

**J. E. HUTTON**



***A HISTORY  
OF THE MORAVIAN  
CHURCH***

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# PREFACE.

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For assistance in the preparation of this second edition, I desire herewith to express my obligations to several friends:—To the late Rev. L. G. Hassé, B.D., whose knowledge of Moravian history was profound, and who guided me safely in many matters of detail; to the Rev. N. Libbey, M.A., Principal of the Moravian Theological College, Fairfield, for the loan of valuable books; to the Rev. J. T. Müller, D.D., Archivist at Herrnhut, for revising part of the MS., and for many helpful suggestions; to Mr. W. T. Waugh, M.A., for assistance in correcting the proof-sheets, and for much valuable criticism; to the members of the Moravian Governing Board, not only for the loan of books and documents from the Fetter Lane archives, but also for carefully reading through the MS.; to the ministers who kindly supplied my pulpit for three months; and last, but not least, to the members of my own congregation, who relieved me from some pastoral duties to enable me to make good speed with my task.

MORAVIAN MANSE, HECKMONDWIKE.

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# **BOOK ONE. THE BOHEMIAN BRETHREN.**

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# CHAPTER I—THE RISING STORM.

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When an ordinary Englishman, in the course of his reading, sees mention made of Moravians, he thinks forthwith of a foreign land, a foreign people and a foreign Church. He wonders who these Moravians may be, and wonders, as a rule, in vain. We have all heard of the Protestant Reformation; we know its principles and admire its heroes; and the famous names of Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, Latimer, Cranmer, Knox and other great men are familiar in our ears as household words. But few people in this country are aware of the fact that long before Luther had burned the Pope's bull, and long before Cranmer died at the stake, there had begun an earlier Reformation, and flourished a Reforming Church. It is to tell the story of that Church—the Church of the Brethren—that this little book is written.

For her cradle and her earliest home we turn to the distressful land of Bohemia, and the people called Bohemians, or Czechs. To us English readers Bohemia has many charms. As we call to mind our days at school, we remember, in a dim and hazy way, how famous Bohemians in days of yore have played some part in our national story. We have sung the praises at Christmas time of the Bohemian Monarch, "Good King Wenceslaus." We have read how John, the blind King of Bohemia, fell mortally wounded at the Battle of Crecy, how he died in the tent of King Edward III., and how his generous conqueror exclaimed: "The crown of chivalry has fallen today; never was the like of this King of Bohemia." We have all read, too, how Richard II. married Princess Anne of Bohemia; how the Princess, so the story goes, brought a Bohemian Bible to England; how

Bohemian scholars, a few years later, came to study at Oxford; how there they read the writings of Wycliffe, the "Morning Star of the Reformation"; and how, finally, copies of Wycliffe's books were carried to Bohemia, and there gave rise to a religious revival of world-wide importance. We have struck the trail of our journey. For one person that Wycliffe stirred in England, he stirred hundreds in Bohemia. In England his influence was fleeting; in Bohemia it was deep and abiding. In England his followers were speedily suppressed by law; in Bohemia they became a great national force, and prepared the way for the foundation of the Church of the Brethren.

For this startling fact there was a very powerful reason. In many ways the history of Bohemia is very like the history of Ireland, and the best way to understand the character of the people is to think of our Irish friends as we know them today. They sprang from the old Slavonic stock, and the Slavonic is very like the Keltic in nature. They had fiery Slavonic blood in their veins, and Slavonic hearts beat high with hope in their bosoms. They had all the delightful Slavonic zeal, the Slavonic dash, the Slavonic imagination. They were easy to stir, they were swift in action, they were witty in speech, they were mystic and poetic in soul, and, like the Irish of the present day, they revelled in the joy of party politics, and discussed religious questions with the keenest zest. With them religion came first and foremost. All their poetry was religious; all their legends were religious; and thus the message of Wycliffe fell on hearts prepared to give it a kindly welcome.

