

Professor John Erdö

Transylvanian Unitarian Church

Chronological History and Theological Essays



Translated by Dr. Judit Gellérd

Preface by Prof. George M. Williams

THE CENTER FOR FREE RELIGION

Prof. John Erdö

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UNITARIAN CHURCH**

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**CENTER FOR FREE RELIGION
CHICO, CA.**

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Preface

When the Center for Free Religion proposed a series of five books for the 1990 Hamburg Congress of the International Association for Religious Freedom about Unitarianism in Transylvania and Hungary, we suggested that one by Prof. John Erdő about Transylvanian Unitarianism be included. Interest was at an all time high among American Unitarians in Transylvania, focusing on the Ceausescu's planned destruction of Rumanian villages and their churches.

No new book about Transylvanian Unitarianism could be written under the circumstances, so we arranged to translate materials which had already been published in Hungarian. Anything would be satisfactory that would not get Prof. Erdő into trouble. We received permission to translate the essays for a book on Unitarianism in Transylvania from him directly, though a new work for the Hamburg Congress would have been the most desirable. Thus, this book, which was in preparation before the December revolution against Ceausescu, reflects the caution of that period.

Though the Revolution of December 1989 ended a brutal dictatorship, it is not yet clear what the new era will portend for Unitarians in Transylvania. Theirs is a delicate position; Unitarians are Hungarian speaking members of a minority which has been blamed for unrest and division. They are hoping that this will be a beginning of a new epoch without religious and ethnic persecution.

Transylvanian Unitarianism has gone through many periods of persecution but none more devastating than this last one, the period of state demoralization of religion. That is a long and complex story which will be revealed in the future. Three of the four essays in this book come from *Teológiai Tanulmányok* [*Theological Essays*] published in 1986. This Hungarian language book seems to be the only Unitarian work published under the Ceausescu government in the past decade. State censorship

was total and even more problematic for former political prisoners. Prof. Erdő had been rehabilitated to citizenship and church service after having been a victim of the “conceptual trials” of the early nineteen sixties.

The opportunity to have a Unitarian book published under state control was used well. His church was isolated from the rest of the world, and especially from liberal religion. The volume followed a threefold organization: the history of Transylvanian Unitarianism, original theological essays by Prof. Erdő, and theological papers presented to the international liberal religious body, IARF.

The four selections of this book were chosen to provide understanding of and insight into Unitarianism as it was practiced and as it experienced itself at the end of the nineteen eighties. The first essay, “A Chronological History of the Transylvanian Unitarian Church,” is a major contribution to church history and to Transylvanian Unitarian history in particular. Read between the lines of this historical document. It was written under state censorship so every word had to be carefully weighed. Though its flavor might be considered quaint, as if in a time warp, it is written facing inward toward the Rumanian Unitarian Church rather than facing outward as an objective history would be written. So there are abundant references to figures that an “in-house” account would wish remembered. One other concern seems similar, and that is the concern with donations of property and library books. But these donations are a double sword. They are an accounting of property which Unitarians had before Rumania acquired Transylvania and nationalized so much of life. In the last years of Ceausescu even church registers, chalices, books, etc.— anything over 100 years old— could be taken by the state as national treasures.

“The Foundation of Transylvanian Unitarian Church” was written for the 400th Anniversary of the founding of the Unitarian Church and published in *Faith and Freedom: Journal of Progressive Religion* (1970). It summarizes Unitarian history and teachings over four centuries. Prof. Erdő especially wanted this included in this volume to help others understand his church. Thus, the “Chronological History” and “Foundation” will provide a historical introduction to Transylvanian Unitarianism.

The second part of this volume contains two theological essays: “Dávid Ferenc and the Problem of Toleration” and “Jesus’ Notion about God.” They both come from *Teológiai Tanulmányok*.

The theologizing in this allowed publication of the Ceausescu era is a historical document of how a radical denomination of reasoning religion, of cognitional faith, survives. Prof. Erdő, in contrast with four centuries of Unitarian theologians, does not seem to look for new horizons. He does not seem to probe issues which are a puzzle needing the free power of inquiry. He returns to the safety of issues of the first decades of Unitarianism in Transylvania: the oneness of God as illustrated in the Biblical text. He repeats a theological discussion which will help ministers in the villages preach Unitarianism more articulately without falling into any of the traps that the pulpit affords in a totalitarian state. Above all, biblical preaching grants safety in which the "language of flowers" can be engaged.

"Toleration" and "Jesus" are representative essays which show how a brilliant and faithful professor theologizes about his faith under difficult circumstances. Transylvanian Unitarianism had been caught in a "deep freeze" preserving an ancient form of Unitarianism but also retaining a freshness and vitality unlike its Western counterparts. Persecution would have many bad effects, but it also weeded out what was not the religious essence leaving a faith which was viable under the worst of times. In the "language of flowers" using safe Biblical metaphors and ancient theological language, Prof. Erdő points his people to their *raison d'être*. He finds in Jesus and in Dávid Ferenc a value or axiological Christianity which still experiences God—God as whole, one. That unified experience of transcendence immanates in life in a unified way as well. As God is unified, so life is one. There is nothing which is left apart, nothing which lies outside the realm of perfecting, of becoming perfectly in harmony with all of life. So Prof. Erdő's simple prose belies a timeless theme: the liberating spirit in human beings evolving onward and the interconnectedness of all of life.

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Major Dates from the History of the Transylvanian Unitarian Church

Compiled by Prof. Erdő János

Translated by Dr. Judit Gellérd

1510-1520 Birth of Dávid Ferenc.

According to the tradition he was born in 1510, but presumably he was born later, around 1520 in Kolozsvár. His father was Hertel Dávid (citizen of Saxon nationality); his mother was a Hungarian. After his father's first name, David, he named himself Franciscus Davidis (or son of Dávid) and from this he Hungarianized it later into Dávid as his last or family name. His sons, Dávid and János returned to the name of Hertel in its Latin form, Hertelius.

1530-1545 In his own country he went to school in his hometown of Kolozsvár, later at Gyulafehérvár and Brassó.

1540-1571 The lifespan of the king János Zsigmond (John Sigismund).

1544-1556 The Reformation of Kolozsvár.

1546-1551 Dávid Ferenc's studied abroad. Supported by the patrons, Medgyesi Ferenc and Pesti Gábor, he was educated in German universities in Frankfurt by Odera and in Wittenberg where he became a devotee of the Reformation.

1549 Hoffgreff György, a Saxon typographer, founded the printing house of Kolozsvár which later would become the property of Heltai Gáspár.

1551-1565 Publication of the first 7 volumes of the Bible's Hungarian translation was started but unfinished by Heltai Gáspár. The missing parts are: the Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther and Job. Involved in the translation besides Heltai were also Ozorai István, Egri Lukács, Szegedi Lajos, Gyulai István, preachers, and Vizaknai Gergely, a headmaster. The translation of the Bible promoted the spread of the Reformation.

1551 After returning home, Dávid Ferenc became a teacher at Beszterce.

1552 He became minister in the village of Petres near Beszterce. In both places he followed the spirit of the Reformation in his activity.

1552-1555 He became the headmaster in Kolozsvár

1554-1555 The Synod of Szék.

As the recognized theologian of the Transylvanian Reformation, Dávid Ferenc participated at the synod which discussed the thesis about salvation of the Italian liberal thinker Francis Stancaro. In defense of the resolution of the synod Dávid Ferenc wrote and published his first work in Latin, the *Dialysis*.

1555, October 6. Kolozsvár elected Dávid as chief minister. From this point he played a key role in the promotion of the Transylvanian Reformation. At the same time he developed Kolozsvár into the center of religious reform and culture.

He saw the disengagement from the Bible as the main cause of the demoralization of Christianity. The Reformation could not be anything else than the restoration of gospel Christianity based on the Bible.

1557-1559 Dávid Ferenc became the bishop of the Transylvanian Hungarian Lutherans. Because of dogmatic reasons he renounced his office in 1559.

1559-1564 Spreading of the doctrines of the Swiss reformers, Zwingli and Calvin, in Transylvania.

1560-1564 Dávid Ferenc didn't consider the religious reformation finished with Martin Luther. He wanted to continue it until a more perfect restoration of Christianity was achieved. He found the communion doctrine of the Swiss reformation more in accord with the Bible than that of Lutheranism. Therefore he joined the Swiss direction as better serving Christian renewal. For the sake of keeping the unity of the Reformation he sought for reconciliation of the Lutheran and Swiss tendencies.

1564, April 9. The synod from Nagyenyed.

This was the last attempt at reconciliation. They couldn't agree on the question of communion. Because of this the Transylvanian Reformation split, and the separation of the two reforming trends has remained

definitive. The Swiss reformation began to organize an independent Church. Its followers elected Dávid Ferenc their bishop. The king, János Zsigmond nominated him to be his court preacher.

1565 The beginning of the Unitarian reformation.

Dávid Ferenc's biblical and humanistic view came early into conflict with the dogmatism of the Swiss reformation. Opposing Calvin, he considered religious reformation as an eternal principle and its particular directions as evolutionary stages. He saw that God's will progressed step by step in reforming religion and reaching the entire [full] truth. The continuation of the reformation was a prophetic mission in his conception which he had to carry out for the love of God, Jesus and his Church. *"Whom God enlightened by His spirit must not be silent and must not hide the truth."*

Based on the Bible and reason, Dávid Ferenc continued the reformation of the precepts of Christianity. He only kept those which proved to originate from the Bible and were conceivable by reason. In his searching he rejected the dogma of the Trinity as a human creation and started preaching the concept of one God based on Jesus's teachings. This is how the principle of God's unity became the central idea of his reformation. Along with this the Transylvanian religious reformation arrived at a new, radical stage in its development, Unitarianism.

1566.Jan.20. Dávid Ferenc gave his first Unitarian oration in the main church of Kolozsvár.

1566-1571 Dávid Ferenc and Melius Juhász Péter's religious debates.

The king allowed the organizing religious debates in order to put an end to the religious tensions by establishing a uniform attitude and to restore the unity of religion.

Beginning in 1566 these religious debates were a common occurrence between the conservative and the reform-minded orators and laymen about the "old papal science and the new gospel."

"One heard all over Transylvania in the villages and in cities, even among the ordinary people, the great disputes during meals, during drinking, in the evening

and the morning, at night and daytime, in the common talk and from the pulpits, even accusations and fights between the representative of the two religions." (The chronicle of Nagy Szabó Ferenc).

The religious orientation of Lutheran and Swiss Reformed presented a united front against Unitarianism. The burden of the religious debates was carried by Dávid Ferenc and Melius Juhász Péter.

1566. March, 15. The Synod of religious debates at Torda proclaimed that the only basis of the Christian faith was the Apostolic Creed. This resolution constituted the first objective manifestation of the Unitarian reformation.

April 24-27. The first religious dispute at Gyulafehérvár. Here for the first time the question of the Trinity was put forth as an issue in an open [public] debate.

May 19. The religious debate at Marosvásárhely. Dávid Ferenc published a catechism.

1567 The foundation of the printing house at Gyulafehérvár, the king placing it at Dávid Ferenc's disposal. The printing house served Unitarians until 1571. The first Unitarian books were published here.

In 1567 Dávid Ferenc published three works, the most important of them was the *Short Explanation (Rövid magyarázat)* in which he elaborated the articles of faith of Unitarianism based on the Bible.

1568. Jan. 6-13. The Diet of Torda proclaimed freedom of religion and of conscience as follows:

"Our Royal Majesty, as he had decided at the previous debates within his country about matters of religion, confirms as well at the present Diet that every orator shall preach the gospel by his own [personal] conception, at any place if that community is willing to accept him, or if it isn't, no one should force him just because their soul is not satisfied with him; but a community can keep such a preacher whose teachings are delightful. And no one, neither superintendents nor others, may hurt a preacher by this or by the previous constitutions; no one may be blamed because of their religion. No one is allowed to threaten others with prison or divest anyone of their office because of

their profession: because faith is God's gift born from hearing and this hearing is conceived by the word of God."

This decision being unparalleled in contemporary Europe, constituted state recognition of Unitarianism and foundation of the Unitarian Church.

The new received religion hadn't an accepted name at its beginning. Dávid Ferenc and his associates signed their publications: "The Transylvanian ecclesia of one accord." The Unitarians preferred using the name of "Christian;" Dávid Ferenc referred to himself as "the servant of the crucified Jesus Christ."

1568. March 8-18. The second religious debate at Gyulafehérvár. By its importance this stands pre-eminent among the Transylvanian debates. Its report was published by both parties, edited by Dávid Ferenc and Heltai Gáspár respectively.

The consequences of the religious debates made the victory of the Unitarians likely. Tradition has it that just after coming home from the debate Dávid Ferenc preached standing on the "round rock" at the corner of Torda street in Kolozsvár and converted all there to become Unitarian.

In this year the Ovár school at Kolozsvár became Unitarian. With the support of the king and of the city, the school developed into a high level college serving the evolution of Unitarian theology and Transylvanian education very efficiently. The first president of Ovár College was Dávid Ferenc.

In the printing house at Gyulafehérvár Dávid Ferenc's book, *Explanation about Jesus Christ on the foundation of Holy Scripture*, was published; as was the pamphlet from the works of the Western European and Polish Unitarian writers, *De falsa et vera unius Dei patris* (Of the false and the true, only one God, our Father) and also the books of Basilius István orator at Kolozsvár: *The short explanation of the apostolic creed* and *Some questions of the Christian true belief*.

1569. Oct. 20-25. The religious debate at Nagyvárad.

It was held in Hungarian in order that the people could understand. The report of this debate was published by Dávid Ferenc on Heltai's press.

Tradition has it that after this debate 3000 converted to be Unitarian.

- 1569 The first volume of Dávid Ferenc's sermons was published .

In this year also appeared the pamphlet written together by Dávid Ferenc and Blandrata György, the *Refutatio scripti Georgii Maioris*.

- 1570 The publication of the first Unitarian Hymnbook.
Tradition has it belonging to Dávid Ferenc. No copy of this edition is known today.

- 1570's Many foreign liberal thinkers and antitrinitarian theologians found refuge in Transylvania. These were Sommer János, Neuser Adám, Francken Keresztély, Palaeologus Jakab, Glirius-Vehe-Mátyás and others. The patron of the refugees was Gerendi János who in his manor-house at Aranyosgerend and Olcona housed almost all of them as his guests.

Blandrata György, Italian physician and antitrinitarian, came to Transylvania in 1562 as the doctor of the king. As a devotee of the radical reformation he participated in the struggles of the Transylvanian religious reform.

1571. Jan. 6-14. The Diet of Marosvásárhely.

It confirmed the resolutions of the Diet of Torda in 1568: "God's gospel is to be preached everywhere freely, nobody will be hurt because of their confession, neither a preacher nor the audience."

1571. March 14. Death of the king János Zsigmond (John Sigismund).

The system of received religions is associated with his name, which consisted in stopping Catholicism as the state religion and resulted in all the protestant denominations of the Reformation being gradually recognized as received religions.

He was a devotee of the Reformation from 1563, and after 1568 the follower and patron of Unitarianism. He was buried in the cathedral at Gyulafehérvár. At the king's funeral Dávid Ferenc preached his oration in Hungarian, Sommer János in Latin.

After the death of János Zsigmond two important theological works of Dávid Ferenc were published: *About the glorious God himself and his true son, Jesus*

of Nazareth and the True confession about divinity of the only one God the Father and of his holy son Jesus Christ.

