HEROES OF REFORMATION

(JOHN HUSS)

HIS LEGACY: John Huss did more prophetic words issued from the depths of his dungeon. He foresaw that a real reformation of the Church was at hand. When driven out of Prague and compelled to wander through the fields of Bohemia, where an immense crowd followed his steps and hung upon his words, he had cried out: “The wicked have begun by preparing a treacherous snare for the goose. But if even the goose, which is only a domestic bird, a peaceful animal, and whose flight is not very high in the air, has nevertheless broken through their toils, other birds, soaring more boldly towards the sky, will break through them with still greater force. Instead of a feeble goose, the truth will send forth eagles and keen-eyed vultures.” This prediction was fulfilled by the reformers.

When the venerable priest had been summoned by Sigismund’s order before the council of Constance, and had been thrown into prison, the chapel of Bethlehem, in which he had proclaimed the Gospel and the future triumphs of Christ, occupied his mind, much more than his own defence. One night the holy martyr saw in imagination, from the depths of his dungeon, the pictures of Christ that he had painted on the walls of his oratory, effaced by the pope and his bishops. This vision distressed him: but on the next day he saw many painters occupied in restoring these figures in greater number and in brighter colors. As soon as their task was ended, the painters, who were surrounded by an immense crowd, exclaimed: “Now let the popes and bishops come! they shall never efface them more!” And many people rejoiced in Bethlehem, and I with them, adds John Huss.—” Busy yourself with your defence rather than with your dreams,” said his faithful friend, the knight of Chlum, to whom he had communicated this vision. “I am no dreamer,” replied Huss, “but I maintain this for certain, that the image of Christ will never be effaced. They have wished to destroy it, but it shall be painted afresh in all hearts by much better preachers than myself. The nation that loves Christ will rejoice at this. And I, awaking from among the dead, and rising, so to speak, from my grave, shall leap with great joy.”

The History of Reformation, Vol. 1, Book 1, p. 30