Again, Bohemia, like Ireland, was the home of two rival populations. The one was the native Czech, the other was the intruding German; and the two had not yet learned to love each other. From all sides except one these German invaders had come. If the reader will consult a map of Europe he will see that, except on the south-east frontier,

where the sister country, Moravia, lies, Bohemia is surrounded by German-speaking States. On the north-east is Silesia, on the north-west Saxony, on the west Bavaria and the Upper Palatinate, and thus Bohemia was flooded with Germans from three sides at once. For years these Germans had been increasing in power, and the whole early history of Bohemia is one dreary succession of bloody wars against German Emperors and Kings. Sometimes the land had been ravaged by German soldiers, sometimes a German King had sat on the Bohemian throne. But now the German settlers in Bohemia had become more powerful than ever. They had settled in large numbers in the city of Prague, and had there obtained special privileges for themselves. They had introduced hundreds of German clergymen, who preached in the German language. They had married their daughters into noble Bohemian families. They had tried to make German the language of the court, had spoken with contempt of the Bohemian language, and had said that it was only fit for slaves. They had introduced German laws into many a town, and German customs into family life; and, worse than all, they had overwhelming power in that pride of the country, the University of Prague. For these Germans the hatred of the people was intense. "It is better," said one of their popular writers, "for the land to be a desert than to be held by Germans; it is better to marry a Bohemian peasant girl than to marry a German queen." And Judas Iscariot himself, said a popular poet, was in all probability a German.

Again, as in Ireland, these national feuds were mixed up with religious differences. The seeds of future strife were early sown. Christianity came from two opposite sources. On the one hand, two preachers, Cyril and Methodius, had come from the Greek Church in Constantinople, had received the blessing of the Pope, and had preached to the people in the Bohemian language; on the other, the German

Archbishop of Salzburg had brought in hosts of German priests, and had tried in vain to persuade the Pope to condemn the two preachers as heretics. And the people loved the Bohemian preachers, and hated the German priests. The old feud was raging still. If the preacher spoke in German, he was hated; if he spoke in Bohemian, he was beloved; and Gregory VII. had made matters worse by forbidding preaching in the language of the people.

The result can be imagined. It is admitted now by all historians—Catholic and Protestant alike—that about the time when our story opens the Church in Bohemia had lost her hold upon the affections of the people. It is admitted that sermons the people could understand were rare. It is admitted that the Bible was known to few, that the services held in the parish churches had become mere senseless shows, and that most of the clergy never preached at all. No longer were the clergy examples to their flocks. They hunted, they gambled, they caroused, they committed adultery, and the suggestion was actually solemnly made that they should be provided with concubines.

For some years a number of pious teachers had made gallant but vain attempts to cleanse the stables. The first was Conrad of Waldhausen, an Augustinian Friar (1364-9). As this man was a German and spoke in German, it is not likely that he had much effect on the common people, but he created quite a sensation in Prague, denounced alike the vices of the clergy and the idle habits of the rich, persuaded the ladies of high degree to give up their fine dresses and jewels, and even caused certain well-known sinners to come and do penance in public.

The next was Milic of Kremsir (1363-74). He was a Bohemian, and preached in the Bohemian language. His whole life was one of noble self-sacrifice. For the sake of the poor he renounced his position as Canon, and devoted himself entirely to good works. He rescued thousands of

fallen women, and built them a number of homes. He was so disgusted with the evils of his days that he thought the end of the world was close at hand, declared that the Emperor, Charles IV., was Anti-Christ, went to Rome to expound his views to the Pope, and posted up a notice on the door of St. Peter's, declaring that Anti-Christ had come.

The next was that beautiful writer, Thomas of Stitny (1370-1401). He exalted the Holy Scriptures as the standard of faith, wrote several beautiful devotional books, and denounced the immorality of the monks. "They have fallen away from love," he said; "they have not the peace of God in their hearts; they quarrel, condemn and fight each other; they have forsaken God for money."

In some ways these three Reformers were all alike. They were all men of lofty character; they all attacked the vices of the clergy and the luxury of the rich; and they were all loyal to the Church of Rome, and looked to the Pope to carry out the needed reform.