1571. Sept.20. The religious debate at Marosvásárhely.

The religious debates and the attempts at compromise remained unsuccessful because of intolerance and exclusivity in the conviction of each to their own dogmatic conceptions. Dávid Ferenc with his sermons, debates and works attained great success at conserving the results. The majority of the ministers, having a Swiss spirit before, joined Unitarianism and as did the king and the aristocracy who had been sympathizing with it. Unitarianism came away victoriously from the ardor of the religious debates. It took roots in the whole country and became an important factor in the life of Transylvania. The ideas of the Unitarian reformation also were spreading outside of Transylvania, beyond the Danube in Bánság, Alföld and Dunántúl.

1571-1576 The rule of Báthori István.

The Prince and his successors introduced a religious policy for restoration of the Catholic Church, supplanting Unitarianism.

Báthori István confiscated the printing house at Gyulafehérvár from the Unitarians, removed Dávid Ferenc from his office of court orator and, except for Blandrata György, displaced all Unitarians from his court.

1571. Sept.17. The introduction of censorship.

The Prince forbade the publication and distribution of any religious works of old or new writers without censorship.

1572. May 25-29. The Law of Innovation.

Though the Diet of Torda confirmed the religious laws of Prince János Zsigmond, at Báthori István's initiation it forbade any further religious reform promising punishment from Prince Báthori himself for innovators [reformers].

This Innovation Law plays a decisive role in the further fate of the Unitarian Church.

1572-1579 The years of tribulation.

Unitarianism continued dogmatic analysis in the 1570's and through this process baptism and Jesus' personality became a center of interest.

In the dispute about Jesus, two sides opposed each other: one was the party of Dávid Ferenc teaching the humanity of Jesus and, consequently, his being due respect but not worship. The other group represented the conservative opinion of Blandrata György and Hunyadi Demeter, who in spite of their antitrinitarianism taught the worship and appeal of Christ.

The antagonism between the two sides gradually became more manifest, which not only split Unitarianism but also tragically turned the previous collaborators against each other at a time when the counter-reformation had already appeared in Transylvania.

1574 Death of Heltai Gáspár

He was an orator, a translator of the Bible, a writer and a publisher at the same time. He had been following Dávid Ferenc faithfully in the developments of the reformation. Since 1544 he was a Lutheran reformer in Kolozsvár; starting in 1559 he was a devotee of the Swiss reformation; and beginning with 1569 he became a Unitarian orator. His printing house was one of the few European presses making the publication of Unitarian books possible.

Death of Alvinczi György, Unitarian minister.

At the religious dispute in Nagyharsány his opponents—the followers of the Swiss reformation—condemned him to death and killed him. This was a flagrant case of the religious intolerance in the 16th century.

1576. Jan.28. The Diet at Medgyes recognized the episcopacy [bishopric] of Dávid Ferenc and confirmed the right of the Unitarian Church to elect a bishop.

1576-1581 The rule of Báthori Kristóf.

At the Diet of Torda the Prince limited the right of Unitarians to hold a synod to Kolozsvár and Torda.

1578. March. The Unitarian synod at Torda with participation of 322 ministers confirmed the principle of free inquiry. According to this, nobody can be accused and condemned of violating the Innovation Law if he is searching questions which the synod hasn't yet decided.

1578 Nov. Socinus Faustus came to Kolozsvár.

Blandrata György invoked the help of the well-known antitrinitarian theologian to try to convince

Dávid Ferenc and make him accept the practice of Jesus' worship and his appeal.

The disputation between Socinus Faustus and Dávid Ferenc ended without any result.

1579. Feb.28. The synod at Torda rejected the charge of Blandrata György against Dávid Ferenc and his followers of violating the Innovation Law. The synod affirmed that Unitarians did not innovate, but they only developed their previous teachings. Seeking for the religious knowledge and truth is not only allowed but it is the duty of ministers.

1579. March. Blandrata György denounced Dávid Ferenc before the Prince as a religious reformer who was violating the Law of Innovation and preaching new teachings.

Prince Báthori Kristóf was waiting for the right opportunity to turn against Dávid Ferenc, and based on that denunciation, forbade the Unitarian reformer to preach, detained him under house-arrest and brought his case before the Diet.

1579. Apr.26. Dávid Ferenc's cause before the Diet at Torda.

The courageous espousal of the orator and the attitude of his supporters crossed up the Prince's plans. The Diet warned the Prince that "in this case he shouldn't be carried away by any unconsidered decision but act deliberately, appealing to the advice of both the lay and the Church judges."

Arraignment of Dávid Ferenc's case was postponed until the Diet in June.

June 1-2. The sentence of the Diet at Gyulafehérvár in Dávid Ferenc's trial.

Learning from the failure of the Diet at Torda, the trial was prepared by the advisor of the Prince, the Jesuit Leleszi János. Accordingly this diet charged Dávid Ferenc with violation of the Innovation Law. Ill and detained under house-arrest, Dávid Ferenc was brought to Gyulafehérvár. His defenders were Trauzner Lukács, Ovári Benedek and Sztárai Miklós.

Before the Diet Dávid Ferenc explained again that he is not an innovator; he had always been teaching Jesus' humanity and the Bible which orders the worship of God and not the worship and appeal of Jesus.

The group of Blandrata György and Hunyadi Deme-

ter and the influential majority of the Diet declared Dávid Ferenc's teaching an innovation. Based on this the Prince sentenced Dávid Ferenc as a religious reformer to life imprisonment in the fortress of Déva.

The sentence of Dávid Ferenc constitutes the first victory of the counter-reformation.

1579. July 2. The [Unitarian] synod at Kolozsvár and its resolutions.

This synod under the pressure of Blandrata György and Hunyadi Demeter accepted a creed consisting of 4 points: Jesus divinity, worship and appeal to Jesus, and Christ's kingdom. As leadership of the Church, near the bishop, the synod organized a Consistorium of 24 members and to the chair of the [Unitarian] bishop, fallen vacant due to Dávid Ferenc's imprisonment, it nominated the orator Hunyadi Demeter. He was confirmed by Prince Báthori Kristóf.

Dávid Ferenc's type of Unitarianism didn't come to an end. Though the absolutism of the Prince and the counter-reformation deprived it of its development, many of the ministers and followers remained loyal to it. In those writings which escaped censorship they kept alive Dávid Ferenc's teachings.

1579. Oct.20. The arrival of the Jesuits in Transylvania.

The Diet of Torda at the request of the Prince gave permission to the Jesuits to come into the country and to set up schools at Monostor and later in Kolozsvár and Gyulafehérvár. With this, the activity of the counter-reformation started.

1579. Nov. Karádi Pál, Unitarian minister from Temesvár wrote a letter to the ministers of Kolozsvár about his commitment to Dávid Ferenc's teachings. He also marked Blandrata György, Hunyadi Demeter and his party who promoted Dávid Ferenc's condemnation as traitors. He separated from the Transylvanian Church, along with the lowland and Banat congregations. The bishop of the detached congregations became Karádi Pál.

November. Death of Dávid Ferenc.

In the notice of Bogáti Fazakas Miklós, Dávid Ferenc died on November the 7th, or by tradition on November the 15th. The circumstances of his death and his grave are unknown.

Prison didn't break Dávid Ferenc's spirit. This is indicated by his testimony carved on the wall of his prison cell: "Neither the sword of popes, nor the cross, nor the image of death— nothing will halt the march of truth. I wrote what I felt and that is what I preached with trusting spirit. I am convinced that after my destruction the teachings of the false prophets will collapse."

- 1580 The publication of his document of defence, the *Defensio Francisci Davidis*.

Dávid Ferenc's sentence and death provoked a desperate disputation both in the country and abroad. Through this process his writings were published in Frankfurt and edited by Palaeologus Jakab, Glorius-Vehe-Mátyás and Hertel Dávid, serving with success in the defense of the Unitarian reformer and justifying his cause. The great interest toward this book is indicated by it going through three editions during the 16th century; the fourth edition was published in 1983 by the "Bibliotheca Unitariorum".

- 1582 Around this year Bogáti Fazakas Miklós (1548-1592) made his famous Psalms translation. For the first time he rendered the whole book of the Psalms into Hungarian verse. However much he tried to be faithful to the original text, he still interwove his translations with some timely social references.

- 1592 After Hunyadi Demeter's death the synod elected the college professor and president, Enyedi György, as Unitarian bishop.

- 1597 Death of Enyedi György.

He was the professor of Ovár College, theologian, writer and famous orator. He is the founder of scientific explanations of Unitarian articles of faith. His *oeuvre* was the *Explicationes* edited and published by Toroczka Máté in 1598. Enyedi György in this book demonstrated that the dogma of the trinity could not be proved or deduced from the Bible. As a consequence of the great interest in this book it was reprinted in Groningen [Holland].

Enyedi György's work provoked wide debate both from the Catholic and Protestant sides.

- 1600, Oct.25-Nov.4. At the Diet of Lécfalva the name [denomi-

nation] of "Unitarian" (*Unitaria*) was used for the first time, expressing the basic theological principle of Unitarianism: God is one in essence and in person. From this derives the name of "unity believer," also.

- 1601 Toroczkai Máté, orator of Kolozsvár, was elected the next Unitarian bishop.
- 1602-1615. The first known version [edition] of our hymnbook was published in this period. During the bishopric of Toroczkai Máté the hymnbook ran into its fifth edition; the last one titled *God glorifying, devotional and comforting songs* was published in 1777. Unitarians had been using first the one of Bogáti Fazakas Miklós, later Tordai János's translations until 1665, when they accepted the renderings of Szenci Molnár Albert.
- 1618 Csanádi Pál, the president of the college, held an open religious dispute with Geleji Katona István, principal of the Reformat [Reformed; Swiss Reformed] school at Gyulafehérvár in the presence of the Prince Bethlen Gábor.
1618. Nov.11. At the synod of Erdőszentgyörgy the Unitarian Church delimited itself and condemned Sabbatarianism. This movement appeared at the end of the 16th century in Transylvania. According to tradition, its founder was Eössi András. Its spiritual source and seed-sower was Glirius-Vehe-Mátyás; its organizer and demonstrator of its ideas at the beginning of the 17th century was Péchi Simon.
- Sabbatarianism, by right of the Innovation Law, had been persecuted by the princes and its followers were punished.
- 1619 Enyedi György's work, the *Explicationes*, was translated into Hungarian by Toroczkai Máté who partially edited it and gave the title: *Explanations of the passages [parts] of the Old-and New Testament from which usually is claimed the idea of the trinity*. It was published in 1619; its distribution became possible with the permission of the Prince Báthori István in 1620. This book proved to be efficient in defense of the Unitarian faith.
- 1626 The publication of the *Disciplina ecclesiastica*.
It contains the regulations of the Unitarian Church being elaborated and published by Bishop Radeczki

Bálint (1616-1632). In 1694 Bishop Almási Gergely Mihály reprinted it in an enlarged form.

1638. July 1-7 The Accord of Dés.

The diet which was authorized to arrange religious problems required Unitarians to worship and appeal to Jesus; to baptize in name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; to publish their religious books only with the censorship of the Prince. Anybody who violated this would be punished by the Prince and the diet. This consensus is known as "the accord."

The intervention into the life of the Church by Prince Rákóczi György I and the Diet was aroused by the conflict of Rév Mátyás, a Saxon preacher at Kolozsvár, with Beke Dániel, Unitarian bishop, and Rév's accusation of innovation against the Unitarian Church.

The consequences of the Accord of Dés were the oppression of Unitarians, confiscation of their churches by right of the majority, and impeding of doctrinal clarification and publication of religious books until the end of the 18th century.

1660 The year of mourning of Polish Unitarians.

The Polish Diet encouraged by the counter-reformation declared that Unitarians either convert to Catholicism by July 10, 1660 or to leave the country. The majority chose conversion to Catholicism. Yet there were many who thought it better to leave their country than to give up their religion. They found refuge in Prussia, Switzerland, the Netherlands and England. A larger group came to Transylvania; their majority settled in Kolozsvár, organizing an independent Polish Church. After their last minister's death, Szaknovics Ignác, they merged into the Hungarian Unitarian congregation. A smaller group settled at Bethlen, patroned by the Unitarian Bethlen Ferenc, and they even organized a congregation which lasted until the middle of the 18th century.

The admission and settling of the Polish Unitarians was arranged by Bishop Koncz Boldizsár.

1661 Death of Arkosi Tegző Benedek.

He was a professor of Ovar College, a recognized theologian in the 17th century. Because of censorship his theological works couldn't be published. The

Church required ministers and professors to copy and study Arkosi Tegző Benedek's prayers and theological writings.

1663. Oct. 21. The synod of Adámos elected Koncz Boldizsár as bishop.

1669 The first synod organized on a representative system for the Unitarian ecclesia was held at Kíssáros. Koncz Boldizsár had initiated this reform which only required a definite number of the representatives from every church district to participate.

1684 Death of the bishop Koncz Boldizsár.

He created a new life in the Church which had undergone the destructions of war and oppression. In order to make the Unitarian articles of faith known and in interest of apology he wrote a catechism, but because of censorship its publication only became possible in 1698. This catechism ran into its fifth edition, the last from 1854.

1692. Feb. 26. Order by Bánffy György, governor, according to which all the congregations of the Háromszék district which were brought under the supervision of the Reformat [Swiss Reformed] bishop since 1622, be given back to the control of the Unitarian bishop.

March 15. The Proclamation of the Lipót's Diploma [*Diploma Leopoldinum*]

This diploma affirmed the rights of the received religions [Lutheran, Reformed, Unitarian, Roman Catholic] and at the same time made possible for Catholics to expand at the expense of Protestants.

Nov. 6. The synod from Szabéd elected Almási Gergely Mihály as bishop.

1693 The inspection of bishop Almási Gergely Mihály in Háromszék church district.

As a result of the inspection he ordered election of lay treasurers in every congregation to safeguard movable and real property.

Almási Gergely Mihály introduced the practice of a collection box for the church offertory.

1693. Oct. 10. The confiscation of Ovár College.

Referring to the Diploma of Lipót, Catholics asked for the college to be given back. The Unitarian Church, in the national interest, was obliged to agree to its

surrender but with the condition of getting another convenient building and compensation from the state. In spite of the agreement, it got only one house. On October 10th Óvár College was forced to move into private houses bought by the Unitarian Church on the western side of the market.

1696 Setting up a Unitarian printing house in Kolozsvár.

The printing house was purchased from public contributions and from a donation by Mrs. Kmita András [Wilhelm Krisztina]. The first publications of the press was the catechism of Koncz Boldizsár and the Hymnbook.

Unitarians used the printing house for 20 years when along with the Kolozsvár cathedral it became the property of the Catholic Church.

1697. May 6. The majority of Kolozsvár along with the cathedral and the college were burnt down. The rebuilding of the city was made possible with help of Protestants from the Netherlands; the collection is the merit of Dimény Pál, college president.

1701 Publication of P. Horváth Ferenc's book: *Apologia fratrum Unitariorum*.

It is a precious work of Unitarian literature in the 18th century, serving the defense of Unitarianism.

1711. Aug. 22. Donation of Tasiczki Akos, Polish patron, to help the Polish congregations in Kolozsvár and Bethlen.

1712 The emperor Carol III at the request of the Jesuits ordered all the buildings and estates from every Protestant denomination which had been confiscated from the Catholics since the beginning of the Reformation to be returned, even with military force if needed.

1716. March 30. The confiscations of the counter-reformation in Kolozsvár.

Stenville István, the military commander of Transylvania, occupied all the Unitarian churches of Kolozsvár, giving them to the Catholic Church along with the property belonging to them, as well as the printing house.

The Unitarians of Kolozsvár were forced to hold their worship services only in private houses and chapels for 80 years.

Similar confiscations were carried out in all over the

country. All the protests and requests for the confiscated churches and printing house to be returned remained unsuccessful.

1718. April 2. The confiscation of the college near the market.

As a result of the decision of the emperor, the Unitarian Church was also forced to surrender the building of the new college to the Catholic Church.

