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THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

"WHOSOEVER speaketh a word against the Son of Man it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. – Matt. 12:32. [The word here rendered world, as in many other places, should be rendered age, and is so rendered in all new translations.] [R260 : page 51]

This text teaches first that there is such a thing as forgiveness of sins both in the present Gospel age and in the coming – Millennial – age. The basis of all forgiveness of sins, is in the fact that "Christ died for our sins."

Secondly, it teaches that some sins are possible, which God will not reckon as a part of the Adamic sin which passed upon all men and which is to be forgiven all men. If men looked at Jesus and ignorantly supposed him an impostor and blasphemed him, it would be excusable and forgivable as a result of the fallen nature. Even should they blaspheme the name of God, and say they believed in no such being, etc., this too might be forgiven for the same reasons. But when God's power (the Holy Ghost) was manifested in doing them good as it was manifested through Jesus, there certainly was no excuse for even the most depraved of men ascribing those good works to an evil power – Satan. And this is just what Jesus tells them, that such conduct cannot be classed as a part of the general human depravity, and it therefore cannot be forgiven.

The light was shining so clearly, that though their eyes were nearly blinded by sin, they could not help realizing some of the light as Jesus manifested some of "the powers of the world (age) to come." As he said to them on another occasion, their "stripes" (punishment) in the next age will be in proportion as they have been able to

comprehend and do justly and have not so done. They whose moral sight and hearing have been totally destroyed by Adam's sin and its results (if any such there be – the Lord knoweth) will have no stripes in the future, will be forgiven fully. They who see a little and could obey a little and do not so do, shall be forgiven the things they did not see and could not do, but will be beaten (punished) with a few stripes for the few things they saw, and could, but did not do. They who saw more and whose ability to perform was less impaired by the fallen nature, and who fail to do according to their ability, are to be beaten with many stripes.

Now notice that all who receive "stripes" receive them for **[R260 : page 52]** unpardoned sins, for if the sins were pardoned they would not be punished for them. In our earthly courts if a man had trespassed against the law in two ways, and the penalty of the first crime was imprisonment for five years, and for the second six months; if it could be shown that he was not really to blame for the first crime, but was forced into it by circumstances over which he had no control, but the second crime was measurably under his control, the decision of the court would be "guilty" on both charges: but he would be pardoned on the first charge and not on the second; the result would be that he would serve the six months' punishment.

Here are two earthly crimes, one pardonable and one unpardonable. So it is with God's law; all are sinners and condemned – guilty – on account of Adam's sin, but the full ransom from that sin has been paid, and so though condemned before the court of heaven, it is announced that all of our imperfections traceable to that cause are freely and fully forgiven. But neither more nor less is pardonable. All sins against light and ability are unpardonable, cannot be forgiven at any time, and hence must be punished. The world will have many such sins to be punished in the age to come, and they receive in some instances much punishment in the present life and age. In a word, all

punishment indicates unpardoned sin, for if it were pardoned it would not be punished as well.

Paul tells us of extreme cases of this sort of unpardonable sin. Men of the world who have a little light we have seen can commit it, but when a man becomes a Christian and has the eyes of his understanding opened – when he is brought from the condition of darkness and ignorance, into the light of the knowledge of the Lord, to then "sin willfully" is terrible indeed. Due and full allowance is made for all our weaknesses and imperfections which come to us through our fallen nature, and which clog and hinder our doing as we should wish to do – our Father's will: but no more. If we cease to desire to do God's will, we cut loose from our Lord and begin to walk according to our own **[R260 : page 53]** will as natural and no longer spiritual beings. This is the thing pictured by the proverb: "The dog is returned to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." – 2 Pet. 2:22.

In Heb. 6:4-6, Paul assures us that any Christian who has reached a full and mature development in the spiritual life, having "been enlightened," "tasted of the heavenly gift," "been made partaker of the Holy Ghost," "tasted of the good word of God" – if such shall fall away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance. Why? Because this is an unpardonable sin. But can they not be punished for this sin and thus be free from it in time? No, with the above description of the Apostle, we understand that these had enjoyed all the blessings due them on account of Christ's ransom: i.e., they were reckoned of God justified from all sin, as new creatures had been brought to a condition of enlightenment and knowledge of the Lord's will, and then, had deliberately and willfully acted contrary to it. We do not refer to a child of God stumbling or being overcome of the old nature for a time, but as expressed in Heb. 10:26 – "if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more

(a) sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour (destroy) the adversaries."

In a word, we understand Paul to teach that the class here **[R261 : page 53]** described have received all the benefits due them through Christ's ransom, and that their willful sinning against knowledge, etc., places them in the same position as Adam occupied when he sinned; the penalty of all such willful sin is death. In Adam's case it was the first death. In the case of these it is the second death. They had been reckoned dead as Christians, and then reckoned of God alive as new creatures, and now they die for their own willful sin – the second death. There is neither forgiveness nor excuse for such sin; they must have the full penalty and die. They have lightly esteemed the ransom after they knew of it, and thus have "trodden under foot the Son of God **[R261 : page 54]** and counted the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified (set apart as new creatures) an unholy (ordinary – common) thing, and done despite (disrespect) unto the spirit of (favor) grace."

These have no hope; they could not be recovered from the second death in any other way than as Adam and his children were redeemed from the first death – i.e., by some one dying for their sin as Jesus died for Adam's sin. Will Jesus die again for them? No, "Christ being risen dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him." Nor could there be any object in bringing such to life again; having had full redemption, and having come to know both Good and Evil, if they love evil rather than good and willfully do it, let them be deprived of life. All will say it is love on the part of our Father to deprive them of life, which, if continued, would be only of injury and evil both to themselves and others.

It will readily be seen that this sin to this last mentioned extent – punishable with the second death – could not possibly have been committed prior to the Gospel age, since not until Pentecost did the

Holy Ghost come as a teacher to guide the church into the truth. – John 16:13. It had in past time been active through holy men of old, as they – "spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," but it moved them to write but not to understand. It came upon the prophets as servants to communicate; it comes to us as a seal of sonship, and to enable us as sons to understand our Father's will. – Rom. 8:14. Consequently in previous ages none ever "tasted of the good word of God," or "became partakers of the Holy Ghost," etc., and consequently none who lived in past ages could sin away forever all hope of a future life.

The millions of past ages never have been recovered from the first death (Adamic) in any sense, and must be so recovered before it will be possible for them to commit the "sin unto death." – Heb. 6:4,6. That Israelites, Sodomites, Egyptians, and others have not fully lived up to the knowledge they possessed [R261 : page 55] we doubt not, and they will doubtless, therefore, have "stripes" in the coming age for sins not pardoned by Jesus' ransom.

We are glad to say that we believe very few have ever committed this "Sin unto death;" that very few ever possessed the knowledge, etc., specified by the apostle, we feel sure; and that is the specified condition.

"There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in his justice
Which is more than liberty."