But the next Reformer, Matthew of Janow, carried the movement further (1381-93). The cause was the famous schism in the Papacy. For the long period of nearly forty years (1378-1415) the whole Catholic world was shocked by the scandal of two, and sometimes three, rival Popes, who spent their time abusing and fighting each other. As long as this schism lasted it was hard for men to look up to the Pope as a true spiritual guide. How could men call the Pope the Head of the Church when no one knew which was the true Pope? How could men respect the Popes when some of the Popes were men of bad moral character? Pope Urban VI. was a ferocious brute, who had five of his enemies secretly murdered; Pope Clement VII., his clever rival, was a scheming politician; and Pope John XXIII. was a man whose character will scarcely bear describing in print. Of all the scandals in the Catholic Church, this disgraceful quarrel between rival Popes did most to upset the minds of good

men and to prepare the way for the Reformation. It aroused the scorn of John Wycliffe in England, and of Matthew of Janow in Bohemia. "This schism," he wrote, "has not arisen because the priests loved Jesus Christ and His Church, but rather because they loved themselves and the world."

But Matthew went even further than this. As he did not attack any Catholic dogma—except the worship of pictures and images—it has been contended by some writers that he was not so very radical in his views after all; but the whole tone of his writings shows that he had lost his confidence in the Catholic Church, and desired to revive the simple Christianity of Christ and the Apostles. "I consider it essential," he wrote, "to root out all weeds, to restore the word of God on earth, to bring back the Church of Christ to its original, healthy, condensed condition, and to keep only such regulations as date from the time of the Apostles." "All the works of men," he added, "their ceremonies and traditions, shall soon be totally destroyed; the Lord Jesus shall alone be exalted, and His Word shall stand for ever." Back to Christ! Back to the Apostles! Such was the message of Matthew of Janow.

At this point, when the minds of men were stirred, the writings of Wycliffe were brought to Bohemia, and added fuel to the fire. He had asserted that the Pope was capable of committing a sin. He had declared that the Pope was not to be obeyed unless his commands were in accordance with Scripture, and thus had placed the authority of the Bible above the authority of the Pope. He had attacked the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, and had thus denied the power of the priests "to make the Body of Christ." Above all, in his volume, "De Ecclesia," he had denounced the whole Catholic sacerdotal system, and had laid down the Protestant doctrine that men could come into contact with God without the aid of priests. Thus step by step the way was prepared for the coming revolution in Bohemia. There

was strong patriotic national feeling; there was hatred of the German priests; there was a growing love for the Bible; there was lack of respect for the immoral clergy, and lack of belief in the Popes; there was a vague desire to return to Primitive Christianity; and all that was needed now was a man to gather these straggling beams together, and focus them all in one white burning light.

## CHAPTER II. — THE BURNING OF HUS.

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On Saturday, July 6th, 1415, there was great excitement in the city of Constance. For the last half-year the city had presented a brilliant and gorgeous scene. The great Catholic Council of Constance had met at last. From all parts of the Western World distinguished men had come. The streets were a blaze of colour. The Cardinals rode by in their scarlet hats; the monks in their cowls were telling their beads; the revellers sipped their wine and sang; and the rumbling carts from the country-side bore bottles of wine, cheeses, butter, honey, venison, cakes and fine confections. King Sigismund was there in all his pride, his flaxen hair falling in curls about his shoulders; there were a thousand Bishops, over two thousand Doctors and Masters, about two thousand Counts, Barons and Knights, vast hosts of Dukes, Princes and Ambassadors—in all over 50,000 strangers.

And now, after months of hot debate, the Council met in the great Cathedral to settle once for all the question, What to do with John Hus? King Sigismund sat on the throne, Princes flanking him on either side. In the middle of the Cathedral floor was a scaffold; on the scaffold a table and a block of wood; on the block of wood some priestly robes. The Mass was said. John Hus was led in. He mounted the scaffold. He breathed a prayer. The awful proceedings began.