Lacking a building, teaching ceased and the students dispersed.

After 1718 the oppression and persecution of Unitarians increased. Because of their religion they were excluded from state offices and every method was tried to make them become Catholics: with promises and threats.

Yet the counter-reformation didn't reach its ultimate purpose, the annihilation of the Unitarian Church.

The oppression prompted Unitarians to even greater solidarity and generosity, taking such defensive measures which guaranteed the survival of their Church.

1718. Apr. 8. The conference of lay Unitarians in Kolozsvár.

When the news spread of the occupation of the college and dispersion of the students, Unitarian members of the Diet meeting in Kolozsvár along with other lay leaders discussed the defense of the Church and saving of the college. In the given situation they took these measures:

The congregation of Kolozsvár ceased being the sole supporter of the college; this task was conveyed to the entire Unitarian Church.

In order to raise the necessary material support, the church members and congregations were called upon for donations.

In the interest of defending the Church, a post of general superintendent was organized under the bishop and superintendents were placed under the district deans. Bíró Sámuel and Simon Mihály were elected the first general superintendents. As their deputies, prestigious church members were nominated: Sándor Gergely, Daniel Ferenc, Gidófalvi Gábor, Bongardus János and Teleki Ferenc. Under the district deans, 13 superintendents were nominated.

1718. May 10. The roofless college found its home in the "Huszár house" of the Church on the inner Magyar street where

after a month of forced vacation the college could start its program again. The life and soul of the college was professor Szentábrahádi L. Mihály.

1723 Separation of the finances of the congregation at Kolozsvár and from the Unitarian Church, raising a permanent financial fund.

1724 Organization of the Representative Consistory at Kolozsvár.

The synod of Arkos organized a Consistory responsible for Church business to be run by both clergy and lay persons. From this would later develop the present "Church Representative Consistory."

1724. March 23. Death of the bishop Almási Gergely Mihály.

1729. Jan.15. Organization of the Supreme Council. [General Assembly]

The synod of Kissáros organized the Supreme Council [General Assembly] composed of laity and clergy, this being the supreme legislative body of the Church, substituting even the synod. From this evolved the present "Church General Assembly" [Supreme Council].

1737. Aug.24. The synod of Kövend elected the president and general notary Szentábrahádi Lombard Mihály as bishop.

1747 Election of Henter József general superintendent at the synod from Ducsőszentmárton.

He was the first constitutionally elected general superintendent; before this, lay leaders had nominated the general superintendent from among themselves.

1758. March 31. Death of Szentábrahádi Lombard Mihály.

He had been serving the Church and the college in the cruel circumstances of recatholization of the 18th century. He promoted joining the lay elements in the organizational life of the Church. He also was the enthusiastic worker defending and building the Unitarian Church. Education was his main concern; due to his generous activity the college did survive.

His life-work was the *Systema universae theologiae christianae*. His numerous works because of censorship have remained in manuscript except for his prayer book which was published in 1746. Usually he is mentioned as the second founder of the Church, who

was "the eye, the heart and the mouth of Unitarians."

1763 The synod of Kolozsvár declared that nobody had his or her own chair or seat in the church; everybody should sit where they find room.

1767 In this year Kénosi Tőzsér János minister at Bágyon started writing his work in Latin: *The history of the Transylvanian Unitarian*.

After his death (1772) this work was rewritten and continued by Uzoni Fosztó István minister at Bágyon. After his death in 1778 this work it was restarted by Kozma Mihály minister of Szentgerice and his son Kozma János minister at Csokfalva. After Kozma János's death (1840) the work has remained unfinished.

This work, going under the name of Uzoni Fosztó István, is an indispensable source of Unitarian history.

1773. June 26. Agh István, bishop, and Kovács Tamás, general superintendent, presented themselves in audience before crown-prince Joseph who came to Kolozsvár.

Bishop Agh István recounted the many insults that Unitarians have experienced without redressing a grievance until then. Prince Joseph during the audience made the following declaration: "We say that nobody finds salvation outside of the faith of Rome but it would not be wrong to allow the possibility for everybody to chose that particular way to heaven which he likes."

1778 The synod of Szentábrahám.

Among its resolutions the most important were:

1. Forming the "Consistory of Marosvásárhely" chaired by P. Horváth Ferenc, general superintendent. Its members were recruited only from laypersons. Its sphere of authority was supervising the measures taken by the Representative Consistory at Kolozsvár and leading the Church. It was an expression of the guiding role of the laity.

It was dissolved at the beginning of the 19th century.

2. Election of general superintendents to lead the college at Kolozsvár and the highschool at Torda.

Abandonment of the practice of "asking the minister to stay on" [detaining].

The relation between the congregations and their leadership required them to declare every year mutually: whether the minister wanted to remain and whether the congregation wanted them to stay on.

The Church replaced this with the system of the "ordering," by which the church leadership was ordered by the Representative Consistory without asking the congregations.

1781. Nov.29. Proclamation of the Edict of Tolerance.

Emperor Joseph II's edict aimed at redressing the religious insults of Protestant and Orthodox Churches and at regulating their relations with the state.

The Edict of Toleration made it possible for the non-Catholic denominations to practice their faith, building churches and schools depending on the number of inhabitants, and it also allowed ministers and teachers to be employed. At the same time it forbade anybody to be required to worship or to vow contrary to their conviction. Catholicism yet remained the dominant religion; the other denominations fell into the legal status of "tolerated religions".

In Transylvania, though the freedom of the received religions had been assured by laws, Protestants received the edict as a great achievement because it redressed the most striking insults and it limited the recatholicizing tendency of the counter-reformation. It meant a move toward equality in religious rights.

The Edict of Toleration promoted the renewal of the Unitarian Church.

1785 Organizing the presbytery.

The General Assembly ordered setting up a presbytery for a better management of the congregations. Its president is the minister, its lay president is the treasurer [intendant]. The number of members in the presbytery varied between 7 and 11 depending on the size of the congregation.

1786, Aug.22. The synod from Nagyajta elected Lázár István as bishop.

1787 The theology of Szentábrahádi L. Mihály was published as the *Summa universae theologiae christianae secundum unitarios*. The statement of the government-general was that the "publication of this work can be

allowed not only because Unitarianism is a received religion in Transylvania, but also because the modesty manifesting in it should serve as an example for other religious books." The publication of the book is Bishop Agh István's merit.

In this year the General Assembly stopped the practice of the bishop's resignation every year and his submission to critics. There was an old compulsory custom that the bishops and deans resign at the synod and submit themselves to public critique. They could re-occupy their office only if public confidence found them worthy to it.

1789-1803 The inspection of Bishop Lázár István.

The bishop visited every congregation of Torda-Aranyos, Udvarhely, Székelykeresztúr, Háromszék, Küküllő and Maros church-districts. Official reports were written of his visits containing an exact description of the state of each congregation and about its whole property in detail. These reports constitute a value for the history of the church and its culture.

1791, Febr. 14. Donation of Suki László.

Apr. 16. Suki László (1741-1792) the first superintendent of the College left all his property to the College.

His argument for his decision was:

"Seeing and experiencing in reality that our Unitarian College at Kolozsvár is absolutely necessary for the whole Unitarian community to survive in hard times, it had run out of all its goods so totally that our congregation can only very poorly support and feed its leaders, professors and teachers of all ranges, and even that with permanent solicitation and collection. My purpose and intention had always been, if God blesses my struggle, to leave such a permanent fund to our community and to the college of Kolozsvár from whose income the college not only would be able to be restored but also its welfare would be assured in the future".

The donation of Suki László made it possible that the new building of the college was built. He was a great patron of the 18th century.

1792-1796. The new church of the congregation at Kolozsvár was built.

Its architect was Török (Türk) Antal architect from

Marosvásárhely. The constructions happened in the ministries of Márkos György and Ferenczi János and the superintendencies of Bartha Mózes and R. Nagy Ferenc. The church building had been supported by P. Horváth Ferenc, general-superintendent, and Lázár István, bishop.

1793, July 10. The foundation of the school at Székelykeresztúr.

The synod at Homoródalmás based on the proposal of P. Horváth Ferenc, general-superintendent, decided to establish a new highschool at Székelykeresztúr. The school was built from public contributions and it started its program in 1804. The inspiration for the construction and organization was the headmaster Szabó Sámuel (1756-1856).

The school at Székelykeresztúr has been serving public education and the Church with great success.

1796 Introduction of the double presidency.

According to the decision of the synod at Székelykál the president of the Synod and General Assembly on the lay side is the general-superintendent and on the part of the clergy is the bishop. The principle of the double presidency in the Representative Consistory, in the church districts and in the congregations was introduced in the first part of the 19th century.

1804, Nov.21. Death of P. Horváth Ferenc.

He had been serving his Church for 26 year with great devotion. His exemplary generosity, his mobilizing the laity in defense of the Church and his wise Church-guidance contributed a great deal to strengthening the Unitarian Church.

1811, Oct.9. Death of the bishop Lázár István.

The outstanding results of his 25 year bishoptry were the 41 churches and towers, the 9 schools that he built and other major restorations with the contributions of the church-members. He was a powerful initiator and leader for external renewal of the Church.

1812, July 7. Körmöczy János (1762-1836), president of the college, was elected as boshop at the synod of Rava.

1821 Beginning of the connection with the British Unitarian Church.

The British Unitarians sent a letter to our Church in which they described their religion, history and its

situation. Our Church in its answer at the same way presented our religious principles, our organization and our history. The communication between the two Churches since 1858 has become regular.

1831 Establishing contact with the American Unitarian Association.

During Bölöni Farkas Sándor's journey in North America, he met Unitarians there and told them the history and conditions of our Church. Mediated by him, a correspondence started between the two Churches. Extension of regular communications started in 1868 with the collaboration of C. H. Dall, E. Hale, J. Fretwell, A. Richmond and E. Southwirth on the American side and Kriza János and Ferencz József on Hungarian side.

Bölöni Farkas Sándor in his book, *North-American Journey*, published in 1833 reports about his encounter with American Unitarians.

The American Unitarian Church made it possible for Transylvanian theological students to continue their study in American universities and seminaries.

1832, Aug. 20. The synod of Nyárádszentlászló elected Augusztinovich Pál (1763-1837) as general-superintendent.

In his will of Oct. 1, 1837 he left his valuable library and all his property to the Church. He stipulated the use of his property: "My supreme wish is to elevate the scientific and moral education at the noble Unitarian College of Kolozsvár, by assigning my property to keep this preference consciously in view." Augusztinovich Pál was a great benefactor of the 19th century.

1836, Dec. 13 Death of the bishop Körmöczy János.

Having a profound culture and knowledge he was a prestigious professor and orator. He was the outstanding representative of the Enlightenment in our Church. The General Assembly at his initiation established the by-laws of the offices of superintendents and intendents and also of the school-headmaster. He introduced preparation and teachings for confirmation. He had been working on the material and spiritual elevation of the Church, being the guardian and the promoter of internal renewal of the Church.

1837, Feb. 8. The General Assembly elected Brassai Sámuel as

professor, and the next year as President of the College. His election constituted "the victory of the liberals over those loyal to the [Habsburg] dynasty. His professorship started a new era in the life of the College.

In this year was published the new hymnbook of the Church entitled *God's glorification and prayers*, edited by Székely Sándor (1797-1852) and based on the old hymnbook. The hymnbook went into its sixth edition and remained in use until 1924.

1839 Publication A. Székely Sándor's work, *Early years of the Unitarianism in Transylvania*. This is the first published work on Unitarian history.

1840 The synod at Bölön replaced the practice of "ordering ministers" with that of an application linked to a nomination to a pulpit.

1841, Aug.22. Testimony of Bölöni Farkas Sándor (1795-1842).

The enlightened, progressive writer and devoted Unitarian donated his library of great value to our College. He also left a large amount of money for acquisitions.

Aug.23. The educational reform of the Church.

The synod at Korond accepted Prof. Brassai Sámuel's curriculum of study and education in which Hungarian was introduced instead of the Latin. It also replaced the system of the classes [forms] with that of speciality. This reform has promoted the elevation of the educational standard.

1847 Under the bishoptry of Székely Sándor the institutional system for independent ministerial training was established. Before 1847 students graduated from the college of philosophy and were employed as ministers. The progress and the religious life required a decent theological training for future ministers. Therefore the Church established in 1847 a two-year "theological course" which was supposed to be completed after graduating from the course of philosophy. The theological course was extended to three years in 1857 and to four years in 1889.

1849, Jan.20. Gedő József of Homoródszentmárton, patron of the sciences and literature, donated his library to the College. He described his decision as follows: "It has been my wish for a long time to give my library as a

present to the College at Kolozsvár because I had been trained there myself between 1791 and 1798 and gained from it my passion for the literature."

1854, July 4. At the synod of Kolozsvár K. Nagy Elek was elected general-superintendent.

In the fight with Habsburg absolutism he was a wise leader and brave defender of the Church and its institutions. In his church service his collaborators were Székely Mózes, vicebishop, Mikó Lőrinc, professor, and Fejér Márton, lawyer.

1856, Aug.30. The payment of the "alms of groat [penny]".

In order to establish a financial fund for supporting the schools, the Church asked for one silver groat [penny] from every church-member. This was called "alms of groat". Because this contribution wasn't sufficient, K. Nagy Elek and Mikó Lőrinc created a new plan of fundraising which was accepted by the General Assembly. According to this the congregations, the church-leader, and the church-members redeemed their alms of groat by a contribution and put it into a bond. The General Assembly held in June 7 1857 stated with great satisfaction that by this new system such funds had been established that provided the necessary help for the schools.

1858-1859 The visit of a representative of the Unitarian Church from England.

First, Rev. Edward Tagart [sic.] minister of London visited us in 1858 in order to investigate the situation of our church. On his way back he died without being able to give a report of his mission. In the next year Alfred Steinthal, minister from Manchester, got the same commission, which he could fulfill and presented a detailed report to his Church about the situation of the Transylvanian Unitarian Church. These visits meant a great moral and financial support for our church in its hardship.

1859 The representatives of our church, Ferencz József and Buzogány Aron, who college students visited the Unitarian center of London and also participated for the first time in their General Assembly.

At this occasion English Unitarians decided to provide scholarships for Transylvanian theological

students to study in Manchester New College. These scholarships have efficiently contributed to maintaining the relationship between the two churches.

1860 The Representative Consistory sent Simén Domokos (1836-1878), a candidate for ministry, to Manchester New College to continue his studies.

1861 Establishing of the *Keresztény Magvető* (Christian Seed-Sower).

The goal of the journal was "to sow and bring forth seeds of Christian ideas and generally what was morally beautiful, good and true." In this spirit the *Keresztény Magvető* mobilized all Unitarian scholars, writers and theologians of the 18th and 19th centuries. It created at the same time a valuable theological literature and made an outstanding contribution to the revival of religious life and has made our religious principles known. Its editors were Kriza János and Nagy Lajos.

The *Keresztény Magvető* was the first theological journal in Transylvania.

1861, July 1. Kriza János became bishop of the Unitarian Church. The synod at Torda elected Kriza János, a minister from Kolozsvár and professor at the Seminary.

1862 The General Assembly elected Brassai Sámuel as superintendent of the college. In 1877 they honored him with the title of superintendent for life.

1864 Publication of the Ferencz József's catechism.

It has gone into its 18th revised edition; the last one was in 1983. The different editions reflect the development of our theological principles.

The catechism was also published in German in 1892 in the translation of Grátz Mór, an Evangelical minister at Kolozsvár.

1865 Orbán Balázs, historian and public figure, become a Unitarian.

He was a faithful member and supporter of our church. In 1876 and 1890 he established endowments to support students at the Gymnasium at Székelykeresztúr, regardless of nationality or denomination.

