thurzo line, George, at the age of eighteen, married the daughter of his step-father's brother, Sofia Forgách, who bore him three children, František, Zuzanna, and Judith. At twenty-five he entered military service and fought against the Turk, making such a fine record for himself that Rudolph II bestowed upon

122. For biography of George Thurzo see Mocko, Eliáš Lani, pp. 48-66 and Kalendár Sion, 1911, pp. 166-168.

him the title of colonel. In one of his battles against the Turk, he was surrounded by them, and it seemed that he would either be captured or killed. However, he managed barely to escape. News of this precarious adventure reached the ears of his wife who had just borne him a daughter. The shock proved too great for her and she succumbed.

In 1598 he was named king's councilor and in 1599, cup-bearer. In 1598 Thurzo married Elizabeth Czobor, who was born and reared in the central part of Hungary. In Tranovský's hymnal there is a hymn preserved which Lady Thurzo composed, probably with the aid of Eliáš Láni, their court-preacher.¹²³ In 1604 Thurzo left the army and entered upon a diplomatic career. A year later Rudolph II bestowed upon him the title of Count. Thurzo was the mediator between Rudolph II and Matthias at the Peace of Vienna in 1606. On December 7, 1609, he was elected palatine of Hungary, and thus became the guardian of the Peace of Vienna. Through his efforts the Synod of Žilina became a reality and a success, for it was he who invited all the Lutheran counts and magnates to the Synod in 1610.

Thurzo and his wife, Elizabeth, were an exemplary Christian couple. His many duties as a diplomat took him away from home for shorter and longer periods, but he always wrote letters to his wife which she preserved and valued. These letters were printed in two volumes in 1876. They cast light up-

123. Škultéty, op. cit., p. 80.

on his devoted family life and especially upon the pains he took to give his children a proper Christian education and training. All his children knew Slovak, which was very unusual for the children of nobility of that period.

By his second wife Thurzo had ten children. His two sons were John and Imrich. Imrich went to Wittenberg in 1615 and became a teacher at the University. Upon the request of his father he returned to Bytča in June, 1616, and married Countess Kristine Nyáry.

Toward the end Thurzo was a sickly man and became almost bedridden. It is interesting to note what great influence he held and in what great esteem his decisions were held, when we notice that his greatest enemy, Peter Pazmány, the chief leader of the bloody Counter-Reformation in Slovakia, came to his sick-bed with several other leading dignitaries of the country to seek his advice about the next successor to the king.

Thurzo died at nine in the evening on December 24, 1616, at the age of only forty-nine, having served as palatine of Hungary for seven years. His death was a great blow not only to his family, but also to the Lutheran Church of Slovakia, for the Catholic opposition was becoming greater and a good leader was in demand. Thurzo wasn't buried until February 19, 1617, for time was needed to give him a fitting burial and to give dignitaries time to make the journey to his funeral.

In his will, which was made out on January 19, 1615, he

exhorts his children to remain true to the Lutheran Church of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and disinherits those who turn to another faith.

In the chapel of his Orava castle is a granite life-size ~~image~~ of Thurzo. Next to it hang his helmet and cudgel which he carried in the defense of his country.

Eliáš Láni,¹²⁴ one of the first superintendents of Slovakia, a noted preacher,¹²⁵ and composer of religious hymns and apologies,¹²⁶ was born in Slovenské Pravno, Turiec, about the year 1570. Since the records of his early life were burned during the later persecution of the Lutherans in Slovakia, little is known of his early life. At the age of twenty-four he became a professor at Stráž. In 1595 he accepted a teacherage in Jelšava. In 1596 he was ordained to the ministry in Breh, Silesia, and thereupon accepted a call to Mošovce. In the meantime he married Zuzanna Tamarisci who bore him three sons, Izák, Rehor, and Zachariáš.

In 1602 he was elected dean of Turiec, which conference also delegated him, together with Matthew Lochman, pastor at Sučany, to draw up a new set of rules to govern the conference. These he presented the same year for endorsement to Peter

124. For biographies of Eliáš Láni see Mocko, Eliáš Láni; Dobroslav Chrobak, Rukovät dejín slovenskej literatúry, and Ottuv, Slovník Naučný, Vol. XV., p. 636 under Láni, E.

125. Several of his sermons were printed. The most famous is Reč na pohrbu hraběte Jiřího Turza (The Address at the Funeral of Palatine George Thurzo).

126. Best known is his apology against T. Fabricius, "Scutum libertatis Christianae in usu Ceremoniarum, nominatum autem imaginum." Defensio libertatis Christianae in usu imaginum historico. It was printed in Bardiov in 1595.

Révay, patron of the Lutheran Church. These rules were valid only in the Turiec conference.

