

The Martyrdom of John Huss
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By the occasion of Queen Anne, who was a Bohemian, and married to King Richard II., the Bohemians coming to the knowledge of Wickliffe's* books here in England, began first to taste and savour Christ's Gospel, till at length, by the preaching of John Huss, they increased more and more in knowledge, insomuch that Pope Alexander V. hearing thereof, began to stir coals, and directeth his bull to the Archbishop of Prague, requiring him to look to the matter, and to provide that no person in churches, schools, or other places, should maintain that doctrine; citing also John Huss to appear before him. To whom the said John answering, declared that mandate or bull of the pope utterly to repugn against the manifest examples and doings both of Christ and of His apostles, and to be prejudicial to the liberty of the Gospel, in binding the Word of God not have free course; and, therefore, from this mandate of the Pope he appealed to the same Pope better advised. But, while he was prosecuting his appeal, Pope Alexander died.

After Alexander succeeded Pope John XXIII., who also, playing his part like a Pope, sought by all means possible to keep under the Bohemians, first beginning to work his malice upon the aforesaid John Huss, their preacher who, at the same time preaching at Prague in the temple of Bethlehem, because he seemed rather willing to teach the Gospel of Christ than the traditions of bishops, was accused for a heretic.

The Pope committed the whole matter to Cardinal de Columna; who, when he had heard the accusation, appointed a day to John Huss, that he should appear in the court of Rome: which thing done, Wenceslaus, King of the Romans and of Bohemia, at the request specially of his wife Sophia and of the whole nobility of Bohemia, as also at the earnest suit and desire of the town and University of Prague, sent his ambassadors to Rome, to desire that Pope to quit and clearly deliver John Huss from that citation and judgment; and that if the Pope did suspect the kingdom of Bohemia to be infected with any heretical or false doctrine, he should send his ambassadors, who might correct and amend same, and that all this should be done at the sole cost and charges of the King of Bohemia: and to promise in his name, that he would assist the Pope's legates with all his power and authority, to punish all such as should be taken or found in any erroneous doctrine.

In the mean season, also, John Huss, before his day appointed, sent his lawful and meet procurators unto the court of Rome, and with most firm and strong reasons did prove his innocency; whereupon he so trusted, that he thought he should have easily obtained, that he should not have been compelled, by reason of the great danger, to appear the day appointed. But, when the Cardinal de Columna, unto whose will and judgment the whole matter was committed, would not admit any defence or excuse, John

*John Wickliffe (1320-1384), public reader of Divinity at the University of Oxford, England, translated the Bible into English – the common language of the people.

Huss's procurators appealed unto the Pope: yet, notwithstanding, this last refuge did not so much prevail with Cardinal de Columna, but that he would openly excommunicate John Huss as an obstinate heretic, because he came not at his day appointed to Rome.

Notwithstanding, forso much as his proctors had appealed unto the Pope, they had other judges appointed unto them, as the Cardinals of Aquileia and of Venice, with certain others; which judges, after they had deferred the matter by the space of a year and a half, returned to the sentence and judgment of Cardinal de Columna, and, confirming the same, commanded John Huss's procurators, that they should leave off to defend him anymore, for they would suffer it no longer: whereupon, when his procurators would not cease their instant suit, certain of them were cast into prison, and grievously punished; the other, leaving their business undone, returned into Bohemia.

The Bohemians little cared for all this; but, as they grew more in knowledge, so the less they regarded the Pope, complaining daily against him and the archbishop for stopping the Word of God and the Gospel of Christ to be preached, saying, that by their indulgences, and other practices of the court of Rome, they sought their own profit, and not that of Jesus Christ; that they plucked from the sheep of Christ the wool and milk, and did not feed them, either with the Word of God, or with good examples; teaching, moreover, and affirming, that the commandments of the Pope and prelates are not to be obeyed but so far as they follow the doctrine and life of Christ and of His apostles. They derided also and scorned the Pope's jurisdiction, because of the schism that was then in the church, when there were three Popes together, one striving against another for the papacy.

It happened by the occasion of Ladislaus, King of Naples, who was ravaging the Pope's towns and territories, that Pope John, raising up war against the said Ladislaus, gave full remission of sins to all those who would war on his side to defend the Church. When the bull of the Pope's indulgence was come to Prague, and there published, the King Wenceslaus, who then favoured that Pope, gave commandment that no man should attempt anything against the said Pope's indulgences.

But Huss, with his followers, not able to abide the impiety of those pardons, began to speak against them, of which company were three certain artificers, who, hearing the priest preaching of these indulgences, did openly speak against the, and call the Pope Antichrist. Wherefore they were brought before the senate, and committed to ward: but the people, joining themselves together in arms, came to the magistrates, requiring them to be let loose. The magistrates, with gentle words and fair promises, satisfied the people, so that every man returning home to his own house, the tumult was assuaged: but the artisans, whose names were, John, Martin and Stascon, being in prison, were notwithstanding there beheaded. The martyrdom of these three being known to the people, they took the bodies, and with great solemnity brought them unto the church of Bethlehem: at whose funeral divers priests favouring that side, did sing on this wise; 'These be the saints, who, for the testament of God, gave their bodies.' And so their bodies were sumptuously interred in the church of Bethlehem, John Huss preaching at the funeral, much commending them for their constancy.

Thus this city of Prague was divided. The prelates, with the greatest part of the clergy and most of the barons who had anything to lose, did hold with the Pope. On the contrary part, the commons, with part of the clergy and most of the barons who had anything to

lose, did hold with the Pope. On the contrary part, the commons, with part of the clergy and students of the University, went with John Huss. Wenceslaus the King, fearing lest this would grow to a tumult, being moved by the doctors and prelates and council of his barons, thought best to remove John Huss out of the city. And further to cease this dissension risen in the Church, he committed the matter to the disposition of the doctors and the clergy. They, consulting together, did set forth a decree, confirmed by the sentence of the King, containing eighteen articles for the maintenance of the Pope and of the see of Rome, against the doctrine of Wickliffe and John Huss.

John Huss, thus departing out of Prague, went to his country, where he, being protected by the lord of the soil, continued preaching, to whom resorted a great concourse of people; neither yet was he so expelled out of Prague, but that sometimes he resorted to his church at Bethlehem, and there preached unto the people.

Moreover, against the said decree of the doctors John Huss answered with contrary articles as followeth.

The Objections of John Huss against the Decree of the Doctors.

False it is that they say the Pope and his cardinals to be the true and manifest successors of Peter and the apostles, neither that any other successors of Peter and of the apostles can be found upon the earth besides them: whereas all bishops and priests be successors of Peter and of the apostles.

Not the Pope, but Christ only, is the head; and not the cardinals, but all Christ's faithful people, be the body of the Catholic Church.

If the Pope be a reprobate, it is plain that he is no head, no nor member even, of the Holy Church of God, but of the devil and of his synagogue.

Neither is it true, that we ought to stand in all things to the determination of the Pope and of the cardinals, but so far forth as they do agree with the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testament.

