

By the grace and providence of our G we ~~are~~ were permitted to commemorate the 414th anniversary of the Great Reformation festival only a few days ago. More than four centuries have elapsed since that chosen vessel of G, Dr. M. Luther, nailed his well known 95 theses or sentences against the Castle door at Wittenberg. This act of the great reformer brot about great changes, both in a religious and also political way. With regards to religion, we might rightly say that it was the act which has given us the blessings which we are enjoying today in the form of religious liberty, and freedom of conscience to worship our G as we wish. It was this act of Dr. M. Luther which again restored the religion and religious tenets as they were taught in the OT, and especially as they were proclaimed by the greatest of all religious teachers, X himself. Because Luther had the stamina or courage to openly rebuke the false teachings as they were being practised in his day and age, because he was bold enuf to stand up for what he knew to be the right teaching from the W of G, therefore you have the privilege to sit at this pulpit this morning, and hear the W of G proclaimed to you thru the mouth of His servant, in all its truth and purity. You are furthermore, also, permitted to use the Sac, the Sac of the L Supper and that of Holy Baptism purely, and as they were instituted by X himself.

However, the Reformation also brot about great changes in the political and social sphere. ~~Let us note breifly, a few of these.~~ In many respects we you and I are enjoying many privileges to be living just at this time. Our eyes are privileged to witness scenes that eyes in former generations have not seen, nor ever thot of seeing. Think of the wonderful industrial progress which has been made during the past 400 years. Think of the astounding progress which has been made in the field of science, the rapid means of communication and transportation which has been established for only a short time. And so there has been progress in every line of human endeavor.

Again, when thinking of the reformation, we think of how the political complexion of the world has changed ~~since~~ during this time. Those nations which ranked first in power then are merely secondary today. Their form of gov't has been changed, their ideals have taken new form. Their mode of living and ambitions are different. Educational facilities have become much greater than ever before. It is simply astonishing when we read how ignorant and illiterate the people were at the time of Luther. Only few were able to read and write, and even among the clergy, such who should have had a comparatively good knowledge of secular as well as theological things, we find that their knowledge was so meager that they did not even know the Lds Prayer or the ten Com of G, whose teachings they were trying to impart to the people. The result of such ignorance is surely evident to all. In contrast to those conditions, think of the educational facilities which we are enjoying today. Surely a marked difference.

Other great advantages which we are enjoying today which were unknown before the time of the great reformation are such as freedom of thot, freedom of conscience, freedom of speech, of press, of gov't, of worship; in fact, every advantage of social, moral and religious elevation. Today we look upon all of these things as self evident, since we have always had them, but four hundred years ago such privileges were unheard of. And to whom, under G, do we owe these great blessings and advantages which we are enjoying so graciously today? Xtian fr, these advantages are the result of that great movement which was brot about in the sixteenth century by G thru his chosen vessel, Dr. M. Luther. They all have their beginning in the Reformation. The Reformation was the act which freed the enslaved people from the fetters and bonds of popery. In joytul commemoration of this blessed fact the Xtians have for many years dedicated a special service ~~to~~ in which they raise their voice in thankfulness and praise for all the blessings and benefits which the L has showered upon them. The great Day on which the Reformation made its beginning was Oct. 31, 1517. We have chosen this Sunday in which we wish to praise G for his blessings, because it is the Sunday between the Day of Ref and Luthers birthday, which falls on Nov. 10, or next Wed. In view of these two

Lutheran Holidays, and on the basis on the words of our Text, permit me to speak to you briefly this morning on the topic,

1. A few of the ^{THE GREAT REFORMATION OF 1517.} blessings we enjoy as the result of this Reformation.
 2. What we owe our G for these blessings.

1.1.2. In the words of our 1 the Psalmist is calling upon his soul to bless and praise the name of the L for all the benefits which he has received from his G. And which were some of these blessings which David, that man of G was enjoying. He enumerates some of them in the following verses, 3-5. Forgiveness of sins, healing ^{of} the diseases, salvation from the bonds of ~~et~~ destruction, yes, all that was good he received from his L. And therefore he exhorts his own soul, "Bless the L O my soul and forget not all his benefits." These same words of the Psalmist should be our confession on this festival day. We too should say to our soul, v. 1.2. And which are some of the great blessings which we are enjoying as the result of the Great Reformation of 1517?

