

## Front Page - May 2025

# How Can One Man Bear the Penalty For The World of Sinners?

An illustration: Mr. Harkness has defrauded Mr. Jones of 1000 dollars. Being poverty-stricken, unemployable and bankrupt, it is understood that Mr. Harkness will never be able to pay the money back. He had broken the trust Mr. Jones had in him, and Mr. Jones will be the poorer because of his loss. How can things be amended and trust rekindled? Mr. Harkness has a very wealthy friend who hears of the situation and in compassion decides to help. In less than a minute he writes a check to Mr. Jones for 1000 dollars so indicating the debt is paid in full. The lesson is obvious. Mr. Harkness' friend was able to do in a minute that which Mr. Harkness could never do. So at Calvary, in the three hours of darkness when bearing the penalty for our sins, the fulness of the moral perfections of Christ enabled Him to alleviate in righteousness the wrath of God against me.

### **This darkness is the supreme demonstration of divine love and ultimate compassion**

When contemplating the words of Scripture, "the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 Jn. 4:14), and "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 Jn. 4:10), we are in wonder of the infinite moral wealth of Christ and the unbounded love of the Father. There are things in life that are almost impossible to believe and this is a truth that can only be believed by faith. "The Son of God loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20 paraphrase).

Musing on such truths, we stand at the edge of a fathomless wonder peering up at heights that are inconceivable, and walk through the scope of profoundness where every concept of human intelligence fails. Yet, at the same time, we thank God that this is but the beginning of insights into the wonder of Christ and Calvary.

### **Did the Father turn away from the Son?**

The first observation is the Son was never forsaken by the Father. He was forsaken by God. Having been forsaken the Lord cried, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46). When the Lord speaks about God being God, it is always in the context of His humanity. When God is spoken of as Father, it is in the context of relationship. It is important to stay to what the Lord said. In the first cry He said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Lk. 23:34); in the last cry He said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Lk. 23:46).

### **What is the divine utterance that conveys what Hell is?**

When our Lord hung on the cross He gave seven cries. The cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me" conveys what Hell is like. What does it mean to be God forsaken? What does it mean that He was made sin for us (2 Cor. 5: 21)? What does it mean, "Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor. 15:3)? The observation is, no one who is redeemed will ever know what it is to be God forsaken. No unsaved person will ever know its fulness for they have never known the height of fellowship with God. Christ is the only human being who lived in unbroken fellowship with God yet was forsaken by Him when bearing the penalty for our sins and laying the foundation for our forgiveness. Christ knew nothing of human compassion, it was a man alone with God, standing as one reckoned to be guilty of all the sins ever committed by man and knowing the dreadfulness of God's abandonment. He knew nothing of earth's addictions to help ease the pain. In hell there will be no drink, no drugs, no sex, no cursing, no sports, nothing to give ease. It will not be just bodily hurting but spirit suffering. Added to God forsakenness is the horror of the terms used by God. It is a place of never being able to die (Mk. 9:44), therefore a place of eternal hopelessness, no light at the end of this experience, nothing to ease the tormented mind, and no opportunity for repentance (Lk. 16:23).

### **Was it fair or righteous for an innocent person to suffer for the guilty?**

In daily life it is totally wrong for an innocent person to suffer for the guilty. In earlier days there was a lad known as the whipping boy. If a Royal did wrong then he could not be chastised, but the wrong doing deserved punishment. That is where the innocent whipping boy came in. He received the whipping the Prince deserved for

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wrong doing, but was this morally right? Why should the guilty stand aside and the innocent be punished even though they did nothing wrong? Everything in us declares this is wrong, then how was it right for Christ to bear the penalty for our sins when He was not the wrong doer. The only way it can be righteous is if the innocent volunteer is motivated by love to take the punishment. My Aunt Myrtle was a timid child whereas her sister was a strong strapping girl. One day little Myrtle failed in her homework. She was brought to the front to be strapped when Isobel, her sister, stood up and of her own volition and love for her sister took the strapping. This is how it is fair for Christ to take the punishment for us. It was an act of voluntary love.

### Is it fair for me to take that which another suffered for and take it for my own?

Of course it is not righteous unless the one who suffers offers that suffering as a gift, and I accept it without any conditions of my own. Here I learn that God loved a world of lost sinners, and that the Son of God loved me. The measuring of these truths is far beyond my heart and mind. That which the Lord had been experiencing for three hours was suffering that could never be humanly comprehended. Herein love was manifested beyond all understanding, with mercy and grace immeasurable.

. . . *Rowan Jennings*