The Church of Rome is not that place where the Lord did appoint the principal see of His whole Church: for Christ, Who was the head priest of all, did first sit in Jerusalem, and Peter did sit in Antioch, and afterward in Rome. Also other Popes did sit, some at Bologna, some at Perugia, some at Avignon.

The prelates are falsifiers of the Holy Scriptures who affirm and say, that we must obey the Pope in all things. For why? It is known that many Popes have been heretics, and one Pope was also a woman.

They fondly and childishly argue that the processes made against Master John Huss ought to be obeyed, because, forsooth, the whole body of the clergy of Prague have received them. By the same reason they may argue also, that we must obey the devil, because our first parents, Adam and Eve, obeyed him.

Unto these objections of John Huss the catholic doctors did answer in a long tedious process, the scope whereof principally tended to defend the principality of the Pope, and to maintain obedience to him above all other potentates in the world. Like as Christ is King of all Kings, and yet Charles may be King of France; so say they, Christ may be the universal head, and yet the Pope may be head under Him of the whole Church. While Christ walked here on earth in His bodily presence, He was Pope Himself and chief bishop, and so head of the Church here militant on earth. But because after He departed

out of the world, His body, which is the Church militant upon the earth, should not be headless, therefore He left Peter and his successors to His Church for a head in His place, unto the consummation of the world.

Thus then Master John Huss, being driven out of Prague, and, moreover, being so excommunicated, that no mass must be said where he was present, the people began mightily to grudge and to cry out against the prelates and other popish priests, sparing not to lay open their vices, to their great ignominy and shame, and much craving reformation to be had of the clergy.

The King, seeing the inclination of the people, being also not ignorant of the wickedness of the clergy, under pretence of reforming the Church, began to require greater exactions upon such priests and men of the clergy as were known to be wicked livers. Whereupon they that favoured John Huss, complained of all, whomsoever they knew to be of the catholic faction, or enemies to John Huss; by reason whereof the priests of the popish clergy were brought, such as were faulty, into great distress, and such as were not faulty, into great fear, insomuch that they were glad to fall in, at least not to fall out, with the Protestants, being afraid to displease them. By this means Master Huss began to take some more liberty unto him, and to preach in his church at Bethlehem, and none to control him: by the same means the people received some comfort, and the King much gain.

Thus the popish clergy, while they went about to persecute John Huss, were enwrapped themselves in great tribulation, and afflicted on every side, as well of laymen, as of the evangelical clergy; nay, the women also and children were against them because of the interdict against John Huss.

The more the Pope's clergy were pinched, the more grudge and hatred redounded to John Huss, although he was no cause thereof, but only their own wicked deservings. And to help the matter forward, the Pope writeth letters to Wenceslaus, King of Bohemia, who was brother to Sigismund, the emperor, for the suppressing of John Huss and of his doctrine. 'We hear that in divers places under your dominion, there be certain who do follow and preach the errors of that arch-heretic Wickliffe,* whose books have been long since condemned in the general Roman council to be erroneous, heretical, and swerving from the catholic faith. Wherefore we do exhort your worship effectuously to show forth your regal power, both for the glory of God and defence of the catholic faith, as it becometh a catholic prince; whereby this heresy may be rooted out.'

During all this time of Pope John, there were three Popes reigning together, neither was yt the schism ceased, which had continued the space, already, of thirty-six years; by reason whereof a General Council was holden at Constance in A.D. 1414, being called by Sigismund the Emperor, and Pope John XXIII. These three Popes were John, whom the Italians set up; Gregory, whom the Frenchmen set up; Benedict, whom the Spaniards placed. In these schismatical ambitious conflict everyone defended his Pope, to the great disturbance of Christian nations. This Council endured three ears and five months. Many great and profitable things to the glory of God and public profit might have been concluded, if the rotten flesh of the churchmen could have bidden the salt of the Gospel, and if they had loved the truth.

Pope John was deposed by the decree of the Council, more than three and forty most grievous and heinous crimes being proved against him: as that he had hired Marcilius Parmensis, a physician, to poison Alexander, his predecessor; further, that he was a

heretic, a simoniac, a liar, a hypocrite, a murderer, an enchanter, and a dice-player. Finally, what crime is it that he was not infected withal?

In this Council of Constance nothing was decreed or enacted worthy of memory, but this only, that the Pope's authority is under the Council, and that the Council ought to judge the Pope. And, as touching the communion in both kinds (bread and wine), although the Council did not deny but that it was used by Christ and His apostles, yet notwithstanding, he the same Council it was decreed to the contrary.

Which Council, although it was principally thought to be assembled for quieting of the schism between the three Popes; yet, notwithstanding, a great part thereof was for the cause of the Bohemians, and especially for John Huss. For before the Council began, the Emperor Sigismund sent certain gentlemen, Bohemians, who were of his own household, giving them in charge to bring John Huss, bachelor of divinity, unto the said Council. The meaning and intent thereof was, that John Huss should purge and clear himself of the blame which they had laid against him: and, for the better assurance, the Emperor did not only promise him safe conduct, that he might come freely unto Constance, but also that he should return again into Bohemia, without fraud or interruption; he promised also to receive him under his protection, and under safeguard of the whole empire.

John Huss, seeing so many fair promises and the assurance which the Emperor had given to him, sent answer, that he would come unto the Council. But before he departed out of the realm of Bohemia, and especially out of the town of Prague, he did write certain bills and caused them to be fastened upon the gates of the cathedral churches and parish churches, cloisters and abbeys, signifying unto them all, that he would go to the General Council at Constance there to declare his faith which he hath hitherto holden, and even at the present doth hold, and by God's help will defend and keep even unto death; wherefore, if any man have any suspicion of his doctrine, that he should declare it before the Lord Conrad, Archbishop of Prague; or, if he had rather, at the General Council, for there he would render unto everyone, and before them all, an account and reason of his faith.

About the ides of October, 1414, John Huss, being accompanied with two noble gentlemen, Wenceslaus of Duba, and John of Clum, departed from Prague, and took his journey towards Constance. In all cities as he passed by, a great number of people did come unto him, and he was very gently received and entertained through all the towns of Germany, not only of his hosts, but of the citizens generally, and oftentimes of the curates; insomuch that the said Huss did confess, in a certain epistle that he found in no place so great enemies as in Bohemia. And if it happened that there were any bruit or noise before of his coming, the streets were always full of people who were desirous to see and gratify him; especially at Nuremberg, where there were many curates who came unto him, desiring him that they might talk with him secretly, unto whom he answered: that he loved much rather to show forth his mind openly before all men than in hugging-mugger, for he would keep nothing close or hidden. So, after dinner, until it was night, he spake before the priests, senators, and divers other citizens, insomuch that they had him in great estimation and reverence.

The twentieth day after that he parted out of the town of Prague, which was the third day of November, he came unto Constance, and lodged at an honest matron's house, being a widow named Faithful, in St. Gale's Street.

The morrow after, the noble men, Lord John de Clum, and Lord Henry Latzemboge, went to speak with the Pope, and certified him that John Huss was come, desiring that he would grant the said John Huss liberty to remain in Constance, without any trouble, or vexation, or interruption. Unto whom the Pope answered – that even if John Huss had killed his brother, yet would he go about, as much as in him lay, that no outrage or hurt should be done unto him during his abode in the city of Constance.