1868, Aug.30-31. The 300th anniversary of the existence of the Unitarian Church.

The synod of Torda was able to celebrate the Edict

of the Diet of Torda in 1568 and the founding of the church for the first time with the participation of the state and representatives of all the other denominations. At the celebration representatives of English Unitarians were present, too. For this occasion Kriza János wrote the hymn, "People of this house, O God, burst into holy joy." (the 215th song of our Hymnbook) The *Keresztény Magvető* published all the orations of the synod and described in detail the whole celebration.

1869, June 25. Kelemen Benő's endowment to support poor and diligent students of good behavior.

Sept. 5. Nagyajtai Kovács István left his library to the college.

1870 American Unitarian theologian's, W. E. Channing (1780-1842), first volume of selections from his works was published in Hungarian. The translation was initiated by Bishop Kriza János, with collaboration from college professors and ministers. The third and last volume was published in 1881. Channing's books contributed to the growth of our seminary.

1872, March 10. Death of Mikó Lőrinc, professor of the college.

As the professor of jurisprudence, he participated in the struggle of the church against Habsburg absolutism. He collected and systematized the resolutions of the various synods. His book, the *Administrative System of the Transylvanian Unitarian Religious Community* was published by Tóth György in 1931.

1875, March 26. Kriza János's death.

He served his church as minister of Kolozsvár, professor of the college, and bishop. During the 14 years of his bishopry his main concern was nurturing religious life, promoting inner revival and developing Unitarian theological principles. He contributed to establishing connections with foreign churches.

The permanent value of his literary activity is the volume, *Vadrózsák (Wild Roses)*.

1875 Publication the *Little Unitarian Mirror* by Ferencz József.

This work is a short description of the history, theological principles, religious services and organization of our church. In 1930 Vári Albert revised and repub-

lished it.

1876, Aug. 27. The synod at Ákos elected Ferencz József (1835-1928), minister of Kolozsvár, as bishop.

Oct. 19. Baldácsi Antal, a Roman Catholic, established an endowment for helping the Protestant churches. The endowing document was signed by Ferencz József bishop and Daniel Gábor general-superintendent.

Establishment of the Pension and Relief Fund to help ministers, professors and teachers.

1878, Sept. 9. Death of Simén Domokos.

After finishing his studies in 1863 he became a teacher at the Gymnasium at Székelykeresztúr. The synod of Szentgerice in 1865 elected him as headmaster of the school. In 1866 he was transferred as professor to the college at Kolozsvár. In 1877 the General Assembly elected him as their general notary.

He found his mission in teaching and the cultivation of science. At the seminary he taught biblical disciplines and philosophy. He planned to translate the Bible into Hungarian, but his early death prevented him from finishing this work. His books, the *Evangelical Miracles* and *The History of the Origin and Evolution of the Trinity*, have been a great and permanent value in our theological literature.

1879, Aug. 24-26. The 300th anniversary of Dávid Ferenc's death.

At the synod held at Székelykeresztúr the occasion of the death of Dávid Ferenc was celebrated for the first time. At the synod representatives of foreign Unitarian churches were also present.

The "Dávid Ferenc Foundation" started by the Bishop Ferencz József was dedicated to the memory of Dávid Ferenc. Jakab Elek's book, *The memory of Dávid Ferenc*, presented the life and reform activity of the great church-founder.

1883 The synod of Vargyas decided upon the establishment of an Institute for Pension and Relief.

1885, Aug. 29. Forming of the Dávid Ferenc Society, initiated by Boros György, professor of the college. Its goal was nurturing religious life. The first president of the society was Brassai Sámuel.

1888 Appearance of the journal, *Unitárius Közlöny*

(Unitarian Bulletin). The journal was published by the Dávid Ferenc Society. Its first editors were Nagy Lajos and Boros György.

Sept. 10. Berde Mózes's endowment.

Berde Mózes (1815-1893) left all his property to the Unitarian church. "I had been struggling for a sacred purpose all my life," he wrote in his testimony. "I wanted to show that even a poor man with strong will can be of use to society, humanity, and the nation... From my youth one sentiment has been nurtured in my heart, one thought in my mind: to help my poor religious community to rise, to make it easier for students to master the sciences and to give relief to its old servants and professors."

Berde Mózes reached his goal. His property accumulated with unparalleled diligence and ascetic saving, which helped his church a great deal. His care for students in his special "loaf foundation" made possible for many poor and talented young men to study. Berde Mózes is rightly called "the benefactor prince.". His biography was written by Benczédi Gergely entitled, *Biography of Berde Mózsza*, published in 1901.

1888, July 15. Bartók István donated his library to the church.

1890, Aug. 30. Dersi János left an endowment to help poor students.

1896 Establishing of the "Society of Unitarian Ministers." Its goal was to serve post-graduate education and represented their interest. Its first president was Bishop Ferencz József.

1897, Apr. 16. Brassai Sámuel donated his library of extraordinary value and all his property to the Unitarian church.

June 24. Death of Brassai Sámuel.

In his nearly hundred year lifetime he accomplished an extensive spiritual and literary activity. As the creator of the church educational system, as scholar and professor of the University and Seminary at Kolozsvár, he cultivated a large range of the sciences. Also as a theologian and patron, his merits are unfading. His biography was written by Boros György entitled *The life of Dr. Brassai Sámuel*. It was published in 1927.

July 22. Death of Jakab Elek.

He was a historian, writer and devoted Unitarian. His main work was *The history of Kolozsvár. Memory of Dávid Ferenc* is, which is an everlasting value for our church history. He was a contributor to the *Keresztény Magvető* enriching the journal with his essays written about the great ones of our church and based on his research in the archives. He is the founder of the modern Unitarian historiography. His biography was written by Gál Kelemen entitled *Portrayal of Life and Character of Jakab Elek*, published in 1938.

1896 Publication of Sándor János's book, *The History of the Unitarian Gymnasium at Székelykeresztúr*.

1898-1901 The headquarters of the Unitarian Church was built at Kolozsvár in which the college, the Theological Seminary and other church-institutions had been placed. The building was the creation of church architect Pákey Lajos. Among his other main buildings were the churches at Bölön, Székelyudvarhely, Firtosmartonos, and Sáros. The monuments of Berde Mózes and Brassai Sámuel in the famous Házsongárd graveyard at Kolozsvár were also his work.

1900, May 25 Establishment of the International Association for Religious Freedom in Boston, a world organization of Unitarians and other liberal religions.

Our church has been a member of it from the beginning. Its secretariat is set up in Frankfurt (West-Germany).

1902 Publication of Ferencz József bishop's book, *Theology*.

1905 Establishment of the monthly journal, *Unitarian Church*. Its goal was promoting religious life, building the Church and elaborating timely organizational reforms in the church. Its editor was Lőrinczi István, minister from Székelykeresztúr.

1907 Publication of the periodical, *Unitarian Pulpit*.

Its goal was supporting oratorical activity of the ministers and developing the literature of sermons. Its editors were Vári Albert, Deák Miklós and Balázs András.

Publication of Varga Dénes's work, *History of the Unitarian Gymnasium at Torda*.

1910, Aug.20-23. The 400th anniversary of birth of Dávid

Ferenc.

Our church commemorated him at the synod held at Kolozsvár and Déva. Representatives of all the other denominations of the country and also Unitarians from abroad participated. The church memorialized this celebration with a facsimile edition of Dávid Ferenc's book, *Short Explanation*, and publication of the book, *Dávid Ferenc*, written by Kis Ernő. Each minister wrote the history of their own congregation. Finally a commemorative plaque was placed in the fortress at Déva with the inscription: "In the dungeon of the Déva fortress Dávid Ferenc, the founder and bishop of the Unitarian Church, was condemned to life imprisonment because of his religious conviction, and passed away in 1579. Placed in 1910 with reverence on the 400th anniversary of his birth by his spiritual successor, the Unitarian Church."

The synod at Kolozsvár and Déva saw that full justice was done the memory of Dávid Ferenc.

"The Unitarian Christian Popular Calendar" appeared. It was edited and published by the ministers from Székelyudvarhely church district. In 1927 the Dávid Ferenc Society took charge of its printing; since 1950 the denomination publishes it.

Appearance of the monthly "Church Society."

Its goal was the development of church-society. Its editors were Gvidó Béla, Nagy Béla and Ütő Lajos ministers from the church-district of Küküllő.

Retirement of Péterfi Dénes (1851-1925).

He graduated from theological studies at Manchester New College. He became a minister of Kolozsár and professor of the college, and editor of the *Keresztény Magvető*. He was a theologian and orator of the Unitarian faith. His works like *Unitarian Christianity*, *At the Table of Jesus*, and his essays published in the *Keresztény Magvető* were outstanding contributions to our theological literature.

1915 Establishment of the Unitarian Theological Seminary.

The General Assembly to promote ministerial training transformed the "Institute for training ministers" into a seminary. The new organization and

educational status of ministerial training functioned with few modifications until 1948.

1919, Oct. 2. The "Unitarian Home for Girls" started in the new building of the college. After 1928 it was moved to its final place, into the old college building.

1920, Aug. 28. Establishment of the "Unitarian Literary Society."

Its goal was to present Unitarian history and its theological principles, laying down its most important events and promoting Unitarian education. In 1921 it took charge of the edition of the *Keresztény Magvető*. The president of the Literary Society was Bishop Ferencz József.

1921 Tóth György's (1870-1942) edition of *Organization of the Unitarian Church* was published in the series of Collection of the Laws of the Unitarian Church. Tóth György was the cultivator of Unitarian ecclesiastical law, making a great contribution by codifying and explaining church laws.

1922 The church district of Aranyostorda elected Bors Mihály councillor. This patron of the church from Szind was elected superintendent. His testimony demonstrates his devotion by giving the Unitarian church all his property.

1924 Publication of the new hymnbook.

The hymnbook was edited by Professor Pálfi Márton with the collaboration of Vári Albert, Régeni Aron, Sándor János and Pap Domokos. Our hymnbook is still in use today; its 11th edition was printed in 1983.

1928, Feb. 19. Death of Bishop Ferencz József.

The 52 years of his bishopric was a time of development and a flourishing of our church. In the renewal of the church, its organizational growth, in presenting our theological principles and in literary development. In all of this his service had been priceless.

His biography was written by Gál Kelemen, *The Life and Time of Kilyéni Ferencz József Unitarian Bishop*, published in 1936.

1928, July 10-15. The first conference of Unitarian youth at Székelykeresztúr. The president of the conference was Szent-Iványi Sándor, minister of Kolozsvár.

1928, May 19-20. The synod held at Torda elected Boros György

(1855-1941), professor of the theology and general notary, as bishop. His life and service are inseparable from ministerial training, with development of the Unitarian Theological Seminary, with the extension of the foreign relationships. His ecclesiastical social work had been manifesting within the Dávid Ferenc Society, whose general secretary and then vice-president he had been. He also edited the *Unitárius Közlöny*. He had a priceless church literary activity, publishing many essays in the Unitarian journals. After 60 year of service he retired.

1928, Nov. 18-19. The General Assembly elected Borbély István (1886-1932) as professor of the Unitarian Theological Seminary to the chair of systematical theology. He had been a professor and director of the college, he also was one of the founders and general secretary of the Unitarian Literary Society, the editor of the *Keresztény Magvető*. His academical activity from both the viewpoint of number of his publications and their quality made him an outstanding Unitarian writer of our century. Among his theoloical writings the best ones are *Dual Existentialist Philosophy and its Theology* (1928), *The History of Establishing the Modern Unitarian Theological Principles* (1925) and *Basic Notions of Unitarian Christian Faith*, lithographic edition (1930).

1930, Apr. 6. Balázs Ferenc (1900-1937) began his ministry in the congregation of Mészkö.

After graduation from the Unitarian Theological Seminary, he studied abroad between 1923 and 1928 at Manchester New College, in the theological institute of the English Unitarian Church at Oxford, and in the Unitarian seminary of American Unitarians at Berkeley, completing the academic degree of master of philosophy. After this he started a journey around the world in order to get to know the religious, social and political institutions of different peoples. He got home after five year of travel in 1928. In his book *I go about the World* published in 1929 he described his journey and experiences. Balázs Ferenc was a Unitarian minister and writer who sought to lift his people and the villages throughout his lifetime. The spiritual travelogue of his struggle was described in the *Plain Gospel* and in *Under*

the Clod. There hadn't been any Unitarian minister in this century who could have awakened interest and love or criticism on such a grand scale as Balázs Ferenc.

- 1932 Establishment of the journal, *Unitárius Evangelium*, edited by Dr. Kiss Elek, professor of theology.

Its goal was preaching the gospel of Jesus, serving professional Unitarian life, and building the kingdom of God.

- 1938, Jan. 16-17. The General Assembly elected Varga Béla, professor and general notary, as bishop.

After finishing his studies abroad, he became the professor of the college in 1911. In 1923 the General Assembly offered him a full professoral chair of philosophy and pedagogy at the Unitarian Theological Seminary. On November 7th, 1940 because of ill-health, he resigned from the office of bishop.

During his short bishopric he had been struggling to put an end to the internal discordance and restore the unity of the church. In his ecclesiastical service he tried to elevate the training of ministers and deepen religious life. As a philosopher and theologian his activity constitutes priceless value.

- 1939 Establishing the journal of *Unitárius Jövendő* (Unitarian Future), edited by Kovács Lajos, minister from Brassó. Its goal was serving church society and the religious life.

- 1941, June 29. The synodal General Assembly at Marosvásárhely elected József Miklós (1869-1946), dean-vicar, as bishop.

- 1943 Dávid Ferenc's book *De dualitate* was published in Hungarian [*Dissertation about Dual Divinity*]. The translation is the work of Márkos Albert, college professor.

- 1945, Feb. 10. Death of Dr. Gál Kelemen (1869-1945).

He had been a professor of the college for 35 years and its president for 25 years; he served with devotion in different high church positions. Beside his professoral and college duties, he had been dedicating all his spare time to researching the past of the church. His life-work is *History of the Unitarian College at Kolozsvár* in two volumes, published in 1935. He wrote the biographies of Bishop Ferencz József, Jakab Elek and K. Nagy Elek. This last work has remained in

manuscript.

1946, Feb.7-10 The conference at Kolozsvár.

The Church Representative Consistory met with the representatives of the church-districts and institutions at a conference to discuss the situation and tasks of the church. Considering the formation of a new social order, the conference created the work-program of the church to serve God and humanity, based on the Gospel.

1946, Sept.15. The synod at Székelykeresztúr elected Dr. Kiss Elek, theological professor and general notary, as bishop.

1948, Aug.4. Institution of the new cult law which, according to the social development of the country, placed the relationship between the church and the state on a new foundation and also regulated the function of the church.

Establishing the University degree Universal Protestant Theological Institute.

According to paragraph 49 of cult law, as respecting the traditions of theological education, in 1948 the four Protestant churches (*ágostai evangélikus, zsinatpresiteri evangélikus, református, unitárius*) organized a common theological institute which started its program on January 1, 1949. In this institution their ministers have been training in the spirit of mutual respect for each others' religious particularities and in a fraternal collaboration.

Oct. 24. The General Assembly accepted the revised Organizational Statutes which were ratified by the Presidency of the National Assembly on June 1, 1949. This statute was published in 1949.

1954 The anniversary of Dávid Ferenc's death.

1959, Jan. 1. Establishment of the Pension and Relief Fund of the church. This institution cares for its employees so that they can be legal recipients of social insurance and can receive pensions after retirement.

