

72. Religious Liberty.

O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; because His mercy endureth forever. Ps. 118, 1.

Luther stood for freedom of conscience and thereby "also widened the area of liberty in general. That his principles are the fundamental principles of our American Republic there can be no question. He asserted the equality of all men before God, in Christ, and out of that at length came our Declaration of Independence, which affirms the equality of all men before human law. Our Constitution still reads: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

Religious liberty, this blessed fruit of the Lutheran Reformation, is the greatest spiritual blessing of our land. Our Government does not take upon itself to prescribe what religion its citizens must adopt, nor does it in any other way transgress the bounds of the Church. We have here, indeed, such a relation between the two as God desires it. We may worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience.

Let us guard the priceless heritage that has been bequeathed to us. Let us guard our freedom of conscience, our religious liberty. The wise and pious framers of our Constitution, knowing both from reason and from unpleasant experience that religious liberty can exist only in the case of strict separation of Church and State, adopted every precaution to prevent the admission of anything hostile to religious liberty being incorporated into the constitutions of States. Their object was to have a free Church in a free country.

It is well known that a spirit prevails which is intensely hostile to the civil and religious principles of our Government. There have been some bold encroachments on the part of Rome, which does not believe in the separation of Church and State. Rome acknowledges but one head, who wields temporal, political, and spiritual power. Rome openly and boldly seeks to obtain temporal and political power throughout our country. Let us beware of Rome's destructive power in our country!

Prayer.

Lord God, heavenly Father, owing to Thy paternal care Thy Church has been preserved from false doctrine and persecution on account of the true faith; our country was not devastated. We pray Thee, protect our homes from peril and grant health of body and peace within our borders. Crown our land with Thy goodness and give us the necessaries of life. Preserve Thy Church from errors in doctrine and life, our country from war, famine, and pestilence, our homes from fire and all danger, and the fruits of the field from hail and tempest. Above all, preserve unto us the precious jewel of religious liberty. Amen.

Our fathers' God, to Thee,
Author of liberty,
To Thee we sing;
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light;
Protect us by Thy might,
Great God, our King!

This devotion is one of 318 taken from *Daily Bread* by F. E. Pasche, published by CPH in 1926, but now in the public domain. They have been copied and reformatted by Rev. Bruce G. Ley and made available for distribution by pastors and missionaries.

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