But why was John Hus there? What had he done to offend both Pope and Emperor? For the last twelve years John Hus had been the boldest reformer, the finest preacher, the most fiery patriot, the most powerful writer, and the most popular hero in Bohemia. At first he was nothing more than a child of his times. He was born on July 6th, 1369, in a

humble cottage at Husinec, in South Bohemia; earned coppers in his youth, like Luther, by chanting hymns; studied at Prague University; and entered the ministry, not because he wanted to do good, but because he wanted to enjoy a comfortable living. He began, of course, as an orthodox Catholic. He was Rector first of Prague University, and then of the Bethlehem Chapel, which had been built by John of Milheim for services in the Bohemian language. For some years he confined himself almost entirely, like Milic and Stitny before him, to preaching of an almost purely moral character. He attacked the sins and vices of all classes; he spoke in the Bohemian language, and the Bethlehem Chapel was packed. He began by attacking the vices of the idle rich. A noble lady complained to the King. The King told the Archbishop of Prague that he must warn Hus to be more cautious in his language.

"No, your Majesty," replied the Archbishop, "Hus is bound by his ordination oath to speak the truth without respect of persons."

John Hus went on to attack the vices of the clergy. The Archbishop now complained to the King. He admitted that the clergy were in need of improvement, but he thought that Hus's language was rash, and would do more harm than good. "Nay," said the King, "that will not do. Hus is bound by his ordination oath to speak the truth without respect of persons."

And Hus continued his attacks. His preaching had two results. It fanned the people's desire for reform, and it taught them to despise the clergy more than ever.

At the same time, when opportunity offered, John Hus made a practice of preaching on the burning topics of the day; and the most popular topic then was the detested power of Germans in Bohemia. German soldiers ravaged the land; German nobles held offices of state; and German scholars, in Prague University, had three-fourths of the

voting power. The Bohemian people were furious. John Hus fanned the flame. "We Bohemians," he declared in a fiery sermon, "are more wretched than dogs or snakes. A dog defends the couch on which he lies. If another dog tries to drive him off, he fights him. A snake does the same. But us the Germans oppress. They seize the offices of state, and we are dumb. In France the French are foremost. In Germany the Germans are foremost. What use would a Bohemian bishop or priest, who did not know the German language, be in Germany? He would be as useful as a dumb dog, who cannot bark, to a flock of sheep. Of exactly the same use are German priests to us. It is against the law of God! I pronounce it illegal." At last a regulation was made by King Wenceslaus that the Bohemians should be more fairly represented at Prague University. They had now three votes out of four. John Hus was credited by the people with bringing about the change. He became more popular than ever.

If Hus had only halted here, it is probable that he would have been allowed to die in peace in his bed in a good old age, and his name would be found enrolled to-day in the long list of Catholic saints. However wicked the clergy may have been, they could hardly call a man a heretic for telling them plainly about the blots in their lives. But Hus soon stepped outside these narrow bounds. The more closely he studied the works of Wycliffe, the more convinced he became that, on the whole, the great English Reformer was right; and before long, in the boldest possible way, he began to preach Wycliffe's doctrines in his sermons, and to publish them in his books. He knew precisely what he was doing. He knew that Wycliffe's doctrines had been condemned by the English Church Council at Black-Friars. He knew that these very same doctrines had been condemned at a meeting of the Prague University Masters. He knew that no fewer than two hundred volumes of Wycliffe's works had been publicly

burned at Prague, in the courtyard of the Archbishop's Palace. He knew, in a word, that Wycliffe was regarded as a heretic; and yet he deliberately defended Wycliffe's teaching. It is this that justifies us in calling him a Protestant, and this that caused the Catholics to call him a heretic.

John Hus, moreover, knew what the end would be. If he stood to his guns they would burn him, and burned he longed to be. The Archbishop forbade him to preach in the Bethlehem Chapel. John Hus, defiant, went on preaching. At one service he actually read to the people a letter he had received from Richard Wyche, one of Wycliffe's followers. As the years rolled on he became more "heterodox" than ever. At this period there were still two rival Popes, and the great question arose in Bohemia which Pope the clergy there were to recognise. John Hus refused to recognise either. At last one of the rival Popes, the immoral John XXIII., sent a number of preachers to Prague on a very remarkable errand. He wanted money to raise an army to go to war with the King of Naples; the King of Naples had supported the other Pope, Gregory XII., and now Pope John sent his preachers to Prague to sell indulgences at popular prices. They entered the city preceded by drummers, and posted themselves in the market place. They had a curious message to deliver. If the good people, said they, would buy these indulgences, they would be doing two good things: they would obtain the full forgiveness of their sins, and support the one lawful Pope in his holy campaign. John Hus was hot with anger. What vulgar traffic in holy things was this? He believed neither in Pope John nor in his indulgences.

