

By Faith Lesson 27

## **Confession**

Look up from your Catechism Part V concerning "Confessions." Martin Luther writes in his so-called Large Catechism:

### **1. Confession of sin**

### **2. Absolution**

"Notice therefore-as I have often said, that in confession there are two parts. One part is our deed and activity: I lament my sin and yearn for comfort and refreshment for my soul; the second part is God's work that He does by the putting of His Word in a man's mouth and declares me free from my sin. The last mentioned is the most important and loftiest, for it makes confession sweet and comforting."

Paul counsels young Timothy: "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck." (I Tim. 1:18,19)

The Holy Spirit that dwells in the heart of a child of God has been called a tutor, or "home-teacher." It admonishes one to put away from the conscience all such matters which prevent from believing freely. Even for the young believer, trusted confessor-fathers and -mothers can be found in God's kingdom, to whom one can unburden.

### **The confessor-father must be a "sealed vessel."**

The confessor-father proclaims all sins forgiven in Jesus' name and blood. The confessor father must not tell anyone about the forgiven matters. If two or more children of God have been overtaken in the same sin, they cannot become freed of it by absolving each other. Then another Christian- not involved in the matter-is needed to proclaim absolution. Sometimes, the sin may be of such nature that it should be confessed before the congregation. Then all the children of God know that the open and public offense has been openly mended. Experienced Christians have advised: "As broad as the offense is, so broad is its repentance."

### **Faith is first, then confession**

It is very important to remember that confession is a grace-privilege. It is the fruit of true faith. We do not become Christians by confession of our sins, neither do we become better Christians. As children of God, we endeavor in faith to care and foster the household of conscience in the kingdom of God. Faith is a gift of God.

### **Exercises**

1. Find the following places in the Bible: II Sam. 12:13, Ps. 51:5, Heb. 12:1, James 5:16. Discuss these places of Scripture. In which of these is there questions of confession?
2. What are the two parts in confession?
3. What is meant by secret confession and public confession?