In this meantime, the greatest adversary that John Huss had, named Master Stephen Paletz, who was also a Bohemian born, was come unto Constance. The said Paletz did associate unto him one Michael de Causis, who was the first and bitterest accuser of the said John Huss. Paletz had been familiarly conversant with John Huss from his youth upward; but after that there was a bull brought unto Prague from Pope John XXIII. Against the king of Apulia named Ladislaus, the said John Huss withstood it openly, forsomuch as he saw that it was wicked and nought. Paletz, albeit that he had confessed at a certain banquet, in the presence of the said John Huss, that the said bull was contrary to all equity and right, yet, notwithstanding, forsomuch as he was bound unto the Pope by means of certain benefices received at his hand, he maintained and defended the said bull against John Huss.

As for Michael de Causis, the companion of Master Paletz, he was sometime the curate of New Prague: but he, not being content therewith, and seeking after a further prey, imagined a new device how to attain unto it; for he made a semblance that he had found out a new invention, whereby the mines of gold in Gilowy, which were perished and lost, might be set on work again. By this means he did so much with the King Wenceslaus, that he did put a great sum of money into his hands, to do that withal which he had promised. This honest man, after he had labored certain days about it, perceiving that he brought nothing to pass, and that he was utterly in despair of his purpose, conveyed himself privily out of the realm of Bohemia with the rest of the money, and withdrew himself, as a worthy bird for such a nest, to the court of Rome.

These two jolly roisters, Stephen Paletz and Michael de Causis, drew out certain articles against the said Huss, saying, that they had gathered them out of his own writings, and especially out of his treatise which he had written of the Church. They trotted up and down, hither and thither, taking great pains to show the said articles unto the cardinals, bishops and monks, giving them to understand, that there were other matters of greater importance, which the said John Huss had committed against the holy constitutions, and other ordinances of the Pope and the church; which, if need were, they said they would propound before the Council. Through the kindling of this their fire, they did so incense the cardinals and the priests, that they all, with one mind, thought to cause the good man to be laid hands on.

The twenty-sixth day after the said Huss was come to Constance (during all which time he was occupied in reading, writing, and familiar talk with his friends), the cardinals, through the instigation of Paletz, and Michael de Causis, sent two bishops, to wit, the Bishops of Augsburg and of Trent, and with them the borough-master of Constance, and a certain knight, to the place where John Huss lodged, about dinner-time; who should make report unto him that they were sent by the Pope and his cardinals, to advertise him that he should come to render some knowledge of his doctrine before them as he had oftentimes desired, and that they were ready to hear him.

Unto whom John Huss answered, 'I am not come for any such intent, as to defend my cause particularly before the Pope and his cardinals, but that I would willingly appear before the whole Council, and there answer for my defence openly, without any fear or doubt, unto all such things as shall be required of me. Notwithstanding, forasmuch as you require me so to do, I will not refuse to go with you before the cardinals; and if it happen that they evil entreat or handle me, yet I trust in my Lord Jesus, that He will so comfort and strengthen me, that I shall desire much rather to die for His glory's sake, than to deny the verity which I have learned by His holy Scriptures.'

Wherefore it came to pass that, the bishops being instant upon him, and not showing any outward semblance that they bare any malice against him in their hearts (albeit they had privily laid garrisons both in the house where they were assembled, and also in other houses), John Huss took his horse which he had at his lodging, and went unto the court of the Pope and the cardinals.

When he was come thither, and had saluted the cardinals, they began to speak to him in this sort: 'We have heard many reports of you, which, if they be true, are in no case to be suffered; for men say, that you have taught great and manifest errors against the doctrine of the true Church; and that you have sowed your errors abroad through all the realm of Bohemia, by a long space of time; wherefore we have caused you to be called hither before us, that we might know how the matter standeth.'

Unto whom John Huss answered in few words: 'Reverend fathers! You shall understand that I am thus minded and affectioned, that I should rather choose to die, than I should be found culpable of one only error, much less of many and great errors. I am ready to receive correction, if any man can prove any errors in me.' The cardinals answered him that his sayings pleased them very well; and upon that they went away, leaving the said John Huss with Lord John de Clum, under the guard of the armed men, until four of the clock in the afternoon.

After that time the cardinals assembled again in the Pope's court, to take counsel what they should do with John Huss. Stephen Paletz and Michael de Causis, with divers others of their adherents, made earnest suit that he should not be let go at liberty again, and having the favour of the judges on their part, they bragged up and down in a manner as they had been mad men, and mocked the said John Huss, saying, 'Now we will hold thee well enough; thou art under our power and jurisdiction, and shalt not depart until such time as thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.'

A little before night, they sent the provost of the Roman court unto Lord John de Clum, to show him that he might return to his lodging; but as for John Huss, they had otherwise provided for him. When Lord John de Clum heard this news, he was wonderfully displeased, forasmuch as through their crafts, subtleties, and glossing words, they had so trained this good man into their snares; whereupon he went unto the Pope, declaring unto him all that was done; most humbly beseeching him, that he would call to remembrance the promise which he had made unto him and Lord Henry Latzemboge, and that he would not so lightly break his faith. The Pope answered, that all these things were done without his consent or commandment; and said further to Lord de Clum apart, 'What reason is it that you should impute this deep unto me, seeing that you know well enough that I myself am in the hands of these cardinals and bishops?'

So the said Lord de Clum returned very pensiveful and sorry; he complained very sore, both privily and openly, of the outrage that the Pope had done; but all profited

nothing. After this, the said John Huss was led to the house of the precentor of the church of Constance, where he was kept prisoner by the space of eight days; from thence he was carried unto the Jacobites, had by the river Rhine, and was shut up in the prison of the abbey.

After he had been enclosed there a certain time he fell sore sick of an ague, by means of the stench of the place, and became so weak, that they despaired of his life. And for fear lest this good man should die in prison, the Pope sent unto him certain of his physicians to cure him. In the midst of his sickness his accusers made importunate suit to the principals of the Council, that the said John Huss might be condemned, and presented unto the Pope these articles:

He doth err about the sacraments of the Church, and especially about the sacrament of the body of Christ, forasmuch as he hath openly preached, that it ought to be ministered openly unto the people under both kinds, that is to say, the body and blood. Moreover, it is affirmed by divers, that he hath taught both in the schools and in the church, or at the least that he doth hold this opinion, that after the words of consecration pronounced upon the altar, there remaineth still material bread in the sacrament.

He doth not allow and admit that the church signifieth the Pope, cardinals, archbishops, and the clergy underneath them.

He saith, that the Church hath no power of the keys, when the Pope, cardinals, and all other of the priests and clergy are in deadly sin.

He holdeth opinion that every man hath authority to invest and appoint any man to the cure of souls. This is evident by his own doings, forasmuch as many in the kingdom of Bohemia by their defenders and favourers, or rather by himself, were appointed and put into parish churches, which they have long ruled and kept, not being appointed by the apostolic see, neither yet by the ordinary of the city of Prague.

