2. Difference Between Unforgivable and Unforgiven

In no Bible passage can we find the terms "unforgivable sin" or "unpardonable sin." These are man's terms. They are not inspired by the Holy Spirit. There is a vast difference between a sin that is "unforgivable" (as men say) and a sin that is "unforgiven" (as the scriptures call it).

I would like to illustrate the important difference between calling a sin "unforgivable" (as men do) and "unforgiven" (as the scriptures do). I want to drive home the point that when one speaks of an "unpardonable" or "unforgivable" sin one is not speaking as the scriptures speak.

Unloved Orphan Boy

Suppose you saw a documentary about the sad life of a forlorn little boy, an orphan from birth in a war-torn, disease-ridden village. The commentator describes the poor little chap as "unloved." Would you understand that to mean the boy is unlovable? There's a lot of difference, isn't there? Even if the commentator said, the boy "will never be loved", you'd still not think the boy was unlovable...

The Unused Hammer

Suppose I had just purchased a new hammer at the ironmongers. I could say my new hammer is unused. But I certainly would not mean it was unusable, would I? There's a lot of difference, isn't there, between a hammer being unused and unusable? It is even possible for the hammer to never be used, yet still be usable.

The Unforgiven Sin

Jesus spoke of sin that is "unforgiven" and "never forgiven". He did not say it was unforgivable. Just as we do not assume that an unloved boy is unlovable, or an unused tool is unusable, so we should not say that an unforgiven sin is unforgivable. When Jesus calls a sin unforgiven, even when he says it will never be forgiven, let us not put words into his mouth and call the sin unforgivable.

3. Conditions Preventing Forgiveness

If a sin is unforgiven, there are conditions preventing its forgiveness. No sin is unpardonable when the barrier to forgiveness is removed. God never puts up a barrier, but sinners often do. So let's now look at what the barrier to forgiveness actually is.

If you look at each of the passages listed on the first page, you will find that the problem is not in God's heart, or in the nature of the sin itself, but lies with the sinner's own heart and will. It is not the sin, but the sinner's attitude that prevents forgiveness.

Going on sinning wilfully (Heb 10:26-31)

The condition we have been talking about is...