

John Huss the Reformer 100 Years Before Luther

Summary: Moravia and Bohemia begin to see increased persecution from Rome as Biblical Christianity spreads in the regions. John Huss comes onto the scene and is converted from Catholicism to Biblical faith, mainly through the writings of Wicliffe, then begins to confront morals and theology of Rome. The imprisonment and martyrdom of Huss

JOHN HUSS THE REFORMER 100 YEARS BEFORE LUTHER FROM "THE HISTORY OF PROTESTANTISM" VOL. 1 by J. A. Wylie BOOK 3

Chapter 1

IN spring time does the husbandman begin to prepare for the harvest. He turns field after field with the plough, and when all have been got ready for the processes that are to follow, he returns on his steps, scattering as he goes the precious seed on the open furrows. His next care is to see to the needful operations of weeding and cleaning. All the while the sun this hour, and the shower the next, are promoting the germination and growth of the plant. The husbandman returns a third time, and lo! over all his fields there now waves the yellow ripened grain. It is harvest.

So was it with the Heavenly Husbandman when He began His preparations for the harvest of Christendom. For while to the ages that came after it the Reformation was the spring time, it yet, to the ages that went before it, stood related as the harvest.

We have witnessed the great Husbandman ploughing one of His fields, England namely, as early as the fourteenth century. The war that broke out in that age with France, the political conflicts into which the nation was plunged with the Papacy, the rise of the universities with the mental fermentation that followed, broke up the ground. The soil turned, the Husbandman sent forth a skillful and laborious servant to cast into the furrows of the ploughed land the seed of the translated Bible. So far had the work advanced. At this stage it stopped, or appeared to do so. Alas! we exclaim, that all this labor should be thrown away! But it is not so. The laborer is withdrawn, but the seed is not: it lies in the soil; and while it is silently germinating, and working its way hour by hour towards the harvest, the Husbandman goes elsewhere and proceeds to plough and sow another of His fields. Let us cast our eyes over wide Christendom. What do we see? Lo! yonder in the far off East is the same preparatory process begun which we have already traced in England. Verily, the Husbandman is wisely busy. In Bohemia the plough is at work, and already the sowers have come forth and have begun to scatter the seed.

In transferring ourselves to Bohemia we do not change our subject, although we change our country. It is the same great drama under another sky. Surely the winter is past, and the great spring time has come, when, in lands lying so widely apart, we see the flowers beginning to appear, and the fountains to gush forth.

We read in the Book of the Persecutions of the Bohemian Church: "In the year A.D. 1400, Jerome of Prague returned from England, bringing with him the writings of Wicliffe." [\[1\]](#) "A Taborite chronicler of the fifteenth century, Nicholaus von Pelhrimow, testifies that the books of the evangelical doctor, Master John Wicliffe, opened the eyes of the blessed

Master John Huss, as several reliable men know from his own lips, whilst he read and re read them together with his followers." [2]

Such is the link that binds together Bohemia and England. Already Protestantism attests its true catholicity. Oceans do not stop its progress. The boundaries of States do not limit its triumphs. On every soil is it destined to flourish, and men of every tongue will it enroll among its disciples. The spiritually dead who are in their graves are beginning to hear the voice of Wicliffe, yea, rather of Christ speaking through Wicliffe, and to come forth.

The first drama of Protestantism was acted and over in Bohemia before it had begun in Germany. So prolific in tragic incident and heroic character was this second drama, that it is deserving of more attention than it has yet received. It did not last long, but during its career it shed a resplendent luster upon the little Bohemia. It transformed its people into a nation of heroes. It made their wisdom in council the admiration of Europe, and their prowess on the field the terror of all the neighboring States. It gave, moreover, a presage of the elevation to which human character should attain, and the splendor that would gather round history, what time Protestantism should begin to display its regenerating influence on a wider area than that to which until now it had been restricted.

It is probable that Christianity first entered Bohemia in the wake of the armies of Charlemagne. But the Western missionaries, ignorant of the Slavonic tongue, could effect little beyond a nominal conversion of the Bohemian people. Accordingly we find the King of Moravia, a country whose religious condition was precisely similar to that of Bohemia, sending to the Greek emperor, about the year 863, and saying: "Our land is baptized, but we have no teachers to instruct us, and translate for us the Holy Scriptures. Send us teachers who may explain to us the Bible." [3] Methodius and Cyrillus were sent; the Bible was translated, and Divine worship established in the Slavonic language.

The ritual in both Moravia and Bohemia was that of the Eastern Church, from which the missionaries had come. Methodius made the Gospel be preached in Bohemia. There followed a great harvest of converts; families of the highest rank crowded to baptism, and churches and schools arose everywhere. [4] Though practicing the Eastern ritual, the Bohemian Church remained under the jurisdiction of Rome; for the great schism between the Eastern and the Western Churches had not yet been consummated. The Greek liturgy, as we may imagine, was displeasing to the Pope, and he began to plot its overthrow.

Gradually the Latin rite was introduced, and the Greek rite in the same proportion displaced. At length, in 1079, Gregory VII. (Hildebrand) issued a bull forbidding the Oriental ritual to be longer observed, or public worship celebrated in the tongue of the country. The reasons assigned by the Pontiff for the use of a tongue which the people did not understand, in their addresses to the Almighty, are such as would not, readily occur to ordinary men. He tells his "dear son," the King of Bohemia, that after long study of the Word of God, he had come to see that it was pleasing to the Omnipotent that His worship should be celebrated in an unknown language, and that many evils and heresies had arisen from not observing this rule. [5] This missive closed in effect every church, and every Bible, and left the Bohemians, so far as any public instruction was concerned, in total night. The Christianity of the nation would have sunk under the blow, but for another occurrence of an opposite tendency which happened soon afterwards. It was now that the Waldenses and Albigenses, fleeing from the sword of persecution in Italy and France, arrived in Bohemia. Thaurus informs us that Peter Waldo himself was among the number

of these evangelical exiles. Reynerius, speaking of the middle of the thirteenth century, says: "There is hardly any country in which this sect is not to be found." If the letter of Gregory was like a hot wind to wither the Bohemian Church, the Waldensian refugees were a secret dew to revive it. They spread themselves in small colonies over all the Slavonic countries, Poland included; they made their headquarters at Prague. They were zealous evangelizers, not daring to preach in public, but teaching in private houses, and keeping alive the truth during the two centuries which were yet to run before Huss should appear.

It was not easy enforcing the commands of the Pope in Bohemia, lying as it did remote from Rome. In many places worship continued to be celebrated in the tongue of the people, and the Sacrament to be dispensed in both kinds. The powerful nobles were in many cases the protectors of the Waldenses and native Christians; and for these benefits they received a tenfold recompense in the good order and prosperity which reigned on the lands that were occupied by professors of the evangelical doctrines. All through the fourteenth century, these Waldensian exiles continued to sow the seed of a pure Christianity in the soil of Bohemia.

All great changes prognosticate themselves. The revolutions that happen in the political sphere never fail to make their advent felt. Is it wonderful that in every country of Christendom there were men who foretold the approach of a great moral and spiritual revolution? In Bohemia were three men who were the pioneers of Huss; and who, in terms more or less plain, foretold the advent of a greater champion than themselves. The first of these was John Milicius, or Miltz, Archdeacon and Canon of the Archiepiscopal Cathedral of the Hradschin, Prague. He was a man of rare learning, of holy life, and an eloquent preacher. When he appeared in the pulpit of the cathedral church, where he always used the tongue of the people, the vast edifice was thronged with a most attentive audience. He inveighed against the abuses of the clergy rather than against the false doctrines of the Church, and he exhorted the people to Communion in both kinds. He went to Rome, in the hope of finding there, in a course of fasting and tears, greater rest for his soul. But, alas! the scandals of Prague, against which he had thundered in the pulpit of Hradschin, were forgotten in the greater enormities of the Pontifical city. Shocked at what he saw in Rome, he wrote over the door of one of the cardinals, "Antichrist is now come, and sitteth in the Church," [6] and departed. The Pope, Gregory XI., sent after him a bull, addressed to the Archbishop of Prague, commanding him to seize and imprison the bold priest who had affronted the Pope in his own capital, and at the very threshold of the Vatican.

No sooner had Milicius returned home than the archbishop proceeded to execute the Papal mandate. But murmurs began to be heard among the citizens, and fearing a popular outbreak the archbishop opened the prison doors, and Milicius, after a short incarceration, was set at liberty. He survived his eightieth year, and died in peace, A.D. 1374. [7] His colleague, Conrad Stiekna (a man of similar character and great eloquence, and whose church in Prague was so crowded, he was obliged to go outside and preach in the open square) died before him. He was succeeded by Matthew Janovius, who not only thundered in the pulpit of the cathedral against the abuses of the Church, but traveled through Bohemia, preaching everywhere against the iniquities of the times. This drew the eyes of Rome upon him. At the instigation of the Pope, persecution was commenced against the confessors in Bohemia. They durst not openly celebrate the Communion in both kinds, and

those who desired to partake of the "cup," could enjoy the privilege only in private dwellings, or in the yet greater concealment of woods and caves. It fared hard with them when their places of retreat were discovered by the armed bands which were sent upon their track. Those who could not manage to escape were put to the sword, or thrown into rivers. At length the stake was decreed (1376) against all who dissented from the established rites. These persecutions were continued till the times of Huss. [8] Janovius, who "taught that salvation was only to be found by faith in the crucified Savior," when dying (1394) consoled his friends with the assurance that better times were in store. "The rage of the enemies of the truth," said he, "now prevails against us, but it will not be for ever; there shall arise one from among the common people, without sword or authority, and against him they shall not be able to prevail." [9] Politically, too, the country of Bohemia was preparing for the great part it was about to act. Charles I., better known in Western Europe as Charles IV., Emperor of Germany, and author of the Golden Bull, had some time before ascended the throne. He was an enlightened and patriotic ruler. The friend of Petrarch and the protector of Janovius, he had caught so much of the spirit of the great poet and of the Bohemian pastor, as to desire a reform of the ecclesiastical estate, especially in the enormous wealth and overgrown power of the clergy. In this, however, he could effect nothing; on the contrary, Rome had the art to gain his concurrence in her persecuting measures. But he had greater success in his efforts for the political and material amelioration of his country. He repressed the turbulence of the nobles; he cleared the highways of the robbers who infested them; and now the husbandman being able to sow and reap in peace, and the merchant to pass from town to town in safety, the country began to enjoy great prosperity. Nor did the labors of the sovereign stop here. He extended the municipal libraries of the towns, and in 1347 he founded a university in Prague, on the model of those of Bologna and Paris; filling its chairs with eminent scholars, and endowing it with ample funds. He specially patronized those authors who wrote in the Bohemian tongue, judging that there was no more effectual way of invigorating the national intellect, than by cultivating the national language and literature. Thus, while in other countries the Reformation helped to purify and ennoble the national language, by making it the vehicle of the sublimest truths, in Bohemia this process was reversed, and the development of the Bohemian tongue prepared the way for the entrance of Protestantism. [10] Although the reign of Charles IV. was an era of peace, and his efforts were mainly directed towards the intellectual and material prosperity of Bohemia, he took care, nevertheless, that the martial spirit of his subjects should not decline; and thus when the tempest burst in the beginning of the fifteenth century, and the anathemas of Rome were seconded by the armies of Germany, the Bohemian people were not unprepared for the tremendous struggle which they were called to wage for their political and religious liberties. Before detailing that struggle, we must briefly sketch the career of the man who so powerfully contributed to create in the breasts of his countrymen that dauntless spirit which bore them up till victory crowned their arms. John Huss was born on the 6th of July, 1373, in the market town of Hussinetz, on the edge of the Bohemian forest near the source of the Moldau river, and the Bavarian boundary. [11] He took his name from the place of his birth. His parents were poor, but respectable. His father died when he was young. His mother, when his education was finished at the provincial school, took him to Prague, to enter him at the university of that city. She carried a present to the

rector, but happening to lose it by the way, and grieved by the misfortune, she knelt down beside her son, and implored upon him the blessing of the Almighty. [12] The prayers of the mother were heard, though the answer came in a way that would have pierced her heart like a sword, had she lived to witness the issue. The university career of the young student, whose excellent talents sharpened and expanded day by day, was one of great brilliance. His face was pale and thin; his consuming passion was a desire for knowledge; blameless in life, sweet and affable in address, he won upon all who came in contact with him. He was made Bachelor of Arts in 1393, Bachelor of Theology in 1394, Master of Arts in 1396; Doctor of Theology he never was, any more than Melanchthon. Two years after becoming Master of Arts, he began to hold lectures in the university. Having finished his university course, he entered the Church, where he rose rapidly into distinction. By and by his fame reached the court of Wenceslaus, who had succeeded his father, Charles IV., on the throne of Bohemia. His queen, Sophia of Bavaria, selected Huss as her confessor. He was at this time a firm believer in the Papacy. The philosophical writings of Wicliffe he already knew, and had ardently studied; but his theological treatises he had not seen. He was filled with unlimited devotion for the grace and benefits of the Roman Church; for he tells us that he went at the time of the Prague Jubilee, 1393, to confession in the Church of St.

Peter, gave the last four groschen that he possessed to the confessor, and took part in the processions in order to share also in the absolution: an efflux of superabundant devotion of which he afterwards repented, as he himself acknowledged from the pulpit. [13] The true career of John Huss dates from about A.D. 1402, when he was appointed preacher to the Chapel of Bethlehem. This temple had been founded in the year 1392 by a certain citizen of Prague, Mulhamio by name, who laid great stress upon the preaching of the Word of God in the mother tongue of the people. On the death or the resignation of its first pastor, Stephen of Colonia, Huss was elected his successor. His sermons formed an epoch in Prague. The moral condition of that capital was then deplorable. According to Comenius, all classes wallowed in the most abominable vices. The king, the nobles, the prelates, the clergy, the citizens, indulged without restraint in avarice, pride, drunkenness, lewdness, and every profligacy. [14] In the midst of this sunken community stood up Huss, like an incarnate conscience. Now it was against the prelates, now against the nobles, and now against the ordinary clergy that he launched his bolts. These sermons seem to have benefited the preacher as well as the hearers, for it was in the course of their preparation and delivery that Huss became inwardly awakened. A great clamor arose. But the queen and the archbishop protected Huss, and he continued preaching with indefatigable zeal in his Chapel of Bethlehem, [15] founding all he said on the Scriptures, and appealing so often to them, that it may be truly affirmed of him that he restored the Word of God to the knowledge of his countrymen.

