

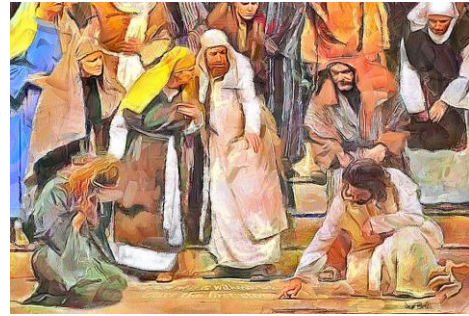
It Shall Not be Forgiven

First Series – Sermon Four

Original by George MacDonald

Paraphrase by Dale R. Howie

The focus of "It Shall not be Forgiven" is on relationship because it is the irreducible truth of God. MacDonald is more concerned with the relational destruction caused by unforgiveness than any misunderstandings concerning the Son. Murder in his mind was less grievous than unforgiveness, for murder can be a momentary act of passion, but unforgiveness is a deliberate choice of the heart to kill the offender!



MacDonald saw all judgment as redemptive, as the relentless love of God. Unforgiveness is the state of mind and heart that separates you from your neighbor to the greatest distance possible. It is the polar opposite of forgiveness. **"This state is the sin against the Holy Spirit. 'This is the judgment' (not in the sins and acts men have committed but in the condition of mind and heart in which they choose to remain) 'that the light came into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.'** In this sin against the Holy Spirit, I see no single act, although it will find expression in many and is the willful condition of the mind. This condition is far removed from God and the light of heaven." If a person will not forgive, release others to God for their transgressions, it is unlikely that God's forgiveness can reach their hearts!

Outline

Union and Power – The act of forgiveness fulfills Their purpose in uniting our hearts as ONE!

Meaning of Forgiveness – It is in the Divine heart that forgiveness originates and shapes ours.

Unforgiveness to Others – The shutting out of our neighbor from our mercies, love, and world as far as is possible for us.

All Judgment is Redemptive – God is, first and foremost, our Father, His Father's heart being filled with relentless Love!

Committed Rebels – Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Judas – Jesus loved Judas even while he was kissing Him and believed He was his Savior still!

Hope in Revelation – Hope is the distance between our glimpses and His mighty vision!

Luke 12:10 NLT

"Anyone who speaks against the Son of Man can be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven."

Jesus had no plans of establishing a religious system of doctrinal truths. The reality of the moment, in its relation to Himself, was the Truth that He spoke. Jesus spoke from a place of revelation that He knew could only be revealed, not represented, in the forms of intellect and language. The "Word" invaded our darkness with vivid flashes of life and truth, prodding us with sharp points of light to encourage our awakening. Jesus is resurrecting us from darkness and death into our calling to the Light that only He can give. This resurrection is not just in words but in union and power!

Union and Power

How will truth advance with those who have neither inspiration nor insight? Those who would build intellectual systems from His words or His disciples? Better a little child to interpret Plato or Paul than them. The inspiration within the hearts of those who knew Jesus was too extraordinary to enter theirs. The insights they could receive would have to be small enough to pass through their narrow doors.

Words, divorced from their original motivation and intentions, can have any meaning the hearer wishes to attach to them. How will the man, focused at best on the salvation of his own soul, understand Paul's meaning and heart? Paul was willing and ready to experience alienation from the presence of Christ that his beloved brothers, his nation, Israel might enter! For those who are not simple, plain words are the most mysterious of riddles.

If we are determined to understand what our Lord means, and He speaks that we can understand, we should be equally committed to refuse any interpretation, which seems unlike and unworthy of Him. Jesus said, "Why do you not judge for yourselves what is right?" **To accept as Truth what is inconsistent with what we know of Him already introduces conflict into harmony. This harmony's purpose to unite our hearts as One.**