He holdeth opinion, that a man, being once ordained a priest or deacon, cannot be forbidden or kept back from the office of preaching. This is likewise manifest by his own doings, forasmuch as he himself could never be letted from preaching, neither by the apostolic see, now yet by the Archbishop of Prague.

Moreover, when there were questions moved amongst the divines of the University of Prague upon the forty-five articles of John Wickliffe, and they had called a convocation, and all the divines of Bohemia had concluded that every one of those articles was either heretical, seditious, or erroneous; he alone held the contrary opinion, that none of those articles were either heretical, seditious, or erroneous, as afterwards he did dispute, hold, and teach, in the common schools of Prague; whereby it is evidently enough foreseen, that he doth affirm those articles of Wickliffe, which are not only condemned in England, but also by the whole Church.

Upon this accusation, they appointed three commissioners or judges; the Patriarch of Constantinople, the Bishop of Castel-a-mare, and the Bishop of Lebus; the which prelates heard the accusation and the witness which was brought in by certain babbling priests of Prague, confirmed by their oaths, and afterwards recited the said accusation unto the said Huss in the prison, at such time as his ague was fervent and extremely upon him.

Upon this, John Huss required to have an advocate to answer for him; which was plainly and utterly denied him. And the reason that the masters commissioners brought against it was this: that the plain canon doth forbid that any man should be a defender of

him who is suspected of heresy. The vanity of folly of the witnesses was such, that if they had not been both the accusers and judges themselves, there should have needed no confutation.

Thus John Huss remained in the prison of the convent of the Franciscans, until the Wednesday before Palm Sunday; and in the mean season, to employ his time, he wrote certain books of the ten commandments, of the love and knowledge of God, of matrimony, of penance, of the three enemies of mankind, of the prayer of our Lord, and of the supper of our Lord.

The same day Pope John XXIII changed his apparel, and conveyed himself secretly out of Constance, fearing the judgment by which afterwards he was deprived of his papal dignity by reason of most execrable and abominable forfeits and doings. This was the cause that John Huss was transported and carried unto another prison; for the Pope's servants, who had the keeping of John Huss, understanding that their master was fled, delivered up the keys of the prison unto the Emperor Sigismund, and to the cardinals, and followed their master the Pope. Then, by the consent of the Council, the said John Huss was put into the hands of the Bishop of Constance, who sent him to a castle on the other side of the river Rhine, not very far from Constance, where 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.

In the mean season, certain noblemen and gentlemen of Poland and Bohemia did all their endeavor to purchase his deliverance, having respect to the good renown of all the realm, which was wonderfully defamed and slandered by certain naughty persons. The matter was grown unto this point, that all they who were in the town of Constance, who seemed to bear any favour unto John Huss, were made as mocking stocks, and derided of all men, yea, even of the slaves and base people. Wherefore they took counsel and concluded together to present their request in writing unto the whole Council, the fourteenth day of May, A.D. 1415; the tenor here ensueth:

'When Master John Huss was freely of his own accord come unto Constance, under safe-conduct, he was grievously imprisoned before he was heard, and at this present is tormented both with fetters, and also with hunger and thirst. Master John Huss, neither being convicted nor condemned, no not so much as once heard, is taken and imprisoned, and is so weakened with thin and slender diet, that it is to be feared, lest that, his power and strength being hereby consumed and wasted, he should be put in danger of his wit or reason.

'Wherefore, we do wholly and most earnestly desire and require your reverences that both for the honour of the safe-conduct of our lord the King, and also for the preservation and increase of the worthy fame and renown both of the kingdom of Bohemia, and your own also, you will make a short end about the affairs of Master John Huss.'

The said barons and lords also presented a supplication unto the emperor: 'We most humbly require and desire your princely majesty, that you would interpose your good offices with the said most reverend fathers and lords, that they may effectually hear us in this our just petition.'

But what answer the emperor made hereunto, we could never understand or know; but by the process of the matter a man may easily judge, that this good emperor was led even unto this point, through the obstinate mischief of the cardinals and bishops, to break and falsify his promise and faith: and this was their reason whereby he was driven thereunto,

that no defence could or might be given either by safe-conduct, or by any other means, unto him who was suspected or judged to be a heretic.

When John Huss was brought forth again before the whole assembly, a strange and shameful matter brought forth a few witnesses, but, as he was about to open his mouth to answer, all this mad herd began so to cry out upon him, that he had not leisure to speak one only word. The noise and trouble was so great and so vehement, that a man might well have called it a bruit of wild beasts, and not of men; much less was it to be judged a congregation of men gathered together, to determine so grave and weighty matters.

Some did outrage in words against him, and others spitefully mocked him; so that he, seeing himself overwhelmed with these rude and barbarous noises, and that it profited nothing to speak, determined finally with himself to hold his peace. From that time forward, all the whole rout of his adversaries thought that they had won the battle of him, and cried out all together; 'Now he is dumb: this is a certain sign and token, that he doth consent and agree unto these his errors.' Finally, the matter came to this point, that certain of the most moderate and honest among them, seeing this disorder, determined to proceed no further, but that all should be put off until another time. Through their advice, the prelates and others parted from the Council for that present, and appointed to meet there again on the day after the morrow, to proceed in judgment.

On that day, which was the seventh of June, somewhere about seven of the clock, the sun a little before having been almost wholly eclipsed, this same flock assembled in the cloister of the friars minor, and by their appointment John Huss was brought before them, accompanied with a great number of armed men. Thither went also the emperor, whom the noble men, Lords Wenceslaus de Duba and John de Clum, did follow, to see what the end would be.

Then was read a certain article of accusation, in the which it was alleged, that John Huss had taught, and obstinately defended, certain erroneous articles of Wickliffe's. To confirm their article, there was alleged that John Huss did withstand the condemnation of Wickliffe's articles, the which had been first made at Rome. And afterward also, when the Archbishop of Prague, with other learned men, held a convocation at Prague for the same matter, he answered, that he durst not agree thereunto, for offending of his conscience, and especially for these articles: that Silvester the Pope, and Constantine, did err in bestowing great gifts and rewards upon the Church: also that the Pope or priest, being in mortal sin, cannot consecrate nor baptize. 'This article, said Huss, 'I have thus limited, so as I should say, that he doth unworthily consecrate or baptize, for that, when he is in deadly sin, he is an unworthy minister of the sacraments of God.' He did not consent that Wickliffe's articles should be condemned, before sufficient reasons were alleged out of the holy Scripture for their condemnation.