1960, Nov.27. The General Assembly elected Kelemen Lajos (1877-1963), councillor of the church and retired general director of the archives, as general superintendent. He was a historian who had been sharing his enormous knowledge with others. His works relating to Unitarians constitutes an indispensable source of our history. For

his scientific activity he was awarded with a first grade order of the Rumanian People's Republic. At his 80th birthday his admirers published a memorial volume. As a college professor, a church superintendent and while serving in other church offices he proved great fidelity to the cause of the church.

1965, Aug.21. The Constitution of the Rumanian Socialist Republic.

The 30th paragraph of the Constitution was accepted by the National Assembly and assured freedom of conscience and free practice of religion to every citizen.

Total equality among the denominations became a reality. Our church has had a friendly relationship with the leaders and the church-members of the other religions and denominations; it collaborates with them in the name of love and mutual understanding for building the country and peace.

1968, Febr.29. Nicolae Ceausescu, president of the Rumanian Socialist Republic granted an interview to the leaders of all the denominations of the country. At the reception the president of the Republic expressed his high appreciation for the work of the churches. At the same time the church leaders, including Unitarian bishop Kiss Elek, took an oath that along with their followers they would support with devotion the noble work of the state in order that every citizen's life would be happy in this homeland regardless of nationality or religion.

1968, Aug.17-19. The synodal General Assembly, held at Kolozsvár, Torda and Déva, celebrated the 400th anniversary of the foundation of the Unitarian Church.

At the celebration the authorities of the state, the religious denominations of the country, the IARF and representatives of the the foreign Unitarian churches participated. To honor the anniversary, the congregations made major restorations and repairs on their churches and church buildings. In order to make the congregations aware of the importance of this event, Bishop Kiss visited a majority of the churches.

In memory of the anniversary our church published a memorial volume, entitled *Four hundred years, 1568-1968*.

1971, Dec.7. Death of the bishop Kiss Elek.

After finishing his studies at home and abroad, he became a minister at Kíssolyos between 1915 and 1921. From 1921 until 1946 he was a full professor of Old Testament at the Unitarian Theological Seminary. In 1938 the General Assembly elected him general notary. He held different church functions; for several years, he had been co-editor of the journals *Unitárius Egyház* (Unitarian Church), *Unitárius Közlöny* and *Keresztény Magvető*. He enriched our theological literature with many pedagogical and theological writings of great value. Among these the most important are *The relation between rational and moral education*. (1916-1917), *The way of God's law* (1924), *The evolution of the world in the view of atoms* (1946). As an appreciation of his theological activity he was awarded the title of "doctor honoris causa" by both the Protestant Theological Seminary at Kolozsvár and Meaville Lombard Unitarian Theological Seminary (Chicago) in 1968. He was struggling throughout all his work to serve his church, his country and humankind in a missionary way, having universal values in view.

1972, March 19. The synodal General Assembly held at Székelyudvarhely elected Dr. Kovács Lajos (1909-), theological professor and general notary, as bishop.

1974, May 16-19. The Executive Committee of the IARF held its annual meeting in the center of our church. [at Kolozsvár]

1975, Aug. 21. The IARF Congress at Montreal unanimously elected Bishop Kovács Lajos as its president. This was the first occasion when a representative of our church received the chair of presidency.

1977, July 21-24. IARF organized a theological conference at Kolozsvár. Its subject was *The limits of patience today*. The papers constituted a theological preparation for the congress in Oxford the next year.

1979, Aug. 11-12. The 400th anniversary of Dávid Ferenc's death.

The synodal General Assembly at Kolozsvár organized the "Dávid Ferenc Symposium" and in a festive way remembered the anniversary of the church-founder. At the symposium speakers from the country and from abroad evaluated the importance of Dávid Ferenc. Within the General Assembly Dr. Kovács Lajos,

bishop, presented the life and activity of this great reformer.

At the celebration the other denominations of the country and the representatives of the foreign Unitarian churches were present. The celebration of the synodal General Assembly ended at Déva with wreath being placed on Dávid Ferenc's memorial tablet.

In honour of the anniversary the *Keresztény Magvető* published a jubilee "Dávid Ferenc" number.

The Bishops of the Unitarian Church*

1. Dávid Ferenc 1568-1579.
2. Hunyadi Demeter 1579-1592.
3. Enyedí György 1592-1597.
4. Kósa János 1597-1601.
5. Toroczkaí Máté 1601-1616.
6. Radeckzi Bálint 1616-1632.
7. Csanádi Pál 1632-1636.
8. Beke Dániel 1636-1661.
9. Járai János 1661, April 7-June 3.
(For two years the chair of bishop remained vacant because the war prevented the church to hold a synod.)
10. Koncz Boldizsár 1663-1684.
11. Szentiványi Márkos Dániel 1684-1689.
12. Bedő Pál 1689-1690,
13. Nagy Mihály 1691-1692.
14. Almási Gergely Mihály 1692-1724.
15. Pálfi Zsigmond 1724-1737.
16. Szentábrahámí Lombard Mihály 1737-1758.
17. Agh István 1758-1786.
18. Lázár István 1786-1811.
19. Körmöczy János 1812-1836.
20. Székely Miklós 1838-1843.
21. Székely Sándor 1845-1852.
(For nine years the office of bishop was vacant because the state didn't recognize the right of the Unitarian Church to elect its bishop. In this interval the duty of the bishop was accomplished by the general notary, Székely Mózes.)
22. Kriza János 1861-1875.
23. Ferencz József 1876-1928.
24. Dr. Boros György 1928-1938.
25. Dr. Varga Béla 1938-1940.
26. Józán Miklós 1941-1946.
27. Dr. Kiss Elek 1946-1971.
28. Dr. Kovács Lajos 1972-

Editor's Note: Bishops of the Transylvanian Unitarian Church from 1568-1948 and Bishops of the Rumanian Unitarian Church from 1948 through the present.

2

The Foundation of the Transylvanian Unitarian Church

The first Unitarian Church in Europe was founded 402 years ago. The historic occasion of its origin was the Diet of Torda, held from 6 to 13 January, 1568, when Sigismund II, King of Hungary, accepted the Unitarian faith taught by Francis David and proclaimed the Edict of Torda, promising toleration to Lutherans, Zwinglians, Calvinists and Unitarians.

Four hundred years later, in August, 1968, the Transylvanian Unitarian Church convened a solemn Synod to ordain new ministers and to celebrate the quatercentenary of its foundation. There is a smaller section of the Church in Hungary, in and around Budapest; but the great majority of its members live and worship in Transylvania, which has been part of Rumania since the Treaty of Trianon (1920). The celebrations were held at the Church's original religious centre at Kolozsvár (Cluj) at Déva, the mountain-top castle, where Francis David died in prison, and at Torda, scene of the decisive Diet in 1568.

As a central part of the Synod's proceedings, Dr. John Erdő, professor of Theology, Kolozsvár, delivered this paper in the Unitarian Church at Torda on Sunday 18 August, 1968.

The translation is by Dudley Richards, who acknowledges the assistance of the English version was issued during the meetings of the Synod.

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THE UNITARIAN CHURCH is celebrating the 400th anniversary of its foundation. Even by the scale of history, four hundred years is a long period. Why are we looking back so far into the dim past? Our answer is clear and simple: we are inquiring into the source of the Unitarian reformation and the organization of the Unitarian church; and we want to recall the witness of our forefathers and, through their faith, to revive our own.

Our celebration draws its importance from the present as well as the past. On the one hand it is a mark of our good relations with the socialist state, a demonstration on the part of all, layfolk and ministers, of their loyalty to their country, actively expressed by their part in the building of new life and in the defense of peace. On the other hand, it draws attention to the history and significance of the reformation achieved through Francis David.

The Unitarian church was born in the sixteenth century, as a natural and logical development of the Reformation of Christianity. The location of its emergence was the principality of Transylvania to which Providence assigned a leading role in the history of reformation. It was a time of storm and desolation for other countries of Europe: only Transylvania could there be a free development of the reformation and particularly of its radical direction in the Unitarian reformation.

In Transylvania the ideas of the reformation quickly took root. Their penetration and rapid extension were assisted by the economic, social and political conditions of the principality and by the general dissatisfaction with the Catholic church. Attempts towards a reformation of religion found a home in the first place among the bourgeoisie and the masses in the towns. From the towns the revival spread among the peasants and the serfs who were ready for a reformation of religion.

The reformation, in its Lutheran form, developed first in the Saxon towns. Between 1542 and 1545 the whole of the Saxon population became followers of Luther and set about their own independent reorganization. From 1544 onwards the citizens of Kolozsvár, Nagyenyed, Torda and Dés, and the inhabitants of the Székely towns, became Lutheran. The Lutheran reformation was followed by that of Calvin and Bullinger with its more thoroughgoing reforms, particularly in the Hungarian-speaking towns.

At first the new movement was threatened with annihilation by the state: later, it was the support of the prince and the government that made possible new phases of development. The Diet held at Torda in 1557 and 1564 gave official recognition to Lutheranism and Calvinism alongside Catholicism. From then on, under Prince John Sigismund, official policy took a new direction. Roman Catholicism was no longer the established faith, and recognition was accorded to the reforming movements. However, the new order had its limitation; the faith of the Orthodox Rumanians, who formed the majority of the population of Transylvania, was excluded from recognition and toleration.

FRANCIS DAVID AND THE UNITARIAN REFORMATION

The Lutheran and Calvinist movements were immediately followed in the sixties of the sixteenth century by the Unitarian reformation.

Unitarianism was not only radical in its theology, but also progressive in its social tendencies. Its reformer and organizer was Francis David. He was born at Kolozsvár about 1510, his father, David Hertel, was a Saxon shoemaker and his mother a Hungarian. He grew up in Kolozsvár, a town with mixed population, and was educated in Gyulafehérvár (Alba Julia), a centre of humanism, where he became a priest, and adopted the name Francis David. From the beginning he showed a lively interest in the Reformation. In 1545, with the support of Francis Medgyesi and Gáspár Pesthi, canons of humanist leanings, he went to Wittenberg, the centre of Lutheranism, to continue his studies. After his return home he worked first as a teacher at Beszterce (Bistrita), and then, in 1552, as a minister at Péterfalva, in both cases showing reforming tendencies. At the end of 1552 we find him at Kolozsvár, as the director of the school of the old town. In 1555 he became the superintendent, first of the Hungarian Lutherans in 1556, and then of the Calvinists in 1564.

From 1551 until his death in 1579, the life and work of Francis David were bound up with the Transylvanian reformation.

Francis David was a great humanist theologian. According to Fazekas Mihály Bogáti he was a theologian without a peer, a prophetic personality, and one of the greatest figures of his age. In a great man there is always some new manifestation. It may be a fresh theoretical insight, or practical idea; it may be a new historical conception or power, organically linked with the past and at the same time pushing on into the future. It arouses the thoughts and will of his contemporaries, their faith, their enthusiasm, the very pace of their life, and causes them to take new directions. Through a great man breaks the dawn of a new world. Such a man was Francis David. He towered above his age. He saw the direction in which Christianity must further evolve; and this insight made him the radical reformer of his time. He represents the most radical reforming tendencies in opposition to feudalism. Emancipated from the passion which characterized his epoch, he became a unique hero of humanity, and of freedom of spirit and conscience, in the Europe of the sixteenth century.

Francis David saw in the Reformation a God-given direction for those who were looking for a new heaven and a new earth! He believed himself to be called by God to serve those ends with sound

learning, profound humanism and prophetic enthusiasm.

The motive and deciding force of his reforming activity was the deep experience of God which emerged from his study of the Bible, and especially of the New Testament. In the Bible he found the law and revelation of God, for the understanding of which one needed the help both of one's reason and of the Holy Spirit. In the Bible, again, he was convinced that he had found the way to a right knowledge of God and of Jesus, the basis of eternal life, and the chief authority in all matters of religion. 'In our quest for the way to salvation', he said, 'all we need is the writing of the prophets, evangelists and apostles. The gospel is a sweet and heavenly food in the heart of the believer, a food which turns to poison if anything else is added to it.'

Like the other reformer, he saw only one possible means of purifying Christianity: to go back to Holy Scripture and on that basis to restore Christianity in its original gospel form. In his opinion the work of reformation had been only partially accomplished. The reforms of Luther and Calvin had been confined to a few minor changes in theology and organization, and they set bounds to the freedom of man's individual experience and to his further religious development. With the attainment of some restricted reforms, the work of renovation was regarded as completed, and as a simple fact of history.

Against this view Francis David regarded it as an eternal principle that the work of reformation must be continued and extended. The purpose of that eternal work of reformation was not only the restoration of gospel Christianity by the renewing of life for all mankind.

One of Francis David's reforming aims was 'to give back to our Father God the dignity which had been obscured and diminished by the antichrist of Rome'. He regarded this task as a mission from God which must be accomplished 'with love for God's holy son, Jesus Christ, and his church, and with a good and upright conscience'. He could not conceal the truth of God's word, but must speak in season and out of season. One he had recognized, with the help of revelation, the errors which were perverting religion, he could not keep silent with a good conscience. To hide the truth would have been a sin against God and against Jesus. 'Those who have been enlightened by God's spirit', he said, 'must not cease to speak nor can they suppress the truth. Such in the power of the spirit, that the mind of man, putting aside every false artifice, strives only to add to the glory of God, let the whole world rage and oppose it'.

The radical reformation inaugurated by Francis David involved a re-examination and re-appraisal of the Christian religion and the Christian church. With the aid of Holy Scripture, he examined every tenet of religion and accepted and maintained only those which had an assured foundation in the gospel and commended themselves to reason. He replaced scholastic forms of doctrine with the simple intelligible words of the Bible. 'We ought not', he taught, 'to believe, to do, or to command, anything except the word of God'.

The dogma of the Trinity emerged as the central point of Francis David's reforming work. That dogma was more a subject of debate than any other. Its acceptance was a duty which meant salvation; its denial brought the death penalty.

Francis David devoted a detailed study to this dogma and came to the following conclusions:

1. The dogma was framed by theologians and by the general councils with the aid of Greek philosophy.

2. In its scholastic expression it was an abstract, theological speculation which the believer could not understand. 'We are judged to be heretics because we can no longer believe in essence, person, nature, incarnation, as they want us to believe. If these things are necessary for salvation, it is certain that no poor peasant Christian is saved, because he could never understand them in all his life.'

In place of the dogma of the Trinity, Francis David taught the doctrine of the indivisible unity of God, that is, that God is indivisible in his essence and in his person. Thereby he desired to restore the Biblical teaching about the one God in its original purity. On the basis of scripture he taught that God was the creator and lawgiver of all, the omnipotent Father, whose infinite mercy saves us through the man Jesus Christ, and by a new birth through the Holy Spirit. His original teaching about Jesus was that he was God's son, who was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin, but was inferior to the Father, He was the only mediator, the judge of the living and the dead, and the head of the church. In the later phases of his reformation, he taught that Jesus was a man to whom one must not pray nor call for help. The Holy Spirit was God's own sanctifying spirit and energy; it was not God and consequently not to be prayed to nor asked for help. The Holy Spirit was given to believers through Jesus Christ.

The rejection of the dogma of the Trinity, and the affirmation of the oneness of God, were the central teachings of Francis David's reformation. Through them the evangelical element in Christianity was freed from the prison of the authority of the medieval church and entered the service of the Reformation.

As an active participant in the struggle for reform, and as one who was well acquainted with human nature and human society, Francis David was aware that the programme of the Reformation could not be carried through overnight, and that progress must be gradual. Knowing the difficulties, he moved slowly and steadily towards the goal of the victory of truth. 'It was God's will' he said 'that we should move step by step, and come gradually to the fullness of the truth, just as at first we feed infants with milk and only later give them more solid food.'

The slow progress of reform cannot discourage a man. The renovation of Christianity is God's cause also, and he is concerned for it and assure it eventual success.