How will we then receive Him if we avoid discernment? If we hold onto a limited perspective, our favorite image, to be the real likeness of Jesus? Is it possible that by holding onto my way of thinking and not judging clearly, I might close the door against the Master Himself as an imposter? If I don't judge my concepts and assumptions humbly and lovingly, who will discern them for me? **It is better to refuse the truth for a time than to accept an intellectual creed that our hearts cannot receive. Not seeing clearly God's Being introduces hesitation into our prayer, difficulty into our praise, and misery into our love! If something is true, we will one day see it clearly and love it. The Truth is always lovely! This part of us that loves Him let us follow. In its judgment, let us trust. Let us hope beyond all else for insight and growth from the Lord, who is the Spirit!**

Better, I say again, to refuse the right form or structure than to accept the misunderstanding of what it is, denying the Spirit and Truth in it. Which of these, I ask, is like the sin against the Holy Spirit? To

misunderstand what Jesus meant and be filled with sadness or to care so little for Him as to believe something about Him that our best nature rejects as low and weak, or selfish and wrong? The latter, to disbelieve the Truth itself, seems more like the sin against the Holy Spirit that can not be forgiven.

Words for their full meaning depend upon their source, the person who speaks them. A saying may even seem ordinary until you know who said it. That person to be always thinking, feeling, and acting genuinely, recognizing the being from which the words come. You then see the proportion by which they are to be understood. Therefore, the words from God cannot be accepted as the same as words from men. Whatever the word means, used by a good man, implies infinitely more when used by God. The thoughts and feelings expressed by that word take greater meaning in us as we become more capable of understanding Him. That is, as we become more like Him.

I am less concerned to reveal what the sin against the Holy Spirit means and more to express what unforgiveness implies. Even though I think as we go, we will understand both of them better. I cannot agree for a moment that there is anything in the Bible too mysterious to be explored. True, into many things, I can only see a little. But that little is the way of Life, for the depth of its mystery is God!

Meaning of Forgiveness

Understanding forgiveness requires us to ask what divine forgiveness means. If there is any meaning in the Incarnation, it is through the human that we ascend to the divine. I don't think it is beneficial to look at the Greek or English words for the act's primary thought. Forgiveness means "a sending away" in English, "a giving away." It will be sufficient to look at the feelings related to the actions of what we call forgiveness.

A man may say, "I forgive, but I cannot forget. I never want to see the person again." What level does such forgiveness reach? Does it reach remission or send away the penalties for which the injured believes he can claim against the offender? No, here there is no sending away of the injury between them.

Again, a man can say, "He has done a terrible thing, but he has the worst of it that he is capable of doing something like this. I hate him too much to care for revenge. I will ignore it. I forgive him; I really don't care." Here again, there is no sending away of the injury between them, no remission of the sin.

A third will say, "I know I must forgive him, for if I don't forgive him, God will not forgive me." Insofar as a base of sympathy, this person is a little nearer to the truth, but only by recognizing the common sin, they have between them.

Another will say, "He has injured me terribly. It is an awful thing to me and even more awful that he has done this to himself. He has hurt me, but he has nearly killed himself. I will not cause him any more injury from it. I do not feel the same toward him yet, but I will try to help him see it and acknowledge what he has done to free him from it. Then, perhaps, I can return to my previous feelings for him. To this end, I will show him all the kindness I can. Not forcing it on him, but taking every reasonable opportunity, not in the hope of any personal gain or advantage from him, but because I love him and want him to be reconciled and free to be his true self. I will send it away. I will destroy what has come between us. I will hope that he will also destroy it by renouncing it completely."

Which of these comes nearest to the divine idea of forgiveness? Closest to removing the distance between them, the distance that is as far as the heavens are above the earth.

For God created us, and His creative power far exceeds ours. **It is the Divine that originates forgiveness in itself, shapes our forgiveness, and so much more. Forgiveness takes up our wrongs, both small and great, along with the presence of sadness and sorrow. It removes them from between our God and us.**

“Jesus Christ is God's forgiveness!”

God is so much more and comes so much nearer to us than a human father can be or come. Before we go any closer to this great revelation, let us consider human forgiveness as seen in a relationship between a father and his son. **Fatherhood is the last and highest stair from which our understandings can see him from afar, and our hearts can know that He is near, even in us!**

There are various kinds and types of wrong-doing. Each requires different forms of forgiveness. For instance, a sudden outburst of anger in a child barely needs forgiveness. The wrong is so small that the parent only needs to influence the child towards self-restraint and rallying his will against it. The father will not feel that a fault like this has built up any wall between them.