'And of the same mind,' saith John Huss, 'are a great many other doctors and masters of the University of Prague; for when Sbinco the archbishop commanded all Wickliffe's books to be gathered together in the whole city of Prague, and to be brought unto him, I myself brought also certain books of Wickliffe's which I gave unto the archbishop, desiring him, that if he found any error or heresy in them, he would note and mark them, and I myself would publish them openly. But the archbishop, albeit that he showed me no error nor heresy in them, burned my books, together with those that were brought unto him. He obtained a bull from the Pope that all Wickliffe's books, for the manifold errors contained in them (whereof there were none named), should be taken out of all men's

hands. The Archbishop, using the authority of this bull, thought that he should bring to pass, that the King of Bohemia and the nobles should consent to the condemnation of Wickliffe's books; but therein he was deceived. Yet nevertheless, calling together certain divines, he gave them in commission to sit by a definitive sentence in the canon law. These men, by a general sentence, judged all those books worthy to be burned; which when the doctors, masters and scholars of the University heard report of, they, all together, with one consent and accord (none excepted by only they, who before were chosen by the archbishop to sit in judgment), determined to make supplication unto the King to stay the matter. The King, granting their request, sent by and by certain unto the archbishop to examine the matter. There he denied that he would decree anything, as touching Wickliffe's books, contrary unto the King's will and pleasure. Whereupon, albeit that he had determined to burn them the next day after, yet for fear of the King, the matter was passed over. In the meantime, Pope Alexander V. being dead, the archbishop, fearing lest the bull which he had received of the Pope, would be no longer of any force or effect, privily calling unto him his adherents, and shutting the gates of his court round about him, being guarded with a number of armed soldiers, consumed and burned all Wickliffe's books. Besides this great injury, the archbishop by means of this bull aforesaid, committed another no less intolerable; for he gave commandment, that no man after that time, under pain of excommunication, should teach any more in chapels. Whereupon I did appeal unto the Pope; who being dead, and the cause of my matter remaining undetermined, I appealed likewise unto his successor John XXIII.: before whom when, by the space of two years, I could not be admitted by my advocates to defend my cause, I appealed unto the high judge Christ.'

When John Huss had spoken these words, it was demanded of him, whether he had received absolution of the Pope or no? Whereunto John Huss answered: 'Verily I do affirm here before you all, that there is no more just or effectual appeal, than that appeal which is made unto Christ, forasmuch as the law doth determine, that to appeal, is no other thing than in cause of grief or wrong done by an inferior judge, to implore and require aid and remedy at a higher judge's hand. Who is then a higher judge than Christ? Who, I say, can know or judge the matter more justly, or with more equity? When in Him there is found no deceit, neither can He be deceived; or, who can better help the miserable and oppressed than He?' While John Huss, with a devout and sober countenance, was speaking and pronouncing those words, he was derided and mocked by all the whole Council.

Then was there rehearsed another article of his accusation in this manner; that John Huss, to confirm the heresy which he had taught the common people out of Wickliffe's books, said that he wished his soul to be in the same place where John Wickliffe's soul was. Whereunto John Huss answered, that a dozen years before any books of divinity of John Wickliffe's were in Bohemia, he did see certain works of philosophy of his, which, he said did marvelously delight and please him. And when he understood the good and godly life of the said Wickliffe, he spake these words.

This done, the said John Huss was committed to the custody of the Archbishop of Riga. But before he was led away, the Cardinal of Cambray, calling him back again in the presence of the emperor, said, 'John Huss, I have heard you say, that if you had not been willing of your own mind to come unto Constance, neither the emperor himself, nor the King of Bohemia, could have compelled you to do it.'

Unto whom John Huss answered: 'Under your license, most reverend father! I did say, that there were in Bohemia a great number of gentlemen and noblemen, who did favour and love me, who also might easily have kept me in some sure and secret place, that I should not have been constrained to come unto this town of Constance, neither at the will of the emperor, neither of the King of Bohemia.'

With that the Cardinal of Cambray even for very anger began to change his colour, and despitefully said: 'Do you not see the unshamefastness of the man here?'

And as they were murmuring and whispering on all parts, the Lord John de Clum, ratifying and confirming that which John Huss had spoken, said, that John Huss had spoken very well; 'for on my part' said he, 'who in comparison of a great many others, am but of small force in the realm of Bohemia, yet always, if I would have taken it in hand, I could have defended him easily by the space of one year, even against all the force and power of both these great and mighty kings. How much better might they have done it who are of more force or puissance than I am, and have stronger castles and places than I have?'

After the Lord de Clum had spoken, the Cardinal of Cambray said, 'Let us leave this talk; and I tell you, John Huss! And counsel you, that you submit yourself unto the sentence and mind of the Council, as you did promise in the prison; and if you will do so, it shall be greatly both for your profit and honour.'

And the emperor himself began to tell him the same tale, saying, 'forasmuch as divers have told us, that we may not, or ought not, of right to defend any man who is a heretic, or suspected of heresy; therefore, now, we give you counsel that you be not obstinate to maintain any opinion, but that you do submit yourself unto the authority of the holy Council, which thing if you do, we will give order with an easy penance. Which thing if you, contrariwise, refuse to do, the presidents of the Council shall proceed against you. And, for our part, be ye well assured, that we will sooner make the fire with our own hands, to burn you withal, than we will suffer any longer that you shall maintain or use this stiffness of opinions, which you have hitherto used.'

The morrow after, which was the eighth day of June, the company assembled at the convent of the Franciscans. Thither was John Huss brought; and in his presence there were read the articles, which they said, were drawn out of his books. Huss acknowledged all those that were faithfully and truly collected and gathered, to be his; of which sort there were but very few.

The Articles drawn from the books of John Huss, with his Answers to the same.

'Peter never was, neither is the head of the holy universal Church.'

Answer. This article was drawn out of these words of my book: 'All men do agree in this point, that Peter had received of the Rock of the Church (which is Christ), humility, poverty, steadfastness of faith, and consequently blessedness. Not as though the meaning of our Lord Jesus Christ was, when He said, "Upon this Rock I will build My Church," that He would build every militant Church upon the person of Peter, for Christ should build His church upon the Rock which is Christ Himself, from whence Peter received his steadfastness of faith, forasmuch as Jesus Christ is the only head and foundation of every church, and not Peter.'

‘If he that is called the vicar of Jesus Christ, do follow Christ in his life, then he is his true vicar. But, if so be he do walk in contrary paths and ways, then is he the messenger of Antichrist, and the enemy and adversary of St. Peter, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, and also the vicar of Judas Iscariot.’

Answer. The words of my book are these: ‘If he who is called the vicar of St. Peter, walk in the ways of Christian virtues aforesaid, we do believe verily that he is the true vicar, and true Bishop of the Church which he ruleth; but if he walk in contrary paths and ways, then is he the messenger of Antichrist, contrary both to St. Peter, and to our Lord Jesus Christ. And therefore St. Bernard, in his fourth book, did write in this sort unto Pope Eugene: “Thou delightest and walkest in great pride and arrogancy, being gorgeously and sumptuously arrayed; what fruit or profit do thy flock or sheep receive by thee? If I durst say it, these be rather the pastures and feedings of devils than of sheep. St. Peter and St. Paul did not so; wherefore thou seemest by these thy doings to succeed Constantine, and not St. Peter.”’ It followeth after, in my book, ‘That if the manner and fashion of his life and living be contrary to that which St. Peter used, or that he be given to avarice and covetousness, then is he the vicar of Judas Iscariot, who loved and chose the reward of iniquity, and did set out to sell the Lord Jesus Christ.’

