

31. With the Reformation a New Era Dawned.

Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee. *Is. 49,8.*

On the 31st of October, 1517, Dr. Martin Luther nailed the memorable Ninety-five Theses to the door of the Castle Church at Wittenberg. This proved to be the cause of that mighty upheaval which has brought us freedom from the bonds of Popery. The strokes of the hammer nailing those theses were soon heard in the most remote parts of the earth, like the roaring of heaven's thunderings, covering the whole world with its mighty force. By his gigantic work, Luther brought about the great change for which the children of God had been wishing and praying for many centuries.

When, at Worms, Luther made his clear and strong defense of the Gospel faith he had preached and closed it with the memorable words: "Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise; God help me! Amen," there was the strength of victory in that mighty "Amen," because it appealed to Scripture, the Word of Truth; it appealed to the Gospel, which is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

Now men, women, youths, fearlessly gave the lie to the priests whom they had dreaded so much before. Rome was startled; she wanted to use her old force. She wished to suppress the new teaching, which was nothing but the old truth brought to light again. Of no avail! The Lord had smitten Antichrist with the breath of His mouth. The world was once more enjoying the pure and abundant Gospel-preaching. The Church entered upon another epoch. With the Reformation a new era dawned for the world, an era of spiritual and temporal advancement. Who can enumerate the blessings which came upon the whole world in consequence of the Reformation? Advanced ideas of human rights, our free institutions, our political and religious liberty, — these, in addition to the pure Gospel, which is the greatest blessing, are all fruits of the Reformation.

Prayer.

We thank Thee, O Lord, that Thou hast deigned us worthy of being children of the Reformation. Let us show our gratitude by using to the fullest extent the blessings and privileges which are ours, lest by ingratitude we forfeit these gifts of Thy grace, as did Germany and other countries. Let us ever be mindful of the great honor which Thou hast bestowed upon us in making us Thy chosen generation and a royal priesthood. Let us never forget or shirk our solemn duty. Fill us with zeal and love for Thy work. Establish the work of our hands. Amen.

We believe the Reformation
Was the work of God;
Jesus, for our consolation,
By His shepherd's rod,
Led the people from papistic error's night
To the Gospel truth, its freedom, and its light.

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