The history of the Reformation supports Francis David, and justifies the idea of a slow evolution and maturing of reform. In Luther, Zwingli and Calvin we see the gradual unfolding and extending of the Reformation. On the basis of the results already achieved, the new movement of reform also advances gradually towards the goal of a radical reformation of Christianity. This new movement inspired by Francis David, is known to scholarship as the Unitarian reformation, from its doctrine of the unity of God.

THE ORIGIN OF THE UNITARIAN REFORMATION

We must deal with the much discussed problem of the origin of the ideas of the Unitarian reformation. In the past four hundred years many people have inquired into the source of these ideas and discussed the originality of Francis David's theology. But a solution of the problem was hindered by a defective acquaintance with the Transylvanian reformation and by the prevalence of sectarian attitude.

According to the notion widespread in the sixteen century, the origin of Francis David's teaching and of the reforming movement which he initiated is to be found in such early antitrinitarian heretics as Arius, Sabellius, Paul of Samosata, and Plotinus, and in their modern successors, including Servetus, Socinus and Blandrata. This assertion, which is without any scholarly basis, represents the standpoint of Francis David's theological opponents who wanted to discredit the reformer and his movement. Nineteenth and twentieth century students of the origins of Unitarianism repeat this sixteenth century allegation. And Unitarian historical literature was not much concerned with Unitarian origins.

The results of later investigations are now available and they permit us to arrive at a different interpretation.

Antitrinitarian opinions are found in early Christianity, that is, in the period of discussions about the Trinity. The historical materials

concerning the development of this dogma and the controversies that surrounded it were, of course, available to theologians and investigators. Later on, antitrinitarian ideas and teachings appeared time after time within the Christian church. But because of persecution by the church and the state there could be no development of an organized antitrinitarian movement or institution. In these circumstances the movement towards antitrinitarianism remained limited and isolated, without any popular support. Its adherents, faced with constant persecution, avoided all positive theological declarations, and their attitude, as manifested in both the spoken and written word, is characterized by negativism and by only abstract comments on the dogma of the Trinity.

A trained theologian like Francis David was well acquainted with the literature and history of the dogma of the Trinity and of antitrinitarianism. In his works he makes frequent reference to the most notable and representative writers on antitrinitarianism. He made use of their most valuable theological works, in the form of a compilation, as material for his controversial writings on religion. But his instinct for reform, his open and positive standpoint, the clear-cut Unitarianism of his affirmation of the humanity of Jesus, and finally his appeal to ordinary people and his organization of a church, all established his independence and originality.

Nor can his teachings be regarded as the fruits of philosophic meditation. His was a deeply religious spirit. His rationalism, like that of his fellow-reformers, took the form of as faithful an interpretation as possible of the will of God. For this his examination and collation of the text of the Bible were his main tools.

The sources of Unitarianism are to be found in scripture and particularly in the gospels; its definitive form came from Francis David's religious experience. His views are abundantly clear in those works in which he replies to the attacks of his opponents. The following is an example:

'My God is my witness that the things which I have learnt, which I have taught and which I still teach, came not from the Koran, or the Talmud, or Servetus, but from the word of the living God. I am sure that I am on the way of truth, and guided by the laws of truth I rest all my explanations on what is contained in scripture.'

THE BEGINNING OF THE UNITARIAN REFORMATION

In the absence of reliable information 'it is impossible to determine when the fundamental notion of Unitarianism, his idea of one God, was born in the mind of Francis David.' So states Elek Jakab

the historian. We therefore think it worth noting that from a sermon published in 1569 it can be concluded that for Francis David, Unitarianism was already a living issue round about 1560.

As to the date of origin of the Transylvanian reformation, the results of modern investigations are available to help us. We mention two points in particular.

1. By a resolution of 10 December 1565, a Council held at Kolozsvár forbade the expression of any opinion which contradicted the Bible. It permitted new teachings only if one could demonstrate the truth of one's findings by reference to Holy Scripture. The council warned priest and preacher not to preach against each other, and not to speak offensively about each other from the pulpit; but they might, if they wished, have private discussions in their own homes. All this clearly has reference to Francis David and his teaching.

2. Péter Filstich, a contemporary chronicler of Kolozsvár, makes the following observation: 'On 20 January 1566, Francis David began to reject the dogma of the Trinity, and spoke against it.'

Accordingly, we can place the beginnings of the Unitarian reformation between 1565 and 1566.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE UNITARIAN CHURCH

The flowering of Unitarianism and its organization into a church took place in the years 1565 to 1568.

The Reformation afforded Christianity a chance of revitalizing itself such as it had not had in all its previous history. The Unitarian reformation offered the possibility of a wider and deeper advance. The words of Francis David found a ready response, for they gave expression to ideas which had long preoccupied the Christian world. Success was assured by the fact that the time was ripe for reform, but no less by Francis David's personality. He had those qualities of spirit, character and will which are indispensable in a reformer. He became a reformer through experience, and in particular through religious experience.

The Unitarian reformation proved strong hostility on the part of the existing denomination which regarded Unitarianism as heresy and urged the secular power to exterminate this new and radical movement. The opposing forces were strikingly contrasted: respect for authority was matched against an impatient desire for freedom; the fear of eyes which longed for darkness opposed the resolute courage of a craving for light; a rigid attachment to tradition confronted an enthusiastic questing for new life.

The work of reform was not confined to Francis David.

Around him, with Kolozsvár as the centre of the movement, there gathered a vigorous group of preachers and theologians who spread the new teachings, in both Hungarian and Latin, through treatises and polemical writings, in church, in School and in public debate. They too deserve to be remembered.

Francis David did not want to disrupt Transylvanian Protestantism. As he looked across the centuries, he envisaged a restoration of the church to its own perfection. He imagined that he could carry through the work of radical reformation without endangering church unity. But the outlook of the radical reformation was fundamentally different from those of Luther and Calvin: and as they became aware of this, the Lutherans and Calvinists rigidly opposed any further changes and openly strove for the destruction of Unitarianism. This unbending attitude of hostility compelled Francis David and his companions to fight for further reforms and for the establishment and recognition of the Unitarian movement. Thus inevitably Unitarianism became a radical reforming organization separated from the rest of the Protestant church.

As regards the word 'Unitarian', it came into current use in the seventeenth century. We meet it for the first time in a resolution of the camp Diet held at Lécfalva in 1600, from 25 October to 4 November. The word expresses the conviction of the indivisible unity of God, and it was first officially adopted and used by our church at the settlement known as the *Complanatio Deésiana* of 1638.

THE RESOLUTION OF THE DIET OF TORDA IN 1568

The following is a characteristic extract, bearing on the struggles of the years 1565-8, from the contemporary chronicle of the Székely Sebestyén Borsos:

'There appeared one Francis David by name, a learned man. The Calvinist ministers and preachers were lively in their opposition to him both in debate and in writing but they could not get the better of him. Most people were unfavourable to the priest, who consequently retired into the background to see what would happen. The king, to whom each party was recommending its own brand of faith, listened now to the new ideas of Francis David, and now to the learning of Calvin; and he began to favour the former. He was supported by many of the gentry. If a parish was unwilling to adopt his faith he did not remove its priest as long as he kept his head in the upheaval. At that time, throughout Transylvania, even amongst ordinary folk, in town and village, at meal times, over drinks, morning and evening, day and night, in the course of conversation or in a sermon, you might have

arguments between the adherents of the two faiths, and even some intemperate and profane language. Calvinist and Arian were so vigorous in advertising their religious opinions that the ignorant did not know what to think. But when the king adopted the Arian viewpoint, almost the whole country inclined the same way.'

The Diet of Torda settled the quarrel about religion. The radical reformation which was Unitarianism, under the direction of Francis David, had been accorded legal recognition. Lutheranism and Calvinism, though in a weakened condition, stayed within the limits of the reforms of Wittenberg and Geneva. But the religious organic unity of Transylvania Protestantism was destroyed: after 1568 the Protestant denominations set out on their separate paths.

The Diet met at Torda on 6 January 1568. It opened its deliberations with a discussion of matters of religion. On the motion of the prince, along the lines laid down by Francis David, the Diet declared Unitarianism to be a recognized religion of the principality by the following Resolution:

'Preachers everywhere are to preach the gospel according to their understanding of it; if the parish willingly receives it, good: but if not, let there be no compulsion on it to do so, since that would not ease any man's soul; but let each parish keep a minister whose teaching is acceptable to it. Let no superintendent or anyone else act violently or abusively to a preacher. No one may threaten another, on account of his teaching, with imprisonment or deprivation of office: for faith is a gift of God; it comes from listening, and listening is through God's word'.

The Diet of Torda sanctioned the existing state of affairs in religion, and the popular attitude became law. It was a signal victory for the progressive forces, and it marked the establishment of the Unitarian church. That is why our church regards the resolution of 1568 as its foundation document.

Like the Catholic Church the reformers, Luther, Zwingli and Calvin were prepared to make use of any means to compel the consciences of their opponents. By contrast the very essence of Unitarianism was religious toleration and a consistently firm attitude is support of liberty of conscience. It was not because of religious indifference or as a product of philosophical speculation that Francis David did battle for freedom of religion and conscience, but out of a profound faith in the Fatherhood of God, in the divine sonship, and the brotherhood of man, and in the universal power of love. Therefore he constantly emphasized that religion must be free, that in questions of faith there is no place for compulsion, and that the spreading of the

gospel requires no weapons or violence, because faith is a gift of God. In other words Unitarianism is inseparably bound up with freedom of conscience and faith.

It is regrettable that the enactment of 1568 did not mean complete liberty as we understand it. The privileged classes who wielded power in the principality did not acknowledge the Rumanians as a constituent nationality of Transylvania though they formed the majority of its population. So the church of the Rumanians, the Orthodox church, had an inferior status in terms both of nationality and religion, and the religious liberty decreed at Torda was only for the churches represented there. But it can at least be said that the freedom before the law which was there accorded to the four faiths involved paved the way for the full religious liberty of today.

THE LESSON OF HISTORY

In 1968, our great anniversary year, we remember the past. Whoever forgets the past must live through it again. But those who remember the past find in it directions for the present and the future and can revive tradition in all its richness. It is the duty of each generation to study history, church history included, so that in the light of the past it may see clearly what is its own special task. It is our duty too, on this anniversary occasion.

From the past history of our church we know for certain that it was in our country that the radical reforming movement known as Unitarianism began and went forward. The Unitarian reformation was ideologically the most important religious event in sixteenth century Europe, for it did not content itself with the denial of the Trinity, but erected profoundly democratic principles on the basis of truth of the gospel. We celebrate four hundred years of service to humanity. For this cause our forefathers in the faith laboured, suffered and died. Let us thank God for this reformation, for Francis David, for the four centuries of the story of our church, and for the devout servants of humanity, layfolk and ministers, teachers and benefactors who unremittingly did the will of our Father in heaven.

The man who does not look forward cannot comprehend the profundity of the gospel and of religion. We believe in the Lord of history, that is, we believe in the Lord of the future. We have to keep in mind our children and our witness are making a truly creative contribution to the shaping of the future, and whether we can, through our work, offer genuine help not only to the men of today but also to the men of tomorrow. The shape of the future depends on the fulfilment of the task before us.

Our church has existed for four hundred years. It is its duty to share in the defence of world peace and to support the efforts of the whole nation for the welfare and prosperity of our country. Our church can only fulfil this duty if it goes forward in the spirit and tradition of ceaseless reformation, thus riddings itself of imperfections, and finding its rightful place in society. That place is the service of man and of progress. That is our church's proper sphere of activity. The mission of our church in contemporary society is nothing other than to proclaim fully and faithfully the gospel of the kingdom of God and meanwhile to live a life of loving service to society in all its aspects.

On the threshold of the fifth century of the existence of our church, secure in our Unitarian heritage, and trusting in God, we look forward to the future. With our pulpit ministrations, pastoral care and public-spirited activities we promote the welfare of our country and at the same time contribute to the building of a perfect future for mankind.

3

Dávid Ferenc and the Problem of Toleration

1. Dávid Ferenc, the Radical Reformer.

The history of religious toleration in Transylvania started with Dávid Ferenc. He was born around 1520 at Kolozsvár to a lower middle-class family. The century in which he lived is a historically remarkable age, that of feudal oppression, absolute monarchy, and struggle against Ottoman and Habsburg conquerors. But at the same time it was a time of the birth of a new spirit for great economic, social and religious changes. In his student years his father, Hertel Dávid, latinized his name after his own first name into Franciscus Davidis. Later the son adopted the Hungarian name of Dávid Ferenc. He studied in the best schools, first in Transylvania, later in Germany at the most prestigious cultural center of Protestant Europe of that time. The landmarks of his life include: being a teacher at Beszterce, minister at Petres, a teacher and later a minister at Kolozsvár, superintendent of Transylvania and the preacher at the court of the Prince. He was a theologian of humanist education and a reformer who fascinated the masses. A contemporary scholar, Bogáti Fazakas Miklós, named him an "incomparable theologian." He dedicated his life of sacrifice to work for the kingdom of God and for human spiritual progress until his martyr-death in 1579. As he called himself, he was the "servant of the crucified Christ."

All his life Dávid Ferenc had been one struggling for knowledge of God and for renewal of the Christian faith. The teachings of the Catholic Church had not satisfied him. Neither the Swiss reformation nor that of Luther gave satisfactory answers. What was definitely important for him, he discovered in Holy Scripture as the authentic source and measurement of the Christian life and its teachings. From this point on, he taught that "we don't have to believe in, act or be ordered by anything else than the Gospel of God." This became the fundamental

principle of his reformation. His firm conviction was that "All Christians are given enough spirit to understand from the Bible what they need for their salvation." One just must not despise Scripture which is the promise of the true Christ: "Seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened unto you." Besides the understanding of Holy Scripture, plus an inner inspiration and reason, he considered God's spirit indispensable, which "shows the true meaning of Scripture even to an illiterate, poor peasant." In order to understand God's truth, we have to differentiate between the Old and the New Testaments; we have to separate the letter from the spiritual meaning, the shadow from the body, darkness from light. Dávid considered preaching recognized truth and continuing the reformation as a divine mission. He appeared before the public on January 20, 1566 at Kolozsvár and in the spirit of *semper reformanda* preached that the Christian religion must return to its source, to God's pure Word as the Bible has preserved it. He evaluated Christian teachings in the spirit of Scripture and accepted only those notions which originate in the Gospels and are logical. Based on this, he taught that the dogma of the Trinity is a creation of theologians and synods. Christians must depend on and remain in Jesus and in his teachings. Instead of the Trinitarian dogma he taught the principle of evangelical unity of God because "there is no clearer and more obvious science in the Scripture than that of only one God. The scripture speaks about one God and not trinity, one Christ and not duality, one faith, one baptism and one Lord's Supper. It says nothing about being dual."

Negation of the dogma of Trinity and preaching the oneness of God have become the central teaching of Dávid Ferenc's reformation; from this originates the later name of Unitarianism.

Dávid Ferenc considered reformation as a slow, step-by-step, accomplishing process in which God purifies his Church from all deviations. The history of reformation tries to illustrate this. Just as God sent Moses in old times, he raised Martin Luther, and after him Melanchthon, Bucer, Oecolampadius, Musculus, Petrus Martyr, Calvin, Ochino, Viretus and others. God, who doesn't tolerate imperfection, sent newer and newer prophets for reformation of religion. His answer to the question, "Why the reformation didn't happen at once?" was "Is the blind man able to bear the light if his eyes open suddenly to see?" If we had been in great darkness and the whole light of the Gospel

would have flamed at once, this abundance of light might have taken our sight away from us. Therefore it was God's will to progress step by step, to reach the whole truth slowly just like the baby is first nurtured with milk and only later is given solid food.

