

270. Absolution.

He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. *Pro. 28, 13.*

We receive absolution, or forgiveness, from the pastor as from God Himself and should in no wise doubt, but firmly believe, that by it our sins are forgiven before God in heaven.

When ministers thus announce the forgiveness of sins, are the sins then really and truly forgiven? Most assuredly. Christ says it in so many words: "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them." The words of absolution are Christ's words, and they are not an empty sound; they convey what they express. In absolution the forgiveness of sins is extended to each and every one of those to whom it is announced. Never can the words of Jesus Christ be false, nor can they be empty; they always bring and do what they say.

But how can ministers forgive sins? Ministers are not masters, they are Christ's stewards, and they are not stewards of empty garners nor of shadows and emblems; they are stewards of real goods. Being stewards of genuine goods, they deal out actual forgiveness in the words of absolution. But it is not the steward's, but the Master's forgiveness; for His are both the words and the goods. As surely as Christ's words are true, so truly do they bring what they say – the remission of sins. After the World War a message of pardon was proclaimed by King George throughout India. In that message he said: "I direct my viceroy to exercise, in my name and on my behalf, my royal clemency to political offenders in the fullest measure." These words were not an empty proclamation stating that a man might obtain pardon and liberty from imprisonment; it was in fact the pardon, that is, the pardon was conveyed by these words themselves. All that the inhabitants of India had to do was to accept, and make use of, the pardon which was brought to them in that message. And when the king's viceroy proclaimed that pardon, it was the king's pardon. Thus the forgiveness proclaimed by the pastor is Christ's forgiveness.

Prayer.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Thou hast procured forgiveness of sins for all sinners by the shedding of Thy blood and by Thy death, and hast sealed it by Thy resurrection. This Thou hast commanded to be preached and to be administered throughout the world by means of the Gospel. Now, when my pastor absolves me, he does nothing else than proclaim to me the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins; and this is not an empty announcement, but it actually offers and conveys to me the forgiveness of sins. Praised be Thy holy name for this grace and love. Amen.

Jesus, give me true repentance
By Thy Spirit come from heav'n.
Whisper this transporting sentence,
"Son, thy sins are all forgiv'n."

However great the sins may be,
The absolution sets us free,
Appointed by God's own dear Son
To bring the pardon He has won.

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. You may contact Rev. Ley at: pastorley@leychalet.com.

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