The minister of Bethlehem Chapel was then bound to preach on all church days early and after dinner (in Advent and fast times only in the morning), to the common people in their own language. Obligated to study the Word of God, and left free from the performance of liturgical acts and pastoral duties, Huss grew rapidly in the knowledge of Scripture, and became deeply imbued with its spirit. While around him was a daily increasing devout community, he himself grew in the life of faith. By this time he had become acquainted with the theological works of Wicliffe, which he earnestly studied, and learned to admire

the piety of their author, and to be not wholly opposed to the scheme of reform which he had promulgated. [16] Already Huss had commenced a movement, the true character of which he did not perceive, and the issue of which he little foresaw. He placed the Bible above the authority of Pope or Council, and thus he had entered, without knowing it, the road of Protestantism. But as yet he had no wish to break with the Church of Rome, nor did he dissent from a single dogma of her creed, the one point of divergence to which we have just referred excepted; but he had taken a step which, if he did not retrace it, would lead him in due time far enough from her communion.

The echoes of a voice which had spoken in England, but was now silent there, had already reached the distant country of Bohemia. We have narrated above the arrival of a young student in Prague, with copies of the works of the great English heresiarch. Other causes favored the introduction of Wicliffe's books. One of these was the marriage of Richard II. of England, with Anne, sister of the King of Bohemia, and the consequent intercourse between the two countries. On the death of that princess, the ladies of her court, on their return to their native land, brought with them the writings of the great Reformer, whose disciple their mistress had been. The university had made Prague a center of light, and the resort of men of intelligence. Thus, despite the corruption of the higher classes, the soil was not unprepared for the reception and growth of the opinions of the Rector of Lutterworth, which now found entrance within the walls of the Bohemian capital. [17] [top](#)

Chapter 2

HUSS BEGINS HIS WARFARE AGAINST ROME

AN incident which is said to have occurred at this time (1404) contributed to enlarge the views of Huss, and to give strength to the movement he had originated in Bohemia. There came to Prague two theologians from England, James and Conrad of Canterbury. Graduates of Oxford, and disciples of the Gospel, they had crossed the sea to spread on the banks of the Moldau the knowledge they had learned on those of the Isis. Their plan was to hold public disputations, and selecting the Pope's primacy, they threw down the gage of battle to its maintainers. The country was hardly ripe for such a warfare, and the affair coming to the ears of the authorities, they promptly put a stop to the discussions. Arrested in their work, the two visitors did not fail to consider by what other way they could carry out their mission. They bethought them that they had studied art as well as theology, and might now press the pencil into their service. Having obtained their host's leave, they proceeded to give a specimen of their skill in a drawing in the corridor of the house in which they resided. On the one wall they portrayed the humble entrance of Christ into Jerusalem, "meek, and riding upon an ass." On the other they displayed the more than royal magnificence of a Pontifical cavalcade. There was seen the Pope, adorned with triple crown, attired in robes bespangled with gold, and all lustrous with precious stones. He rode proudly on a richly caparisoned horse, with trumpeters proclaiming his approach, and a brilliant crowd of cardinals and bishops following in his rear. In an age when printing was unknown, and preaching nearly as much so, this was a sermon, and a truly eloquent and graphic one. Many came to gaze, and to mark the contrast presented between the lowly estate of the Church's Founder, and the overgrown haughtiness and pride of His pretended vicar. [18] The city of Prague was moved, and the excitement became at last so

great, that the English strangers deemed it prudent to withdraw. But the thoughts they had awakened remained to ferment in the minds of the citizens.

Among those who came to gaze at this antithesis of Christ and Antichrist was John Huss; and the effect of it upon him was to lead him to study more carefully than ever the writings of Wicliffe. He was far from able at first to concur in the conclusions of the English Reformer. Like a strong light thrown suddenly upon a weak eye, the bold views of Wicliffe, and the sweeping measure of reform which he advocated, alarmed and shocked Huss. The Bohemian preacher had appealed to the Bible, but he had not bowed before it with the absolute and unreserved submission of the English pastor. To overturn the hierarchy, and replace it with the simple ministry of the Word; to sweep away all the teachings of tradition, and put in their room the doctrines of the New Testament, was a revolution for which, though marked alike by its simplicity and its sublimity, Huss was not prepared. It may be doubted whether, even when he came to stand at the stake, Huss's views had attained the breadth and clearness of those of Wicliffe.

Lying miracles helped to open the eyes of Huss still farther, and to aid his movement. In the church at Wilsnack, near the lower Elbe, there was a pretended relic of the blood of Christ. Many wonderful cures were reported to have been done by the holy blood. People flocked thither, not only out of the neighboring countries, but also from those at a greater distance: Poland, Hungary, and even Scandinavia. In Bohemia itself there were not wanting numerous pilgrims who went to Wilsnack to visit the wonderful relic. Many doubts were expressed about the efficacy of the blood. The Archbishop of Prague appointed a commission of three masters, among whom was Huss, to investigate the affair, and to inquire into the truth of the miracles said to have been wrought. The examination of the persons on whom the alleged miracles had been performed, proved that they were simply impostures. One boy was said to have had a sore foot cured by the blood of Wilsnack, but the foot on examination was found, instead of being cured, to be worse than before. Two blind women were said to have recovered their sight by the virtue of the blood; but, on being questioned, they confessed that they had had sore eyes, but had never been blind; and so as regarded other alleged cures. As the result of the investigation, the archbishop issued a mandate in the summer of 1405, in which all preachers were enjoined, at least once a month, to publish to their congregations the episcopal prohibition of pilgrimages to the blood of Wilsnack, under pain of excommunication. [19] Huss was able soon after (1409) to render another service to his nation, which, by extending his fame and deepening his influence among the Bohemian people, paved the way for his great work. Crowds of foreign youth flocked to the University of Prague, and their numbers enabled them to monopolize its emoluments and honors, to the partial exclusion of the Bohemian students. By the original constitution of the university the Bohemians possessed three votes, and the other nations united only one. In process of time this was reversed; the Germans usurped three of the four votes, and the remaining one alone was left to the native youth. Huss protested against this abuse, and had influence to obtain its correction. An edict was passed, giving three votes to the Bohemians, and only one to the Germans. No sooner was this decree published, than the German professors and students (to the number, say some, of 40,000; but according to Aeneas Sylvius, a contemporary, of 5,000) left Prague, having previously bound themselves to this step by oath, under pain of having the two first fingers of their right hand cut off. Among these students were not a few on

whom had shone, through Huss, the first rays of Divine knowledge, and who were instrumental in spreading the light over Germany. Elevated to the rectorship of the university, Huss was now, by his greater popularity and higher position, abler than ever to propagate his doctrines. [20]

What was going on at Prague could not long remain unknown at Rome. On being informed of the proceedings in the Bohemian capital, the Pope, Alexander V., fulminated a bull, in which he commanded the Archbishop of Prague, Sbinko, with the help of the secular authorities, to proceed against all who preached in private chapels, and who read the writings or taught the opinions of Wicliffe. There followed a great auto da fe, not of persons but of books. Upwards of 200 volumes, beautifully written, elegantly bound, and ornamented with precious stones, the works of John Wicliffe, were, by the order of Sbinko, piled upon the street of Prague, and, amid the tolling bells, publicly burned. [21] Their beauty and costliness showed that their owners were men of high position; and their number, collected in one city alone, attests how widely circulated were the writings of the English Reformer on the continent of Europe. This act but the more inflamed the zeal of Huss. In his sermons he now attacked indulgences as well as the abuses of the hierarchy. A second mandate arrived from Rome. The Pope summoned him to answer for his doctrine in person. To obey the summons would have been to walk into his grave. The king, the queen, the university, and many of the magnates of Bohemia sent a joint embassy requesting the Pope to dispense with Huss's appearance in person, and to hear him by his legal counsel. The Pope refused to listen to this supplication. He went on with the case, condemned John Huss in absence, and laid the city of Prague under interdict. [22] The Bohemian capital was thrown into perplexity and alarm. On every side tokens met the eye to which the imagination imparted a fearful significance. Prague looked like a city stricken with sudden and terrible calamity. The closed church doors; the extinguished altar lights; the corpses waiting burial by the way side; the images which sanctified and guarded the streets, covered with sackcloth, or laid prostrate on the ground, as if in supplication for a land on which the impieties of its children had brought down a terrible curse, gave emphatic and solemn warning that every hour the citizens harbored within their walls the man who had dared to disobey the Pope's summons, they but increased the heinousness of their guilt, and added to the vengeance of their doom. "Let us cast out the rebel," was the cry of many, "before we perish." Tumult was beginning to disturb the peace, and slaughter to dye the streets of Prague. What was Huss to do? Should he flee before the storm, and leave a city where he had many friends and not a few disciples? What had his Master said? "The hireling fleeth because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep." This seemed to forbid his departure. His mind was torn with doubts. But had not the same Master commanded, "When they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another"? His presence could but entail calamity upon his friends; so, quitting Prague, he retired to his native village of Hussinetz.

Here Huss enjoyed the protection of the territorial lord, who was his friend. His first thoughts were of those he had left behind in Prague: the flock to whom he had so lovingly ministered in his Chapel of Bethlehem. "I have retired," he wrote to them, "not to deny the truth, for which I am willing to die, but because impious priests forbid the preaching of it." [23] The sincerity of this avowal was attested by the labors he immediately undertook. Making Christ his pattern, he journeyed all through the surrounding region, preaching in

the towns and villages. He was followed by great crowds, who hung upon his words, admiring his meekness not less than his courage and eloquence. "The Church," said his hearers, "has pronounced this man a heretic and a demon, yet his life is holy, and his doctrine is pure and elevating." [24] The mind of Huss, at this stage of his career, would seem to have been the scene of a painful conflict. Although the Church was seeking to overwhelm him by her thunderbolts, he had not renounced her authority. The Roman Church was still to him the spouse of Christ, and the Pope was the representative and vicar of God. What Huss was warring against was the abuse of authority, not the principle itself. This brought on a terrible conflict between the convictions of his understanding and the claims of his conscience. If the authority was just and infallible, as he believed it to be, how came it that he felt compelled to disobey it? To obey, he saw, was to sin; but why should obedience to an infallible Church lead to such an issue?. This was the problem he could not solve; this was the doubt that tortured him hour by hour. The nearest approximation to a solution, which he was able to make, was that it had happened again, as once before in the days of the Savior, that the priests of the Church had become wicked persons, and were using their lawful authority for unlawful ends. This led him to adopt for his own guidance, and to preach to others for theirs, the maxim that the precepts of Scripture, conveyed through the understanding, are to rule the conscience; in other words, that God speaking in the Bible, and not the Church speaking through the priesthood, is the one infallible guide of men. This was to adopt the fundamental principle of Protestantism, and to preach a revolution which Huss himself would have recoiled from, had he been able at that hour to see the length to which it would lead him. The axe which he had grasped was destined to lay low the principle of human supremacy in matters of conscience, but the fetters yet on his arm did not permit him to deliver such blows as would be dealt by the champions who were to follow him, and to whom was reserved the honor of extirpating that bitter root which had yielded its fruits in the corruption of the Church and the slavery of society.

Gradually things quieted in Prague, although it soon became evident that the calm was only on the surface. Intensely had Huss longed to appear again in his Chapel of Bethlehem, the scene of so many triumphs, and his wish was granted. Once more he stands in the old pulpit; once more his loving flock gather round him. With zeal quickened by his banishment, he thunders more courageously than ever against the tyranny of the priesthood in forbidding the free preaching of the Gospel. In proportion as the people grew in knowledge, the more, says Fox, they "complained of the court of Rome and the bishop's consistory, who plucked from the sheep of Christ the wool and milk, and did not feed them either with the Word of God or good examples." [25] A great revolution was preparing in Bohemia, and it could not be ushered into the world without evoking a tempest. Huss was perhaps the one tranquil man in the nation. A powerful party, consisting of the doctors of the university and the members of the priesthood, was now formed against him. Chief among these were two priests, Paletz and Causis, who had once been his friends, but had now become his bitterest foes. This party would speedily have silenced him and closed the Chapel of Bethlehem, the center of the movement, had they not feared the people. Every day the popular indignation against the priests waxed stronger. Every day the disciples and defenders of the Reformer waxed bolder, and around him were now powerful as well as numerous friends. The queen was on his side; the lofty

character and resplendent virtues of Huss had won her esteem. Many of the nobles declared for him, some of them because they had felt the Divine power of the doctrines which he taught, and others in the hope of sharing in the spoils which they foresaw would by and by be gleaned in the wake of the movement. The great body of the citizens were friendly. Captivated by his eloquence, and taught by his pure and elevating doctrine, they had learned to detest the pride, the debaucheries, and the avarice of the priests, and to take part with the man whom so many powerful and unrighteous confederacies were seeking to crush. [26] But Huss was alone; he had no fellow worker; and had doubtless his hours of loneliness and melancholy. One single companion of sympathizing spirit, and of like devotion to the same great cause, would have been to Huss a greater stay and a sweeter solace than all the other friends who stood around him. And it pleased God to give him such: a true yoke fellow, who brought to the cause he espoused an intellect of great subtlety, and an eloquence of great fervor, combined with a fearless courage, and a lofty devotion. This friend was Jerome of Faulfish, a Bohemian knight, who had returned some time before from Oxford, where he had imbibed the opinions of Wicliffe. As he passed through Paris and Vienna, he challenged the learned men of these universities to dispute with him on matters of faith; but the theses which he maintained with a triumphant logic were held to savor of heresy, and he was thrown into prison. Escaping, however, he came to Bohemia to spread with all the enthusiasm of his character, and all the brilliancy of his eloquence, the doctrines of the English Reformer. [27] With the name of Huss that of Jerome is henceforward indissolubly associated. Alike in their great qualities and aims, they were yet in minor points sufficiently diverse for one to be the complement of the other. Huss was the more powerful character, Jerome was the more eloquent orator. Greater in genius, and more popular in gifts, Jerome maintained nevertheless towards Huss the relation of a disciple. It was a beautiful instance of Christian humility. The calm reason of the master was a salutary restraint upon the impetuosity of the disciple. The union of these two men gave a sensible impulse to the cause. While Jerome debated in the schools, and thundered in the popular assemblies, Huss expounded the Scriptures in his chapel, or toiled with his pen at the refutation of some manifesto of the doctors of the university, or some bull of the Vatican. Their affection for each other ripened day by day, and continued unbroken till death came to set its seal upon it, and unite them in the bonds of an eternal friendship.

