

Hymns Class 3- November 22

The Hymns of Jan Hus (1372-1415)

“Dear Faithful Christian . . . search for truth, hear truth, learn truth, love truth, speak the truth, hold the truth, and defend the truth til death.” — Jan Hus

“When the flames were lighted, he sang twice, with a loud voice, “Christ, Thou Son of the Living God, have mercy upon me.” When he began the third clause of the Creed, “Who was conceived of the Virgin Mary,” the wind blew the flames in his face. So, as he was praying, moving his lips and head, he died in the Lord.”

Excerpt from an account of the martyrdom of Jan Hus- July 6, 1415

“The Goose” (Jan Has)

by Aaron Denlinger

“If he were prophetic, he must have meant Martin Luther, who shone about a hundred years after.” So wrote John Foxe in his sixteenth-century Book of Martyrs, referring to a statement attributed to the Bohemian reformer Jan Hus on the occasion of his death. Convicted of heresy in 1415 by the Council of Constance, Hus—according to a story that originated some years after the fact—turned to his executioners shortly before his sentence was carried out and remarked, “Today you burn a goose, but in one hundred years a swan will arise which you will prove unable to boil or roast.”

Why might Hus have identified himself as “a goose”? And why might later commentators—not least, Luther himself—have believed that Hus’ legendary prophecy referred to the German monk whose protest against indulgences launched the Reformation a century later?

The first question is easier to answer than the second. Hus, born about 1372, hailed from the southern Bohemian town of Husinec (literally, “Goosetown”) in what is now the Czech Republic. His surname, derived from his place of birth, means “goose” in Czech. Understanding why Luther and later Protestants believed Hus had anticipated, if not predicted, the Reformation is more difficult and requires some consideration of Hus’ life, doctrine, and death.

Hus’ Life

In 1390, Hus, whose early years remain obscure, enrolled at the University of Prague with the intention of training for the priesthood. He later confessed that ordained ministry appealed to him for its promise of providing a comfortable life and worldly esteem. Despite devoting, by his own admission, too much time to

playing chess, Hus excelled at his studies and, upon receipt of his master's degree in 1396, joined the philosophy faculty of the university.

Shortly after he began teaching, Hus experienced, in the words of one biographer, a “radical and fundamental change” resulting in a deepened commitment to Christ. This “change” may have stemmed from exposure to the thought of John Wycliffe, whose ideas were beginning to create a stir in Prague. Wycliffe's reforming program—which included strident criticism of clerical immorality, rejection of the medieval doctrine of transubstantiation, and insistence upon lay access to Scripture in the vernacular language—reached Bohemia thanks largely to Czech students who studied at Wycliffe's own Oxford University and returned home with heads full of Wycliffe's ideas and backpacks full of Wycliffe's books. In 1403, conflict over Wycliffe's ideas came to a head at the University of Prague.

Although Hus took exception to Wycliffe's rejection of transubstantiation, he agreed with much that the English reformer had said, and threw in his lot with the pro-Wycliffe reforming party. Just one year earlier, Hus had been appointed preacher of Bethlehem Chapel in central Prague. His sermons from the pulpit of Bethlehem increasingly reflected Wycliffe's concern over corruption within the church.

The preaching of “God's little goose,” as Hus came to be called, was immensely popular, drawing crowds of several thousand. Hus was eager to make Scripture and his reforming message accessible to the people. He not only preached in Czech, but translated portions of the liturgy as well as several Latin hymns into the vernacular language. He even took advantage of empty wall space in the chapel to advance his message, commissioning murals that contrasted Christ's humility and simplicity with the vanity and greed of contemporary priests.

In 1409, the papacy, perturbed by the growing fame of Hus, ordered the archbishop of Prague to prohibit any further preaching in Bethlehem Chapel. Hus refused to relinquish his pulpit. The following year, the archbishop excommunicated Hus on grounds of heresy and immediately thereafter fled the city for fear of popular reprisal. Hus continued preaching. In 1411, the papacy, which had by then issued a second excommunication of Hus (to no effect), placed the entire city of Prague under interdict, thereby forbidding Prague's clergy from offering sermons, weddings, the Eucharist, or other religious services to the people.

