

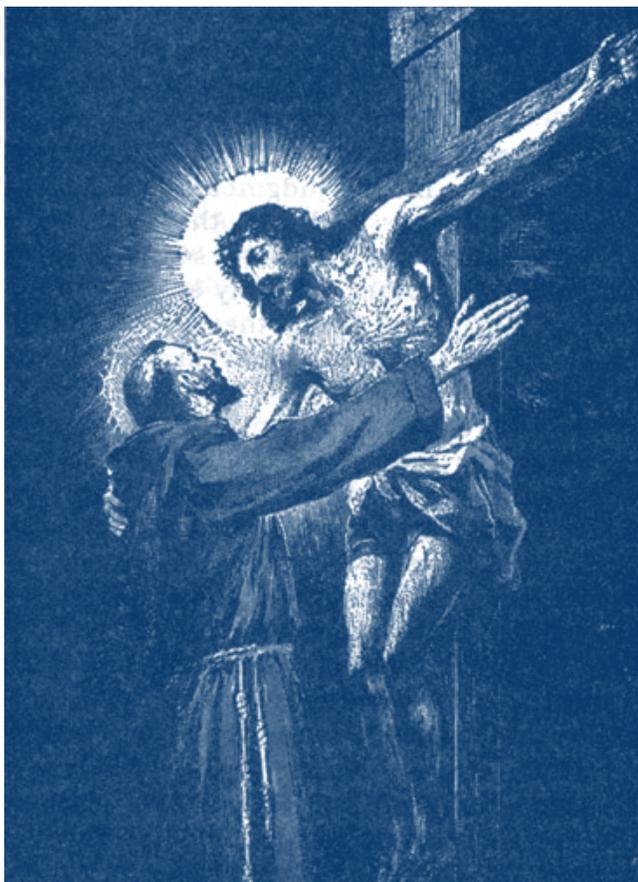
The Song of Prayer— Forgiveness

FORGIVENESS OFFERS WINGS to prayer, to make its rising easy and its progress swift. Without its strong support it would be vain to try to rise above prayer's bottom step, or even to attempt to climb at all. Forgiveness is prayer's ally; sister in the plan for your salvation. Both must come to hold you up and keep your feet secure; your purpose steadfast and unchangeable. Behold the greatest help that God ordained to be with you until you reach to Him. Illusion's end will come with this. Unlike the timeless nature of its sister, prayer, forgiveness has an end. For it becomes unneeded when the rising up is done. Yet now it has a purpose beyond which you cannot go, nor have you need to go. Accomplish this and you have been redeemed. Accomplish this and you have been transformed. Accomplish this and you will save the world.

Forgiveness of Yourself

No gift of Heaven has been more misunderstood than has forgiveness. It has, in fact, become a scourge; a curse where it was meant to bless, a cruel mockery of grace, a parody upon the holy peace of God. Yet those who have not yet chosen to begin the steps of prayer cannot but use it thus. Forgiveness' kindness is obscure at first, because salvation is not understood, nor truly sought for. What was meant to heal is used to hurt because forgiveness is not wanted. Guilt becomes salva-

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Created by Ariel Agemian exclusively for the Confraternity of the Precious Blood

The incarnation of a love that surpasses perfect forgiveness utters from the cross a prayer of reprieve for his murderers, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

tion, and the remedy appears to be a terrible alternative to life.

Forgiveness-to-destroy will therefore suit the purpose of the world far better than its true objective, and the honest means by which this goal is reached. Forgiveness-to-destroy will overlook no sin, no crime, no guilt that it can seek and find and "love." Dear to its heart is error, and mistakes loom large and grow and swell within its sight. It carefully picks out all evil things, and overlooks the loving as a plague; a hateful thing of danger and of death. Forgiveness-to-destroy is death, and this it sees in all it looks upon and hates. God's mercy has become a twisted knife that would destroy the holy Son He loves.