The drama was no longer confined to the limits of Bohemia. Events were lifting up Huss and Jerome to a stage where they would have to act their part in the presence of all Christendom. Let us cast our eyes around and survey the state of Europe. There were at that time three Popes reigning in Christendom. The Italians had elected Balthazar Cossa, who, as John XXIII., had set up his chair at Bologna. The French had chosen Angelo Corario, who lived at Rimini, under the title of Gregory XII.; and the Spaniards had elected Peter de Lune (Benedict XIII.), who resided in Arragon. Each claimed to be the legitimate successor of Peter, and the true vicegerent of God, and each strove to make good his claim by the bitterness and rage with which he hurled his maledictions against his rival. Christendom was divided, each nation naturally supporting the Pope of its choice. The schism suggested some questions which it was not easy to solve. "If we must obey," said Huss and his followers, "to whom is our obedience to be paid? Balthazar Cossa, called John XXIII., is at Bologna; Angelo Corario, named Gregory XII., is at Rimini;

Peter de Lune, who calls himself Benedict XIII., is in Arragon. If all three are infallible, why does not their testimony agree? and if only one of them is the Most Holy Father, why is it that we cannot distinguish him from the rest?" [28] Nor was much help to be got towards a solution by putting the question to the men themselves. If they asked John XXIII. he told them that Gregory XII. was "a heretic, a demon, the Antichrist;" Gregory XII. obligingly bore the same testimony respecting John XXIII., and both Gregory and John united in sounding, in similar fashion, the praises of Benedict XIII., whom they stigmatized as "an impostor and schismatic," while Benedict paid back with prodigal interest the compliments of his two opponents. It came to this, that if these men were to be believed, instead of three Popes there were three Antichrists in Christendom; and if they were not to be believed, where was the infallibility, and what had become of the apostolic succession?

The chroniclers of the time labor to describe the distractions, calamities, and woes that grew out of this schism. Europe was plunged into anarchy; every petty State was a theater of war and rapine. The rival Popes sought to crush one another, not with the spiritual bolts only, but with temporal arms also. They went into the market to purchase swords and hire soldiers, and as this could not be done without money, they opened a scandalous traffic in spiritual things to supply themselves with the needful gold. Pardons, dispensations, and places in Paradise they put up to sale, in order to realize the means of equipping their armies for the field. The bishops and inferior clergy, quick to profit by the example set them by the Popes, enriched themselves by simony. At times they made war on their own account, attacking at the head of armed bands the territory of a rival ecclesiastic, or the castle of a temporal baron. A bishop newly elected to Hildesheim, having requested to be shown the library of his predecessors, was led into an arsenal, in which all kinds of arms were piled up. "Those," said his conductors, "are the books which they made use of to defend the Church; imitate their example." [29] How different were the words of St. Ambrose! "My arms," said he, as the Goths approached his city, "are my tears; with other weapons I dare not fight."

It is distressing to dwell on this deplorable picture. Of the practice of piety nothing remained save a few superstitious rites. Truth, justice, and order banished from among men, force was the arbiter in all things, and nothing was heard but the clash of arms and the sighings of oppressed nations, while above the strife rose the furious voices of the rival Popes frantically hurling anathemas at one another. This was truly a melancholy spectacle; but it was necessary, perhaps, that the evil should grow to this head, if peradventure the eyes of men might be opened, and they might see that it was indeed a "bitter thing" that they had forsaken the "easy yoke" of the Gospel, and submitted to a power that set no limits to its usurpations, and which, clothing itself with the prerogatives of God, was waging a war of extermination against all the rights of man.

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Chapter 3

GROWING OPPOSITION OF HUSS TO ROME

THE frightful picture which society now presented had a very powerful effect on John Huss. He studied the Bible, he read the early Fathers, he compared these with the sad spectacles passing before his eyes, and he saw more clearly every day that "the Church"

had departed far from her early model, not in practice only, but in doctrine also. A little while ago we saw him leveling his blows at abuses; now we find him beginning to strike at the root on which all these abuses grew, if haply he might extirpate both root and branch together.

It was at this time that he wrote his treatise *On the Church*, a work which enables us to trace the progress of his emancipation from the shackles of authority. He establishes in it the principle that the true Church of Christ has not necessarily an exterior constitution, but that communion with its invisible Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, is alone necessary for it: and that the Catholic Church is the assembly of all the elect. [30] This tractate was followed by another under the title of *The Six Errors*. The first error was that of the priests who boasted of making the body of Jesus Christ in the mass, and of being the creator of their Creator. The second was the confession exacted of the members of the Church, "I believe in the Pope and the saints", in opposition to which, Huss taught that men are to believe in God only. The third error was the priestly pretension to remit the guilt and punishment of sin. The fourth was the implicit obedience exacted by ecclesiastical superiors to all their commands. The fifth was the making no distinction between a valid excommunication and one that was not so. The sixth error was simony. This Huss designated a heresy, and scarcely, he believed, could a priest be found who was not guilty of it. [31] This list of errors was placarded on the door of the Bethlehem Chapel. The tract in which they were set forth was circulated far and near, and produced an immense impression throughout the whole of Bohemia. Another matter which now happened helped to deepen the impression which his tract on *The Six Errors* had made. John XXIII. fulminated a bull against Ladislaus, King of Hungary, excommunicating him, and all his children to the third generation. The offense which had drawn upon Ladislaus this burst of Pontifical wrath was the support he had given to Gregory XII., one of the rivals of John. The Pope commanded all emperors, kings, princes, cardinals, and men of whatever degree, by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, to take up arms against Ladislaus, and utterly to exterminate him and his supporters; and he promised to all who should join the crusade, or who should preach it, or collect funds for its support, the pardon of all their sins, and immediate admission into Paradise should they die in the war, in short, the same indulgences which were accorded to those who bore arms for the conquest of the Holy Land. This fulmination wrapped Bohemia in flames; and Huss seized the opportunity of directing the eyes of his countrymen to the contrast, so perfect and striking, between the vicar of Christ and Christ Himself; between the destroyer and the Savior; between the commands of the bull, which proclaimed war, and the precepts of the Gospel, which preached peace. A few extracts from his refutation of the Papal bull will enable us to measure the progress Huss was making in evangelical sentiments, and the light which through his means was breaking upon Bohemia. "If the disciples of Jesus Christ," said he, "were not allowed to defend Him who is Chief of the Church, against those who wanted to seize on Him, much more will it not be permissible to a bishop to engage in war for a temporal domination and earthly riches." "As the secular body," he continues, "to whom the temporal sword alone is suitable, cannot undertake to handle the spiritual one, in like manner the ecclesiastics ought to be content with the spiritual sword, and not make use of the temporal." This was flatly to contradict a solemn judgment of the Papal chair which asserted the Church's right to both swords. Having condemned

crusades, the carnage of which was doubly iniquitous when done by priestly hands, Huss next attacks indulgences. They are an affront to the grace of the Gospel. "God alone possesses the power to forgive sins in an absolute manner." "The absolution of Jesus Christ," he says, "ought to precede that of the priest; or, in other words, the priest who absolves and condemns ought to be certain that the case in question is one which Jesus Christ Himself has already absolved or condemned." This implies that the power of the keys is limited and conditional, in other words that the priest does not pardon, but only declares the pardon of God to the penitent. "If," he says again, "the Pope uses his power according to God's commands, he cannot be resisted without resisting God Himself; but if he abuses his power by enjoining what is contrary to the Divine law, then it is a duty to resist him as should be done to the pale horse of the Apocalypse, to the dragon, to the beast, and to the Leviathan." [32] Waxing bolder as his views enlarged, he proceeded to stigmatize many of the ceremonies of the Roman Church as lacking foundation, and as being foolish and superstitious. He denied the merit of abstinences; he ridiculed the credulity of believing legends, and the groveling superstition of venerating relics, bowing before images, and worshipping the dead. "They are profuse," said he, referring to the latter class of devotees, "towards the saints in glory, who want nothing; they array bones of the latter with silk and gold and silver, and lodge them magnificently; but they refuse clothing and hospitality to the poor members of Jesus Christ who are amongst us, at whose expense they feed to repletion, and drink till they are intoxicated." Friars he no more loved than Wicliffe did, if we may judge from a treatise which he wrote at this time, entitled *The Abomination of Monks*, and which he followed by another, wherein he was scarcely more complimentary to the Pope and his court, styling them the members of Antichrist.

Plainer and bolder every day became the speech of Huss; fiercer grew his invectives and denunciations. The scandals which multiplied around him had, doubtless, roused his indignation, and the persecutions which he endured may have heated his temper. He saw John XXIII., than whom a more infamous man never wore the tiara, professing to open and shut the gates of Paradise, and scattering simoniacal pardons over Europe that he might kindle the flames of war, and extinguish a rival in torrents of Christian blood. It was not easy to witness all this and be calm. In fact, the Pope's bull of crusade had divided Bohemia, and brought matters in that country to extremity. The king and the priesthood were opposed to Ladislaus of Hungary, and consequently supported John XXIII., defending as best they could his indulgences and simonies. On the other hand, many of the magnates of Bohemia, and the great body of the people, sided with Ladislaus, condemned the crusade which the Pope was preaching against him, together with all the infamous means by which he was furthering it, and held the clergy guilty of the blood which seemed about to flow in torrents. The people kept no measure in their talk about the priests. The latter trembled for their lives. The archbishop interfered, but not to throw oil on the waters. He placed Prague under interdict, and threatened to continue the sentence so long as John Huss should remain in the city. The archbishop persuaded himself that if Huss should retire the movement would go down, and the war of factions subside into peace. He but deceived himself. It was not now in the power of any man, even of Huss, to control or to stop that movement. Two ages were struggling together, the old and the new. The Reformer, however, fearing that his presence in Prague might embarrass his

friends, again withdrew to his native village of Hussinetz.

During his exile he wrote several letters to his friends in Prague. The letters discover a mind full of that calm courage which springs from trust in God; and in them occur for the first time those prophetic words which Huss repeated afterwards at more than one important epoch in his career, the prediction taking each time a more exact and definite form. "If the goose" (his name in the Bohemian language signifies goose), "which is but a timid bird, and cannot fly very high, has been able to burst its bonds, there will come afterwards an eagle, which will soar high into the air and draw to it all the other birds." So he wrote, adding, "It is in the nature of truth, that the more we obscure it the brighter will it become." [33] Huss had closed one career, and was bidden rest awhile before opening his second and sublimer one. Sweet it was to leave the strife and clamor of Prague for the quiet of his birth place. Here he could calm his mind in the perusal of the inspired page, and fortify his soul by communion with God. For himself he had no fears; he dwelt beneath the shadow of the Almighty.

By the teaching of the Word and the Spirit he had been wonderfully emancipated from the darkness of error. His native country of Bohemia had, too, by his instrumentality been rescued partially from the same darkness. Its reformation could not be completed, nor indeed carried much farther, till the rest of Christendom had come to be more nearly on a level with it in point of spiritual enlightenment. So now the Reformer is withdrawn. Never again was his voice to be heard in his favorite Chapel of Bethlehem. Never more were his living words to stir the hearts of his countrymen. There remains but one act more for Huss to do, the greatest and most enduring of all. As the preacher of Bethlehem Chapel he had largely contributed to emancipate Bohemia, as the martyr of Constance he was largely to contribute to emancipate Christendom.

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Chapter 4

PREPARATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE

WE have now before us a wider theater than Bohemia. It is the year 1413. Sigismund (a name destined to go down to posterity along with that of Huss, though not with like fame) had a little before mounted the throne of the Empire. Wherever he cast his eyes the new emperor saw only spectacles that distressed him. Christendom was afflicted with a grievous schism. There were three Popes, whose personal profligacies and official crimes were the scandal of that Christianity of which each claimed to be the chief teacher, and the scourge of that Church of which each claimed to be the supreme pastor. The most sacred things were put up to sale, and were the subject of simoniacal bargaining. The bonds of charity were disrupted, and nation was going to war with nation; everywhere strife raged and blood was flowing. The Poles and the knights of the Teutonic order were waging a war which raged only with the greater fury inasmuch as religion was its pretext. Bohemia seemed on the point of being rent in pieces by intestine commotions; Germany was convulsed; Italy had as many tyrants as princes; France was distracted by its factions, and Spain was embroiled by the machinations of Benedict XIII., whose pretensions that country had espoused. To complete the confusion the Mussulman hordes, encouraged by these dissensions, were gathering on the frontier of Europe and threatening to break in and repress all disorders, in a common subjugation of Christendom to the yoke of the Prophet.