The pope's interdict initially had little force thanks to King Wenceslaus IV of Bohemia. Wenceslaus (whose name-sake from the tenth century would later become the subject of a Christmas carol) supported Hus and ordered Prague's clergy to disregard the interdict. In 1412, however, circumstances pitted Hus and Wenceslaus against one another. The papacy began selling indulgences in Bohemia to raise money for a military campaign. Wenceslaus took no exception to this, largely because he received a share of the earnings. But Hus, who saw the sale of indulgences as symptomatic of the church's corruption, protested from both pulpit and lectern. The king, eager to sustain his newfound income, prohibited criticism of indulgences. He reinforced that prohibition by beheading several men who spoke out against them. In order to further undermine Hus, the king now commanded Prague's clergy to enforce the pope's interdict.

Hus, reluctant to see the people deprived of Word and sacrament on his account, quit Prague in 1412. He spent the following two years in self-imposed exile in southern Bohemia, writing works that furthered his reforming ideals. In 1414, he was cited to appear before the Council of Constance to answer charges of heresy, and he was promised a safe return from the council by the Emperor Sigismund, brother to King Wenceslaus. Hus agreed to attend the council, aware that he might not return but hopeful that he might be given opportunity to promote his vision for reformation of the church. Upon arriving in Constance in November 1414, he was placed under arrest and remained imprisoned until his trial and execution the following summer.

Hus' Theology

Hus was no mere mime of Wycliffe, as some scholars have suggested. Nor, as others have implied, did he anticipate Protestantism in every regard. Contra both Wycliffe and the Reformers, he defended the doctrine of transubstantiation, though he denied that priests per se have the power to effect the transformation of bread into Christ's body. Contra the Protestant doctrine of sola fide, he believed that charity plays an instrumental role in the justification of sinners. Nevertheless, **Hus anticipated a number of Protestantism's key convictions.** He criticized his contemporaries' idolatrous veneration of Mary and the saints. He likewise criticized the medieval practice of withholding the chalice from the common people (out of fear, ostensibly, that they might mishandle Christ's blood) and offering them only the bread in the Eucharist. Hus' insistence that the laity should receive both bread and wine so came to define his followers that, when forced to defend themselves militarily in the wake of Hus' death, they incorporated a chalice into their coat of arms.

Hus further anticipated the Reformers—and revealed the extent of his debt to Wycliffe—in his doctrine of the church. Hus identified the true church as that invisible body of believers in the past, present, and future who have been eternally elected by God unto salvation and incorporated into Christ as their head. Not every member of the visible church, he argued, belongs to the invisible church, and when clergy in particular prove themselves reprobate by their actions, their authority is suspect. This doctrine informed Hus’ stinging criticisms of priests and popes as “antichrist” and his willingness to disregard papal bulls when they clearly contradicted Scripture.

Closely related to his doctrine of the church was Hus’ doctrine of Scripture. Hus rejected any claim that the visible church, which might at any point be populated more by the reprobate than the elect, exercised infallibility in its rulings or interpretations of Scripture. He held traditional voices in the church, especially the church fathers, in high regard; indeed, he privileged the church fathers’ interpretation of Scripture over any individual’s interpretation, including his own. But Hus acknowledged that even the fathers could err. Thus, he recognized Scripture as the only infallible norm of Christian faith and practice, a view that the Reformers would express with the slogan “sola Scriptura”.

Hus’ Death

Hus was given limited opportunity to defend his doctrine at the Council of Constance, and he was eventually convicted on a mixture of legitimate and spurious claims about his beliefs. He was called upon to recant the teachings falsely attributed to him. Hus refused to do so, even though it sealed his fate, because he didn’t want to perjure himself by admitting to beliefs he didn’t hold. On July 6, 1415, Hus was stripped of his clerical robes, decorated with a dunce cap embellished with drawings of demons, tied to a stake, and burned to death. According to an eyewitness account, he entrusted his soul to God and sang a hymn to Christ as the flames enveloped him. Once he was dead, the authorities ground up his remains and cast them into the Rhine River to keep them from being venerated by his followers. Ironically, Hus probably would have appreciated this final gesture.

Hus never actually uttered the famous prophecy attributed to him on the occasion of his death. He did express, in a letter he wrote during his imprisonment, a hope that stronger “birds” than he would arise to carry on his work. It was in fact Luther, in writings from the 1530s, who transformed Hus’

words into an oracle that found its fulfillment in him. Regardless, Hus would, one suspects, have rejoiced to see Luther's day and would have been happy to acknowledge Luther's work and subsequent efforts to reform the church according to God's Word as a proper continuation of his own labors.