"Let who will," he thundered, "proclaim the contrary; let the Pope, or a Bishop, or a Priest say, 'I forgive thee thy sins; I free thee from the pains of Hell.' It is all vain, and helps

thee nothing. God alone, I repeat, can forgive sins through Christ."

The excitement in Prague was furious. From this moment onwards Hus became the leader of a national religious movement. The preachers went on selling indulgences {1409.}. At one and the same time, in three different churches, three young artisans sang out: "Priest, thou liest! The indulgences are a fraud." For this crime the three young men were beheaded in a corner near Green Street. Fond women—sentimental, as usual—dipped their handkerchiefs in the blood of the martyrs, and a noble lady spread fine linen over their corpses. The University students picked up the gauntlet. They seized the bodies of the three young men, and carried them to be buried in the Bethlehem Chapel. At the head of the procession was Hus himself, and Hus conducted the funeral. The whole city was in an uproar.

As the life of Hus was now in danger, and his presence in the city might lead to riots, he retired for a while from Prague to the castle of Kradonec, in the country; and there, besides preaching to vast crowds in the fields, he wrote the two books which did the most to bring him to the stake. The first was his treatise "On Traffic in Holy Things"; the second his great, elaborate work, "The Church."[\[1\]](#) In the first he denounced the sale of indulgences, and declared that even the Pope himself could be guilty of the sin of simony. In the second, following Wycliffe's lead, he criticised the whole orthodox conception of the day of the "Holy Catholic Church." What was, asked Hus, the true Church of Christ? According to the popular ideas of the day, the true Church of Christ was a visible body of men on this earth. Its head was the Pope; its officers were the cardinals, the bishops, the priests, and other ecclesiastics; and its members were those who had been baptized and who kept true to the orthodox faith. The idea of Hus was different. His conception of the nature of the true Church was very similar to that held by

many Non-conformists of to-day. He was a great believer in predestination. All men, he said, from Adam onwards, were divided into two classes: first, those predestined by God to eternal bliss; second, those fore-doomed to eternal damnation. The true Church of Christ consisted of those predestined to eternal bliss, and no one but God Himself knew to which class any man belonged. From this position a remarkable consequence followed. For anything the Pope knew to the contrary, he might belong himself to the number of the damned. He could not, therefore, be the true Head of the Church; he could not be the Vicar of Christ; and the only Head of the Church was Christ Himself. The same argument applied to Cardinals, Bishops and Priests. For anything he knew to the contrary, any Cardinal, Bishop or Priest in the Church might belong to the number of the damned; he might be a servant, not of Christ, but of Anti-Christ; and, therefore, said Hus, it was utterly absurd to look to men of such doubtful character as infallible spiritual guides. What right, asked Hus, had the Pope to claim the "power of the keys?" What right had the Pope to say who might be admitted to the Church? He had no right, as Pope, at all. Some of the Popes were heretics; some of the clergy were villains, foredoomed to torment in Hell; and, therefore, all in search of the truth must turn, not to the Pope and the clergy, but to the Bible and the law of Christ. God alone had the power of the keys; God alone must be obeyed; and the Holy Catholic Church consisted, not of the Pope, the Cardinals, the Priests, and so many baptized members, but "of all those that had been chosen by God." It is hard to imagine a doctrine more Protestant than this. It struck at the root of the whole Papal conception. It undermined the authority of the Catholic Church, and no one could say to what, ere long, it might lead. It was time, said many, to take decisive action.