Would you forgive yourself for doing this? Then learn that God has given you the means by which you can return to Him in peace. Do not see error. Do not make it real. Select the loving and forgive the sin by choosing in its place the face of Christ. How otherwise can prayer return to God? He loves His Son. Can you remember Him and hate what He created? You will hate his Father if you hate the Son He loves. For as you see the Son you see yourself, and as you see yourself is God to you. As prayer is always for yourself, so is forgiveness always given you.

It is impossible to forgive another, for it is only your sins you see in him. You want to see them there, and not in you. That is why forgiveness of another is an illusion. Yet it is the only happy dream in all the world; the only one that does not lead to death. Only in someone else can you forgive yourself, for you have called him guilty of your sins, and in him must your innocence now be found. Who but the sinful need to be forgiven? And do not ever think you can see sin in anyone except yourself.

This is the great deception of the world, and you the great deceiver of yourself. It always seems to be another who is evil, and in his sin you are the injured one. How could freedom be possible if this were so? You would be slave to everyone, for what he does entails your fate, your feelings, your despair or hope, your misery or joy. You have no freedom unless he gives it to you. And being evil, he can only give of what he is. You cannot see his sins and not your own. But you can free him and yourself as well.

Forgiveness, truly given, is the way in which your only hope of freedom lies. Others will make mistakes and so will you, as long as this illusion of a world appears to be your home. Yet God Himself has given all His Sons a remedy for all illusions that they think they see

Christ's vision does not use your eyes, but you can look through His and learn to see like Him. Mistakes are tiny shadows, quickly gone, that for an instant only seem to hide the face of Christ,



From *Die Bibel in Bildern*, Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld (1789-1853)

The Adulteress before Christ

Christ Jesus turns the weapon of the law against its zealous custodians to effect release of the adulterous woman (John 9). God sent not His Son to condemn the world but to redeem it. Forgiveness is possible because Christ is infused in the very earth of the human form and waits to be identified and set free from the incognito of each seeming sinner.

which still remains unchanged behind them all. His constancy remains in tranquil silence and in perfect peace. He does not know of shadows. His eyes look past error to the Christ in you. Ask, then, His help, and ask Him how to learn forgiveness as His vision lets it be. You are in need of what He gives, and your salvation rests on learning this of Him. Prayer cannot be released to Heaven while forgiveness-to-destroy remains with you. God's mercy would remove this withering and poisoned thinking from your holy mind. Christ has forgiven you, and in His sight the world becomes as holy as Himself. Who sees no evil in it sees like Him. For what He has forgiven has not sinned, and guilt can be no more. Salvation's plan is made complete, and sanity has come.

Forgiveness is the call to sanity, for who but the insane would look on sin when he could see the face of Christ instead? This is the choice you make; the simplest one, and yet the only one that you can make. God calls on you to save His Son from death by offering Christ's love to him. This is your need, and God holds out this gift to you. As

He would give, so must you give as well. And thus is prayer restored to formlessness, beyond all limits into timelessness, with nothing of the past to hold it back from re-uniting with the ceaseless song that all creation sings unto its God.

But to achieve this end you first must learn, before you reach where learning cannot go. Forgiveness is the key, but who can use a key when he has lost the door for which the key was

a “better” person deigns to stoop to save a “baser” one from what he truly is. Forgiveness here rests on an attitude of gracious lordliness so far from love that arrogance could never be dislodged. Who can forgive and yet despise? And who can tell another he is steeped in sin, and yet perceive him as the Son of God? Who makes a slave to teach what freedom is? There is no union here, but only grief. This is not really mercy. This is death.

Forgiveness has a Teacher Who will fail in nothing. Rest a while in this; do not attempt to judge forgiveness, nor to set it in an earthly frame. Let it arise to Christ, Who welcomes it as gift to Him. He will not leave you comfortless, nor fail to send His angels down to answer you in His Own Name.

made, and where alone it fits? Therefore we make distinctions, so that prayer can be released from darkness into light. Forgiveness’ role must be reversed, and cleansed from evil usages and hateful goals. Forgiveness-to-destroy must be unveiled in all its treachery, and then let go forever and forever. There can be no trace of it remaining, if the plan that God established for returning be achieved at last, and learning be complete.