Jan Hus (1372-1415) and Hymn Singing in the Vernacular

“On January 13, 1501, the first vernacular hymnal was printed in Prague. It featured 89 Moravian hymns in Czech, some penned by martyred reformer Jan Hus. Though several of the hymns were based on Gregorian chants, for the most part the collection broke with Catholic tradition. Catholic worship at the time included only music written in Latin and sung by professionals; ***Moravians helped re-introduce the custom of congregational singing in a language all could understand.***

Moravian, or Hussite, hymns often focused on themes central to the reform movement. Battle hymns like "Oh, Ye Warriors of the Lord" united communities, lifted soldiers' spirits, and proclaimed reforming beliefs.

One of Hus's hymns on the subject, "Jesus Christ, Our Blessed Savior," still appears in some Lutheran hymnals. It includes these stanzas:

Jesus Christ, our blessed Savior,
Turned away God's wrath forever;
By His bitter grief and woe
He saved us from the evil Foe.

As His pledge of love undying
He, this precious food supplying,
Gives His body with the bread
And with the wine the blood He shed.

Consider the depth of Hus' theology in his hymn "To Avert from Men God's Wrath" which focuses on Christ and His work of propitiation

John Murray on the doctrine of Propitiation...

There are passages in which the language of propitiation is expressly applied to the work of Christ (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 2:17; I John 2:2; 4:10). And this means, without question, that the work of Christ is to be construed as propitiation.

But there is also another consideration. The frequency with which the concept appears in the Old Testament in connection with the sacrificial ritual, the fact that the New Testament applies to the work of Christ the very term which denoted this concept in the Greek Old Testament, and the fact that the New Testament regards the Levitical ritual as providing the pattern for the sacrifice of Christ lead to the conclusion that this is a category in terms of which the sacrifice of Christ is not only properly but necessarily interpreted. In other words, the idea of propitiation is so woven into the fabric of the Old Testament ritual that it would be impossible to regard that ritual as the pattern of the sacrifice of Christ if propitiation did not occupy a similar place in the one great sacrifice once offered. This is but another way of saying that ***sacrifice and propitiation stand in the closest relations with one another. The express application of the term "propitiation" to the work of Christ by the New Testament writers is the confirmation of this conclusion.***

But what does propitiation mean? In the Hebrew of the Old Testament it is expressed by a word which means to "cover." In connection with this covering there are, in particular, three things to be noted:

- 1. it is in reference to sin that the covering takes place;***
- 2. the effect of this covering is cleansing and forgiveness;***
- 3. it is before the Lord that both the covering and its effect take place (cf. especially lev. 4:35; 10:17; 16:30).***

This means that sin creates a situation in relation to the Lord, a situation that makes the covering necessary. It is this Godward reference of both the sin and the covering that must be fully appreciated. It may be said that the sin, or perhaps the person who has sinned, is covered before the sight of the Lord. ***In the thought of the Old Testament there is but one construction that we can place upon this provision of the sacrificial ritual. It is that sin evokes the holy displeasure or wrath of God. Vengeance is the reaction of the holiness of God to sin, and the covering is that which provides for the removal of divine displeasure which the sin evokes.*** It is obvious that we are brought to the threshold of that which is clearly denoted by the Greek rendering in both Old and New Testaments, namely, that of propitiation. ***To propitiate means to "placate," "pacify," "appease," "conciliate." And it is this idea that is applied to the atonement accomplished by Christ.***

Propitiation presupposes the wrath and displeasure of God, and the purpose of propitiation is the removal of this displeasure.

Very simply stated the doctrine of propitiation means that Christ propitiated the wrath of God and rendered God propitious to his people.

Perhaps no tenet respecting the atonement has been more violently criticized than this one. It has been assailed as involving a mythological conception of God, as supposing internal conflict in the mind of God and between the persons of the Godhead. It has been charged that this doctrine represents the Son as winning over the incensed Father to clemency and love, a supposition wholly inconsistent with the fact that the love of God is the very fount from which the atonement springs.

When the doctrine of propitiation is presented in this light it can be very effectively criticized and can be exposed as a revolting caricature of the Christian gospel. But the doctrine of propitiation does not involve this caricature by which it has been misconceived and misrepresented. To say the least, this kind of criticism has failed to understand or appreciate some elementary and important distinctions.

First of all, to love and to be propitious are not convertible terms. It is false to suppose that the doctrine of propitiation regards propitiation as that which causes or constrains the divine love. It is loose thinking of a deplorable sort to claim that propitiation of the divine wrath does prejudice to or is incompatible with the fullest recognition that the atonement is the provision of the divine love.

