

### 34. The Public Confessions Are the Standard of Doctrine in the Lutheran Church.

**Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. *Matt. 10,32.***

The works of Luther; the Reformer, and his co laborers, with a few exceptions, are throughout sound in doctrine, and hence we read them with the conviction that what is contained in their books is God's truth. But even the writings of the Reformer we do in no wise place on a level with the public Confessions of the Church. These, too, we subject to the general rule that the writings of individual theologians are to be tried by the Confessions of our Church. If in Luther's own writings anything is found not in agreement with the Confessions, we will not receive it as Lutheran doctrine; and this we do according to the clear declarations found in the *Book of Concord*, which says: "But whatever we have said hitherto concerning a compend, or outline, of sound doctrine must be referred simply to the sentence that we need a definite form of doctrine approved by universal consent, which all our Evangelical churches at once may recognize and adopt, and by which, as having itself been taken from the Word of God, all other writings may be tried or proved, which are set forth for our approbation and adoption." The public Confessions are the standard of doctrine in the Lutheran Church, and a man teaches Lutheran doctrine only in as far as his teachings are in agreement with these public writings, which the Lutheran Church has approved and adopted as expressing her faith.

We would therefore never consent to be bound even to the writings of the Reformer himself, much less to the writings of the later Lutheran theologians, because it is well known that in some things these later teachers of our Church, or dogmaticians, are not fully trustworthy guides. When we want to know what is Lutheran doctrine, we go to the *Book of Concord*, which contains all Confessions of the Lutheran Church. And from these Confessions there must be no appeal, neither to synods nor universities, much less to individual theologians, — only to the Scriptures.

### Prayer.

We pray Thee, heavenly Father, grant us grace to hold fast our profession without wavering. There are mighty enemies who would wrest our hope and comfort out of our hands and thus tempt us to waver. Do not let us be misled into denying, or withholding from others, our Christian hope, our true religion. Stablish and strengthen us to withstand apostasy, to contend for the faith, to hold fast our profession unceasingly, privately and publicly, in good and evil days. Govern and guide us with Thy Holy Spirit, to the end that we may have, and unto our end keep, true faith and a good conscience. Amen.

Rejoice, rejoice, with heart and voice,  
As Luther did, in Jesus;  
And praise the light of faith so bright  
By which the Savior frees us  
From Pope's decree and masses' fee,  
From sin and its damnation,  
And leads us on, where He hath gone  
To glorious consolation.

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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