‘The papal dignity hath his original from the Emperors of Rome.’

Answer: Mark well what my words are: ‘The pre-eminence and institution of the Pope is sprung and come of the emperor’s power and authority; for Constantine granted this privilege unto the Bishop of Rome, and others after him confirmed the same: that like as Augustus, for the outward and temporal goods bestowed upon the Church, is counted always the most high King above all others; so the Bishop of Rome should be called the principal father above all other bishops.’

‘Noman would reasonably affirm (without revelation) either of himself or of any other, that he is the head of any particular Church.’

Answer. I confess it to be written in my book.

‘The Pope’s power as vicar is but vain and nothing worth, if he do not confirm and address his life according to Jesus Christ, and follow the manners of St. Peter.’

Answer. It is thus in my book; ‘That it is meet and expedient that he who is ordained vicar, should address and frame himself, in manners and conditions, to the authority of Him who did put him in place.’

‘The cardinals are not the manifest and true successors of the other apostles of Jesus Christ, if they live not according to the fashion of the apostles, keeping the commandments and ordinances of the Lord Jesus.’

Answer. It is thus written in my book.

‘A heretic ought not to be committed to the secular powers to be put to death, for it is sufficient only that he abide and suffer the ecclesiastical censure.’

Answer. These are my words, ‘They might be ashamed of their cruel sentence and judgment, especially forasmuch as Jesus Christ, Bishop both of the Old and New Testament, would not judge such as were disobedient by civil judgment, neither condemn them to bodily death.’ A heretic ought first to be instructed and taught with Christian love and gentleness by the holy Scriptures. But if there were any, who, after gentle and loving admonitions and instructions, would not cease from their stiffness of opinions, but obstinately resist against the truth, such, I say, ought to suffer corporal or bodily punishment.

As soon as John Huss had a spoken those things, the judges read in his book a certain clause, wherein he seemed grievously to inveigh against them who delivered a heretic unto the secular power, not being confuted o convicted of heresy: and compared them unto the high priests, Scribes and Pharisees, who said unto Pilate, 'It is not lawful for us to put a man to death,' and delivered Christ unto him: and yet notwithstanding, according unto Christ's own witness, they were greater murderers than Pilate. 'For he,' said Christ, 'who hath delivered Me unto thee, hath committed the greatest offence.' Then he said, 'All those who deliver up any innocent unto the civil sword, as the Scribes and Pharisees delivered Jesus Christ unto Pilate.'

He that is excommunicated by the Pope, if he refuse and forsake the judgment of the Pope and the General Council, and appealeth unto Jesus Christ, after he hath made his appellation, all the excommunications and curses of the Pope cannot annoy or hurt him.'

Answer. I did make my complaint in my book, that they had both done me, and such as favoured me, great wrong; and that they refuse to hear me in the Pope's court. For after the death of one Pope, I did appeal to his successor, and all that did profit me nothing. And, therefore, last of all, I have appealed to the head of the Church, my Lord Jesus Christ; for He is much more excellent and better than any Pope, to discuss and determine matters and causes, forasmuch as He cannot err, neither yet deny justice to him that doth ask or require it in a just cause; neither can He condemn the innocent.

'The minister of Christ, living according to His law, and having the knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures, and an earnest desire to edify the people, ought to preach; notwithstanding the pretended excommunication of the Pope. And moreover, if the Pope, or any other ruler, do forbid any priest or minister, so disposed, to preach, that he ought not to obey him.'

Answer. These are my words: 'That albeit the excommunication were either threatened or come out against him, in such sort that a Christian ought not to do the commandments of Christ, it appeareth by the words of St. Peter, and the other apostles, that we ought rather to obey God than man.' Whereupon it followeth, that the minister of Christ, living according unto this law, ought to preach, notwithstanding any pretended excommunication; for God hath commanded us to preach and testify unto the people. Whereby it is evident, that if the Pope, or any other ruler of the Church, do command any minister disposed to preach, not to preach, they ought not to obey him.'

They objected unto him, that he had said, that such kind of excommunications were rather blessings.

'Verily,' said John Huss, 'even so I do now say again, that every excommunication, by which a man is unjustly excommunicated, is unto him a blessing before God. No Christian ought to doubt, but that a man sufficiently instructed in learning is more bound to counsel and instruct the ignorant, to teach those who are in doubt, to chastise those who are unruly, and to remit and forgive those that do him injury, than to do any other works of mercy.'

'There is no spark of appearance, that there ought to be one head in the spirituality, to rule the Church, which should be always conversant with the militant Church.'

Answer. I do grant it. Christ is the Head of the spirituality, ruling and governing the militant Church by much more and greater necessity than Caesar ought to rule the temporalty; forasmuch as Christ Who sitteth on the right hand of God the Father, doth necessarily rule and militant Church as head.

‘Christ would better rule His Church by His true apostles, dispersed throughout the whole world, without such monstrous heads.’

Answer. It is in my book as here followeth: We do verily believe that Christ Jesus is the head over every Church, ruling the same without lack or default, pouring upon the same a continual motion and sense. The Church, in the time of the apostles, was far better ruled and governed than now is. And what doth hinder, that Christ should not now rule the same better by His true disciples, without such monstrous heads as have been of late?

When the articles were read over, together with their testimonies, the Cardinal of Cambray calling unto John Huss, said: ‘Thou hast heard what grievous and horrible crimes are laid against thee, and what a number of them there are; and now it is thy part to devise with thyself what thou wilt do. Two ways are set before thee by the Council. First, that thou do meekly submit thyself unto the judgment of the Council, that whatsoever shall be there determined, thou wilt patiently bear, and suffer the same. Which thing if thou wilt do, we will treat and handle thee with as great humanity, love, and gentleness, as we may. But if as yet thou art determined to defend any of those articles which we have propounded unto thee, and dost desire or require to be further heard thereupon, we will not deny thee power and license thereunto: but this thou shalt well understand, that here are such manner of men, so clear in understanding and knowledge, and having such firm and strong reasons and arguments against thy articles, that I fear it will be to thy great hurt, detriment and peril.’

Unto whom, with a lowly countenance, John Huss answered: Most reverend fathers! I have often said that I came hither of mine own free will, not to the intent obstinately to defend anything, but that if in anything I should seem to have conceived a perverse or evil opinion, I would meekly and patiently be content to be reformed and taught. Whereupon I desire that I may have yet further liberty to declare my mind; whereof, except I shall allege most firm and strong reasons, I will willingly submit myself, as you require.’

Then said the Cardinal of Cambray: ‘Forasmuch, then, as thou dost submit thyself unto the grace of this Council, this is decreed – First, that thou shalt humbly and meekly confess thyself to have erred in these articles which are alleged and brought against thee: Secondly, that thou shalt promise by an oath, that from henceforth thou shalt not hold, or teach, any of these articles: And last of all, that thou shalt openly recant all these articles.’