On May 26, 1608, he was called as court-preacher by Palatine Count George Thurzo to Bytča, Trenčín, and thus became the confessor and spiritual adviser to the most powerful and renowned magnate of Hungary. The following year he was elected dean of the Trenčín conference. The clergy had come to learn of his learning, willingness and ability to work in the kingdom of God and valued his opinions and decisions highly. They also knew that he had the support of the Lutheran palatine, George Thurzo.

However, Láni did not want to accept the office, but when the decision of the conference remained unchanged, he accepted the office with a few reservations. He requested that the brethren show him due obedience, for he did not want to be a dean in name only, and also knew well that he was considered a new-comer in the seniorate. Láni also knew that many factions existed in this conference and therefore asked that all existing differences be ironed out and that the conference work toward unity and harmony in all of its dealings. Knowing also that there were many who were giving offense to the Christian congregations, he asked his brethren to be of help to him in exhorting the offenders, and if need be, to punish them.

At the Synod of Žilina he was elected to one of the three superintendentships. To his care fell the Lutheran congregations of the three counties of Trenčín, Liptov, and Orava.

How seriously he took his position can be seen from the one fact that in one year alone he visited 105 congregations.

Because of the various experiences in his visitations, he presented eight topics for discussion at the Bytča conference in January, 1613. He wished to hear the opinion of his brethren on these seven points in order that they could be added to the resolutions passed upon at the Synod of Žilina: (1) On the method of visitations, (2) On the life, morals, and diligence of pastors, (3) Of the manner in which to protest against infringements of rights, (4) The question of a common and unified Agenda, (5) On the agreement of laws in all the counties, (6) On the removal of ministers from office and, (7) On the illegal entry of teachers and pastors into these regions.

One of his main contributions to the Slovak literature of the Lutherans was his translation of Luther's Catechism into Slovak, which was printed in Levoča in 1612. This translation, in which he was assisted by Abrahamides and Melik, he dedicated to Palatine George Thurzo and his wife. Thurzo had it printed and placed into all the Lutheran schools.

Láni not only stood for the pure teaching of the Word of God and strict adherence to the Augsburg Confession, but he also vigorously attacked those who did not adhere to the Word of God or taught false doctrine.

The year 1617 marked the first centennial of the Reformation. The university at Wittenberg gave the impetus to the proper observance of this centennial, and the Lutheran Church

in Slovakia followed in its footsteps with Láni at the head of the movement. He called the superintendents to the Synod of Mošovce on September 26, 1617, in order that a unified program might be established for the proper observance of this centennial. Returning home, Láni immediately drew up the program of the jubilee. He called a special conference of the Upper Trenčín congregations and even notified the secular leaders of the Trenčín county of the importance of this jubilee in a letter of October 6, 1617.

His death, like Thurzo's, was a great blow to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Slovakia. But his many duties and activities and his vigilance over the Lutheran Church in Slovakia sapped his strength, and he departed this life still a young man. He died on November 5, 1618, at the age of forty-eight.

He was given a memorable burial. His heirs placed a monumental stone upon his grave with the Latin inscription: "It is enough, O Lord, take Thou my soul! To the honorable and enlightened Eliáš Láni, pastor of the Bytča congregation and first elected superintendent of the counties of Trenčín, Liptov, and Orava, who in Christ departed this life on November 5, 1618 in his forty-eighth year. Erected by his heirs." However, this monument did not remain long upon his grave, for the leaders of the Counter-Reformation destroyed it at their first opportunity.

Láni was also a great master of poetry and composed hymns for the Slovak Lutheran Church -- hymns which in lyrical style

reveal the deep-souled feelings, trials and tribulations of his age.¹²⁷ The Transcius, the present-day authorized hymnal of the Slovak Lutheran Church, lists ten of his hymns, numbers 428, 550, 555, 568, 595, 814, 815, 853, 941 and 966.

Izák Abrahamides, who also went under the pseudonym of Hrochotius (Hrochotský),¹²⁸ although not present at the Synod of Žilina, nevertheless was elected, in absentia, superintendent of the counties of Tekov, Nitra, and Bratislava. He was born about 1575 in Hrochoť, Zvolen, and studied in Praha and Liptov. He taught school in Vienna and was a notary public in Kremnica. In 1595 he was ordained to the ministry in Wittenberg. Abrahamides excelled in theological studies and in oratory. Together with Eliáš Láni and Samuel Melik he translated Luther's Catechism into Slovak and saw it printed in Levoča in 1612. He departed from this life on September 3, 1621.