No doubt, the greatest of all the blessings which we are enjoying today, the one which perhaps takes in the greatest territory is this. The Reformation has put the BIBLE, that book of books, into the hands and houses of the people. At first that this may seem to be a strange statement, and yet we must remember that at the time of the Reformation 414 years ago, the Bible was seldom seen and never read by the common people. The Bibles were stored away, even fastened to chains in the libraries of the Universities and higher schools of learning. And there seem to have been various reasons for this. In the first place, the Bible had not yet appeared in the language of the common people. It was found only in the Hebrew and Aramaic, the Greek and the Latin languages. That of course, excluded the common class of people from reading it. Then, too, the Bible was a very costly book, a book which a man of ordinary means was unable to purchase. But one of the greatest reasons why the Bible was hidden away so securely from the people, was due to the fact that the highest authority in the church, the Pope, had forbidden the people to read the Sc. Such were the conditions before the Reformation. Compare that with the blessings which we are enjoying in our own home and church today. The Bible has been translated in nearly every known tongue or language. It is not so costly that there is an excuse for it to be found in every home. A small coin will purchase a copy of the Sc, and there are Bible Societies who are willing to supply any one with a Bible who is unable to afford one himself. That which was once so tightly concealed and closed is today unsealed and open. There is only one fact which is to be lamented in this connection, namely, that I fear there is perhaps as much dust to be found upon the covers of the Bibles as there was in those days. Only a few months ago a young man who is preparing himself for the ministry in the Lutheran church, canvassed our city with Bibles. He labored 3 1/2 days without placing a single Bible in any home. Those who already possessed this great heavenly treasure, THE BIBLE, would answer him, "We have a Bible, tho we never use it", while those who did not have it would simply say, we have no use for the book." Surely a lamentable fact that the people of today do not recognise what blessings our G has bestowed upon us by giving us the Bible in our own language. Xtian fr, when did you last use you Bible? Are you ignoring the blessings which G has bestowed upon us as the result of the great Ref of 1517. That is a matter which you will have to settle with your G.

There is another great blessing which we should not overlook just at this time. The Reformation has put away all human mediators between G and man and has again opened the door of approach to G-directly. We should give the Mother Mary due honor and praise, however, G himself strictly forbids that we worship her, or call upon her or any one else to intercede for us before the throne of G. We should do that directly with our G. Or think of the other great evil which the Reformation overcame, that which first prompted Luther to offer opposition against the teachings of the church at that time. The people were able to purchase or buy their lot of forgiveness of sins for a bit of filthy lucre. O how dreadful-and that should be called Xtianity! That is surely putting aside the teachings of the H S'r which says, "Believe on the LJA and thou shalt be saved."

Other great blessings which go hand in hand with the first one mentioned and which we will be able to speak of very briefly today are these. Thru the Ref of 1517 Luther again restored the preaching of the Gos and the administration of the Sacrs to the people acc to Xt's institution. He thereby also showed the clergy that the Bible was the rule and norm of all rel questions, and that all the man-made laws need not be obeyed as the W of G. Thereby the despotic hierarchy, the priesthood, was overthrown and the government of the church was again restored to the proper place, the congregation of believers. And so we could continue for a long while to enumerate the blessings of the Reformation of 1517, however, time does not permit us to do so. In every form of human activity we feel the impulse and the throb of this great religious movement. It has changed the current of human affairs, it has caused men to think, act, and speak differently, in short, it has purified the church. Even the Roman Church ought to thank Luther for what he has done, since today, the Roman Catholic church, especially where it labors side by side with the Protestants, is forced to be a better Church, is forced to teach more Sc doctrines than it did before the Reformation. The results are evident, -more souls are comforted than before.

For all of these blessings we are greatly in debt to the L, our G. And what do we owe him for all of these blessings?

II.

1.1.2. The words of David should be our confession also. We too should bless G for all his benefits toward us, for having given Luther the courage and understanding of the HScr, so that he would be able to bring about this Ref. Let us be on our guard that we do not begin to give Luther too much credit for his labors. He deserves much praise, but we dare never forget that it was our G who gave him the power to carry on his work. It was G who gave him the understanding and intelligence to do what he did. For that reason the highest praise belongs to G.

But our T does not only remind us to be instant in our praises and blessings to G for what he has done, it also says, "And forget not his benefits. We should not forget immediately what G has done for us. This warning is especially applicable also to us NT Xtians. We are enjoying blessings which our forefathers have not been privileged to enjoy. We have the Bible, have the opportunity to worship G as our conscience dictates. However, do we always remain mindful of them. Does it not sometimes occur that even we, who have so many blessings, begin to forget them, and take them all for self evident? For

that reason the warning also goes out to us, "Forget not all his benefits".

G grant that we all will ever be mindful of the blessings which G has bestowed upon us thru the Ref of 1517, and that we will constantly bless him for them all, never forgetting all his benefits. Wo this end help us, dear heavenly Father.

AMEN.