This is the world of opposites. And you must choose between them every instant while this world retains reality for you. Yet you must learn alternatives for choice, or you will not be able to attain your freedom. Let it then be clear to you exactly what forgiveness means to you, and learn what it should be to set you free. The level of your prayer depends on this, for here it waits its freedom to ascend above the world of chaos into peace.

Forgiveness-to-Destroy

Forgiveness-to-destroy has many forms, being a weapon of the world of form. Not all of them are obvious, and some are carefully concealed beneath what seems like charity. Yet all the forms that it may seem to take have but this simple goal; their purpose is to separate and make what God created equal, different. The difference is clear in several forms where the designed comparison cannot be missed, nor is it really meant to be.

In this group, first, there are the forms in which

Another form, still very like the first if it is understood, does not appear in quite such blatant arrogance. The one who would forgive the other does not claim to be the better. Now he says instead that here is one whose sinfulness he shares, since both have been unworthy and deserve the retribution of the wrath of God. This can appear to be a humble thought, and may indeed induce a rivalry in sinfulness and guilt. It is not love for God’s creation and the holiness that is His gift forever. Can His Son condemn himself and still remember Him? Here the goal is to separate from God the Son He loves, and keep him from his Source. This goal is also sought by those who seek the role of martyr at another’s hand.

Here must the aim be clearly seen, for this may pass as meekness and as charity instead of cruelty. Is it not kind to be accepting of another’s spite, and not respond except with silence and a gentle smile? Behold, how good are you who bear with patience and with saintliness the anger and the hurt another gives, and do not show the bitter pain you feel.

Forgiveness-to-destroy will often hide behind a cloak like this. It shows the face of suffering and pain, in silent proof of guilt and of the ravages of sin. Such is the witness that it offers one who could be savior, not an enemy. But having been made enemy, he must accept the guilt and heavy-laid reproach that thus is put upon him. Is this love? Or

is it rather treachery to one who needs salvation from the pain of guilt? What could the purpose be, except to keep the witnesses of guilt away from love?

Forgiveness-to-destroy can also take the form of bargaining and compromise. "I will forgive you if you meet my needs, for in your slavery is my release." Say this to anyone and you are [a] slave. And you will seek to rid yourself of guilt in further bargains which can give no hope, but only greater pain and misery. How fearful has forgiveness now become, and how distorted is the end it seeks. Have mercy on yourself who bargains thus. God gives and does not ask for recompense. There is no giving but to give like Him. All else is mockery. For who would try to strike a bargain with the Son of God, and thank his Father for his holiness?

What would you show your brother? Would you try to reinforce his guilt and thus your own? Forgiveness is the means for your escape. How pitiful it is to make of it the means for further slavery and pain. Within the world of opposites there is a way to use forgiveness for the goal of God, and find the peace He offers you. Take nothing else, or you have sought your death, and prayed for separation from your Self. Christ is for all because He is in all. It is His face forgiveness lets you see. It is His face in which you see your own.

All forms forgiveness takes that do not lead away from anger, condemnation and comparisons of every kind are death. For that is what their purposes have set. Be not deceived by them, but lay them by as worthless in their tragic offerings. You do not want to stay in slavery. You do not want to be afraid of God. You want to see the sunlight and the glow of Heaven shining on the face of earth, redeemed from sin and in the Love of God. From here is prayer released, along with you. Your wings are free, and prayer will lift you up and bring you home where God would have you be.

Forgiveness-for-Salvation

Forgiveness-for-salvation has one form, and only one. It does not ask for proof of innocence, nor pay of any kind. It does not argue, nor evaluate the errors that it wants to overlook. It does not offer gifts in treachery, nor promise freedom while it asks for death. Would God deceive you? He but asks for trust and willingness to learn how to be free. He gives His Teacher to whoever asks, and seeks to understand the Will of God. His readiness to give lies far beyond your understanding and your simple grasp. Yet He has willed you learn the way to Him, and in His willing there is certainty.

