Trials Of Joan Of Arc Essay, Research Paper

The Trial of Jeanne d?Arc

Jeanne d?Arc, better known as Joan of Arc, was the Maid of Orleans. She was a great heroin of the Hundred Years War for the French and was the spirit of the army. She was only a teenager when she heard the voices of Saint Catherine, Saint Michael, and Saint Margaret. The voices told her to march with the French army to drive out the English and place Charles VII on the throne. She provided support and spirit to the troops and shaped them up into better soldiers. She had successful victories like Orleans and at Patay, but was defeated and captured by the Burgandians while defending Compiegne. The Burgundians sold her to the English who had long been after her. She would be tried for witchcraft and heresy by the ecclesiastical court of Rouen led by Bishop Pierre Cauchon.

The court was judged by the Bishop along with his assessors. The trial consisted of six public examinations, 9 private examinations, and several readings of articles. In the first public examination, Jeanne made it clear to the bishop and the forty-two assessors present that she would only tell the things she was allowed to tell even if it meant death upon her own oath instead of what the English wished her to. “?Of my father and my mother and of what I did after taking the road to France, willingly will I swear; but of the revelations which have come to me from God, to no one will I speak or reveal them, save only to Charles my King; and to you I will not reveal them, even if it cost me my head; because I have received them in visions and by secret counsel, and am forbidden to reveal them. Before eight days are gone, I shall know if I may reveal them to you.?” The English interrogated her until she revealed the names of herself, her father and mother and of her birthplace along with many other personal questions. At the second public examination, Jeanne was asked to swear an oath again to which she claimed, ??I made oath to you yesterday,?” she answered, “?that should be quite enough for you: you overburden me too much!?” In this examination, they asked her about her childhood, of the light she sees when the voices of the Saints speak to her, and who possessed her to wear men?s garments. On the third public examination, Jeanne asked for her release but was denied. She was then questioned by a doctor who asked her of her health. He asked her when the last time she had food and drink and when were the last times the voices had spoken to her. He also questioned her of what the voices were revealing to her. At the end of the examination, the doctor asked her if she wanted a woman?s dress to which she said, “Give me one, and I will take it and begone; otherwise, no. I am content with what I have, since it pleases God that I wear it.” On the forth public examination, she was asked mainly about what the voices tell her and of what became of her famous sword Fierbois. She told them about her revelations about Orleans and that she knew it would be a victory for the French. In the fifth public examination, when she was asked to swear upon on oath, ?And in this wise did she swear, her hands on the Holy Gospels. Then she said: ?On what I know touching this Case, I will speak the truth willingly; I will tell you as much as I would to the Pope of Rome, if I were before him.??

They then questioned her of what she would say to the Pope and whom she believed was the true pope. From this, they asked Jeanne if she had received the letter from Count d?Armagnac, which was asking Jeanne which pontiff he should obey to which she replied yes. They then read the letter that the Count wrote and the letter in which Jeanne replied to the Count. They also read a letter from Jeanne to the English King, the Duke of Bedford, and other officials who said that the power should be given to Charles and she was to drive all the English from France. However some words in the letter had been changed or added which she could only state were not her own. They then questioned her on how she knew the English were to suffer a great defeat in France and more of the voices: what they looked like, told her, and promises made to her. The last public examination, Jeanne was asked more of her voices’ appearance and what they have told her. They asked about her dress; why men?s clothing, why a certain fabric. She was also asked if she had any connections with certain political people and their religious visions. At the end of the examination, she was asked about when she was captured, what she said to the English and how they responded to her. After the public examinations, 9 private examinations took place with the bishop and a few other religious figures present. After the private examinations, several readings of Articles were read of the accusations of Jeanne d?Arc.

On May 29, 1431, the end of the fourteen month trial resulted in Jeanne being convicted of witchcraft and heresy. In the sentencing speech, the Pope regarded, ?And also, because that often, very often, not only by Us on Our part but by Doctors and Masters learned and expert, full of zeal for the salvation of thy soul, you have been duly and sufficiently warned to amend, to correct thyself and to submit to the disposal, decision, and correction of Holy Mother Church, which you have not willed, and have always obstinately refused to do, having even expressly and many times refused to submit thyself to our Lord the Pope and to the General Council; for these causes, as hardened and obstinate in thy crimes, excesses and errors, WE DECLARE THEE OF RIGHT EXCOMMUNICATE AND HERETIC; and after your errors have been destroyed in a public preaching, We declare that you must be abandoned and that We do abandon thee to the secular authority, as a member of Satan, separate from the Church, infected with the leprosy of heresy, in order that you may not corrupt also the other members of Christ; praying this same power, that, as concerns death and the mutilation of the limbs, it may be pleased to moderate its judgment; and if true signs of penitence should appear in thee, that the Sacrament of Penance may be administered to thee.

Jeanne?s sentence was not given till the next day.? At age nineteen, Jeanne d?Arc was sentenced to death by burning at the stake in the market?s center that day.

Nearly twenty years later, Charles VII reopened Jeanne?s case. He had several witnesses come speak for her. Cardinal-Bishop Guillaume d’Estouteville represented the request of Jeanne?s mother. Isabelle wanted the name of her daughter cleared up as well as the restoration of the family to the position they had lost by the imputation of heresy cast on them in the person of one of their number. ?When Isabel d’Arc threw herself at the feet of the Commissioners, showing the Papal Legit Rescript and weeping aloud, while her Advocate, Pierre Maugier, and his assistants prayed for justice for her and for the memory of her martyred daughter, so many of those present joined aloud in the petition, that at last, we are told, it seemed that one great cry for justice broke from the multitude.? Jeanne d?Arc was canonized in 1920 and her feast falls upon the day of May 30.

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