[34] To the evils of schism, of war, and Turkish invasion, was now added the worse evil, as Sigismund doubtless accounted it, of heresy. A sincere devotee, he was moved even to tears by this spectacle of Christendom disgraced and torn asunder by its Popes, and undermined and corrupted by its heretics. The emperor gave his mind anxiously to the question how these evils were to be cured. The expedient he hit upon was not an original one certainly (it had come to be a stereotyped remedy) but it possessed a certain plausibility that fascinated men, and so Sigismund resolved to make trial of it: it was a General Council.

This plan had been tried at Pisa, [35] and it had failed. This did not promise much for a second attempt; but the failure had been set down to the fact that then the miter and the Empire were at war with each other, whereas now the Pope and the emperor were prepared to act in concert. In these more advantageous circumstances Sigismund resolved to convene the whole Church, all its patriarchs, cardinals, bishops, and princes, and to summon before this august body the three rival Popes, and the leaders of the new opinions, not doubting that a General Council would have authority enough, more especially when seconded by the imperial power, to compel the Popes to adjust their rival claims, and put the heretics to silence. These were the two objects which the emperor had in eye: to heal the schism and to extirpate heresy.

Sigismund now opened negotiations with John XXIII. [36] To the Pope the idea of a Council was beyond measure alarming. Nor can one wonder at this, if his conscience was loaded with but half the crimes of which Popish historians have accused him. But he dared not refuse the emperor. John's crusade against Ladislaus had not prospered. The King of Hungary was in Rome with his army, and the Pope had been compelled to flee to Bologna; and terrible as a Council was to Pope John, he resolved to face it, rather than offend the emperor, whose assistance he needed against the man whose ire he had wantonly provoked by his bull of crusade, and from whose victorious arms he was now fain to seek a deliverer. Pope John was accused of opening his way to the tiara by the murder of his predecessor, Alexander V. [37] and he lived in continual fear of being hurled from his chair by the same dreadful means by which he had mounted to it. It was finally agreed that a General Council should be convoked for November 1st, 1414, and that it should meet in the city of Constance. [38] The day came and the Council assembled. From every kingdom and state, and almost from every city in Europe, came delegates to swell that great gathering. All that numbers, and princely rank, and high ecclesiastical dignity, and fame in learning, could do to make an assembly illustrious, contributed to give eclat to the Council of Constance. Thirty cardinals, twenty archbishops, one hundred and fifty bishops, and as many prelates, a multitude of abbots and doctors, and eighteen hundred priests came together in obedience to the joint summons of the emperor and the Pope. Among the members of sovereign rank were the Electors of Palatine, of Mainz, and of Saxony; the Dukes of Austria, of Bavaria, and of Silesia. There were margraves, counts, and barons without number. [39] But there were three men who took precedence of all others in that brilliant assemblage, though each on a different ground. These three men were the Emperor Sigismund, Pope John XXIII., and last and greatest of all, John Huss.

The two anti Popes had been summoned to the Council. They appeared, not in person, but by delegates, some of whom were of the cardinalate. This raised a weighty question in the Council, whether these cardinal delegates should be received in their red hats. To permit

the ambassadors to appear in the insignia of their rank might, it was argued, be construed into a tacit admission by the Council of the claims of their masters, both of whom had been deposed by the Council of Pisa; but, for the sake of peace, it was agreed to receive the deputies in the usual costume of the cardinalate. [40] In that assembly were the illustrious scholar, Poggio; the celebrated Thierry de Niem, secretary to several Popes, "and whom," it has been remarked, "Providence placed near the source of so many iniquities for the purpose of unveiling and stigmatizing them;" Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, greater as the elegant historian than as the wearer of the triple crown; Manuel Chrysoloras, the restorer to the world of some of the writings of Demosthenes and of Cicero; the almost heretic, John Charlier Gerson; [41] the brilliant disputant, Peter D'Ailly, Cardinal of Cambrai, surnamed "the Eagle of France," and a host of others. In the train of the Council came a vast concourse of pilgrims from all parts of Christendom. Men from beyond the Alps and the Pyrenees mingled here with the natives of the Hungarian and Bohemian plains. Room could not be found in Constance for this great multitude, and booths and wooden erections rose outside the walls. Theatrical representations and religious processions proceeded together. Here was seen a party of revelers and masqueraders busy with their cups and their pastimes, there knots of cowed and hooded devotees devoutly telling their beads. The orison of the monk and the stave of the bacchanal rose blended in one. So great an increase of the population of the little town, amounting, it is supposed, to 100,000 souls, rendered necessary a corresponding enlargement of its commissariat. [42] All the highways leading to Constance were crowded with vehicles, conveying thither all kinds of provisions and delicacies: [43] the wines of France, the breadstuffs of Lombardy, the honey and butter of Switzerland; the venison of the Alps and the fish of their lakes, the cheese of Holland, and the confections of Paris and London.

The emperor and the Pope, in the matter of the Council, thought only of circumventing one another. Sigismund professed to regard John XXIII. as the valid possessor of the tiara; nevertheless he had formed the secret purpose of compelling him to renounce it. And the Pope on his part pretended to be quite cordial in the calling of the Council, but his firm intention was to dissolve it as soon as it had assembled if, after feeling its pulse, he should find it to be unfriendly to himself. He set out from Bologna, on the 1st of October, with store of jewels and money. Some he would corrupt by presents, others he hoped to dazzle by the splendor of his court. [44] All agree in saying that he took this journey very much against the grain, and that his heart misgave him a thousand times on the road. He took care, however, as he went onward to leave the way open behind for his safe retreat. As he passed through the Tyrol he made a secret treaty with Frederick, Duke of Austria, to the effect that one of his strong castles should be at his disposal if he found it necessary to leave Constance. He made friends, likewise, with John, Count of Nassau, Elector of Mainz.

When he had arrived within a league of Constance he prudently conciliated the Abbot of St. Ulric, by bestowing the miter upon him. This was a special prerogative of the Popes of which the bishops thought they had cause to complain. Not a stage did John advance without taking precautions for his safety, all the more that several incidents befell him by the way which his fears interpreted into auguries of evil. When he had passed through the town of Trent his jester said to him, "The Pope who passes through Trent is undone." [45]

In descending the mountains of the Tyrol, at that point of the road where the city of Constance, with the lake and plain, comes into view, his carriage was overturned. The Pontiff was thrown out and rolled on the highway; he was not hurt the least, but the fall brought the color into his face. His attendants crowded round him, anxiously inquiring if he had come by harm: "By the devil," said he, "I am down; I had better have stayed at Bologna;" and casting a suspicious glance at the city beneath him, "I see how it is," he said, "that is the pit where the foxes are snared." [46] John XXIII. entered Constance on horseback, the 28th of October, attended by nine cardinals, several archbishops, bishops, and other prelates, and a numerous retinue of courtiers. He was received at the gates with all possible magnificence. "The body of the clergy," says Lenfant, "went to meet him in solemn procession, bearing the relics of saints. All the orders of the city assembled also to do him honor, and he was conducted to the episcopal palace by an incredible multitude of people. Four of the chief magistrates rode by his side, supporting a canopy of cloth of gold, and the Count Radolph de Montfort and the Count Berthold des Ursins held the bridle of his horse. The Sacrament was carried before him upon a white pad, with a little bell about its neck; after the Sacrament a great yellow and red hat was carried, with an angel of gold at the button of the ribbon. All the cardinals followed in cloaks and red hats. Reichenthal, who has described this ceremony, says there was a great dispute among the Pope's officers as to who should have his horse, but Henry of Ulm put an end to it by saying that the horse belonged to him, as he was burgomaster of the town, and so he caused him to be put into his stables. The city made the presents to the Pope that are usual on these occasions; it gave a silver gilt cup weighing five marks, four small casks of Italian wine, four great vessels of wine of Alsace, eight great vessels of the country wine, and forty measures of oats, all which presents were given with great ceremony. Henry of Ulm carried the cup on horseback, accompanied by six councilors, who were also on horseback. When the Pope saw them before his palace, he sent an auditor to know what was coming. Being informed that it was presents from the city to the Pope, the auditor introduced them, and presented the cup to the Pope in the name of the city. The Pope, on his part, ordered a robe of black silk to be presented to the consul." [47] While the Pope was approaching Constance on the one side, John Huss was traveling towards it on the other. He did not conceal from himself the danger he ran in appearing before such a tribunal. His judges were parties in the cause. What hope could Huss entertain that they would try him dispassionately by the Scriptures to which he had appealed? Where would they be if they allowed such an authority to speak? But he must appear; Sigismund had written to King Wenceslaus to send him thither; and, conscious of his innocence and the justice of his cause, thither he went.

In prospect of the dangers before him, he obtained, before setting out, a safe conduct from his own sovereign; also a certificate of his orthodoxy from Nicholas, Bishop of Nazareth, Inquisitor of the Faith in Bohemia; and a document drawn up by a notary, and duly signed by witnesses, setting forth that he had offered to purge himself of heresy before a provincial Synod of Prague, but had been refused audience. He afterwards caused writings to be affixed to the doors of all the churches and all the palaces of Prague, notifying his departure, and inviting all persons to come to Constance who were prepared to testify either to his innocence or his guilt. To the door of the royal palace even did he affix such notification, addressed "to the King, to the Queen, and to the whole Court." He made

papers of this sort be put up at every place on his road to Constance. In the imperial city of Nuremberg he gave public notice that he was going to the Council to give an account of his faith, and invited all who had anything to lay to his charge to meet him there. He started, not from Prague, but from Carlowitz. Before setting out he took farewell of his friends as of those he never again should see. He expected to find more enemies at the Council than Jesus Christ had at Jerusalem; but he was resolved to endure the last degree of punishment rather than betray the Gospel by any cowardice. The presentiments with which he began his journey attended him all the way. He felt it to be a pilgrimage to the stake. [48] At every village and town on his route he was met with fresh tokens of the power that attached to his name, and the interest his cause had awakened. The inhabitants turned out to welcome him. Several of the country cures were especially friendly; it was their battle which he was fighting as well as his own, and heartily did they wish him success. At Nuremberg, and other towns through which he passed, the magistrates formed a guard of honor, and escorted him through streets thronged with spectators eager to catch a glimpse of the man who had begun a movement which was stirring Christendom. [49] His journey was a triumphal procession in a sort. He was enlisting, at every step, new adherents, and gaining accessions of moral force to his cause. He arrived in Constance on the 3rd of November, and took up his abode at the house of a poor widow, whom he likened to her of Sarepta. [50] The emperor did not reach Constance until Christmas Eve. His arrival added a new attraction to the melodramatic performance proceeding at the little town. The Pope signalized the event by singing a Pontifical mass, the emperor assisting, attired in dalmatic in his character as deacon, and reading the Gospel, "There came an edict from Caesar Augustus that all the world," etc. The ceremony was ended by John XXIII. presenting a sword to Sigismund, with an exhortation to the man into whose hand he put it to make vigorous use of it against the enemies of the Church. The Pope, doubtless, had John Huss mainly in his eye. Little did he dream that it was upon himself that its first stroke was destined to descend. [51] The Emperor Sigismund, whose presence gave a new splendor to the fetes and a new dignity to the Council, was forty seven years of age. He was noble in person, tall in stature, graceful in manners, and insinuating in address. He had a long beard, and flaxen hair, which fell in a profusion of curls upon his shoulders. His narrow understanding had been improved by study, and he was accomplished beyond his age. He spoke with facility several languages, and was a patron of men of letters. Having one day conferred nobility upon a scholar, who was desirous of being ranked among nobles rather than among doctors, Sigismund laughed at him, and said that "he could make a thousand gentlemen in a day, but that he could not make a scholar in a thousand years." [52] The reverses of his maturer years had sobered the impetuous and fiery spirit of his youth. He committed the error common to almost all the princes of his age, in believing that in order to reign it was necessary to dissemble, and that craft was an indispensable part of policy. He was a sincere devotee; but just in proportion as he believed in the Church, was he scandalized and grieved at the vices of the clergy. It cost him infinite pains to get this Council convoked, but all had been willingly undertaken in the hope that assembled Christendom would be able to heal the schism, and put an end to the scandals growing out of it.

The name of Sigismund has come down to posterity with an eternal blot upon it. How such darkness came to encompass a name which, but for one fatal act, might have been

fair, if not illustrious, we shall presently show. Meanwhile let us rapidly sketch the opening proceedings of the Council, which were but preparatory to the great tragedy in which it was destined to culminate.

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Chapter 5

DEPOSITION OF THE RIVAL POPES

The first act of the Council, after settling how the votes were to be taken namely, by nations and not by persons, was to enroll the name of St. Bridget among the saints. This good lady, whose piety had been abundantly proved by her pilgrimages and the many miracles ascribed to her, was of the blood royal of Sweden, and the foundress of the order of St. Savior, so called because Christ himself, she affirmed, had dictated the rules to her. She was canonized first of all by Boniface IX. (1391); but this was during the schism, and the validity of the act might be held doubtful. To place St. Bridget's title beyond question, she was, at the request of the Swedes, canonized a second time by John XXIII. But unhappily, John himself being afterwards deposed, Bridget's saintship became again dubious; and so she was canonized a third time by Martin V. (1419), to prevent her being overtaken by a similar calamity with that of her patron, and expelled from the ranks of the heavenly deities as John was from the list of the Pontifical ones. [53] While the Pope was assigning to others their place in heaven, his own place on earth had become suddenly insecure. Proceedings were commenced in the Council which were meant to pave the way for John's dethronement. In the fourth and fifth sessions it was solemnly decreed that a General Council is superior to the Pope. "A Synod congregata in the Holy Ghost," so ran the decree, "making a General Council, representing the whole Catholic Church here militant, hath power of Christ immediately, to the which power every person, of what state or dignity soever he be, yea, being the Pope himself, ought to be obedient in all such things as concern the general reformation of the Church, as well in the Head as in the members." [54] The Council in this decree asserted its absolute and supreme authority, and affirmed the subjection of the Pope in matters of faith as well as manners to its judgment. [55] In the eighth session (May 4th, 1415), John Wicliffe was summoned from his rest, cited before the Council, and made answerable to it for his mortal writings. Forty five propositions, previously culled from his publications, were condemned, and this sentence was fittingly followed by a decree consigning their author to the flames. Wicliffe himself being beyond their reach, his bones, pursuant to this sentence, were afterwards dug up and burned. [56] The next labor of the Council was to take the cup from the laity, and to decree that Communion should be only in one kind. This prohibition was issued under the penalty of excommunication. [57] These matters dispatched, or rather while they were in course of being so, the Council entered upon the weightier affair of Pope John XXIII.