You Child of God, the gifts of God are yours, not by your plans but by His holy Will. His Voice will teach you what forgiveness is, and how to give it as He wills it be. Do not, then, seek to understand

what is beyond you yet, but let it be a way to draw you up to where the eyes of Christ become the sight you choose. Give up all else, for there is nothing else. When someone calls for help in any form, He is the One to answer for you. All that you need do is to step back and not to interfere. Forgiveness-for-salvation is His task, and it is He Who will respond for you.

Do not establish what the form should be that Christ's forgiveness takes. He knows the way to make of every call a help to you, as you arise in haste to go at last unto your Father's house. Now can He make your footsteps sure, your words sincere; not with your own sincerity, but with His Own. Let Him take charge of how you would forgive, and each occasion then will be to you another step to Heaven and to peace.

Are you not weary of imprisonment? God did not choose this sorry path for you. What you have chosen still can be undone, for prayer is merciful and God is just. His is a justice He can understand, but you cannot as yet. Still will He give the means to you to learn of Him, and know at last that con-



Created for the Rays by Harry Menne

demnation is not real and makes illusions in its evil name. And yet it matters not the form that dreams may seem to take. Illusions are untrue. God's Will is truth, and you are one with Him in Will and purpose. Here all dreams are done.

"What should I do for Him, Your holy Son?" should be the only thing you ever ask when help is needed and forgiveness sought. The form the seeking takes you need not judge. And let it not be you who sets the form in which forgiveness comes to save God's Son. The light of Christ in him is his release, and it is this that answers to his call. Forgive him as the Christ decides you should, and be His eyes through which you look on him, and speak for Him as well. He knows the need; the question and the answer. He will say exactly what to do, in words that you can understand and you can also use. Do not confuse His function with your own. He is the Answer. You the one who hears.

And what is it He speaks to you about? About salvation and the gift of peace. About the end of sin and guilt and death. About the role forgiveness has in Him. Do you but listen. For He will be heard by anyone who calls upon His Name, and places his forgiveness in His hands. Forgiveness has been given Him to teach, to save it from destruction and to make the means for separation, sin and death become again the holy gift of God. Prayer is His Own right hand, made free to save as true forgiveness is allowed to come from His eternal vigilance and love. Listen and learn, and do not judge. It is to God you turn to hear what you should do. His answer will be clear as morning, nor is His forgiveness what you think it is.

Still does He know, and that should be enough. Forgiveness has a Teacher Who will fail in nothing. Rest a while in this; do not attempt to judge forgiveness, nor to set it in an earthly frame. Let it arise to Christ, Who welcomes it as gift to Him. He will not leave you comfortless, nor fail to send His angels down to answer you in His Own Name. He stands beside the door to which forgiveness is the only key. Give it to Him to use instead of you, and you will see the door swing silently open upon the shining face of Christ. Behold your brother there beyond the door; the Son of God as He created him. (Continued) □

WHAT IS PRAYER?

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed,
The motion of a hidden fire,
That kindles in the breast.

Prayer is the burthen of a sigh,
The falling of a tear,
The upward glancing of an eye,
When none but God is near.

Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try,
Prayer the sublimest strains that reach
The majesty on high.

Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice
Returning from his ways,
While angels in their songs rejoice,
And cry, "Behold! He prays!"

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
Christian's native air,
His watchword at the gates of death—
He enters heaven with prayer.

The saints in prayer appear as one
In words and deed and mind,
Wherewith the Father and the Son
Sweet fellowship they find.

Nor prayer is made by man alone:
The Holy Spirit pleads,
And Jesus, on the eternal throne,
For sinners intercedes.

O Thou by whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way,
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod;
Lord, teach us how to pray.

—James Montgomery

*Evening, and morning, and at noon,
will I pray, and cry aloud;
and he shall hear my voice.*

—Psalm 55:17