How differently would he feel, though, if he discovers a habit of deceitfulness and cruelty to his younger brothers or the pets in the home? Would his forgiveness be the same as before? Would not the different fault require another form of forgiveness, a different response? Perhaps, a punishment suitable for restraining it in the hope of removing the cruelty? Could anything short of this come from real love? Ignoring or setting aside the offense would come from human weakness but never from divine love. **Forgiveness is never indifference, but rather, is love expressed to the unlovely!**

Let's look closer at the father's feelings and how they are expressed. In one child, in the moment of the offense, the father would embrace the child, knowing that his love would destroy the fault in him. The father's hatred toward the child's actions expressed in his tenderness to the child who committed such a wrong would reach the fault and destroy it. This sin then would create no break in their relationship, forgiveness given to the child at once.

But the handling of another type of sin would be dealt with entirely differently. If the child was guilty of meanness, selfishness, deceit, or happiness at others' suffering, the father might say to himself, "I cannot forgive him. This wrong is beyond forgiveness." He might say this to himself while looking for the path to forgiveness to lift his child from where he has fallen.

His love might increase for the child because of his lostness. **For love is divine. It loves according to the need rather than the merit! But this type of forgiveness would only be the beginning of the process in drawing the offender near. Not until the child opens his heart to this forgiving love, meeting it with his own passion, will it be swept away. Only in this way can the child be said to be forgiven.**

God forgives us every day! He sends away what is between us and Him, our darkness and sin! Observe the setting sun, the falling of His rain, the filling of our hearts with food and gladness. God's goodness is evidence that He loves those that do not love Him! When sin and darkness have clouded our vision, hiding Him from us, He forgives us where we are. He sweeps a path so His forgiveness can reach our

hearts. This love is causing repentance, dispelling our darkness, and freeing us to forgive ourselves. For some of us are too proud to forgive ourselves until the forgiveness of God has its way in us.

He looks at this as the ongoing contact between His heart and ours, destroying that which is between us. Honestly, we can say God's love precedes His forgiveness! Love is His motivation, ever working to consummate His forgiveness. His love needs our participation in its fulfillment. His love is perfect in working out forgiveness. He loves when we are not yet ready or able because, in the fullest sense, it is not yet possible, for our hearts are closed. And what lies between us has not been submitted to His consuming fire and been destroyed.

As between a father and his child, some things may be seen comparatively as in-process and can be taken lightly. By this, I do not mean less seriously because no sin can remain, but that sin and darkness in themselves cannot destroy us. That is consume us, leaving no room in our hearts for the presence of God's Spirit to forgive and cleanse away the evil. When we begin experiencing this freedom, we are growing in the Life, which is our lives — becoming perfect in God's will, letting it do its work in our hearts and minds.

Once we can wholeheartedly cast away our sins, there is no longer any need for forgiveness. We are living then in union with Him. When Nathan said to David, "You are the man." Forgiveness laid hold of him, and the king's heart was humbled. When he awoke from the moral slumber that had overtaken him, he found that God was still with him. "When I awake," he said, "I am still with you."

Unforgiveness to Others

There are two sins, not of personal actions, but of spiritual condition, which cannot be forgiven, excused, passed by, or made little of even by the tenderness of God. These block forgiveness from coming into the soul. They will not allow God's good influence to continue affecting us. They shut God out altogether. Therefore, the one guilty of these can never receive for himself divine renewing or experience the saving influence of God's forgiveness. God is outside of him in every way except His creating relationship, which, thank God, keeps hold of him against his own will. One of these sins is against man — the other against God.

The former is simply unforgiveness to our neighbor, the shutting out of him from our mercies, love, and world as far as is possible for us to do. Therefore, the murdering, as it were, of our neighbor. It is probably infinitely less evil to murder someone than to refuse to forgive them. The murder may be but an act of momentary passion. Unforgiveness, on the other hand, is a heart choice! It is spiritual murder, the worst, to hate, to dwell on the feelings that exclude, that kill the image and person of the hated!