Universally odious, the Pope's deposition had been resolved on beforehand by the emperor and the great majority of the members. At a secret sitting a terrible indictment was tabled against him. "It contained," says his secretary, Thierry de Niem, "all the mortal sins, and a multitude of others not fit to be named." "More than forty three most grievous and heinous crimes," says Fox, "were objected and proved against him: as that he had hired Marcillus Permensis, a physician, to poison Alexander V., his predecessor. Further, that he

was a heretic, a simoniac, a liar, a hypocrite, a murderer, an enchanter, a dice player, and an adulterer; and finally, what crime was it that he was not infected with?" [58] When the Pontiff heard of these accusations he was overwhelmed with affright, and talked of resigning; but recovering from his panic, he again grasped firmly the tiara which he had been on the point of letting go, and began a struggle for it with the emperor and the Council. Making himself acquainted with everything by his spies, he held midnight meetings with his friends, bribed the cardinals, and labored to sow division among the nations composing the Council. But all was in vain. His opponents held firmly to their purpose. The indictment against John they dared not make public, lest the Pontificate should be everlastingly disgraced, and occasion given for a triumph to the party of Wicliffe and Huss; but the conscience of the miserable man seconded the efforts of his prosecutors. The Pope promised to abdicate; but repenting immediately of his promise, he quitted the city by stealth and fled to Schaffhausen. [59] We have seen the pomp with which John XXIII. entered Constance. In striking contrast to the ostentatious display of his arrival, was the mean disguise in which he sought to conceal his departure. The plan of his escape had been arranged beforehand between himself and his good friend and staunch protector, the Duke of Austria. The duke, on a certain day, was to give a tournament. The spectacle was to come off late in the afternoon; and while the whole city should be engrossed with the fete, the lords tilting in the arena and the citizens gazing at the mimic war, and oblivious of all else, the Pope would take leave of Constance and of the Council. [60] It was the 20th of March, the eve of St. Benedict, the day fixed upon for the duke's entertainment, and now the tournament was proceeding. The city was empty, for the inhabitants had poured out to see the tilting and reward the victors with their acclamations. The dusk of evening was already beginning to veil the lake, the plain, and the mountains of the Tyrol in the distance, when John XXIII., disguising himself as a groom or postillion, and mounted on a sorry nag, rode through the crowd and passed on to the south. A coarse grey loose coat was flung over his shoulders, and at his saddlebow hung a crossbow; no one suspected that this homely figure, so poorly mounted, was other than some peasant of the mountains, who had been to market with his produce, and was now on his way back. The duke of Austria was at the moment fighting in the lists, when a domestic approached him, and whispered into his ear what had occurred. The duke went on with the tournament as if nothing had happened, and the fugitive held on his way till he had reached Schaffhausen, where, as the town belonged to the duke, the Pope deemed himself in safety. Thither he was soon followed by the duke himself. [61] When the Pope's flight became known, all was in commotion at Constance. The Council was at an end, so every one thought; the flight of the Pope would be followed by the departure of the princes and the emperor: the merchants shut their shops and packed up their wares, only too happy if they could escape pillage from the lawless mob into whose hands, as they believed, the town had now been thrown. After the first moments of consternation, however, the excitement calmed down. The emperor mounted his horse and rode round the city, declaring openly that he would protect the Council, and maintain order and quiet; and thus things in Constance returned to their usual channel. Still the Pope's flight was an untoward event. It threatened to disconcert all the plans of the emperor for healing the schism and restoring peace to Christendom. Sigismund saw the labors of years on the point of being swept away. He hastily assembled the princes and

deputies, and with no little indignation declared it to be his purpose to reduce the Duke of Austria by force of arms, and bring back the fugitive. When the Pope learned that a storm was gathering, and would follow him across the Tyrol, he wrote in conciliatory terms to the emperor, excusing his flight by saying that he had gone to Schaffhausen to enjoy its sweeter air, that of Constance not agreeing with him; moreover, in this quiet retreat, and at liberty, he would be able to show the world how freely he acted in fulfilling his promise of renouncing the Pontificate.

John, however, was in no haste, even in the pure air and full freedom of Schaffhausen, to lay down the tiara. He procrastinated and maneuvered; he went farther away every few days, in quest, as suggested, of still sweeter air, though his enemies hinted that the Pope's ailment was not a vitiated

atmosphere, but a bad conscience. His thought was that his flight would be the signal for the Council to break up, and that he would thus checkmate Sigismund, and avoid the humiliation of deposition. [62] But the emperor was not to be balked. He put his troops in motion against the Duke of Austria; and the Council, seconding Sigismund with its spiritual weapons, wrested the infallibility from the Pope, and took that formidable engine into its own hands. "This decision of the Council," said the celebrated Gallican divine, Gerson, in a sermon which he preached before the assembly, "ought to be engraved in the most eminent places and in all the churches of the world, as a fundamental law to crush the monster of ambition, and to stop the mouths of all flatterers who, by virtue of certain glosses, say, bluntly and without any regard to the eternal law of the Gospel, that the Pope is not subject to a General Council, and cannot be judged by such." [63] The way being thus prepared, the Council now proceeded to the trial of the Pope. Public criers at the door of the church summoned John XXIII. to appear and answer to the charges to be brought against him. The criers expended their breath in vain; John was on the other side of the Tyrol; and even had he been within ear shot, he was not disposed to obey their citation. Three and twenty commissioners were then nominated for the examination of the witnesses. The indictment contained seventy accusations, but only fifty were read in public Council; the rest were withheld from a regard to the honor of the Pontificate: a superfluous care, one would think, after what had already been permitted to see the light. Thirty seven witnesses were examined, and one of the points to which they bore testimony, but which the Council left under a veil, was the poisoning by John of his predecessor, Alexander V. The charges were held to be proven, and in the twelfth session (May 29th, 1415) the Council passed sentence, stripping John XXIII. of the Pontificate, and releasing all Christians from their oath of obedience to him. [64] When the blow fell, Pope John was as abject as he had before been arrogant. He acknowledged the justice of his sentence, bewailed the day he had mounted to the Popedom, and wrote cringingly to the emperor, if haply his miserable life might be spared [65] (which no one, by the way, thought of taking from him). The case of the other two Popes was simpler, and more easily disposed of. They had already been condemned by the Council of Pisa, which had put forth an earlier assertion than the Council of Constance of the supremacy of a Council, and its right to deal with heretical and simoniacal Popes. Angelus Corario, Gregory XII., voluntarily sent in his resignation; and Peter de Lune, Benedict XIII., was deposed; and Otta de Colonna, being unanimously elected by the cardinals, ruled the Church under the title of Martin V.

Before turning to the more tragic page of the history of the Council, we have to remark that it seems almost as if the Fathers at Constance were intent on erecting beforehand a monument to the innocence of John Huss, and to their own guilt in the terrible fate to which they were about to consign him. The crimes for which they condemned Balthazar Cossa, John XXIII., were the same, only more atrocious and fouler, as those of which Huss accused the priesthood, and for which he demanded a reformation.

The condemnation of Pope John was, therefore, whether the Council confessed it or not, the vindication of Huss. "When all the members of the Council shall be scattered in the world like storks," said Huss, in a letter which he wrote to a friend at this time, "they will know when winter cometh what they did in summer. Consider, I pray you, that they have judged their head, the Pope, worthy of death by reason of his horrible crimes. Answer to this, you teachers who preach that the Pope is a god upon earth; that he may sell and waste in what manner he pleaseth the holy things, as the lawyers say; that he is the head of the entire holy Church, and governeth it well; that he is the heart of the Church, and quickeneth it spiritually; that he is the well spring from whence floweth all virtue and goodness; that he is the sun of the Church, and a very safe refuge to which every Christian ought to fly. Yet, behold now that head, as it were, severed by the sword; this terrestrial god enchained; his sins laid bare; this never failing source dried up; this divine sun dimmed; this heart plucked out, and branded with reprobation, that no one should seek an asylum in it." [66]

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Chapter 6

IMPRISONMENT AND EXAMINATION OF HUSS

WHEN John Huss set out for the Council, he carried with him, as we have already said, several important documents. [67] But the most important of all Huss's credentials was a safe conduct from the Emperor Sigismund. Without this, he would hardly have undertaken the journey. We quote it in full, seeing it has become one of the great documents of history. It was addressed "to all ecclesiastical and secular princes, etc., and to all our subjects." "We recommend to you with a full affection, to all in general and to each in particular, the honorable Master John Huss, Bachelor in Divinity, and Master of Arts, the bearer of these presents, journeying from Bohemia to the Council of Constance, whom we have taken under our protection and safeguard, and under that of the Empire, enjoining you to receive him and treat him kindly, furnishing him with all that shall be necessary to speed and assure his journey, as well by water as by land, without taking anything from him or his at coming in or going out, for any sort of duties whatsoever; and calling on you to allow him to PASS, SOJOURN, STOP, AND RETURN FREELY AND SECURELY, providing him even, if necessary, with good passports, for the honor and respect of the Imperial Majesty. Given at Spiers this 18 th day of October of the year 1414, the third of our reign in Hungary, and the fifth of that of the Romans." [68] In the above document, the emperor pledges his honor and the power of the Empire for the safety of Huss. He was to go and return, and no man dare molest him. No promise could be more sacred, no protection apparently more complete. How that pledge was redeemed we shall see by and by.

Huss's trust, however, was in One more powerful than the kings of earth. "I confide

altogether," wrote he to one of his friends, "in the all powerful God, in my Savior; he will accord me his Holy Spirit to fortify me in his truth, so that I may face with courage temptations, prison, and if necessary a cruel death." [69]

Full liberty was accorded him during the first days of his stay at Constance. He made his arrival be intimated to the Pope the day after by two Bohemian noblemen who accompanied him, adding that he carried a safe conduct from the emperor. The Pope received them courteously, and expressed his determination to protect Huss. [70] The Pope's own position was too precarious, however, to make his promise of any great value. Paletz and Causis, who, of all the ecclesiastics of Prague, were the bitterest enemies of Huss, had preceded him to Constance, and were working day and night among the members of the Council to inflame them against him, and secure his condemnation. Their machinations were not without result. On the twenty sixth day after his arrival Huss was arrested, in flagrant violation of the imperial safe conduct, and carried before the Pope and the cardinals. [71] After a conversation of some hours, he was told that he must remain a prisoner, and was entrusted to the clerk of the Cathedral of Constance. He remained a week at the house of this official under a strong guard. Thence he was conducted to the prison of the monastery of the Dominicans on the banks of the Rhine. The sewage of the monastery flowed close to the place where he was confined, and the damp and pestilential air of his prison brought on a raging fever, which had well nigh terminated his life. [72] His enemies feared that after all he would escape them, and the Pope sent his own physicians to him to take care of his health. [73] When the tidings of his imprisonment reached Huss's native country, they kindled a flame in Bohemia. Burning words bespoke the indignation that the nation felt at the treachery and cruelty with which their great countryman had been treated. The puissant barons united in a remonstrance to the Emperor Sigismund, reminding him of his safe conduct, and demanding that he should vindicate his own honor, and redress the injustice done to Huss, by ordering his instant liberation. The first impulse of Sigismund was to open Huss's prison, but the casuists of the Council found means to keep it shut. The emperor was told that he had no right to grant a safe conduct in the circumstances without the consent of the Council; that the greater good of the Church must over rule his promise; that the Council by its supreme authority could release him from his obligation, and that no formality of this sort could be suffered to obstruct the course of justice against a heretic. [74] The promptings of honor and humanity were stifled in the emperor's breast by these reasonings. In the voice of the assembled Church he heard the voice of God, and delivered up John Huss to the will of his enemies.

The Council afterwards put its reasonings into a decree, to the effect that no faith is to be kept with heretics to the prejudice of the Church. [75] Being now completely in their power, the enemies of Huss pushed on the process against him. They examined his writings, they founded a series of criminatory articles upon them, and proceeding to his prison, where they found him still suffering severely from fever, they read them to him. He craved of them the favor of an advocate to assist him in framing his defense, enfeebled as he was in body and mind by the foul air of his prison, and the fever with which he had been smitten. This request was refused, although the indulgence asked was one commonly accorded to even the greatest criminals. At this stage the proceedings against him were stopped for a little while by an unexpected event, which turned the thoughts of the

Council in another direction. It was now that Pope John escaped, as we have already related. In the interval, the keepers of his monastic prison having fled along with their master, the Pope, Huss was removed to the Castle of Gottlieben, on the other side of the Rhine, where he was shut up, heavily loaded with chains. [76]

While the proceedings against Huss stood still, those against the Pope went forward. The flight of John had brought his affairs to a crisis, and the Council, without more delay, deposed him from the Pontificate, as narrated above. To the delegates whom the Council sent to intimate to him his sentence, he delivered up the Pontifical seal and the fisherman's ring. Along with these insignia they took possession of his person, brought him back to Constance, and threw him into the prison of Gottlieben, [77] the same stronghold in which Huss was confined. How solemn and instructive! The Reformer and the man who had arrested him are now the inmates of the same prison, yet what a gulf divides the Pontiff from the martyr! The chains of the one are the monuments of his infamy. The bonds of the other are the badges of his virtue. They invest their wearer with a luster which is lacking to the diadem of Sigismund.