For this purpose Sigismund, King of the Romans and of Hungary, persuaded Pope John XXIII. to summon a general Church Council at Constance; and at the same time he invited Hus to attend the Council in person, and there expound his views. John Hus set out for Constance. As soon as he arrived in the city, he received from Sigismund that famous letter of "safe conduct" on which whole volumes have been written. The King's promise was as clear as day. He promised Hus, in the plainest terms, three things: first, that he should come unharmed to the city; second, that he should have a free hearing; and third, that if he did not submit to the decision of the Council he should be allowed to go home. Of those promises only the first was ever fulfilled. John Hus soon found himself caught in a trap. He was imprisoned by order of the Pope. He was placed in a dungeon on an island in the Rhine, and lay next to a sewer; and Sigismund either would not or could not lift a finger to help him. For three and a-half months he lay in his dungeon; and then he was removed to the draughty tower of a castle on Lake Geneva. His opinions were examined and condemned by the Council; and at last, when he was called to appear in person, he found that he had been condemned as a heretic already. As soon as he opened his mouth to speak he was interrupted; and when he closed it they roared, "He has admitted his guilt." He had one chance of life, and one chance only. He must recant his heretical Wycliffite opinions, especially those set forth in his treatise on the "Church." What need, said the Council, could there be of any further trial? The man was a heretic. His own books convicted him, and justice must be done.

And now, on the last day of the trial, John Hus stood before the great Council. The scene was appalling. For some weeks this gallant son of the morning had been tormented by neuralgia. The marks of suffering were on his brow. His face was pale; his cheeks were sunken; his limbs were weak

and trembling. But his eye flashed with a holy fire, and his words rang clear and true. Around him gleamed the purple and gold and the scarlet robes. Before him sat King Sigismund on the throne. The two men looked each other in the face. As the articles were rapidly read out against him, John Hus endeavoured to speak in his own defence. He was told to hold his tongue. Let him answer the charges all at once at the close.

"How can I do that," said Hus, "when I cannot even bear them all in mind?"

He made another attempt.

"Hold your tongue," said Cardinal Zabarella; "we have already given you a sufficient hearing."

With clasped hands, and in ringing tones, Hus begged in vain for a hearing. Again he was told to hold his peace, and silently he raised his eyes to heaven in prayer. He was accused of denying the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. He sprang to his feet in anger. Zabarella tried to shout him down. The voice of Hus rang out above the babel.

"I have never held, taught or preached," he cried, "that in the sacrament of the altar material bread remains after consecration."

The trial was short and sharp. The verdict had been given beforehand. He was now accused of another horrible crime. He had actually described himself as the fourth person in the Godhead! The charge was monstrous.

"Let that doctor be named," said Hus, "who has given this evidence against me."

But the name of his false accuser was never given. He was now accused of a still more dangerous error. He had appealed to God instead of appealing to the Church.

"O Lord God," he exclaimed, "this Council now condemns Thy action and law as an error! I affirm that there is no safer

appeal than that to the Lord Jesus Christ."

With those brave words he signed his own death warrant. For all his orthodoxy on certain points, he made it clearer now than ever that he set the authority of his own conscience above the authority of the Council; and, therefore, according to the standard of the day, he had to be treated as a heretic.

"Moreover," he said, with his eye on the King, "I came here freely to this Council, with a safe-conduct from my Lord the King here present, with the desire to prove my innocence and to explain my beliefs."

At those words, said the story in later years, King Sigismund blushed. If he did, the blush is the most famous in the annals of history; if he did not, some think he ought to have done. For Hus the last ordeal had now arrived; and the Bishop of Concordia, in solemn tones, read out the dreadful articles of condemnation. For heretics the Church had then but little mercy. His books were all to be burned; his priestly office must be taken from him; and he himself, expelled from the Church, must be handed over to the civil power. In vain, with a last appeal for justice, he protested that he had never been obstinate in error. In vain he contended that his proud accusers had not even taken the trouble to read some of his books. As the sentence against himself was read, and the vision of death rose up before him, he fell once more on his knees and prayed, not for himself, but for his enemies.

"Lord Jesus Christ," he said, "pardon all my enemies, I pray thee, for the sake of Thy great mercy! Thou knowest that they have falsely accused me, brought forward false witnesses and false articles against me. O! pardon them for Thine infinite mercies' sake."

At this beautiful prayer the priests and bishops jeered. He was ordered now to mount the scaffold, to put on the priestly garments, and to recant his heretical opinions. The

first two commands he obeyed; the third he treated with scorn. As he drew the alb over his shoulders, he appealed once more to Christ.

"My Lord Jesus Christ," he said, "was mocked in a white robe, when led from Herod to Pilate."