Secondly, propitiation is not a turning of the wrath of God into love. The propitiation of the divine wrath, effected in the expiatory work of Christ, is the provision of God's eternal and unchangeable love, so that through the propitiation of his own wrath that love may realize its purpose in a way that is consonant with and to the glory of the dictates of his holiness. It is one thing to say that the wrathful God is made loving. That would be entirely false. It is another thing to say the wrathful God is loving. That is profoundly true. But it is also true that ***the wrath by which he is wrathful is propitiated through the cross. This propitiation is the fruit of the divine love that provided it. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (I John 4:10). The propitiation is the ground upon which the divine love operates and the channel through which it flows in achieving its end.***

Thirdly, ***propitiation does not detract from the love and mercy of God; it rather enhances the marvel of his love. For it shows the cost that redemptive love entails. God is love. But the supreme object of that love is himself.***

And because he loves himself supremely he cannot suffer what belongs to the integrity of his character and glory to be compromised or curtailed. That is the reason for the propitiation. God appeases his own holy wrath in the cross of Christ in order that the purpose of his love to lost men may be accomplished in accordance with and to the vindication of all the perfections that constitute his glory. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood to show his righteousness . . . that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus" (Rom. 3:25,26).

Excerpt from Redemption Accomplished and Applied

To Avert from Men God's Wrath

Jan Hus

Tune- "Ajalon" (used with "God, be merciful to me")

1 To avert from men God's wrath,
Jesus suffered in our stead;
by an ignominious death
He a full atonement made;
and by His most precious blood
brought us, sinners, nigh to God.

2 Christ bids each afflicted soul,
"Come that I may soothe your grief.
No one who is strong and whole
needs a doctor for relief;
therefore have no fear, draw nigh,
that your want I may supply."

3 But examine first your case,
whether you be in the faith;
do you long for pard'ning grace?
Is your only hope His death?
Then, how e'er your soul's oppressed,
come, you are a worthy guest.

4 They who Jesus' mercy knows
are from wrath and envy freed;
love unto our neighbor shows
that we are His flock indeed;
thus we may in all our ways
show forth our Redeemer's praise.

Fairest Lord Jesus and the followers of John Hus...

“There are several accounts as to the origin of the beautiful hymn "Fairest Lord Jesus." The best known legend is that it was sung by the twelfth century German Crusaders, as they made their long, weary way to the Holy Land. **Another, more credible account is that it was sung by the followers of John Hus, who were driven out of Bohemia in 1620 in the anti-Reformation purge, who settled in Silesia, now part of Poland. They had to keep their faith secret, yet had a strong tradition of hymn singing.**

Fairest Lord Jesus

Notes from WordWiseHymns

Words: From a 1662 German manuscript (author unknown)

Music: *Crusader's Hymn*, a German folk melody

Note: The German words (*Schonster Herr Jesu*) were translated into English by Joseph August Seiss (1823-1904) and by others. The song has traditionally been used as a Christmas hymn, though there's nothing specifically about the birth of Christ in it.

1 Fairest Lord Jesus, Ruler of all nature,
Son of God, and Son of Man!
Thee will I cherish, Thee will I honour,
Thou, my soul's glory, joy and crown.

The words “fairest” and “fair,” (*yapheh* in Hebrew) are found many times in the Old Testament. Signifying either beautiful or handsome, they are used of both men and women, and of the city of Jerusalem (Ps. 48:2), and employed often in the Song of Solomon to describe the king's bride. One of the descriptions there could be applied in an absolute sense to the Lord Jesus as well. The bridegroom says of his beloved:

“You are all fair...there is no spot in you” (S.S. 4:17).

Christ's is, however, a beauty of holy character, not of physical appearance (“no spot,” I Pet. 1:17-18). As Isaiah prophesied of His coming, “He has no form or comeliness [majesty]; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him” (Isa. 53:2). Paintings with a glowing halo around the head of Jesus are not in keeping with reality.

His glory was veiled from human sight in those days (except for His brief revelation of it on the Mount of Transfiguration, Matt. 17:1-2).

Radiating from His inner Person was “the beauty of holiness” (Ps. 29:2) in all its perfection. In addition to His divine character, what impressed others was not the handsomeness of His Person, but the power and authority demonstrated in His words (Matt. 7:29) and works (Jn. 3:2), during His time on earth.

There was a dramatic difference in how He spoke. While others taught “As rabbi so-and-so says...” Christ was able to speak as the Source of truth, “I say to you...” (e.g. Matt. 5:20, 22, 28, 32, 34, 44). And in His works He repeatedly demonstrated the power of God (Jn. 5:36; Acts 2:22; 10:38).