The Council was only the more intent on condemning Huss, that it had already condemned Pope John. It instinctively felt that the deposition of the Pontiff was a virtual justification of the Reformer, and that the world would so construe it. It was minded to avenge itself on the man who had compelled it to lay open its sores to the world. It felt, moreover, no little pleasure in the exercise of its newly acquired prerogative of infallibility: a Pope had fallen beneath its stroke, why should a simple priest defy its authority?

The Council, however, delayed bringing John Huss to his trial. His two great opponents, Paletz and Causis (whose enmity was whetted, doubtless, by the discomfitures they had sustained from Huss in Prague) feared the effect of his eloquence upon the members, and took care that he should not appear till they had prepared the Council for his condemnation. At last, on the 5th of June, 1415, he was put on his trial. [78] His books were produced, and he was asked if he acknowledged being the writer of them.

This he readily did. The articles of crimination were next read. Some of these were fair statements of Huss's opinions; others were exaggerations or perversions, and others again were wholly false, imputing to him opinions which he did not hold, and which he had never taught. Huss naturally wished to reply, pointing out what was false, what was perverted, and what was true in the indictment preferred against him, assigning the grounds and adducing the proofs in support of those sentiments which he really held, and which he had taught. He had not uttered more than a few words when there arose in the hall a clamor so loud as completely to drown his voice. Huss stood motionless; he cast his eyes around on the excited assembly, surprise and pity rather than anger visible on his face. Waiting till the tumult had subsided, he again attempted to proceed with his defense. He had not gone far till he had occasion to appeal to the Scriptures; the storm was that moment renewed, and with greater violence than before. Some of the Fathers shouted out accusations, others broke into peals of derisive laughter. Again Huss was silent. "He is dumb," said his enemies, who forgot that they had come there as his judges. "I am silent," said Huss, "because I am unable to make myself audible midst so great a noise." "All," said Luther, referring in his characteristic style to this scene, "all worked themselves into rage like wild boars; the bristles of their back stood on end, they bent their brows and gnashed their teeth against John Huss." [79]

The minds of the Fathers were too perturbed to be able to agree on the course to be followed. It was found impossible to restore order, and after a short sitting the assembly broke up.

Some Bohemian noblemen, among whom was Baron de Chlum, the steady and most affectionate friend of the Reformer, had been witnesses of the tumult. They took care to inform Sigismund of what had passed, and prayed him to be present at the next sitting, in the hope that, though the Council did not respect itself, it would yet respect the emperor. After a day's interval the Council again assembled. The morning of that day, the 7th June, was a memorable one. An all but total eclipse of the sun astonished and terrified the venerable Fathers and the inhabitants of Constance. The darkness was great. The city, the lake, and the surrounding plains were buried in the shadow of portentous night. This phenomenon was remembered and spoken of long after in Europe. Till the inauspicious darkness had passed the Fathers did not dare to meet. Towards noon the light returned, and the Council assembled in the hall of the Franciscans, the emperor taking his seat in it. John Huss was led in by a numerous body of armed men. [80] Sigismund and Huss were now face to face. There sat the emperor, his princes, lords, and suite crowding round him; there, loaded with chains, stood the man for whose safety he had put in pledge his honor as a prince and his power as emperor. The irons that Huss wore were a strange commentary, truly, on the imperial safe conduct. Is it thus, well might the prisoner have said, is it thus that princes on whom the oil of unction has been poured, and Councils which the Holy Ghost inspires, keep faith? But Sigismund, though he could not be insensible to the silent reproach which the chains of Huss cast upon him, consoled himself with his secret resolve to save the Reformer from the last extremity. He had permitted Huss to be deprived of liberty, but he would not permit him to be deprived of life. But there were two elements he had not taken into account in forming this resolution. The first was the unyielding firmness of the Reformer, and the second was the ghostly awe in which he himself stood of the Council; and so, despite his better intentions, he suffered himself to be dragged along on the road of perfidy and dishonor, which he had meanly entered, till he came to its tragic end, and the imperial safe conduct and the martyr's stake had taken their place, side by side, ineffaceably, on history's eternal page.

Causis again read the accusation, and a somewhat desultory debate ensued between Huss and several doctors of the Council, especially the celebrated Peter d'Ailly, Cardinal of Cambray. The line of accusation and defense has been sketched with tolerable fullness by all who have written on the Council. After comparing these statements it appears to us that Huss differed from the Church of Rome not so much on dogmas as on great points of jurisdiction and policy. These, while they directly attacked certain of the principles of the Papacy, tended indirectly to the subversion of the whole system; in short, to a far greater revolution than Huss perceived, or perhaps intended. He appears to have believed in transubstantiation; [81] he declared so before the Council, although in stating his views he betrays ever and anon a revulsion from the grosser form of the dogma. He admitted the Divine institution and office of the Pope and members of the hierarchy, but he made the efficacy of their official acts dependent on their spiritual character. Even to the last he did not abandon the communion of the Roman Church. Still it cannot be doubted that John Huss was essentially a Protestant and a Reformer. He held that the supreme rule of faith and practice was the Holy Scriptures; that Christ was the Rock on which our Lord said he

would build his Church; that "the assembly of the Predestinate is the Holy Church, which has neither spot nor wrinkle, but is holy and undefiled; the which Jesus Christ, calleth his own;" that the Church needed no one visible head on earth, that it had none such in the days of the apostles; that nevertheless it was then well governed, and might be so still although it should lose its earthly head; and that the Church was not confined to the clergy, but included all the faithful. He maintained the principle of liberty of conscience so far as that heresy ought not to be punished by the magistrate till the heretic had been convicted out of Holy Scripture. He appears to have laid no weight on excommunications and indulgences, unless in cases in which manifestly the judgment of God went along with the sentence of the priest. Like Wicliffe he held that tithes were simply alms, and that of the vast temporal revenues of the clergy that portion only which was needful for their subsistence was rightfully theirs, and that the rest belonged to the poor, or might be otherwise distributed by the civil authorities. [82] His theological creed was only in course of formation. That it would have taken more definite form, that the great doctrines of the Reformation would have come out in full light to his gaze, diligent student as he was of the Bible had his career been prolonged, we cannot doubt. The formula of "justification by faith alone", the foundation of the teaching of Martin Luther in after days, we do not find in any of the defenses or letters of Huss; but if he did not know the terms he had learned the doctrine, for when he comes to die, turning away from Church, from saint, from all human intervention, he casts himself simply, upon the infinite mercy and love of the Savior. "I submit to the correction of our Divine Master, and I put my trust in his infinite mercy." [83] "I commend you," says he, writing to the people of Prague, "to the merciful Lord Jesus Christ, our true God, and the Son of the immaculate Virgin Mary, who hath redeemed us by his most bitter death, without all our merits, from eternal pains, from the thralldom of the devil, and from sin." [84]

The members of the Council instinctively felt that Huss was not one of them; that although claiming to belong to the Church which they constituted, he had in fact abandoned it, and renounced its authority. The two leading principles which he had embraced were subversive of their whole jurisdiction in both its branches, spiritual and temporal. The first and great authority with him was Holy Scripture; this struck at the foundation of the spiritual power of the hierarchy; and as regards their temporal power he undermined it by his doctrine touching ecclesiastical revenues and possessions.

From these two positions neither sophistry nor threats could make him swerve. In the judgment of the Council he was in rebellion. He had transferred his allegiance from the Church to God speaking in his Word. This was his great crime. It mattered little in the eyes of the assembled Fathers that he still shared in some of their common beliefs; he had broken the great bond of submission; he had become the worst of all heretics; he had rent from his conscience the shackles of the infallibility; and he must needs, in process of time, become a more avowed and dangerous heretic than he was at that moment, and accordingly the mind of the Council was made up: John Huss must undergo the doom of the heretic.

Already enfeebled by illness, and by his long imprisonment, for "he was shut up in a tower, with fetters on his legs, that he could scarce walk in the day time, and at night he was fastened up to a rack against the wall hard by his bed," [85] he was exhausted and worn out by the length of the sitting, and the attention demanded to rebut the attacks and

reasonings of his accusers. At length the Council rose, and Huss was led out by his armed escort, and conducted back to prison. His trusty friend, John de Chlum, followed him, and embracing him, bade him be of good cheer. "Oh, what a consolation to me, in the midst of my trials," said Huss in one of his letters, "to see that excellent nobleman, John de Chlum, stretch forth the hand to me, miserable heretic, languishing in chains, and already condemned by every one." [86]

In the interval between Huss's second appearance before the Council, and the third and last citation, the emperor made an ineffectual attempt to induce the Reformer to retract and abjure. Sigismund was earnestly desirous of saving his life, no doubt out of regard for Huss, but doubtless also from a regard to his own honor, deeply at stake in the issue. The Council drew up a form of abjuration and submission. This was communicated to Huss in prison, and the mediation of mutual friends was employed to prevail with him to sign the paper. The Reformer declared himself ready to abjure those errors which had been falsely imputed to him, but as regarded those conclusions which had been faithfully deduced from his writings, and which he had taught, these, by the grace of God, he never would abandon. "He would rather," he said, "be cast into the sea with a mill stone about his neck, than offend those little ones to whom he had preached the Gospel, by abjuring it." [87] At last the matter was brought very much to this point: would he submit himself implicitly to the Council? The snare was cunningly set, but Huss had wisdom to see and avoid it. "If the Council should even tell you," said a doctor, whose name has not been preserved, "that you have but one eye, you would be obliged to agree with the Council." "But," said Huss, "as long as God keeps me in my senses, I would not say such a thing, even though the whole world should require it, because I could not say it without wounding my conscience." [88] What an obstinate, self opinionated, arrogant man! said the Fathers. Even the emperor was irritated at what he regarded as stubbornness, and giving way to a burst of passion, declared that such unreasonable obduracy was worthy of death. [89] This was the great crisis of the Reformer's career. It was as if the Fathers had said, "We shall say nothing of heresy; we specify no errors, only submit yourself implicitly to our authority as an infallible Council. Burn this grain of incense on the altar in testimony of our corporate divinity. That is asking no great matter surely." This was the fiery temptation with which Huss was now tried. How many would have yielded; how many in similar circumstances have yielded, and been lost! Had Huss bowed his head before the infallibility, he never could have lifted it up again before his own conscience, before his countrymen, before his Savior. Struck with spiritual paralysis, his strength would have departed from him. He would have escaped the stake, the agony of which is but for a moment, but he would have missed the crown, the glory of which is eternal. From that moment Huss had peace, deeper and more ecstatic than he had ever before experienced. "I write this letter," says he to a friend, "in prison, and with my fettered hand, expecting my sentence of death tomorrow ... When, with the assistance of Jesus Christ, we shall meet again in the delicious peace of the future life, you will learn how merciful God has shown himself towards me, how effectually he has supported me in the midst of my temptations and trials." [90] The irritation of the debate into which the Council had dragged him was forgotten, and he calmly began to prepare for death, not disquieted by the terrible form in which he foresaw it would come. The martyrs of former ages had passed by this path to their glory, and by the help of Him who is mighty he should be able

to travel by the same road to his. He would look the fire in the face, and overcome the vehemency of its flame by the yet greater vehemency of his love. He already tasted the joys that awaited him within those gates that should open to receive him as soon as the fire should loose

him from the stake, and set free his spirit to begin its flight on high. Nay, in his prison he was cheered with a prophetic glimpse of the dawn of those better days that awaited the Church of God on earth, and which his own blood would largely contribute to hasten. Once as he lay asleep he thought that he was again in his beloved Chapel of Bethlehem. Envious priests were there trying to efface the figures of Jesus Christ which he had got painted upon its walls. He was filled with sorrow. But next day there came painters who restored the partially obliterated portraits, so that they were more brilliant than before.

"Now," said these artists, 'let the bishops and the priests come forth; let them efface these if they can;' and the crowd was filled with joy, and I also." [\[91\]](#)

"Occupy your thoughts with your defense, rather than with visions," said John de Chlum, to whom he had told his dream "And yet," replied Huss, "I firmly hope that this life of Christ, which I engraved on men's hearts at Bethlehem when I preached his Word, will not be effaced; and that after I have ceased to live it will be still better shown forth, by mightier preachers, to the great satisfaction of the people, and to my own most sincere joy, when I shall be again permitted to announce his Gospel; that is, when I shall rise from the dead." [\[92\]](#)

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Chapter 7

CONDEMNATION AND MARTYRDOM OF HUSS

THIRTY days elapsed. Huss had languished in prison, contending with fetters, fetid air, and sickness, for about two months. It was now the 6th of July, 1415: the anniversary of his birth. This day was to see the wishes of his enemies crowned, and his own sorrows terminated. The hall of the Council was filled with a brilliant assemblage. There sat the emperor; there were the princes, the deputies of the sovereigns, the patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, and priests; and there too was a vast concourse which the spectacle that day was to witness had brought together. It was meet that a stage should be erected worthy of the act to be done upon it, that when the first champion in the great struggle that was just opening should yield up his life, all Christendom might see and bear witness to the fact.