Upon which sentence, when many others had spoken their minds at length, John Huss said: ‘I most humbly desire you all, even for His sake Who is the God of us all, that I be not compelled to do the thing which my conscience doth strive against, or which I cannot do without danger of eternal damnation: that is, that I should make revocation, by oath, to all the articles which are alleged against me. But if there by any man who can teach me contrariwise unto them, I will willingly perform that which you desire.’

Then said the Cardinal of Florence, ‘John Huss, you shall have a form of abjuration, which shall be gentle, and tolerable enough, written and delivered unto you, and then you will easily and soon determine with yourself, whether you will do it or no.’

But John Huss constantly answered as before, insomuch that they said he was obstinate and stubborn. Thus they were all so grievous and troublesome unto him tht he

waxed faint and weary, for he had passed all the night before without sleep, through the pain of his teeth.

The Archbishop of Riga, unto whom John Huss was committed, commanded, that he should be carried again safely to prison. Then John de Clum following him, did not a little comfort him. No tongue can express what courage he received by the short talk which he had with him, when, in so great a broil and grievous hatred, he saw himself forsaken of all men.

After that John Huss was carried away, the emperor began to exhort the presidents of the Council in this manner following: 'You have heard the manifold and grievous crimes which are laid against John Huss, which are not only proved by manifest and strong witnesses, but also confessed by him; of which, every one of them, by my judgment and advice, hath deserved and is worthy of death. Therefore, except he do repent them all, I judge and think meet that he be punished with fire.'

The day before his condemnation, which was the sixth of July, the Emperor Sigismund sent unto him four bishops, accompanied with Lords Wenceslaus de Duba and John de Clum, that they should learn of him what he did intend to do.

When he was brought out of prison unto them, John de Clum began first to speak unto him, saying, 'Master John Huss, I am a man unlearned, neither am I able to counsel you, being a man of understanding: notwithstanding I do require you, if you know yourself guilty of any of those errors which are laid against you, that you will not be ashamed to alter your mind: if contrariwise, I would not that you should do anything against your conscience, but rather suffer any punishment, than deny that which you have known to be the truth.'

Unto whom John Huss, turning himself, with lamentable tears said: 'Verily, I do take the Most High God for my witness, that I am ready with my heart and mind, if the Council can teach me any better by the holy Scripture, to alter my purpose.'

Then one of the bishops who sat by, said unto him, that he would never be so arrogant, that he would prefer his own mind before the judgment of the whole Council.

To whom John Huss answered; 'If he who is the least in all this Council can convict me of error, I will, with an humble heart and mind, perform whatsoever the Council shall require of me.'

'Mark,' said the bishops, 'how obstinately he doth persevere in his errors.'

And when they had thus talked, they commanded the keepers to carry him again to prison.

The next day after, which as Saturday, the sixth day of July, there was a general session holden of the princes and lords, both of the ecclesiastical and temporal estates, in the head church of the city of Constance, the Emperor Sigismund being president in his imperial robes and habit; in the midst whereof there was made a certain high place, being square about like a table, and hard by it there was a desk of wood, on which the vestment pertaining unto priesthood were laid for this cause, that before John Huss should be delivered over unto the civil power, he should be openly spoiled of his priestly ornaments.

When John Huss was brought thither, he fell down upon his knees and prayed a long time.

The proctor of the Council required that they might proceed unto the definitive sentence. Then a certain bishop, who was appointed one of the judges, repeated those

articles which we have before remembered. John Huss went about briefly, with a word or two, to answer unto every one of them; but as often as he was about to speak, the Cardinal of Cambray commanded him to hold his peace, saying, 'Hereafter you shall answer all together, if you will.' Then said John Huss: 'How can I at once answer all these things which are alleged against me, when I cannot remember them all?' Then said the Cardinal of Florence: 'We have heard thee sufficiently.'

But when John Huss, for all that, would not hold his peace, they sent the officers who should force him thereunto. Then began he to entreat, pray, and beseech them, that they would hear him, that such as were present might not credit or believe those things to be true which were reported of him. But when all this would nothing prevail, he, kneeling down upon his knees, committed the whole matter unto God, and the Lord Jesus Christ. 'O Lord Jesu Christ! Whose Word is openly condemned here in this Council, unto Thee again I do appeal, Who, when Thou was evil entreated of Thine enemies, didst appeal unto God Thy Father, committing Thy cause unto a most just Judge; that by Thy example, we also being oppressed with manifest wrongs and injuries, should flee unto Thee.'

When he had spoken these words, one of them, who was appointed judge, read the definitive sentence against him:

'Forasmuch as one John Huss, the disciple of John Wickliffe, hath taught, preached, and affirmed the articles of Wickliffe, which were condemned by the Church of God; especially resisting in his open sermons, and also with his adherents and accomplices in the schools, the condemnation of the said articles of Wickliffe, and hath declared him, the said Wickliffe, for the favour and commendation of his doctrine, before the whole multitude of the clergy and people to be a catholic man, and a true evangelical doctor.

'Wherefore, this most sacred and holy Council of Constance, doth condemn and reprove all those books which the said John Huss wrote; and doth decree, that they all shall be solemnly and openly burned in the presence of the clergy and people of the city of Constance, and elsewhere; adding, moreover, that all his doctrine is worthy to be despised and eschewed of all faithful Christians. This sacred Synod doth straitly command, that diligent inquisition be made for such treatises and works; and that such as are found, be consumed with fire.

'Wherefore, this most sacred and holy Synod, determineth, pronounceth, declareth, and decreeth that John Huss was and is a true and manifest heretic, and that he hath preached openly errors and heresies, despising the keys of the Church, and ecclesiastical censures. In the which his error, he hath continued with a mind altogether indurate and hardened by the space of many years, much offending the faithful Christians by his obstinacy and stubbornness, when he made his appeal unto the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Most High Judge.

'Whereupon the said Synod judgeth him to be condemned as a heretic; and reproveth the said appeal as injurious, offensive, and done in derision unto the ecclesiastical jurisdiction; and judgeth the said Huss not only to have seduced the Christian people by his writings and preachings, neither to have been a true preacher of the Gospel of Christ, but also to have been an obstinate and stiffnecked person, such a one as doth not desire to return again to the lap of our holy mother the Church, neither to abjure the errors and heresies which he hath openly preached and defended. Wherefore this most sacred

Council decreeth that the said John Huss shall be deposed and degraded from his priestly orders and dignity.'

While these things were thus read, John Huss, albeit he as forbidden to speak, notwithstanding, did often interrupt them; and especially when he was reprov'd of obstinacy, he said with a loud voice:

I was never obstinate, but, as always heretofore, even so now again I desire to be taught by the holy Scriptures.' When his books were condemned, he said, 'Wherefore have you condemned those books, when you have not proved that they are contrary to the Scriptures?' And oftentimes looking up unto heaven, he prayed.

When the sentence and judgment were ended, kneeling down upon his knees, he said: 'Lord Jesus Christ! Forgive mine enemies, by whom Thou knowest that I am falsely accused, and that they have used false witness and slanders against me; forgive them, I say, for Thy great mercy's sake.' This his prayer, the greater part, and especially the chief of the priests, did deride and mock.