There on the scaffold he stood, with his long white robe upon him and the Communion Cup in his hand; and there, in immortal burning words, he refused to recant a single word that he had written.

"Behold," he cried, "these Bishops demand that I recant and abjure. I dare not do it. If I did, I should be false to God, and sin against my conscience and Divine truth."

The Bishops were furious. They swarmed around him. They snatched the Cup from his hand.

"Thou cursed Judas!" they roared. "Thou hast forsaken the council of peace. Thou hast become one of the Jews. We take from thee this Cup of Salvation."

"But I trust," replied Hus, "in God Almighty, and shall drink this Cup this day in His Kingdom."

The ceremony of degradation now took place. As soon as his robes had been taken from him, the Bishops began a hot discussion about the proper way of cutting his hair. Some clamoured for a razor, others were all for scissors.

"See," said Hus to the King, "these Bishops cannot agree in their blasphemy."

At last the scissors won the victory. His tonsure was cut in four directions, and a fool's cap, a yard high, with a picture of devils tearing his soul, was placed upon that hero's head.

"So," said the Bishops, "we deliver your soul to the devil."

"Most joyfully," said Hus, "will I wear this crown of shame for thy sake, O Jesus! who for me didst wear a crown of thorns."

"Go, take him," said the King. And Hus was led to his death. As he passed along he saw the bonfire in which his books were being burned. He smiled. Along the streets of the city he strode, with fetters clanking on his feet, a thousand soldiers for his escort, and crowds of admirers surging on every hand. Full soon the fatal spot was reached. It was a quiet meadow among the gardens, outside the city gates. At the stake he knelt once more in prayer, and the fool's cap fell from his head. Again he smiled. It ought to be burned along with him, said a watcher, that he and the devils might be together. He was bound to the stake with seven moist thongs and an old rusty chain, and faggots of wood and straw were piled round him to the chin. For the last time the Marshal approached to give him a fair chance of abjuring.

"What errors," he retorted, "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 the truth I have written and preached."

As the flame arose and the wood crackled, he chanted the Catholic burial prayer, "Jesu, Son of David, have mercy upon me." From the west a gentle breeze was blowing, and a gust dashed the smoke and sparks in his face. At the words "Who was born of the Virgin Mary" he ceased; his lips moved faintly in silent prayer; and a few moments later the martyr breathed no more. At last the cruel fire died down, and the soldiers wrenched his remains from the post, hacked his skull in pieces, and ground his bones to powder. As they prodded about among the glowing embers to see how much of Hus was left, they found, to their surprise, that his heart was still unburned. One fixed it on the point of his spear, thrust it back into the fire, and watched it frizzle away; and

finally, by the Marshal's orders, they gathered all the ashes together, and tossed them into the Rhine.

He had died, says a Catholic writer, for the noblest of all causes. He had died for the faith which he believed to be true.



## **CHAPTER III. — THE WELTER, 1415-1434.**

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The excitement in Bohemia was intense. As the ashes of Hus floated down the Rhine, the news of his death spread over the civilized world, and in every Bohemian town and hamlet the people felt that their greatest man had been unjustly murdered. He had become the national hero and the national saint, and now the people swore to avenge his death. A Hussite League was formed by his followers, a Catholic League was formed by his enemies. The Hussite Wars began. It is important to note with exactness what took place. As we study the history of men and nations, we are apt to fancy that the rank and file of a country can easily be united in one by common adherence to a common cause. It is not so. For one man who will steadily follow a principle, there are hundreds who would rather follow a leader. As long as Hus was alive in the flesh, he was able to command the loyalty of the people; but now that his tongue was silent for ever, his followers split into many contending factions. For all his eloquence he had never been able to strike one clear commanding note. In some of his views he was a Catholic, in others a Protestant. To some he was merely the fiery patriot, to others the champion of Church Reform, to others the high-souled moral teacher, to others the enemy of the Pope. If the people had only been united they might now have gained their long-lost freedom. But unity was the very quality they lacked the most. They had no clear notion of what they wanted; they had no definite scheme of church reform; they had no great leader to show them the way through the jungle, and thus, instead of closing their ranks against the common foe, they split up