We listen to the accuser within us — the voice of our own pride or our own rejected love for the offender's offense. In as much as we can, we extinguish the relationship between us, closing the door for future restoration. This closing is to reject God, our Life! How are we to receive His forgiving presence while we reject our brother, excluding him from our presence within the universal forgiveness, the gift of restoration, thereby refusing to let God be All in all? When God appears to you with forgiveness, how can He say to you, "I forgive you" while you refuse to do likewise to your neighbor? Even if He were to say so, His forgiveness would be of no value to you while you remain in the bitterness of your unforgiveness. It could not reach you!

No, it would kill us, thinking that we are safe and well, while the horrible disease of unforgiveness was eating away our very heart. Infinite life lies within the words, "If you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." These are words of unending kindness. God holds the unforgiving with His hand but turns His face away. If in the desire to see the face of His Father again, he turns his own to his brother's, then God turns His face back once again. Then he can look at God and not die. With forgiveness to his neighbor inflows the awareness of God's forgiveness to us. Even in the effort to let go, we become capable of believing that God can forgive us as well.

If God were to say, "I forgive you," to a man who hated his brother, and if (which is impossible), the word of forgiveness could reach the man, what could it possibly mean to him? How would he understand it? Would it say to him, "You can go on hating, I do not care? You have a good reason and are right to go on hating?" No, God does take the offense and the provoking of us into account. The more the provocation is, the greater the reason for the hatred. The more important it is that the hater is delivered from the hell of his hate. This so that God's child should be the loving person He meant for him to be.

The man might mistakenly think, not that God loved the sinner, but that he forgave the sin, which God never does. Every sin meets its due reward, the unavoidable removal from the paradise of God. **He loves the sinner so much that He cannot forgive him in any other way than to deliver him from the evil that possesses him.** The raising of him up from the difficulties of his sin!

Let no one think for an instant that the one who, at the moment, refuses to forgive his brother will, therefore, be condemned forever to a hell without the possibility of forgiveness and redemption. What is meant here is that while the one remains in such a state, God cannot be with him as his friend. Not that He is not his friend, but that the friendship is one-sided. That of only God's side. This will not look like friendship to us. **As I have said, forgiveness is not just love but is love given as love to the wrongdoer. So, establishing peace with God and forgiveness with his neighbor.**

All Judgement is Redemptive

Let us return to our original text. Does the refusal to forgive contain within it a damnation of irreversible unrepentance? Strange justice this would be, to be said that because someone has done wrong, done wrong to the extent that he becomes "wrong," and he will forever remain "wrong!" Do not tell me that judgment is only in condemnation, the negative. That judgment is forever leaving him to the consequences of his will. Or the withdrawing of the Spirit from him, which he despises. God will not hide behind the trickery of logic, philosophies, or abstract theories. **He is neither a school teacher nor a theologian, but our Father! God knows if He withdraws, He would be guilty of the same unforgiveness, of which He refuses to forgive us!**

The only defensible ground for believing such a doctrine is that God can do no better. **That Satan has won. That Jesus, as God Himself among us, could not defeat His adversary, the accuser, and destroyer of His children.** What then could I say of such a doctrine of devils? That even if we were to repent, God would be incapable of forgiving us?

Let us look now at "the unpardonable sin," as this mystery is commonly called. Let's see what we can learn about it. **First, all sin is unpardonable! There is no accommodation to be made with it.** We will not come through the process of forgiveness other than free and clean. Through the process except

having dealt with everything, having paid the "last penny." The nature of these unpardonable sins lies in the blocking out of God's friendliness to us. His personal spiritual influence on us. Perhaps concerning this sin, I may have spoken too strongly. Possibly the power of love in God will still have a role in the unforgiving man who continues in his unforgiveness. However, this part would eventually decrease and die away. Perhaps even resentment might leave some room for divine influence, although one or the other must yield to forgiveness in time. The one who denies the truth resists duty and goes so far as to say there is no truth. The one who says what is called truth is untrue. What is good comes from Satan, or what is bad comes from God. This person thinks he knows the difference between good and evil. One who denies the Spirit, therefore shutting out the Spirit's influence, cannot receive forgiveness!