At last the seven bishops who were chosen out to degrade him of his priesthood, commanded him to put on the garments pertaining unto priesthood. When he came to the putting on of the albe, he called to his remembrance the white vesture which Herod put on Jesus Christ to mock Him withal. So, likewise, in all other things he did comfort himself by the example of Christ. When he had now put on all his priestly vestures, the bishops exhorted him that he should yet alter his purpose, and provide for his honour and salvation. Then he, being full of tears, spake unto the people in this sort.

'These lords and bishops do exhort and counsel me, that I should here confess before you all that I have erred; which thing o do, if it were such as might be done with the infamy and reproach of man only, they might peradventure easily persuade me thereunto; but now truly I am in the sight of the Lord my God, without Whose great ignominy and grudge of mine own conscience, I can by no means do that which they require of me. With what countenance then should I behold the heavens? With what face should I look upon them whom I have taught, whereof there is a great number, if, through me, it should come to pass that those things, which they have hitherto known to be most certain and sure, should now be made uncertain? Should I, by this my example, astonish or trouble so many souls, so many consciences, endued with the most firm and certain knowledge of the Scriptures and Gospel of our Lord Jesu Christ and His most pure doctrine, armed against all the assaults of Satan? I will never do it, neither commit any such kind of offence, that I should seem more to esteem this vile carcass appointed unto death, than their health and salvation.'

Then one of the bishops took away the chalice from him which he held in his hand, saying: 'O cursed Judas! Why hast thou forsaken the counsel and ways of peace? We take away from thee this chalice of thy salvation.'

But John Huss received this curse in this manner: 'I trust unto God, the Father omnipotent, and my Lord Jesus Christ, for Whose sake I do suffer these things, that He will not take away the chalice of His redemption, but have a steadfast and firm hope that this day I shall drink thereof in His kingdom'

Then followed the other bishops in order, who every one of them took away the vestments from him which they had put on, each one of them giving him their curse. Whereunto John Huss answered: that he did willingly embrace and hear those blasphemies for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

At last they came to the razing of his shaven crown; but before the bishops would goin hand with it, there was a great contention between them, with what instrument it should be done; with a razor, or with a pair of shears. In the mean season, John Huss, turning himself toward the emperor, said: 'I marvel that forasmuch as they be all of like cruel mind, yet they cannot agree upon their kind of cruelty.' At last they agreed to cut off the skin of the crown of his head with a pair of shears.

And when they had done that, they added these words: 'Now hath the Church taken away all her ornaments and privileges from him. Now there resteth nothing else but that he be delivered over unto the secular power.'

But before they did that, there yet remained another knack of reproach; for they caused to be made a certain crown of paper, almost a cubit deep, on which were painted three devils of wonderfully ugly shape, and this title set over their heads, 'Heresiarcha.' Which when he saw, he said: 'My Lord Jesus Christ, for my sake, did wear a crown of thorns; why should not I then, for His sake, again wear this light crown, be it ever so ignominious? Truly I will do it, and that willingly.' When it was set upon his head, the bishop said: 'Now we commit thy soul unto the devil.' 'But I,' said John Huss, lifting his eyes up towards the heavens, 'do commend into Thy hands, O Lord Jesu Christ! My spirit which Thou hast redeemed.'

Then the emperor commanded Louis, Duke of Bavaria, who stood before him in his robes, holding the golden apple with the cross in his hand, that he should receive John Huss of the bishops, and deliver him unto them who should do the execution; by whom as he was led to the place of execution, before the church doors he saw his books burning, whereat he smiled and laughed. And all men that passed by he exhorted, not to thin that he should die for any error or heresy, but only for the hatred and ill-will of his adversaries, who had charged him with most false and unjust crimes. All the whole city in a manner, being in armour, followed him.

The place appointed for the execution was before the Gottlieben gate, between the gardens and the gates of the suburbs. When John Huss was come thither, kneeling down upon his knees, and lifting his eyes up unto heaven, he prayed, and said certain Psalms, and especially the thirty-first and fifty-first Psalms. And they who stood hard by, heard him oftentimes in his prayer, with a merry and cheerful countenance, repeat this verse: 'Into Thy hands, O Lord! I commend my spirit,' which thing when the lay-people beheld who stood next unto him, they said: 'What he hath done before, we know not; but now we see and hear that he doth speak and pray very devoutly and godly.' A certain priest sitting on horseback, in a green gown, drawn about with red silk, said: 'He ought not to be heard, because he is a heretic.' In the meantime, while John Huss prayed, as he bowed his neck backwards to look upward unto heaven, the crown of paper fell off from his head upon the ground. Then one of the soldiers, taking it up again, said: 'Let us put it again upon his head, that he may be burned with his masers the devils, whom he hath served.'

When, by the commandment of the tormentors, he was risen up from the place of his prayer, with a loud voice he said: 'Lord Jesu Christ! Help me, that with a constant and patient mind, I may suffer this cruel and ignominious death, whereunto I am condemned for the preaching of Thy most Holy Gospel and word.' Then, as before, he declared the cause of his death unto the people. In the mean season the hangman stripped him of his garments, and turning his hands behind his back, tied him fast unto the stake with ropes

that were made wet. And whereas, by chance, he was turned towards the east, certain cried out that he should not look towards the east, for he was a heretic: so he was turned towards the west. Then was his neck tied with a chain unto the stake, which chain when he beheld, smiling he said, that he would willingly receive the same for Jesus Christ's sake, Who, he knew, was bound with a far worse chain. Under his feet they set two faggots, admixing straw withal, and so from the feet up to the chin, he was enclosed round about with wood.

But before the wood was set on fire, Louis, Duke of Bavaria, and another gentleman with him, who was the son of Clement, came and exhorted John Huss, that he would yet be mindful of his salvation, and renounce his errors. To whom he said: 'What error should I renounce, when I know myself guilty of none? For this was the principal end and purpose of my doctrine, that I might teach all men repentance and remission of sins, according to the verity of the gospel of Jesus Christ: wherefore, with a cheerful mind and courage, I am here ready to suffer death.' When he had spoken these words, they left him, and shaking hands together, departed.

Then was the fire kindled, and John Huss began to sing with a loud voice: 'Jesu Christ! The Son of the living God! have mercy upon me.' And when he began to say the same the third time, the wind drove the flame so upon his face, that it choked him. Yet, notwithstanding, he moved awhile after, by the space that a man might almost say three times the Lord's Prayer. When all the wood was consumed, the upper part of the body was left hanging in the chain, which they threw down stake and all, and making a new fire, burned it, the head being first cut in small gobbets, that it might the sooner be consumed unto ashes. The heart, which was found amongst the bowels, being well beaten with staves and clubs, was a last pricked upon a sharp stick, and roasted at a fire apart until it was consumed. Then, with great diligence gathering the ashes together, they cast them into the river Rhine, that the least remnant of that man should not be left upon the earth, whose memory, notwithstanding, cannot be abolished out of the minds of the godly, neither by fire, neither by water, neither by any kind of torment.

This godly servant and martyr of Christ was burned at Constance, the sixth day of the month of July, A.D. 1415.

Source: Library of Congress, Rare Book Collection.