

PUNISHMENT IN THE HANDBOOK OF CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS

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HANDBOOK OF CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS, Peter Kreeft & Ronald Tacelli, Monarch, East Sussex, 1994.

Their Handbook of Christian Apologetics Says

There are two kinds of punishment. Natural law punishment and positive law punishment. A promiscuous homosexual who gets AIDS and dies got a natural law punishment. He did bad and brought AIDS on himself. A positive law punishment is one you choose yourself such as when you break a law and have to be fined or jailed for it. Hell is a natural law punishment for the sinner refuses God's love and suffers through resisting it.

Reason replies:

This is nonsense. The Bible never speaks of Hell, where it says you go at death forever if you are not forgiven by God, as being that kind of punishment. How could it be when we are told that you pay for your own sins unless you abandon them to Jesus for him to atone to God for them? This amounts to saying that a sin that is not that bad puts you there forever.

Also, as God supposedly has set up nature it follows that he is using it as a weapon to punish. This is considered natural law punishment but it is only positive law punishment in another form.

Punishment is based on the concept of retribution, making a person pay for having done wrong. It must then be intentional as far as God is concerned. Natural law punishment then must be just another way of giving out positive punishment.

The homosexual who sleeps around did not intend to get AIDS and if he did he didn't do it to pay himself back for his "sins". What about the man who would be promiscuous if he could? He could be the worse sinner in his heart. Only a vindictive God would set it up so that the homosexual suffers for doing what is in his heart while somebody with a blacker heart gets away with it.

Hell is retribution from God. If God punishes you by putting you in jail (positive law) or by making sure you will get a disease if you commit certain sins (natural law) it is only the style of the retribution that is different. Both are still intended by him as punishment.

Is the saint who dies of doing good works undergoing a natural law punishment?

Living sinners don't necessarily suffer through rejecting God. God has the power to make sure this doesn't happen dead sinners so he makes sure they suffer. It is vindictive retributive punishment. And to lie that it is not and blame the sinner is vindictive too. There can be no doubt that this whitewashed book in saying that most of our pain is caused by mental pain which is caused by selfishness and sin, is blaming the victims of any suffering on earth or in Heaven. They say that before the fall, Adam would have felt only physical pain not mental pain if he stubbed his toe against a rock. After the fall he became prone to sin and so his pain was made worse. Mental pain exaggerates physical pain. This is a vile teaching. But it is quite consistent with the Bible which says that suffering came in only with the fall of Adam and Eve when they sinned against God and made sinners of themselves and their descendants.

Handbook of Christian Apologetics Says

Page 292 criticises the notion that Hell puts justice before love by saying that justice is simply a way of loving. Then it launches into an attack on the Calvinist doctrine that God makes some people and schemes to land them in Hell.

Reply: But if the authors are honest they will agree with Calvinist theology. God is the only explanation for the difference between a sinner who dies and will never repent again from one who is alive and in sin but who might repent given the chance. He is the only explanation for how the first cannot repent and the second can. God did something when all the sinners fit for Hell who die never repent.

And besides, God choosing some sinners for going to Hell is not as much of a problem as him causing them to STAY there. It is the STAYING! The Catholics cannot complain about the Calvinists having a God who has people destined to stay in Hell when their own is no better.

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We inflict our punishment in Hell and shut God out but he does not shut us out. The shutting out of God is the reason Hell is painful it says for God alone can give joy.

Reply: We can find joy on earth without thinking of God or believing. The Bible never says that the loss of God is to blame for the suffering of Hell. This is an invention of trendy Christians who do not want to believe that God created a torture chamber and who wish to distort the Bible teaching that he did exactly that!

God by definition would be our deepest need. But many of us do not have that need. Thus it follows we know by experience that there is no God.

Minds do not have nerves. Spirits do not have nerves. So God must put nerves in them to make them suffer!

Handbook of Christian Apologetics Says

Page 309 responds to the suggestion that those who preach Hell are being self-righteous and telling others they could go there while thinking that they themselves are too good for that at least in their present condition.

Reason replies:

Christians admit that all sin is rooted in pride and when they say that they are all sinners let us take their word for it that pride motivates their preaching about Hell for a heart given to pride cannot issue humble acts but only acts that superficially appear humble.

The response given is that all preachers of eternal Hell must realise that it could happen to them. But anybody who takes precautions can afford to be self-righteous. Surely if you are smug you can be smug because it can happen to you and you don't think it will?

Born again Christians are self-righteous for they say they have chosen Jesus which is a righteous act in their opinion and that those who do not do as they have done are going to rot in Hell forever and ever. Their claim that God does all the work but they cannot mean that.

Catholics who go to confession and communion often are taking all the best precautions and can be fairly confident that they will go to Heaven. When they warn about Hell they think themselves to be more sensible and righteous than those who need that warning. They think that they have more right to walk the earth than them. The authors of the book know fine well that self-righteous people cannot be made as humble as they ought to be by the thought that they could be damned so their saying that preachers knowing they could be damned means they are not self-righteous when they preach to sinners is utter nonsense. It's a desperate cover-up but it fails to mask how vicious and self-righteous and pompous the Hell doctrine is.