The time had been made ready for the radical reformation. Dávid Ferenc's teachings found fertile soul. The declaration of Dávid Ferenc's reformation and foundation of the Unitarian church in 1568 as a recognized religion was a final result of the struggle between the churches of the Reformation and the radical reformation. In this act Transylvania took precedence over any other European country.

The Unitarian reformation was a logical consequence of the reform movement. It was not satisfied with the reformation of Christian theology. But through experiencing and living the truth of the Gospel, it has established profoundly humanistic principles. One such consequence was religious toleration and freedom of conscience.

2. The problem of religious toleration in the 16th century.

The 16th century constitutes a landmark in the history of Europe. This is the time when the spirit of an autonomous value-system and a new spirit of respecting the individual was being liberated from the patronage of the church. Among ardent problems of society were religious toleration and reformation of the church.

Religious toleration is a part of that process which, in our opinion, led to the principle of human freedom. It was not a narrow theological principle that was raised: the question which rose far above the times was "what is more important for a religious person, faith or dogma, the ethos or the logos, humanity or theology?" The heroes of this process are not only landmarks of that period but guides for progress as well.

a. The Catholic Church in the 16th century kept continuing the medieval intolerance of the church. In order to assure religious uniformity and exclusivity, the church sanctioned use of force against heterodoxes.

b. The Renaissance and humanism theoretically related in a positive way to the ideal of religious toleration. Humanists recognized the truth of toleration, and they discovered an effective means to achieve a religious peace. But they did not dare to take an open position toward it.

c. The reformation started in the spirit of freedom. It

aimed to assure the rights of all Christians that every person could choose what to believe and how to live. The reformation at the beginning preached religious toleration for another reason; that is, to develop its teachings and reform the church freely. But after its teachings became a "church" and it had won the support of secular power, it changed its position. It rejected the principle of toleration. Intolerance had not only been anti-papal and anti-sectarian, but being influenced by social and political events it became mutually intolerant and ended in religious war. In most European countries, toleration was considered as indifference toward religion and the church; persecution of deviants from the dominating religion, of the "heretics," was meritorious and a socially beneficial act.

d. The execution of the antitrinitarian Serveto Michael in 1553 put spotlight on the problem of toleration, provoking a passionate argument about persecution and punishment of heretics. Castellio Sebastian was the first to defend toleration and freedom of conscience. He denounced intolerance as an unworthy attitude for Christians, and he struggled for freedom of religion and conscience. He declared that "to seek for justice and speak out for it according to our conscience, can never be a sin. Nobody can be forced to any conviction because conviction is free [...], those dogmas which prompt Christians to excommunicate and kill each other, basically, are quite indifferent and they do not improve people. Judging spiritual things is not a human's domain, but only the domain of God."

e. The idea of religious toleration in Europe was promoted by the radical reformation. Its theological position resulted in toleration as a fundamental human right. In this struggle, the Transylvanian reformation lead by Dávid Ferenc had quite a role.

3. Theological basis of Dávid Ferenc's theory of toleration.

The basic principle of Dávid Ferenc's theological system is the indivisibility of God. This is the foundation, and any other precept is based on this superstructure. So is religious toleration. He learned from the scripture that we have only one God, the almighty Father. Jesus himself taught about one God. The evangelists and the apostles didn't write a word about trinity. And yet, the church persecuted those who do not believe "in the essence, person, nature, embodiment," Dávid Ferenc stated. "But if all these are necessary for salvation, a poor Christian peasant will never be saved as they won't be able to learn these

in their whole life."

In his conception, God is an indivisible Spirit who is almighty, wise, good and just. He is the creator of the universe, he is the source and preserver of all beings. Dávid emphasized God's love for humanity and the world through "God's fatherhood." They err who respect God not as gracious Father but rather as a severe judge because he, in whose name we are baptized, calls himself a Father. He is a personification of patience, love itself, "who rises his sun equally for the evil and good, and gives rain for the just and unjust." He provides freedom for people but he is ready to forgive the repentant. Through his mercy he gives salvation and eternal life.

God can be the only subject of our prayer. Jesus also taught that nobody else can be prayed to for help but the Father and that the real worship can only be one which is dedicated in spirit and truth to the Father.

Dávid taught that the holy spirit is God's spirit, power, the cause of life in us. It is true, that the Bible attributes will, examination of inner thoughts, teaching, and comforting to it. This is not because it would be a personal God, but to illustrate the different ways of God's action. This spirit is a teaching power, guiding to good. It does not only revitalize the human but it also renews our nature, gifts us with wisdom, makes us courageous, joyful and strong in confession of justice. We can become God's children through it and we can grow into God's church. At the same time it gives us confidence to be able to call fearlessly "Our Father."

God's spirit reaches every human being. This is why the Scripture teaches that we live, we move, we are in God's spirit. This is the first way of conveying God's spirit with us. The second is to give us wisdom and knowledge for making life more beautiful, like the philosophers, scientists and poets. The third way is creating the human being anew for eternal life.

Dávid Ferenc preached Jesus' humanity. He confessed: "I love my Christ, because he shed his blood, he suffered and died, and he prompts us by his spirit to commend our spirits into his hand and to be sure that he preserves and gives eternal life." He considered Jesus our master in teaching and our guide toward God's kingdom. He saw in Jesus the greatest representative of faith, reason and freedom. He referred to Jesus in his Bible explanation: "...the life and spirit of the Holy Scripture is Christ and after one has gotten to know it and its true meaning,

one can go freely in explaining of the whole Bible.” The human Jesus doesn’t teach about the essence or person, about the Son preexisting eternally, neither about the dual Christ, but only about one God the Father. We Christians must follow him, who teaches us that we can find happiness and eternal life only in knowledge of only God the Father and Jesus. Dávid leads his people to life, justice and perfection through Jesus’ gospel. His teachings hadn’t been written on stone tablets like Moses’ laws were given to the Jewish people, but into our heart. They don’t show the bondage of slavery and fear, but the spirit of life and goodness. We can become Jesus’ disciples by self-abnegation and lifting our own cross. Our mission is to follow Jesus. This is the only worthy way to express our respect.

Belief in humanity is Dávid’s foundational thesis. The human being is the center; everything is for humanity’s sake; religion also serves the human. God created the whole of humanity from one blood; this is the natural foundation of our brotherhood and sisterhood. God created human beings good and capable to become perfect. This is the source of a human’s high vocation; God set up ideals for humans to be attracted to the divine; God planted wishes and intentions into the human heart to prompt it. To be a human is not a state but a hard task yet to be accomplished. Jesus also urged us to be perfect and to strive to perfection ourselves through accomplishing God’s will, to be God’s children, to grow into true humanness in service of God’s kingdom.

Dávid linked the knowledge of God and Jesus together with a moral life of becoming human. One who affirms verbally God’s knowledge and living by Jesus’ teachings, but denies it by one’s actions, does not live in light and the way of the gospel. The members of God’s kingdom can be recognized if they love each other, if they are merciful, meek, peaceful, generous, are ready to practice forgiveness, work in the spirit of the gospel, if they compete in practicing good deeds and are first in service. God requires from us that humanness and love must be visible in all our actions.

Our most personal cause is faith. Dávid taught with Paul the apostle that “faith is God’s gift” (Ephesians 2:8), which we can accept but also can refuse. It is a reality outside of us, independent from external authority which we form and express according to our talents. The fact that faith is a gift is beyond question. If faith was given in our nature and if it wasn’t a gift

from God, then all of us would believe equally and we would assure a place to the Gospel in our life.

Faith, in its content, is trust in God, living with him together. It is God's work in us, entering our life, connecting with us, which speaks to us by faith and we answer him. Faith is the beginning of our becoming perfect. We liberate from fear, loneliness and bondage. We dedicate our life to the service of God and human beings.

The wholeness of faith is illustrated by Jesus' life. This is why Dávid calls the gospel "the most shining mirror of faith." Its knowledge strengthens and makes our faith more conscious. We are justified by faith when it becomes expressed in actions. For this reason faith and action are inseparable. We demonstrate our faith before God by clear thoughts, zealous prayer and concern for spiritual matters. We demonstrate our faith before human beings by actions of justice and love.

From the relationship between God and human beings results a faith which is self-governing and presumes freedom. It contradicts any kind of force or bondage by its essence. God expects from us to assure a total freedom for his gift. One who violates freedom of faith, offends not only against humanity but also against God.

Conscience and reason are the assurance for freedom of faith; they protect it against degenerating into anarchism.

Dávid Ferenc summarized his theology in this way: "Let people argue by their will, to seek for the hidden essence of God or deal with the multitude of the person [*personal*] and to turn around the wisdom of reason, but eternal life is to know your only God who sent Jesus Christ. Who believes in this, will be saved. And if anybody preached another gospel, or would stick something to it, bears God's judgment." He still adds to this that, as he had been the lover of justice, he wants to remain in the future and to follow the true gospel of God according to his capability. "If I was wrong in something, I would give thanks to those who show more that is true from God's gospel and I will follow it."

4. Dávid Ferenc and Religious Toleration.

Dávid Ferenc's theology is associated with religious toleration and freedom of conscience. Toleration was not indifference or humanistic philosophy, weakness, incertitude, neither lack of conviction or obligation for him, but an expression of his religious principles, way of life and attitude, openness toward justice, respect and love for neighbor, resulting from his religion.

Through it David recognized the human right that one is allowed to believe and teach freely what one considers correct. Toleration excludes fear, incertitude, force, oppression, fanaticism. But at the same time it assures a free exchange of ideas, experiences, and approaches of different religious views in order that people respect each other and live in peace. This basically means love for human beings is manifested in freedom. God, the Lord of peace, gives his gifts, like faith, that they may be the means of peace, understanding and respect.

Nowhere in the Scripture we can read, David says, that the gospel should be spread with fire and sword. Christ's people and their sacrifice are spontaneous, cannot be forced to acceptance of the gospel by threat of arms. "There is no greater mindlessness and absurdity than to force conscience and the spirit with external power, when only their creator has authority for them." Jesus himself gave the good example of mercy and compassionate love, declaring that his kingdom is not on this world, that the tares must not be torn up so that the wheat will not suffer, but they should be left together to live until the harvest. Neither had apostle Paul advised that people be persecuted who confess a different faith from ours, but just to avoid them. And he even flatly forbid us to condemn somebody to death because of one's faith. We cannot be either more severe than Jesus and Paul had been, Dávid Ferenc established. Respect for other persons does not mean, naturally, making allowances for others' moral errors; there is no room for indulgence toward moral evil.

Amidst religious debates, religious changes and struggles David remained faithful to toleration and fought for it to prevail. His adversaries used the weapons of sarcasm and depreciation, accused him with heresy and threatened him with sword and with burning him alive. And yet, he never turned to intolerance of his enemies. He preached according to his theological conception that in matters of faith violence must be excluded; one must fight not with the weapons of secular power but "with truth of the gospel and love of spirit." He left revenge to God who took defense of his own cause.

Dávid Ferenc demanded toleration even toward sinful people because God also wants the fallen ones to convert and to live. A good mother doesn't throw away her son who has fallen into sin, but she cares for him and tries to save him with every means. The theologians and the servants of the church, having

been given similar roles toward their audience, are obliged by their office and according to order of the Scripture to do the same.

Dávid Ferenc asked for John Sigismund, instead of punishment, to accord all the respect and reward to the loser, which should be allowed to write and teach: to be given full freedom for everything they do in favor of their cause.

David studied the problem of toleration and freedom of the conscience in detail. He recognized the threat of evil must be punished according to God's order, but the meaning of the Scripture on this topic is so different, that more than a thousand years later the argument is going on without any conclusion. And therefore, the earth had been covered by blood of the innocent. No matter how we think that we know everything and are never wrong, we still have to be careful, David warns, that among the justly crucified thieves we should not crucify the innocent Jesus as well. Concerning this he answers Major that in spite of his unjustified accusations, they [Dávid's party] will suffer patiently and will pray to the heavenly Father to forgive all those who slander them and persecute them.

Even our moral sense argues for toleration, David says. How many sinful people live because of indulgence of the law and authorities. If we tolerate the cursing, haughty, envy, stingy, spoiled people among us and we live with them, we should at least allow also merely life and thinking to those who have other conceptions about Jesus. They don't harm anybody and they would rather die than to speak or act differently than the truth.

Only toleration can liberate Christians from impatience and its consequences. Let us tolerate each other and respect each other's faith, because all of us are God's creatures, and brothers and sisters to each other.

5. The Diet of Torda in 1568 and religious toleration

The theory of toleration of Dávid Ferenc hasn't remained isolated among theologians and inner circles of the religious debates, but it became a matter of common knowledge. The king and the majority of the leaders of the country took a position regarding it. Religious toleration and the cause of David's reformation had a turning point at the Diet held at Torda on January 6-13, 1568. Accepting the prince's proposition, the diet declared the decision as follows: "...Preachers everywhere are to preach the gospel according to their understanding of it; if the parish willingly receives it, good; but if not, let there be no

compulsion on it to do so, since that would not ease any man's soul; but let each parish keep a minister whose teaching is acceptable to it. Let no superintendent or anyone else act violently or abusively to a preacher. No one may threaten another, on account of his teaching, with imprisonment or deprivation of office; for faith is a gift of God; it comes from listening, and listening is through God's word."

The Diet did not do anything else but confirmed the real religious situation and accepted the opinion of the majority when it sanctioned the principle of tolerance and freedom of conscience. This edict meant recognition of Dávid Ferenc's theory of toleration. The religious decree at Torda constituted an important victory for the radical reformation and for progress, a unique phenomenon in the 16th century. Implimentation of the law was imposed as a religious obligation by Prince John Sigismund. The chancellor, Csáki Mihály, in his closing speech at the second religious debate held at Fehérvár on March 8-18 emphasized that the prince will allow in the future for both sides to discuss, "having the will that in his country a total religious freedom will prevail." At the debate held on October 20-25 at Várad, the prince himself declared that "in our kingdom, as we have sanction of it, we want there to be freedom, because we know that faith is God's gift and the conscience cannot be led by any force." Execution of the edict of the Diet has been proven the best preservation of Unitarianism. The Transylvanian principality was the only one in Europe in the 16th century to recognize the Unitarian reformation and assured existence of its church.

The religious edict from Torda in 1568 assured toleration, freedom of individual and common conscience. "It is regrettable that because of the feudal social system, the counter-reformation and autocracy of kings, the enactment of 1568 did not mean complete liberty and equality for all the coexisting religions. Transylvania in the 16th century had been depending politically on the Ottoman empire and the privileged classes who wielded power in the principality did not acknowledge the Rumanians as a privileged nation of Transylvania though they formed the majority of its population. So the church of the Rumanians, the Orthodox church, was only a tolerated denomination. In this system the free religious practice applied to the churches represented in the Diet."

The edict of the diet from Torda, within the social and national limits of the age, was a progressive act. It meant a

positive step forward on the way to a total, unconditioned religious freedom and freedom of conscience.

Whoever forgets the past must live through it again. But those who remember the past find in it directions for the present and the future and can revive tradition in all its richness. We have learned from the past that a long time and much experience is needed until one can get to the realization: that no dogma is worth opposing by harming humanity or love.

Jesus' Notion of God

The center of religion is its notion about God. All religious, historical and philosophical searches conclude this. The whole world of religion, the relationship between faith and morality, worship, religious community, all depend on the nature of the notion about God. We cannot speak about religion, in the true meaning of the word, without the notion of God.