Stanza 4 is not found in all hymn books, but it is truly special, as it voices a personal testimony.

4 All fairest beauty, heavenly and earthly,
Wondrously, Jesus, is found in Thee;
None can be nearer, fairer or dearer,
Than Thou, my Saviour, art to me.

5 Beautiful Saviour! Lord of the nations!
Son of God and Son of Man!
Glory and honour, praise, adoration,
Now and forever more be Thine.

Appendix 1...The Martyrdom of John Hus

Hebrews 13:3 (ESV)

Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.

John Hus was burned at the stake on July 6, 1415. Here is an account found in *The Letters of John Hus*, With Introductions and Explanatory Notes by Herbert B. Workman and R. Martin Pope (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904).

Four days later the Council made another effort to bring about the desired recantation. A deputation of the leaders of the Council—D’Ailli, Zabarella, Simon Cramaud the Patriarch of Antioch, the Archbishops of Riga and Milan, together with two Englishmen, the illustrious Hallum of Salisbury, and Bubwith, the simoniacal Bishop of Bath, narrowed the issue to the recantation merely of the heresies extracted from articles Hus had recognised as his own. At one time this would have satisfied Hus; but now he refused, and referred them to his declaration of July 1.

He dared not cause to stumble those whom he had taught.

Later in the day Emperor Sigismund, influenced perhaps by some remnants of conscience, made one last effort to save him. He sent Chlum, Wenzel de Duba, and Lacembok, together with four bishops, to ask Hus for his final decision, whether he would persevere or recant. Hus was brought out of his cell to meet this deputation—a sidelight as we take it on his cramped confinement—doubtless wondering whether a new trial of his constancy awaited him in the defection of his dearest friends: ‘Master John,’ said honest Chlum, ‘we are laymen, and cannot advise you. Consider, however, and if you realise that you are guilty concerning any of the charges, do not be ashamed to receive instruction and recant. But if you do not feel guilty, do not force your conscience, nor lie before God, but rather stand fast to the death in the truth which you know.’

Hus replied with tears: ***‘Sir, know that if I was conscious that I had written or preached aught against the law, gospel, or Mother Church, I would gladly and humbly recant my errors. God is my witness. But I am anxious now as ever that they will show me Scriptures of greater weight and value than those which I have quoted in writing and teaching. If these shall be shown me, I am prepared and willing to recant.’*** ‘Do you desire to be wiser than the whole Council?’ retorted a bishop. ‘Than the whole Council, no,’ replied Hus; ‘but give me a portion, however small, of the Council to ***teach me by Scriptures*** of greater weight and value, and I am ready to recant.’ ‘He is obstinate in his heresy,’ cried the bishops, and retired to make preparation for the final scene.

At six o’clock the next morning Hus was brought to the cathedral. While mass was sung he was kept waiting outside the door; this over, he was placed in the middle of the aisle on an elevated dais. Around him were placed the various robes needful for celebrating mass. But before taking his stand on this theatre of degradation Hus knelt down and prayed. The whole Council was there, with Emperor Sigismund, in his robes and diadem, on the throne. In the sight of all Hus stood alone while the Bishop of Lodi, the customary orator on big occasions, preached ‘a short, compendious, and laudable’ sermon on the danger of heresy and the duty of destroying it.

The events of that day, said the preacher, would win for Sigismund immortal glory. ‘O King, a glorious triumph is awaiting you; to thee is due the everlasting crown and a victory to be sung through all time, for thou hast bound up the bleeding Church, removed a persistent schism, and uprooted the heretics. Do you not see how lasting will be your fame and glory? For what can be more acceptable to God than to uproot a schism and destroy the errors among the flock.’ But the day was not altogether without its stings for Sigismund. Hus, when he spoke, was not slow to remind him of his safe-conduct. Sigismund, it is said, blushed, an incident denied by some historians with as much warmth as if the blush were as discreditable to Sigismund as his falsehood.

Then the representatives read aloud the record of the trial and the sentence of the Council. When Hus attempted to reply and point out certain omitted limitations in his theses, D'Ailli ordered him to be silenced. 'You shall answer all together later.' 'How can I possibly answer all together,' retorted Hus, 'since I cannot keep them all together in my mind.' 'Be silent,' said Zabarella, 'we have heard you quite enough.' ***'I beseech you for God's sake hear me,' cried Hus, with clasped hands, 'lest the bystanders believe that I ever held such errors; afterwards do with me as you list.'*** We need not wonder at his indignation when we remember that one of the articles read out against him was that he had said that he was the fourth member in the Trinity. When the reading of the issue of falsehood was completed and the sentence pronounced, Hus knelt once more in prayer: ***'Lord Jesus, pardon all my enemies for Thy great mercy's sake, I beseech Thee, for Thou knowest that they have falsely accused me. Pardon them for Thy great mercy's sake.'*** But the bishops who stood near frowned and laughed.

