

THE LUTHER COMMEMORATION.

The event of the season has been

the commemoration of the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther.

Of late both continents have

resounded with the praise of the great

Saxon Reformer. The heroism with

which he defied the papal powers after

his discovery of the misty Bible

in the archives of Erfurt, the bold-

ness with which he faced the perils

that confronted him, the valiantness

with which he proclaimed the doc-

trine of justification by faith, and the

success which he finally achieved in

reformatory measures—all these have

been re-lived in the loud-

sounding praises of the orators of two

continents.

Biographies of the renowned Lu-

ther, and encyclopedias long unused,

have been ransacked to bring out

into the broad light of the nineteenth

century the mighty virtues of the Re-

former.

Luther was unquestionably a great

man. No other than one pre-emi-

nently great could have achieved so

much in the midst of surroundings so

adverse. The nations were beneath

the heel of Rome. Persecution even

unto death had been meted out to

those who, in the past, had dared lift

the voice of protest against priestly

supremacy. But he cared nothing

for these things. He was concerned

only with the duty of the hour. The

sturdy opposition of the Pope only

emboldened him the more. He en-

tered upon his work, and in the great

reformation which he precipitated he

started Christianity upon a new ca-

reer. He set the Bible free again.

He dragged it forth from its secret

place where papal hands had con-

signed it—the more readily to steep

the intellect of the nations in gross

darkness. Henceforth he led the van

in the assaults upon a villainous

priesthood. Unhindered by threats,

undaunted by the fiery fulminations

that gleamed from papal bulls, he

strode onward in his work of preach-

ing justification by faith.

No one can now properly appre-

ciate the valor of Luther during this

stormy period. Alone he stood in

the beginning in the midst of the

most imminent peril, nerved only by

his steady faith in God. But in the

end he triumphed. It was the dawn

of a new era to Christendom. The

bands of papal strength were burst

asunder and light streamed again

upon the world.

All honor, we say, to the champion

Reformer.

Worse than useless is it for Mon-

signor Capel to voice forth a current

of sentiment counter to that which

now dominates the protestant world,

as it turns its eyes backward, along

the centuries, to review the deeds of

Luther. It seems but the refinement

of sarcasm for a turbanned ecclesiastic

to declare in an American city that

Roman Catholics, and not Martin

Luther, commenced the Reformation.

He who talks thus would mock the

intelligence of the nineteenth cen-

tury. The stupendous change wrought

by Luther cannot be denied. His

work speaks for itself. It is written

deep in the centuries. It is in the

sacred keeping of many generations.

From the discussion of the history

of the German Reformer there will

flow two practical results:—

First, it will turn the gaze of the

world upon the blackened and infam-

ous history of the Roman Catholic

church. So megalin has the world

become, and so broad gauged in its

liberality, that it is apt to forget the

past of Roman Catholic history. It

is likely to be blinded by the present

aspect of the papal church, forget-

ting meanwhile that it has been fore-

ced into its present position by the

very principles enunciated and pro-

mulgated by the bold Reformer.

Again, it reproduces the study vi-

ues of a man whose principles made

him great. Luther was the very op-

posite of a modern trimmer, a lack-

liberal, an applause hunter.

Virtues speak loudest in human

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