1. We find in Jesus' teaching the most advanced form of the notion of God. His religious world is determined by his conception about God; he is guided by this gospel of the kingdom of God and this is the measure of all positions taken by individuals in matters of faith. Jesus' notion of God is based on the Old Testament and bears the influence of religious culture of his epoch. Its source and determining mark is experiment God through natural power of the spirit. The starting point of his knowledge of God makes a distinction between divine and human, creator and creature. His life and teaching reflect how much he was aware of his humanity related to God. The creature is able to get to know God's essence only "partially", by a "mirror", because God is more than religion confesses. The spirit must sense God. "God is not exclusively like we imagine but is also different. We know about God only as much as God reveals to us within our earthly and human relationship. We only know God experienced in our human world and even this image is fragmentary."¹ God will remain forever the known and, yet, unknown God.

We are able only to comprehend about God as little as we can include in human notions; anything else exists in our spirit in a form of merely feeling, experience. The notions of theology, however, are not resistant enough, expressive enough for reflecting the personal experience of God. God "is totally different." God is greater and more of what we could include in our notion; we only have analogies as the creature. Jesus speaking about God had to translate recognition of reason about the divine essence

from his faith into a language of analogue notions. He expressed his perception of God in a language of an indirect experience, with simple human words and in a natural way. He always spoke about God with faith and with the power of bearing witness. This is why his knowledge of God is life-like and human.

2. Jesus' notion of God hasn't stiffened into a dogmatic superstructure. His theology follows the sense of a "science about God." God hadn't constituted a problem for him, but a reality: a personal reality of goodness, justice and love. Jesus never dealt with abstract quests concerning God's being and qualities. He was interested in experiencing God, perceiving God's being spontaneously. Jesus didn't teach notions about God, he simply believed in God, "who exists" and "who is with us". God exists in faith and for faith, unconditionally. This had been Jesus' conviction.

3. *God is a living and life-giving reality*, Jesus taught. God lives among us and in us, and we exist in God (Acts 17:28). God meant everything for Jesus and he was entirely of God, from the cradle until the cross (Luke 2:49, Mark 15:34, Luke 23:46).

He experienced God's caring love in all the situations; he listened to God and followed God's will. All the happiness of his life implied gratitude for God, all the sufferings and grief, submission before God's will. The living experience of God made his life a harmonious and serving life (Mark 1:15, Luke 12:15).

4. *God is also real presence in Jesus' faith*. He saw and experienced God everywhere. He didn't expect anything else in his soul but satisfying his longing to see God, to feel his closeness and also winning over the evil.

Jesus did not stop with the recognition of divine reality. He sought for an answer to the great problem of God's nature: who is God and what is God like. This question is unavoidable for belief. Because if we don't imagine God, then we can't speak of God's existence.

5. *God is one*, this is Jesus' first conclusion. The idea of God's unity had been raised before Jesus in several ancient religions but these were just sparks of inspiration in the soul of their great representatives. For the first time in the history of religion the God-notion of Judaism developed into a monotheism. The Old Testament and Judaism taught that God is one, for the first time (2 Moses 20:3; 5 Moses 4:35; 6:4; Isaiah 44:6, 8; 45:5). The classical summary of the Old Testament's monotheism is "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord." This

constitutes the creed of Judaism, and it has become the basis of all its theological teaching.

The monotheism of Judaism however wasn't a clear belief in one God yet. Yahweh is one but had remained God of the chosen Jewish people. His power was related to his chosen people, and the ultimate goal was to make his people happy. Yahweh loved only the Jews and therefore expects loyalty and obedience from them. To worship other, alien gods, meant faithlessness toward Yahweh and the gravest sin. "Take heed lest you forget the Lord, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage! You shall fear the Lord your God. You shall serve him..."(5 Moses 6:12-13).

Jesus adopted the theory of one God from the Old Testament with no change. This is proved by his argument with the scribe. When asked the question "Which is the first among all commandments?" he answered literally quoting the summary of the Law: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord." And he linked to this the obligation of love for God and for humans. It is remarkable that the Pharisee, a representative of Old Testament monotheism, recognized Jesus' conception as correct: "You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that he is one, and there is no other God but him." Yet, concerning the nature of one God, Jesus had a radically different opinion from the traditional belief of the Old Testament. The God of his monotheism is not a national, but a universal God, whose essence is indiscriminate goodness for all created beings.

This ethical monotheism did not remain just a theoretical article of faith, for he adapted its conclusions in his teachings.

God's unity fills the New Testament books, which proved itself as the promoting power of the Gospel in the struggle against polytheism, fear, barbarism and all forms of inhumanity. Jesus' ethical monotheism represents the highest evolutionary level of the idea of God in religious history.

6. *God is spirit* (Jn 4:24; 2 Cor 3:17). A more expressive definition of God's essence doesn't exist. Concerning the nature of existence of the spirit, it can only be personal. Jesus also believed in a perfect accomplishment of the personality in God, which solves the idea of sheer spirituality, removing every human character. God as spirit is independent, invisible and cannot be represented in any kind of image. This is why Jesus turned away from idols and rejected any representation of God. God's personality is fundamentally different from ours; God is

perfect personality; we, as creatures, are only a vague imitation of God.

Jesus believed that we are able to establish relationship only with the living God who loves us, provides for us, forgives our sins and promotes our perfection. We can only love the personal, living God and pray with the trust of a child.

From this essence of God resulted Jesus' relationship with God. "Instead of an exterior religion, a faith which is nurtured by exterior manifestations, Jesus rather taught a faith with an inner source and a religiousness nurtured from our spirit." The relationship between the creator and the creature, consequently, can only be spiritual. There exist a single possible and worthy form of God's worship: to worship in spirit and truth (John 4:24). God's worship is a religious act, according to Jesus, in which purity of the heart, the attitude of the spirit and accomplishment of religious moral values is what is important (Matt. 5:44, 12:50; Mark 3:35). This new worship of God introduced by Jesus basically is nothing else but a manifestation of a life-forming Christian faith, practicing love of others, living a just life and becoming fully human.

As a result of God's spirituality, Jesus subordinates the church, the priesthood and every liturgical action to moral values. The Old Testament linked the valid worship of God to the Temple in Jerusalem. Jesus taught and practiced the opposite: God can be worshiped in spirit and truth anywhere. He thought sacrifice to God valueless. He taught in the spirit of the prophets: "I desire mercy and not sacrifice." (Matt. 9:13; Hosea 6:6). Love and forgiveness, as their values are concerned, are superior to sacrifice: "So if you are offering your gift at the altar and remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. (Matt. 5:23-24; Mark 7:10). Among traditional worship acts he kept only prayer, and even this according to the spiritual nature of God, "in spirit and truth." (Matt. 6:5-13) Jesus saw the reason for the church to exist was for it to be "the house of prayer" (Mark 11:17)

7. *God's fatherhood.* Jesus expressed that God's ethical qualities and personal relationship with believers is simple and profound: God is our Father. The "Father" is the simplest and clearest notion that reason can create about God. A greater truth about God cannot be established. In this there is everything which one can know about God.

The name "Father" if it is connected with God can mean the creator, who created the world, and can mean the preserver, who takes care of every creation, as a loving father. Jesus called God a Father in this sense.

The idea of God's fatherhood had not been unknown in the world of religion. In the Old Testament the most used names of God were Lord and King. Rarely was God named "Father" and only in the sense of Creator or a national patron. Yahweh is "Father of Israel," and of the Jews; and the people of Israel are "first born" of Yahweh (5 Moses 32:1,6; Isaiah 63:16, 64:7; Jeremiah 3:4,19; Hosea 1:10; 2:1-21; Psalms 68:6; 10:13). The idea that Jesus taught about God's fatherhood is unknown in the conception of the Old Testament.

Jesus was the first in the history of religion who conceived God as a "Father" in a universal and ethical sense. In all his life he believed and felt God as Father and most of the time he even called him: my Father, your Father, our Father. "Father" was the first and the last word of Jesus which the writer of the gospel noticed (Luke 2:49; 23:46). As a result of his teachings, in the New Testament—excepting John's Letters—the name of Father became permanent (Mark 14:36; 15:34; Luke 23:32; John 4:23; 12:28, etc.). And the names of Lord or King are rarely used. However the relationship between the Lord or King reflects the heavenly Father's love as well.

The conception of God as a loving father was a totally new element in Jesus' faith. Others used this name before him, but not in Jesus' conception. Jesus' merit consists in not inventing a new name for God but in giving a really personal content to God as in "fatherhood" and in placing the God-human relationship on a new, ethical view.

"Fatherhood" for Jesus is not a mere quality of God among many others but a central quality, giving meaning and form to the others. God's fatherhood means the essence of religion, and all the main criteria of Jesus' conception of God is based on this.

a. *Closeness of God.* The Old Testament found God's greatness and power as far from the earth and human as possible. Yahweh rises to unapproachable, glorious heights above his chosen people. Moses on Mount Horeb "hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God." (2 Moses 3:6; 34:8). Isaiah had the fear of death when in his vision he sees Yahweh and, frightened, cries out: "Woe is me! For I am lost; ...for my eyes have

seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" (Isalah 6:5) By his conception of "Father", Jesus brought God from the inaccessible heights of heaven down among the creatures. God as personal spirit is not only above us but also near us, relates so intimately to us that we really live, move and exist in God (Acts 17:28).

Jesus illustrated this closeness of God through the father-child loving relationship. According to Jesus, God is so close to us, that those who are pure in heart can almost see God, and the peacemakers are sons of God; he demanded from his disciples to be merciful as the heavenly Father is merciful and be perfect as the heavenly Father is perfect.

b. *God's universality.* God is the Father of all humankind, who loves all creatures indiscriminately, regardless of race, religion, or morals. God has no chosen ones and doesn't make any exceptions. God is a universal Father. Universal fatherhood applies not just to humanity but also to the whole universe: God is our Father but the Father of the universe at the same time.

c. *Brotherhood of believers as children of God.* God created all of us from the same blood. (Acts 17:26) Our soul comes from God's spirit. According to Jesus, we all are the children of the same Father. From this brotherhood and sisterhood results the compulsory love of neighbor that Jesus called the second great commandment (Mark 12:31). The state of God's children, contrarily, expresses the relationship between God and the believers. It consists in a spiritual community, in a collaboration with God in the process of our perfecting the Father's model.

According to Third Moses [Leviticus] 11:44, Yahweh said to his people: "Be holy, for I am holy." Jesus requires something different from God's people: "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matt. 5:48) Holiness and perfection are not identical notions. Holiness means God's supernatural, inaccessible almightiness toward creatures. Holiness, consequently, only reaches down from God, from the heaven to the earth. Perfection, being the peak of evolution in quality, has threads growing from the earth toward heaven. Holiness is the state of an unapproachable God and, as such, cannot be an ideal for humanity. Perfection, contrarily, is the ideal state of the Father. We all must strive to reach this state. In Jesus's call, "Be perfect", the ideal is the Father, whom we must resemble. God the Father is the guide whom we have to follow. While God is really the loving Father of all humanity,

humans can become God's children only by permanent perfecting. To be children of God is an eternal ideal before us and its accomplishment is our common cause with God.

d. *God's love.* The most essential quality of God's fatherhood is love. The author of the First Letter John identifies God with love (4:16). The Father of the universe cannot be anything else than love. In Jesus' conception God's love is decisive in every act of God. God's love toward the creatures is infinite and universal; no one can be excluded from it. God loves everyone, even unmerited persons; "he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matt. 5:45) This love made Jesus define the two main obligations of humans by love. (Mark 12:30-31)

The result of God's universal love is providence, which reflects God's care for us. This caring love includes all living beings, to the "grass of the field," to the "birds of the air" and above all, to human children. (Matt. 6:26-34)

A natural consequence of God's love, in Jesus' teaching, is universal love for human beings. According to the author of the First Letter John, "if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." "If any one says: I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen." (4:11, 20).

The standard of love in Jesus is the love of one's enemy. While the Old Testament orders one to hate an enemy, Jesus teaches: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." (Mt 5:43-45) The only way of excelling with others is to excel in serving the community: "If any one would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all." (Mark 9:35)

The unlimited love of God includes goodness, justice and mercifulness.

God is the greatest in providing only good to everybody who asks for it (Matt. 7:7-11) and God provides to all those who trust in God (Luke 12:22-31). God resembles that king who releases all the debt for the imploring servant (Matt. 18:21-35). And God resembles that man who paid the same wage to the laborers of the vineyard coming late as to the others who worked all day long (Matt. 20:1-16) God is like a father who took back the lost but repentant son (Luke 15). Everybody who asks from God, receives, and everybody who seeks, finds: "Or what man of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil,

know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" (Matt. 7-11). In this spontaneous goodness God's perfection and love for us is manifested, Jesus says. (Mark 10:18)

God's goodness is inseparable from justice. God seeks for justice in human life and in the world. The source of God's acts is justice. God judges us according to our deeds and our life. God rewards the good and punishes evil. In the Old Testament the punishment of Yahweh was revenging, sometimes reaching even the descendants to the third and fourth generations. In Jesus, we find God's justice is uplifting, reeducating.

A complement of God's justice is mercifulness. God is just toward sin but also merciful. This mercifulness manifests in holding us back from evil and prompting us to good. God doesn't want us to perish us through punishment but to give us an opportunity to repent and purify ourselves from our sins. Struggle against sin is our most personal matter, which we must fight alone.

God's justice and mercifulness were presented by Jesus's teachings with convincing power. In his view, God wants and celebrates repentance and conversion of sinful people. The father is happier about finding a lost son than about a good one being loyal. Jesus emphasizes how God does everything for the sinful to repent and start a new life. Naturally, God doesn't use any force for this purpose, but God doesn't excuse anybody from the consequences of sin; The sinful must accept atonement in order to purify oneself in its fire and to be born anew.

From the notion of fatherhood in Jesus freedom for the personal relationship with God results. He did not only look at God as Creator and Providence but as a personal, close reality whose image he carried in his soul and tried to resemble his Father. The believer has the right for a free and personal relationship with the Father, without a mediator. God's fatherhood precludes every form of mediation.

God's fatherhood is not in contradiction with God's almightiness and holiness. It doesn't mean humanization of divine perfection. Jesus never missed a chance to distinguish between divine and human. In his teachings, the Father remains God all the time in unsurpassable dignity. Jesus also firmly believed that God is the almighty Lord of heaven and earth, to whom people show humility as the servant to one's lord (Matt. 11:25; Mark 1:27; 14:36; Luke 16:13; 17:7-10).

From the fatherhood of God there doesn't result any change in seriousness to the divine law, neither an indulgence of God for our sins in the future. Jesus definitely taught God's judgment over the sinful who do not want to repent! (Matt. 10:28; Mark 2:43-48; Luke 13:3; 8:26-30).

The harmony between God's fatherhood and majesty is fully expressed in prayer by Jesus. The author of the Psalms, who didn't feel God's closeness, prayed like this: "Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord our God, till he has mercy upon us!" (123:2). Nehemiah began his prayer in this way: "O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments; let thy ear be attentive, and thy eyes open, to hear the prayer of the servant which I now pray before thee day and night..." (1:5-6). Opposing this, Jesus prayed to the caring Father who was close to him and he revealed his soul with the trust of a child. His prayers all begin by addressing "My Father" or "Our Father." His belief in the Father inspired the most beautiful prayers from his heart through which the human can speak to God: "Our Father..." (Matt. 6:6-13).

Jesus's conception about God is unique. It cannot be compared to other gods in the history of religion. He revealed God to us and made God a living reality for us, carrying God's image in his soul and striving to reach God's perfection. We cannot give a more complex image of God than he had given us. Jesus' conception reflects his love for us, his worry for us and his trust in our perfecting, in our being children of God. This made his teaching become gospel.

Jesus' idea of God is an ideal, and we must strive to achieve it. The meaning of his call for us to follow him is this: "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matt. 5:48)

Chapter Notes.

¹Dr. Borbély István, *Az unitárius keresztény hit alapfogalmai*. Kolozsvár, 1931. 51.1.

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