127. Kréméry, op. cit., p. 8.

128. For biographies of Abrahamides see Dobroslav Chrobak, op. cit., and Ottův, op. cit., Vol. I., p. 79.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

English Sources:

- ČAPEK, THOMAS, The Slovaks of Hungary, New York, The Knickerbocker Press, 1906.
- The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. VII., New York, Robert Appleton Co., 1910.
- DOLAK, GEORGE, Zapisnica of Slovak Ev. Lutheran Synod of U.S.A., Pittsburgh, Pa., Slavia Printing Co., 1939, article "A Brief Survey of the Lutheran Church in Slovakia, with Special Reference to its Organization under the Republic of Czechoslovakia."
- HULME, EDWARD MASLIN, Renaissance and Reformation, New York, D. Appleton-Century Co., Inc., 1915.
- KERNER, ROBERT J., Czechoslovakia Twenty Years of Independence, Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1940.
- LENKER, J.N., Lutherans in All Lands, Milwaukee, 1893., pp. 471-475.
- MCLINTOCK, J. and STRONG, JAMES, Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature, Harper and Bro. Publ. New York, 1894, Vol. IV and VIII.
- New Larned History, Nichols Publ. Co., Springfield, Mass., 1924, Vol. V.
- QUALBEN, LARS P., A History of the Christian Church, Thomas Nelson and Sons, New York, 1940, pp. 303-304.
- SETON-WATSON, Slovakia Then and Now, London, 1931.

Slovak Sources:

- AUTHOR UNKNOWN, title unknown also, due to condition of book. Probably, Cirkevná historia.
- BEŽO, JÁN, Tretia Čítanka a Mluvnica pre ev. a. v. počiatocné školy, Senica, 1904, pp. 43-45 and 149-153.
- BODNÁR, JULIUS, Dejepis cirkvi kresťanskej, Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš, Transcius, 1934, pp. 71-77.
- ČAJAK, JANKO, Dejepis Slovákov, Pittsburgh, Pa., Národné Noviny, 1914.
- KADLEČÍK, GUSTÁV, Dejepis pre V. a VI. ročník škôl ľudových, Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš, Transcius, 1924, pp. 24-28.

- CZAMBEL, SAMO, DR., Slováci a ich reč, Budapest, 1903, pp. 1-26.
- JANOŠKA, JUR., Rev., O Synode Žilinskej, Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš, Tranoscius, 1910.
- KLEIN-TESNOSKALSKÝ, Obrazy z dejín prešovských evanjelikov, Lipt. Sv. Mikuláš, Tranoscius, 1933, pp. 6-9.
- KOREŇ, JOZEF, Dejepis, Praha, Československá Grafická Unia A.S., 1928, pp. 76-95.
- KRČMÉR, ŠTEFAN, Prehľad dejín slovenskej literatúry a vzdelanosti, Turčiansky Sv. Martin, Svetová Knižnica, 1921, pp. 13-28.
- KULHÁNEK, F., Ľudové dejiny Československé, Banská Bystrica, 1920, pp. 116-142.
- KVAČALA, JÁN, Dejiny reformácie na Slovensku, Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš, Tranoscius, 1935, pp. 1-185.
- MOCKO, JÁN, Eliáš Láni, prvý superintendent cirkve evanj. augš. vyzn. v Uhrách a jeho doba, Lipt. Sv. Mikuláš, Tranoscius, 1902.
- MÚDRY-ŠEBÍK, MICHAL, Stručné dejiny Slovákov, Pittsburgh, Pa., 1940, pp. 45-54.
- NITRIANSKY SENIORÁT, Školník, Senica, Ján Bežo, 1906, pp. 34-43.
- NOVÁK, P.S., Dejiny cirkve kresťanskej, Lipt. Sv. Mikuláš, Tranoscius, 1921.
- PELIKÁN, JÁN, Historia Reformácie, Pittsburgh, Pa., 1929, pp. 156-167.
- SASINEK, FRANKO V., Stručný Dejepis Uhorska, Vol. III., Turč. Sv. Martin, 1913.
- ŠKROVINA, OTTO, Z historie turčianskeho evanj. seniorátu a jeho sborov, Turč. Sv. Martin, Knihtlačiarsky účastinársky spolok, 1929.
- ŠKULTÉTY, JOSEPH, Sketches from Slovak History, translation by O.D. Koreff, First Catholic Slovak Union, Middletown, Pa., 1930, pp. 79-86.

Czech Sources:

- Československá Vlastiveda, Vol. IV and V., Praha, "Sphinx", 1931.

----- Historie církve křesťanské, Chicago, Národní Slovenský
Denník, 1915, pp. 276-286.

MACŮREK, JOSEF, Dr., Dějiny Maďarů a Uherského státu, Praha,
Melantrich A.S., 1934, pp. 136-163.

German Sources:

BORBIS, JOHANNES, Die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche Ungarns,
Nordlingen, 1861, pp. 3-53.