The Archbishop of Riga came to the prison to bring Huss to the Council. Mass was being celebrated as they arrived at the church door, and Huss was made to stay outside till it was finished, lest the mysteries should be profaned by the presence of a man who was not only a heretic, but a leader of heretics. [\[93\]](#) Being led in, he was bidden take his seat on a raised platform, where he might be conspicuously in the eyes of the whole assembly. On sitting down, he was seen to engage in earnest prayer, but the words were not heard. Near him rose a pile of clerical vestments, in readiness for the ceremonies that were to precede the final tragedy. The sermon, usual on such occasions, was preached by the Bishop of Lodi. He chose as his text the words, "That the body of sin might be destroyed." He enlarged on the schism as the source of the heresies, murders, sacrileges, robberies, and wars which had for so long a period desolated the Church, and drew, says Lenfant, "such a horrible

picture of the schism, that one would think at first he was exhorting the emperor to burn the two anti Popes, and not John Huss. Yet the bishop concluded in these terms, addressed to Sigismund: 'Destroy heresies and errors, but chiefly' (pointing to John Huss) 'that OBSTINATE HERETIC.'" [\[94\]](#)

The sermon ended, the accusations against Huss were again read, as also the depositions of the witnesses; and then Huss gave his final refusal to abjure. This he accompanied with a brief recapitulation of his proceedings since the commencement of this matter, ending by saying that he had come to this Council of his own free will, "confiding in the safe conduct of the emperor here present." As he uttered these last words, he looked full at Sigismund, on whose brow the crimson of a deep blush was seen by the whole assembly, whose gaze was at the instant turned towards his majesty. [\[95\]](#)

Sentence of condemnation as a heretic was now passed on Huss. There followed the ceremony of degradation: an ordeal that brought no blush upon the brow of the martyr. One after another the priestly vestments, brought thither for that end, were produced and put upon him, and now the prisoner stood full in the gaze of the Council, sacerdotally appareled. They next put into his hand the chalice, as if he were about to celebrate mass. They asked him if now he were willing to abjure. "With what face, then," replied he, "should I behold the heavens? How should I look on those multitudes of men to whom I have preached the pure Gospel? No; I esteem their salvation more than this poor body, now appointed unto death." [\[96\]](#)

Then they took from him the chalice, saying, "O accursed Judas, who, having abandoned the counsels of peace, have taken part in that of the Jews, we take from you this cup filled with the blood of Jesus Christ." [\[97\]](#) "I hope, by the mercy of God," replied John Huss, "that this very day I shall drink of his cup in his own kingdom; and in one hundred years you shall answer before God and before me." [\[98\]](#)

The seven bishops selected for the purpose now came round him, and proceeded to remove the sacerdotal garments, the alb, the stole, and other pieces of attire, in which in mockery they had arrayed him. And as each bishop performed his office, he bestowed his curse upon the martyr. Nothing now remained but to erase the marks of the tonsure. On this there arose a great dispute among the prelates whether they should use a razor or scissors. "See," said Huss, turning to the emperor, "they cannot agree among themselves how to insult me." They resolved to use the scissors, which were instantly brought, and his hair was cut cross wise to obliterate the mark of the crown. [\[99\]](#) According to the canon law, the priest so dealt with becomes again a layman, and although the operation does not remove the character, which is indelible, it yet renders him for ever incapable of exercising the functions of the priesthood.

There remained one other mark of ignominy. They put on his head a cap or pyramidal shaped miter of paper, on which were painted frightful figures of demons, with the word Arch Heretic conspicuous in front. "Most joyfully," said Huss, "will I wear this crown of shame for thy sake, O Jesus, who for me didst wear a crown of thorns." [\[100\]](#) When thus attired, the prelates said, "Now, we devote thy soul to the devil." "And I," said John Huss, lifting up his eyes toward heaven, "do commit my spirit into thy hands, O Lord Jesus, for thou hast redeemed me."

Turning to the emperor, the bishops said, "This man John Huss, who has no more any office or part in the Church of God, we leave with thee, delivering him up to the civil

judgment and power." [101] Then the emperor, addressing Louis, Duke of Bavaria (who, as Vicar of the Empire, was standing before him in his robes, holding in his hand the golden apple, and the cross) commanded him to deliver over Huss to those whose duty it was to see the sentence executed. The duke in his turn abandoned him to the chief magistrate of Constance, and the magistrate finally gave him into the hands of his officers or city sergeants.

The procession was now formed. The martyr walked between four town sergeants. The princes and deputies, escorted by eight hundred men at arms, followed. In the cavalcade, mounted on horseback, were many bishops and priests delicately clad in robes of silk and velvet. The population of Constance followed in mass to see the end.

As Huss passed the episcopal palace, his attention was attracted by a great fire which blazed and crackled before the gates. He was informed that on that pile his books were being consumed. He smiled at this futile attempt to extinguish the light which he foresaw would one day, and that not very distant, fill all Christendom.

The procession crossed the bridge and halted in a meadow, between the gardens of the city and the gate of Gottlieben. Here the execution was to take place. Being come to the spot where he was to die, the martyr knelt down, and began reciting the penitential psalms. He offered up short and fervent supplications, and oftentimes repeated, as the bystanders bore witness, the words, "Lord Jesus, into thy hands I commend my spirit." "We know not," said those who were near him, "what his life has been, but verily he prays after a devout and godly fashion." Turning his gaze upward in prayer, the paper crown fell off. One of the soldiers rushed forward and replaced it, saying that "he must be burned with the devils whom he had served." [102] Again the martyr smiled.

The stake was driven deep into the ground. Huss was tied to it with ropes. He stood facing the east. "This," cried some, "is not the right attitude for a heretic." He was again unbound, turned to the west, and made fast to the beam by a chain that passed round his neck. "It is thus," said he, "that you silence the goose, but a hundred years hence there will arise a swan whose singing you shall not be able to silence." [103]

He stood with his feet on the faggots, which were mixed with straw that they might the more readily ignite. Wood was piled all round him up to the chin. Before applying the torch, Louis of Bavaria and the Marshal of the Empire approached, and for the last time implored him to have a care for his life, and renounce his errors. "What errors," asked Huss, "shall I renounce? I know myself guilty of none. I call God to witness that all that I have written and preached has been with the view of rescuing souls from sin and perdition; and, therefore, most joyfully will I confirm with my blood that truth which I have written and preached." At the hearing of these words they departed from him, and John Huss had now done talking with men.

The fire was applied, the flames blazed upward. "John Huss," says Fox, "began to sing with a loud voice, 'Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.' And when he began to say the same the third time, the wind so blew the flame in his face that it choked him." Poggius, who was secretary to the Council, and Aeneas Sylvius, who afterwards became Pope, and whose narratives are not liable to the suspicion of being colored, bear even higher testimony to the heroic demeanor of both Huss and Jerome at their execution. "Both," says the latter historian, "bore themselves with constant mind when their last hour approached. They prepared for the fire as if they were going to a marriage feast. They

uttered no cry of pain. When the flames rose they began to sing hymns; and scarce could the vehemency of the fire stop their singing." [104]

Huss had given up the ghost. When the flames had subsided, it was found that only the lower parts of his body were consumed, and that the upper parts, held fast by the chain, hung suspended on the stake. The executioners kindled the fire anew, in order to consume what remained of the martyr. When the flames had a second time subsided, the heart was found still entire amid the ashes. A third time had the fire to be kindled. At last all was burned. The ashes were carefully collected, the very soil was dug up, and all was carted away and thrown into the Rhine; so anxious were his persecutors that not the slightest vestige of John Huss, not even a thread of his raiment, for that too was burned along with his body, should be left upon the earth. [105]

When the martyr bowed his head at the stake it was the infallible Council that was vanquished. It was with Huss that the victory remained; and what a victory! Heap together all the trophies of Alexander and of Caesar, what are they all when weighed in the balance against this one glorious achievement? From the stake of Huss, [106] what blessings have flowed, and are still flowing, to the world! From the moment he expired amid the flames, his name became a power, which will continue to speed on the great cause of truth and light, till the last shackle shall be rent from the intellect, and the conscience emancipated from every usurpation, shall be free to obey the authority of its rightful Lord. What a surprise to his and the Gospel's enemies! "Huss is dead," say they, as they retire from the meadow where they have just seen him expire. Huss is dead. The Rhine has received his ashes, and is bearing them on its rushing floods to the ocean, there to bury them for ever. No: Huss is alive. It is not death, but life, that he has found in the fire; his stake has given him not an entombment, but a resurrection. The winds as they blow over Constance are wafting the spirit of the confessor and martyr to all the countries of Christendom. The nations are being stirred; Bohemia is awakening; a hundred years, and Germany and all Christendom will shake off their slumber; and then will come the great reckoning which the martyr's prophetic spirit foretold: "In the course of a hundred years you will answer to God and to me."

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End Notes

[1] Comenius, *Persecut. Eccles. Bohem.*, cap. 8, 5; *Lugduni Batavorum*, 1647.

[2] Hoefler, *Hist. Hussite Movement*, vol. 2, p. 593. Lechler, *Johann von Wiclif*, vol. 2, p. 140.

[3] Nestor, *Annals*, pp. 20 to 23; *St. Petersburg edit.*, 1767; apud Count Valerian Krasinski, *Slavonia*, pp. 36, 37.

[4] Comenius, *Persecut. Eccles. Bohem.*, cap. 1, 1. *Centuriatores Madgeburgenses*, *Hist. Eccles.*, tom. 3, p. 8; *Basiliae*, 1624.

[5] See the Pontiff's letter in Comenius, *Persecut. Eccles. Bohem.*, pp. 16, 17. The following is an extract: "Saepe enim meditantés Scripturam Sacram, comperimus, omnipotenti Deo Idacuisse, et placere, cultum sacrum lingua arcana peragi, ne a quibus vis promiscue, praesertim rudioribus, intelligatur." . . . *Datae Romae, etc.*, Anno 1079.

[6] "Antichristus jam venit, et in Ecclesia sedet." (Comenius, *Persecut. Eccles. Bohem.*, p. 21.) Some say that the words were written on the portals of St. Peter's.

[7] Comenius, *Persecut. Eccles. Bohem.*, p. 21.

- [8] Comenius, *Persecut. Eccles. Bohem.*, p. 23.
- [9] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
- [10] Krasinski, *Religious History of the Slavonic Nations*, pp. 49, 50; Edin., 1849.
- [11] Lechler, *Johann von Wiclif*, vol. 2, p. 133.
- [12] Bonnechose, *Reformers before the Reformation*, vol. 1, p. 70; Edin., 1844.
- [13] *Chronicon Universitatis Pragensis apud Lechler, Johann von Wiclif*, vol 2, p. 136.
- [14] Comenius, *Persecut. Eccles. Bohem.*, p. 25.
- [15] Bethlehem Chapel, the House of Bread, because its founder meant that there the people should be fed upon the Bread of Life.
- [16] Hoefler, *Hist. of Hussite Movement*; apud Lechler, *Johann von Wiclif*, vol 2, p. 140, foot note.
- [17] "Huss copied out Wicliffe's *Triologus* for the Margrave Jost of Moravia, and others of noble rank, and translated it for the benefit of the laity, and even women, into the Czech language. A manuscript in Huss's handwriting, and embracing five philosophical tractares of Wicliffe, is to be found in the Royal Library at Stockholm, having been carried away with many others by the Swedes out of Bohemia at the end of the Thirty Years' War. This MS. was finished, as the concluding remark proves, in 1400, the same year in which Jerome of Prague returned from England." (Lechler, *Johann von Wiclif*, vol. 2, p. 113.)
- [18] Comenius, *Persecut. Eccles. Bohem.*, pp. 27, 28. Krasinski, *Slavonia*, p. 60.
- [19] Hoefler, *Hist. of Hussite Movement*; apud *Concilla Pragensia*.
- [20] Krasinski, *Slavonia*, pp. 56, 57. Bonnechose, *Reformers before the Reformation*, vol. 1, p. 78. Dupin, *Eccles. Hist.*, cent. 15, p. 119.
- [21] "Exusta igitur sunt (Aenea Sylvio teste) supra ducenta volumina, pulcherrime conscripta, bullis aureis tegumentisque pretiosis ornata." (Comenius, *Persecut. Eccles. Bohem.*, p. 29. Dupin, *Eccles. Hist.*, cent.15, p. 118.)
- [22] Fox, *Acts and Mon.*, vol. 1, p. 776.
- [23] *Letters of Huss*, No. 11; Edin., 1846.
- [24] Bonnechose, *Reformers before the Reformation*, vol. 1, p. 87.
- [25] Fox, *Acts and Mon.*, vol. 1, p. 776.
- [26] *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 780. Bonnechose, vol. 1, p. 97.
- [27] Dupin, *Eccles. Hist.*, cent. 15, chap. 7, p. 121. Comenius, *Persecut. Eccles. Bohem.*, p. 27.
- [28] Bonnechose, vol. 1, p. 126.
- [29] Bonnechose, vol. 1, p. 99.
- [30] "Omnium praedestinatorum universitas." (De *Eccles.*: Huss: *Hist. et Mon.*)
- [31] Lenfant, vol. 1, p. 37.
- [32] Huss: *Hist. et Mon.*, tom. 1, pp. 215 to 234.
- [33] *Letter's of Huss*, No. 6; Edin. ed.
- [34] Lenfant, *Hist. Counc. Const.*, vol. 1, chap. 1.
- [35] Dupin, *Eccles. Hist.*, *Counc. of Pisa.*, cent. 15, chap 1.
- [36] Lenfant, *Hist. Counc. Const.*, vol. 1, chap. 1, p. 6. Dupin, *Eccles. Hist.*, cent. 15, chap. 1, p. 9; Lond., 1699.
- [37] Alexander V. was a Greek of the island of Candia; he was taken up by an Italian monk, educated at Oxford, made Bishop of Vicenza, and chosen Pope by the Council of Pisa. (Dupin, *Eccles. Hist.*, cent. 15.)