For without God's Spirit, nothing can empower us to cast out evil! Without the confirmation of the Spirit in us, we would not know our forgiveness, even if God showed up and said so. To realize forgiveness, we must be aware of it in us. This realization cannot happen when we are resisting His will.

As far as we can tell, the religious men this was written to, at some level, resisted the truth, knowing it was true. Their selfishness, love of influence, and power was so strong that they rejected the one they knew to be good because Jesus had opposed them and was ruining their influence and authority by revealing them for what they were. They were willing to deny the goodness they knew to be true in order to destroy Him. Is this not to be Satan? Were they not then unpardonable? How, through all of the lies, darkness, and self-deception, could the forgiveness of God reach the true man within?

Even in their unconscious searching for God's forgiveness, these men had all but separated their true selves from their essential humanity. Their very being and had sided with the powers of darkness. Forgiveness, while they were in this state, was impossible. The religious must come out of this mindset, or there is no word from God they could hear. The very call rejected in this state was just one more cry from Mercy calling them to repentance. They needed to listen and fear this message! However, I dare not, cannot, think they refused the Truth, understanding and knowing all that He was. I do believe; however, they rejected the truth, knowing it was true! The religious were not deceived by wild passion but by cold, calculating self-love, envy, greed, and ambition. They were not just knowingly doing wrong, but committing their entire being intentionally against the Light!

This state is the sin against the Holy Spirit. "This is the judgment" (not in the sins and acts men have committed, but in the condition of mind and heart in which they choose to remain) "that the light came into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil." In this sin against the Holy Spirit, I see no single act, although it will find expression in many and is the willful condition of the mind. This condition is far removed from God and the light of heaven. Far from its center and a great distance to its furthest point.

But can a man fall into such a condition of spiritual depravity? This depravity is my real difficulty here. But I think it may be possible, wiser people than I have felt so. However, I do not believe that their condition is final. I don't see why it should be any more than the man who doesn't love his neighbor. If you say that it is worse, I say, is it beyond the forgiveness of God?

Is God able to have no more influence on the man? How is the man to get out of this condition? If he has blocked the Spirit of God from his heart, how is he to repent?

Committed Rebels

The primary influence of the Spirit of God is known through His confirmation of the truth within our spirit. But are there other means and powers proceeding before forgiveness the Spirit's highest form of communication? The God who made us is always near every man who draws breath, not only near but in him. God may not necessarily be in his heart but still in him and present to him. One day some terrible event, one shaking the very core of his being, like an earthquake from the hidden depths of his darkness, from within his nature. This event will take such a man through the deafness of his night to hear the faint voice of the Spirit, the still small voice that comes after the storms and earthquakes. Perhaps there is still a consuming fire even they can feel? Shall we limit this fire of God and its power of liberation?

There is only one conclusion against this argument I can think of that would have any conviction or power to persuade. One must feel total disgust in having sinned against the Truth and realized their sin, causing them to feel life is unendurable. Therefore, the kindest thing God could do for them would be to remove them from existence as if it would be better for him if he had never been born. But if God could bring a man to such a broken and humble state, He could undoubtedly bring him to repentance! This man, converted, would want to live forever, ever-renewing his mind, ever worshiping the beauty that he now beholds. When a man gives up the imprisonment of self, his part in sin will be gone! It will be enough that his portion is in God. That the All-perfect One is and that he can behold Him!

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," said Jesus. Jesus was making excuses for His murderers, not after they killed Him, but at the very moment, He was suffering and dying at their hands. He had already forgiven them! Jesus' prayer to His Father was heard, for He and His Father were one! When the Father's forgiveness reaches us in answer to Jesus' prayer, in them as well as in us, then it breaks forth in our hearts in sorrow, repentance, and faith. Here was the most dreadful of sins, but easy for our Lord to forgive! His excuses accepted for His misled Children! Thank you for that, Lord Jesus! That was absolutely like You!

