HEROES OF REFORMATION

(JOHN HUSS)

JOHN–BAPTIST OF THE REFORMATION: John Huss preached in Bohemia a century before Luther preached in Saxony. He seems to have penetrated deeper than his predecessors into the essence of Christian truth. He prayed to Christ for grace to glory only in his cross and in the inestimable humiliation of his sufferings. But his attacks were directed less against the errors of the Romish church than the scandalous lives of the clergy. Yet he was, if we may be allowed the expression, the John-Baptist of the Reformation. The flames of his pile kindled a fire in the Church that cast a brilliant light into the surrounding darkness, and whose glimmerings were not to be so readily extinguished.

AN ACCOMPLISHED SCHOLAR: At the university, Huss soon distinguished himself by his untiring application and rapid progress, while his blameless life and gentle, winning deportment gained him universal esteem. He was a sincere adherent of the Romish Church, and an earnest seeker for the spiritual blessings which it professes to bestow. On the occasion of a jubilee, he went to confession, paid the last few coins in his scanty store, and joined in the processions that he might share in the absolution promised. After completing his college course, he entered the priesthood, and, rapidly attaining to eminence, he soon became attached to the court of the king. He was also made professor and afterward rector of the university where he had received his education. In a few years the humble charity scholar had become the pride of his country, and his name was renowned throughout Europe.

HUSS ENFORCED PRINCIPLES OF TRUTH AND PURITY: But it was in another field that Huss began the work of reform. Several years after taking priest's orders he was appointed preacher of the chapel of Bethlehem. The founder of this chapel had advocated, as a matter of great importance, the preaching of the Scriptures in the language of the people. Notwithstanding Rome's opposition to this practice, it had not been wholly discontinued in Bohemia. But there was great ignorance of the Bible, and the worst vices prevailed among the people of all ranks. These evils Huss unsparingly denounced, appealing to the Word of God to enforce the principles of truth and purity which he inculcated. The Great Controversy, pp. 98 - 99.