- [38] Lenfant, Hist. Council. Const., vol. 1, p. 7. Dupin, Eccles. Hist., cent. 15, chap. 2, p. 10. Fox, Acts and Mon., vol. 1, p. 781. Mosheim, Eccles. Hist., cent. 15, pt. 2, chap. 2, sec. 4.
- [39] Lenfant, Hist. Council. Const., vol. 1, p. 83. Bonnechose, Reformers before the Reformation, vol. 1, p. 155. Fox, Acts and Mon., vol. 1, p. 782.
- [40] Dupin, Eccles. Hist., cent. 15, chap. 2, p. 11.
- [41] There was no more famous Gallican divine than Gerson. His treatise on the Ecclesiastical Power which was read before the Council, and which has been preserved in an abridged form by Lenfant (vol. 2, bk. 5, chap. 10), shows him to have been one of the subtlest intellects of his age. He draws the line between the temporal and the spiritual powers with a nicety which approaches that of modern times, and he drops a hint of a power of direction in the Pope, that may have suggested to Le Maistre his famous theory, which resolved the Pope's temporal supremacy into a power of direction, and which continued to be the common opinion till superseded by the dogma of infallibility in 1870.
- [42] The Pope alone had 600 persons in his retinue; the cardinals had fully 1,200; the bishops, archbishops, and abbots, between 4,000 and 5,000. There were 1,200 scribes, besides their servants, etc. John Huss alone had eight, without reckoning his vicar who also accompanied him. The retinue of the princes, barons, and ambassadors was numerous in proportion. (Lenfant, Hist. Council. Const., vol. 1, pp. 83, 84.)
- [43] Bonnechose, Reformers before the Reformation, vol. 1, p. 158. See also note by translator.
- [44] Lenfant, Hist. Council. Const., vol. 1, p. 17.
- [45] "Pater sante qui passo Trenta perdo." (Lenfant, Hist. Council. Const., vol. 1, p. 18.)
- [46] Ibid.
- [47] Lenfant, Hist. Council. Const., vol. 1, chap. 1, p. 19.
- [48] Ibid. vol. 1, pp. 38 to 41.
- [49] Fox, Acts and Mon., vol. 1, p. 789. Bonnechose, Reformers before the Reformation, vol. 1, pp. 150 to 152.
- [50] Palacky informs us that the house in which Huss lodged is still standing at Constance, with a bust of the Reformer in its front wall.
- [51] Lenfant, Hist. Council. Const., vol. 1, p. 77.
- [52] Maimbourg, Hist. of Western Schism., tom. 2, pp. 123, 124; Dutch ed. Theobald, Bell. Huss, p. 38. Aeneas Sylvius, Hist. Bohem., p. 45. Lenfant, Hist. Council. Const., vol. 1, pp. 78, 79.
- [53] Lenfant, Hist. Council. Const., vol. 1, pp. 106, 107.
- [54] Concilium Constant., Sess. 5. to Hardouin, tom. 8, col. 258; Parisiis.
- [55] Natalis Alexander, Eccles. Hist., sec. 15, dis. 4. Dupin, Eccles. Hist., cent. 15, chap. 2, pp. 14, 15. Fox, Acts and Mon., vol. 1, p. 782. Mosheim, Eccles. Hist., cent. 15, pt. 2, chap. 2, sec. 4.
- [56] See decree of Pope John against Wicliffe, ordering the exhumation and burning of his bones, in Hardouin, Acta Concil., tom. 8, pp. 263 to 303; Parisiis. Fox, Acts and Mon., vol. 1, p. 782. Mosheim, Eccles. Hist., cent. 15, pt. 2, chap. 2, sec. 8. Dupin Eccles. Hist., cent. 15, chap. 7, pp. 121, 122..
- [57] Fox, Acts and Mon., vol. 1, p. 783. Mosheim, Eccles. Hist., cent. 15, pt. 2, chap. 2.
- [58] Fox, Acts and Mon., vol. 1, p. 782. See tenor of citation of Pope John to Hardouin,

Acta Concil., tom. 8, p. 291; Parisiis.

[59] Dupin, Eccles. Hist., cent. 15, chap. 2. Bonnechose, Reformers before the Reformation, vol. 1, pp. 180 to 182.

[60] Von der Hardt, tom. 1, p. 77. Niem, apud Von der Hardt, tom. 2, pp. 313 to 398, and tom. 4, p. 60; apud Lenfant, vol. 1, p. 129.

[61] Lenfant, Hist. Council. Const., vol. 1, p. 130.

[62] Dupin, Eccles. Hist., cent. 15, chap. 2, pp. 12, 13. Bonnechose, Reformers before the Reformation, vol. 1, pp. 182 to 184.

[63] Lenfant, Hist. Council. Const., vol. 1, p. 463.

[64] Concil. Const., Sess. 12: Hardouin, tom. 8, col. 376, 377; Parisiis.

Dupin, Eccles. Hist., cent. 15, chap. 2, p. 17. Fox, Acts and Mon., vol. 1, p. 782.

Mosheim, Eccles. Hist., cent. 15, pt. 2, chap. 2, sec. 4. The crimes proven against Pope John in the Council of Constance may be seen in its records. The list fills fourteen long, closely printed columns in Hardouin. History contains no more terrible assemblage of vices, and it exhibits no blacker character than that of the inculpated Pontiff. It was not an enemy, but his own friends, the Council over which he presided, that drew this appalling portrait. In the Barberini Collection, the crime of poisoning his predecessor, and other foul deeds not fit here to be mentioned, are charged against him. (Hardouin, tom. 8, pp. 343 to 360.)

[65] Hardouin, Acta Concil., tom. 8, pp. 361, 362.

[66] Lenfant, Hist. Council. Const., vol. 1, p. 398; and Huss's Letters, No. 47; Edin. ed. Some one posted up in the hall of the Council, one day, the following intimation, as from the Holy Ghost: "Aliis rebus occupati nunc non adesse vobis non possumus;" that is, "Being otherwise occupied at this time, we are not able to be present with you." (Fox, Acts and Mon., vol. 1, p. 782.)

[67] These documents are given in full in Fox, Acts and Mon., vol. 1, pp. 786 to 788.

[68] This document is given by all contemporary historians, by Von der Hardt, tom. 4, p. 12; by Lenfant, Hist. Council. Const., vol. 1, pp. 61, 62; by Fra Paolo; by Sleidan in his Commentaries; and, in short, by all who have written the history of the Council. The terms are very precise: to pass freely and to return. The Jesuit Maimbourg, when writing the history of the period, was compelled to own the imperial safe conduct. In truth, it was admitted by the Council when, in its nineteenth session, it defended the emperor against those "evil speakers" who blamed him for violating it. The obvious and better defense would have been that the safe conduct never existed, could the Council in consistency with fact have so affirmed.

[69] Hist. et Mon. J. Huss., epist. 1.

[70] Lenfant, Hist. Council. Const., vol. 1, p. 43.

[71] Fox, Acts and Mon., vol. 1, p. 790. Dupin, Eccles. Hist. cent. 15, chap. 7, p. 121.

[72] Dupin, Eccles. Hist., cent. 15, chap. 7, p. 121. Bonnechose, Reformers before the Reformation, vol. 1, pp. 170 to 173.

[73] Lenfant, Hist. Council. Const., vol. 1, p. 61.

[74] Von der Hardt, tom. 4, p. 397.

[75] The precise words of this decree are as follow: "Nec aliqua sibi fides aut promissio de jure naturali divino et humano fuerit in prejudicium Catholicae fidel observanda." (Concil. Const., Sess. 19: Hardouin, Acta Concil., tom. 8, col. 454; Parisiis.) The meaning is, that

by no law natural or divine is faith to be kept with heretics to the prejudice of the Catholic faith. This doctrine was promulgated by the third Lateran Council (Alexander III., 1167), decreed by the Council of Constance, and virtually confirmed by the Council of Trent. The words of the third Lateran Council are "oaths made against the interest and benefit of the Church are not so much to be considered as oaths, but as perjuries" (non quasi juramenta sed quasi perjuria).

[76] Dupin, Eccles. Hist., cent. 15, chap. 7, p. 121. Fox, Acts and Mon., vol.1, p. 793. Bonnechose, Reformers before the Reformation, vol. 1, pp. 191, 192.

[77] Bonnechose, vol. 1, pp. 243 to 248.

[78] Lenfant, Hist. Council. Const., vol. 1, p. 322. Dupin, Eccles. Hist., cent. 15, chap. 7, p. 122.

[79] Von der Hardt, tom. 4, p. 306. Lenfant, Hist. Council. Const., vol. 1, p. 323. Bonnechose, Reformers before the Reformation, vol. 2, chap. 4. Dupin, Eccles. Hist., cent. 15, chap. 7. Fox, Acts and Mon., vol. 1, p. 792.

[80] Lenfant, Hist. Council. Const., vol 1, p. 323. Fox, Acts and Mon., vol. 1, p. 792. Bonnechose, vol. 2, chap. 4.

[81] Lenfant, Hist. Council. Const., vol. 1, pp. 323, 324.

[82] The articles condemned by the Council are given in full by Hardouin, Acta Concil., tom. 8, pp. 410 to 421.

[83] Epist. 20.

[84] Fox, Acts and Mon., vol. 1, p. 824. Lenfant, Hist. Council. Const., vol. 1, bk. 3.

[85] Fox, Acts and Mon., vol. 1, p. 793.

[86] Epist. 32. It ought also to be mentioned that a protest against the execution of Huss was addressed to the Council of Constance, and signed by the principal nobles of Bohemia and Moravia. The original of this protest is preserved in the library of Edinburgh University.

[87] Concil. Const.: Hardouin, tom. 8, p. 423.

[88] Lenfant, Hist. Council. Const., vol. 1, p. 361.

[89] Bonnechose, Reformers before the Reformation, 2. 47.

[90] Epist. 10.

[91] Ibid. 44.

[92] Bonnechose, Reformers before the Reformation, 2. 24.

[93] Op. et Mon. Joan. Huss., tom. 2, p. 344; Noribergae, 1558. Lenfant, Hist. Council. Const., vol. 1, p. 412.

[94] Lenfant, Hist. Council. Const., vol. 1, p. 413. Op. et Mon. Joan. Huss., tom. 2, p. 346.

[95] Dissert. Hist. de Huss, p. 90; Jenae, 1711. Von der Hardt, tom. 4, p. 393. Lenfant, vol. 1, p. 422. The circumstance was long after remembered in Germany. A century after, at the Diet of Worms, when the enemies of Luther were importuning Charles V. to have the Reformer seized, notwithstanding the safe conduct he had given him. "No," replied the emperor, "I should not like to blush like Sigismund." (Lenfant.)

[96] Fox, Acts and Mon., vol. 1, p. 820.

[97] Op. et Mon. Joan. Huss., tom. 2, p. 347. Concil. Const.: Hardouin, tom. 8, p. 423.

[98] These words were noted down; and soon after the death of Huss a medal was struck in Bohemia, on which they were inscribed: Centum revolutis annis Deo respondebitis et mihi. Lenfant (lib. c., p. 429, and lib. 4, p. 564) says that this medal was to be seen in the

royal archives of the King of Borussia, and that in the opinion of the very learned Schotti, who was then antiquary to the king, it was struck in the fifteenth century, before the times of Luther and Zwingli. The same thing has been asserted by Catholic historians: among others, Peter Matthins, in his History of Henry IV., tom. 2, lib. 5, p. 46. (Vide Sculteti, Annales, p. 7. Gerdesius, Hist. Evang. Renov., pp. 51, 52; Groningae, 1744.) Its date is guaranteed also by M. Bizot, author of Hist. Met. de Hollande.

[99] Op. et Mon. Joan Huss, tom. 2, fol. 347.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Von der Hardt, tom. 4, p. 440. Lenfant, Hist. Counc. Const., vol. 1, pp. 425, 426.

[102] Op. et Mon. Joan. Huss., tom. 2, fol. 348. Lenfant, Hist. Counc. Const., vol. 1, pp. 428 to 430.

[103] In many principalities money was coined with a reference to this prediction. On one side was the effigy of John Huss, with the inscription, Credo unam esse Ecclesiam Sanctam Catholicam ("I believe in one Holy Catholic Church"). On the obverse was seen Huss tied to the stake and placed on the fire, with the inscription in the center, Johannes Huss, anno a Christo nato 1415 condemnatur ("John Huss, condemned A.D. 1415"); and on the circumference the inscription already mentioned, Centum revolutis annis Deo respondebitis et mihi ("A hundred years hence ye shall answer to God and to me"):Gerdesius, Hist. Evang. Renov., vol. 1, pp. 51, 52.

[104] AEneas Sylvius, Hist. Bohem., cap. 36, p. 54; apud Gerdesius, Hist. Evang. Renov., vol. 1, p. 42.

[105] "Finally, all being consumed to cinders in the fire, the ashes, and the soil, dug up to a great depth, were placed in wagons, and thrown into the stream of the Rhine, that his very name might utterly perish from among the faithful." (Op. et Mon. Joan. Huss., tom. 2, fol. 348; Noribergae.) The details of Huss's martyrdom are very fully given by Fox, by Lenfant, by Bonnechose, and others. These have been faithfully compiled from the Brunswick, Leipsic, and Gotha manuscripts, collected by Von der Hardt, and from the History of Huss's Life, published by an eye witness, and inserted at the beginning of his works. These were never contradicted by any of his contemporaries. Substantially the same account is given by Catholic writers.

[106] "The pious remembrance of John Huss," says Lechler, "was held sacred by the nation. The day of his death, 6 th July, was incontestably considered from that time onward as the festival of a saint and martyr. It was called 'the day of remembrance' of the master John Huss, and even at the end of the sixteenth century the inhabitants of Prague laid such stress on the observances of the day, that the abbot of the monastery Emmaus, Paul Horsky, was threatened and persecuted in the worst manner because he had once allowed one to work in his vineyard on Huss's day, as if it were an ordinary workday." It was not uncommon to place pictures of Huss and Jerome on the altars of the parish churches of Bohemia and Moravia. (Lechler, Johann von Wiclif, vol. 2, p. 285.) Even at this day, as the author can testify from 1018 personal observation, there is no portrait more common in the windows of the print shops of Prague than that of John Huss.