Judas

Must we believe that Judas found no mercy in God? Judas repented in such agony that his highly prized life, his self, and soul became nothing in his own eyes. Judas, who met with no mercy at his own hands. When he fled his hanged body, he ran into the tender arms of Jesus and found forgiveness! I don't know how, except that he was in a more hopeful place now than he had ever been before in his entire life. Judas had never known repentance. **I believe that Jesus loved Judas even when he was kissing Him with the traitor's kiss. Jesus believed He was his Savior still!**

If you want to remind me of Jesus' words, "It had been good for that man if he had never been born," I have not forgotten them. I offer you nothing beyond an opinion by way of explanation for them when I say, "Judas had not experienced the good, in the world in which he was born. He had lived in disharmony with the world, and its God and God's love was lost to him. He had been brought to the very Son of God and lived with Him as His friend. Yet, Judas had not loved Him more, but less than he loved himself. Therefore, it had all been empty. "It had been good for that man if he had not been born." For perhaps it was to repeat in a lesser way, in a lower school, and in another world.

He went down the chain of creation, which is ever ascending to its Maker. **But I will not, cannot believe, O God, that you would not forgive your enemy!** Even when he repented in the end. Nor do I think that

Your holy death was powerless to save Your enemy! That this forgiveness could not reach Judas! Have we not heard that your disciples, taught by You, easily forgave their enemies in Your name? And when You forgive, will Your forgiveness not find its way to redemption and purification?

Look at the clause preceding our text: "He who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God." What does this mean? Does it mean, "Ah! You are mine, but not of my kind? You denied me, so away with you to outer darkness?" No! "Everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man (betrays Jesus) will be forgiven." Was Jesus not the Truth revealed because of Judas? But he must stand before the universe of God and need the fire that burns and consumes not.

But he who speaks against the Spirit, the Spirit of God in himself, is he not beyond the reach of the Spirit? For how shall he be forgiven? The forgiveness would no more touch him as if he were a wall of stone. Let him know what it is like to be without the God he has denied. Away with him into outer darkness! Perhaps that will lead him to repentance.

Hope in Revelation

My friends, I offer this as only a contribution towards the understanding of our Lord's words. If we ask Him, He will lead us into all truth. Let us not be afraid to think and wrestle, for he will not be displeased by it.

But what I have said must be at least part of the truth. No amount of discovery in the Bible can tell us all that is true. The best help his disciples can give us is to help us discover, discover the Truth for ourselves.

And beyond all our discoveries in His words and being lies layer upon layer of things we cannot understand. Yet, we will press in to understand and know Him forever! Yes, even now, we only see dim glimpses into places for which we in the past have seen nothing.

The fact that some things have opened up more than before. That great truths have come out of what once looked simple. These revelations are reason enough for hope! That this will go on to be our experience through the ages to come. Our advances from our present place of ignorance can only be but a little of the distance between Jesus and us. The distance between our love and His, between our glimpses and His mighty vision!

To Him, before long, we all will come. All of us as His children, more His children than ever before, to receive from His hand a white stone, and on that stone, a new name is written, that no one knows but he that receives it.

CLIFFNOTES WITH ORIGINAL MACDONALD QUOTES

Our Lord had no design of constructing a system of truth in intellectual forms. The truth of the moment in its relation to him, The Truth, was what he spoke. He spoke out of a region of realities which he knew could only be suggested—not represented—in the forms of intellect and speech. With vivid flashes of life and truth his words invade our darkness, rousing us with sharp stings of light to will our awaking, to arise from the dead and cry for the light which he can give, not in the lightning of words only, but in indwelling presence and power.

Union and Power

If we are bound to search after what our Lord means—and he speaks that we may understand—we are at least equally bound to refuse any interpretation which seems to us unlike him, unworthy of him. He himself says, "Why do ye not of your own selves judge what is right?"... To accept that as the will of our Lord which to us is inconsistent with what we have learned to worship in him already, is to introduce discord into that harmony whose end is to unite our hearts, and make them whole.

Words for their full meaning depend upon their source, the person who speaks them. An utterance may even seem commonplace, till you are told that thus spoke one whom you know to be always thinking, always feeling, always acting. Recognizing the mind whence the words proceed, you know the scale by which they are to be understood. So the words of God cannot mean just the same as the words of man.