After this he was clad by seven bishops in the full vestments of a celebrant. ***Once more the bishops urged him to recant. But Hus turned to the people and cried out: 'These bishops here urge me to recant. I fear to do this lest I be a liar in the sight of God, and offend against my conscience and God's truth.'*** So he stepped down from the table, and the bishops began the ceremony of degradation; one by one his vestments were stripped off him. A dispute arose over his tonsure; should it be cut with scissors or a razor? 'See,' said Hus, turning to Sigismund, 'these bishops cannot even agree in their blasphemy.' ***A paper crown a yard high, with three demons painted on it 'clawing his soul with their nails,' and the words "Heresiarch," was then fastened on his head. 'The crown which my Redeemer wore,' said Hus, 'was heavier and more painful than this.'*** 'We commit thy soul to the devil,' sang the priests, as they handed him over to the secular arm. ***'But he, with clasped hands and upturned eyes: I commit it to the most gracious Lord Jesus.'*** By a strange oversight the Council forgot to add the crowning farce of these inquisition courts, the solemn adjuration to the secular arm to shed no blood. 'Go, take him,' said Sigismund, turning to Lewis, Count Palatine, the sword-bearer of the empire, who stood at Sigismund's elbow, holding the golden orb and its cross in his hand. ***The count handed him over to the magistrates, who stripped him of his gown and hose, and led him out to die, escorted by a thousand armed men.***

As he passed through the churchyard of the Cathedral, Hus saw a bonfire of his books. He laughed, and told the bystanders not to believe the lies circulated about him. The whole city was in the streets as Hus passed through their midst. But when the procession reached the gates the crowd found that they were forbidden to pass; there were fears lest the

drawbridge should break down with their weight. ***On arriving about noon at the execution ground, familiarly known as “the Devil’s Place,” Hus kneeled and prayed ‘with a joyful countenance.’ The paper crown fell off, and he smiled. ‘Put it on again wrong way up,’ cried the mob, ‘that he may be burnt with the devils he has served.’ His hands were tied behind his back, and Hus fastened to the stake which had been driven into the ground over the spot where a dead mule belonging to one of the cardinals had been recently buried.*** ‘Turn him round towards the West,’ cried the crowd, ‘he is a heretic; he must not face the East.’ This done, a chain was wound round his neck. Burgher Reichental—the author of the famous illustrated *Diary*—offered to call a priest. ‘There is no need,’ replied Hus, ‘I have no mortal sin.’ But a priest ‘who was riding about in a vest of very red silk,’ was less merciful. ‘No confessor must be given him,’ he cried, ‘for he is a heretic.’

For the last time Lewis, Count Palatine, and the Marshal of the Empire, asked him if he would recant and save his life. Said Hus, ‘in a loud voice,’ ‘God is my witness that the evidence given against me is false. I have never thought nor preached save with the one intention of winning men, if possible, from their sins. In the truth of the gospel I have written, taught, and preached to-day I will gladly die.’ So they heaped the straw and wood around him, and poured pitch upon it. When the flames were lighted, ‘he sang twice, with a loud voice, “Christ, Thou Son of the Living God, have mercy upon me.” When he began the third clause, “Who was conceived of the Virgin Mary,” the wind blew the flames in his face. So, as he was praying, moving his lips and head, he died in the Lord.’

The beadles piled up the fuel, ‘two or three cart-loads,’ ‘stirred the bones with sticks, split up the skull, and flung it back into the flames, together with his coat and shoes,’ which the Count Palatine bought from the executioner, for three times the usual fee ‘lest the Bohemians should keep them as relics.’ When the heart was found they ran a sharp stake through it and set it ablaze. As soon as all was over the ashes were heaped into a barrow, and tilted into the Rhine.

*For all thy saints, O Lord,
Who strove in thee to live,
Who followed thee, obeyed, adored,
Our grateful hymn receive.
For all thy saints, O Lord,
Accept our thankful cry,
Who counted thee their great reward,
And strove in thee to die.*

Memorial Hymn of the Moravian Church for the Death-day of John Hus (July 6, 1415.)