Meaning of Forgiveness

For the Divine creates the Human, has the creative power in excess of the Human. It is the Divine forgiveness that, originating itself, creates our forgiveness, and therefore can do so much more. It can take up all our wrongs, small and great, with their righteous attendance of griefs and sorrows, and carry them away from between our God and us.

Christ is God's Forgiveness.

For although God is so much more to us, and comes so much nearer to us than a father can be or come, yet the fatherhood is the last height of the human stair whence our understandings can see him afar off, and where our hearts can first know that he is nigh, even in them.

A passing-by of the offence might spring from a poor human kindness, but never from divine love. It would not be remission. Forgiveness can never be indifference. Forgiveness is love towards the unlovely.

For love is divine, and then most divine when it loves according to needs and not according to merits. But the forgiveness would be but in the process of making, as it were, or of drawing nigh to the sinner. Not till his opening heart received the divine flood of destroying affection, and his own affection burst forth to meet it and sweep the evil away, could it be said to be finished, to have arrived, could the son be said to be forgiven.

God is forgiving us every day—sending from between him and us our sins and their fogs and darkness.

But, looking upon forgiveness, then, as the perfecting of a work ever going on, as the contact of God's heart and ours, in spite and in destruction of the intervening wrong, we may say that God's love is ever in front of his forgiveness. God's love is the prime mover, ever seeking to perfect his forgiveness, which latter needs the human condition for its consummation.

Unforgiveness to Others

The former is unforgiveness to our neighbor; the shutting of him out from our mercies, from our love—so from the universe, as far as we are a portion of it—the murdering therefore of our neighbor. It may be an infinitely less evil to murder a man than to refuse to forgive him.

The man would think, not that God loved the sinner, but that he forgave the sin, which God never does. Every sin meets with its due fate—inexorable expulsion from the paradise of God's Humanity. He loves the sinner so much that he cannot forgive him in any other way than by banishing from his bosom the demon that possesses him.

Forgiveness, as I have said, is not love merely, but love conveyed as love to the erring, so establishing peace towards God, and forgiveness towards our neighbor.

Judgement is Redemptive

God will not take shelter behind such a jugglery of logic or metaphysics. He is neither schoolman nor theologian, but our Father in heaven. He knows that that in him would be the same unforgiveness for which he refuses to forgive man.

That Satan has overcome; and that Jesus, amongst his own brothers and sisters in the image of God, has been less strong than the adversary, the destroyer. What then shall I say of such a doctrine of devils as that, even if a man did repent, God would not or could not forgive him?

All sin is unpardonable. There is no compromise to be made with it. We shall not come out except clean.

As far as we can see, the men of whom this was spoken were men who resisted the truth with some amount of perception that it was the truth; men neither led astray by passion, nor altogether blinded by their abounding prejudice; men who were not excited to condemn one form of truth by the love which they bore to another form of it; but men so set, from selfishness and love of influence, against one whom they saw to be a good man, that they denied the goodness of what they knew to be good, in order to put down the man whom they knew to be good, because He had spoken against them, and was ruining their influence and authority with the people by declaring them to be no better than they knew themselves to be.

Of this nature must the sin against the Holy Ghost surely be. "This is the condemnation," (not the sins that men have committed, but the condition of mind in which they choose to remain,) "that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

Committed Rebels

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," said Jesus. Jesus was making excuses for His murderers, not after they killed Him, but at the very moment, He was suffering and dying at their hands. He had already forgiven them!

Judas

But I believe that Jesus loved Judas even when he was kissing him with the traitor's kiss; and I believe that he was his Savior still, even when he repented, and did thee right. Nor will I believe that thy holy death was powerless to save thy foe.

But I will not, cannot believe, O my Lord, that thou wouldst not forgive thy enemy, even when he repented, and did thee right.

Hope in Revelation

The fact that some things have become to us so much more simple than they were, and that great truths have come out of what once looked common, is ground enough for hope that such will go on to be our experience through the ages to come.