

STORMING FORTRESSES



Christ, Biblical Law, And Justice.

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INTRODUCTION

There is little doubt that we live in an age where true justice is absent. Travesty after travesty exist. We hear talk of a “justice system”, but one would be excused for thinking that this were nothing more than an empty title. It is not surprising, therefore, that Christians should begin to question the relationship between Christ and any supposed justice system.

One of our readers has posed some of these questions in a paper that he has circulated. (Chad Waller would love to hear from any who have ideas or opinions on this subject. Contact him on 02 66245566 or chadwaller2000@yahoo.com.au). As these questions have some relevance, we thought that we would put our responses into print and hopefully share some important ideas from a Biblical perspective.¹

The questions will be stated as they were in the original. These questions will then be discussed, modified, or altered as the case may warrant. Our desire is to try and push for a truly Biblical view of justice. We are not sure we have the ability to that end, but we hope, at the very least, to make a start in that direction.

THE PROVISOS

At the outset, we would like to set a few ground rules, as it were. In answering these questions, we hope to be true to our Calvinistic convictions and the Holy Scriptures from which these convictions are taken. As such, we uphold One God in Trinity; One Scripture—authoritative, sufficient, consistent, and breathed out by God Himself. We do not hold to an Old Testament verses New Testament dichotomy. Thus, that which is true of God in one place is true of God in another. The Immutable does not change!

We hold to no Marcionite heresy that portrays different gods in different dispensations and which pits Father against Son and therein blasphemes the Holy Spirit.

Equally, we do not accept terms such as “legalist” or “legalism”. Any search of Scripture will show that

¹ Responses that are contrary to the questions are not an attack on the author of the original question. They are a statement of what we believe to be the Biblical perspective concerning the issues raised.

such terms belonged to those who sought to save themselves via their own works and by laws of their own making.² These terms are never applied to God’s people who desire nothing more than to obey the commands that God has given. If this be the criteria, then Jesus would have been the greatest legalist! (Matthew 5:18-20; Romans 8:1-4) Consequently, when we speak of law and obedience in this essay, we speak of them in the Biblical sense.

Therefore, please do not send “hate-mail” accusing us of “legalism” or of betraying the ideal of being a “New Testament Christian.” Such correspondence shall remain unanswered. It shall remain thus because these are the very concepts that have infiltrated Christianity and robbed it of a total world-view. These concepts, without doubt, are the reason for a truncated, mediocre Christianity. The misuse of the term “legalism” has taken any reasoned discussion concerning law and justice from within Christian circles and the domain of the Holy. Mention “obedience” and you are a dreaded “legalist.” Such should never be.

Similarly, the “New Testament Christian” concept has destroyed the unity of Scripture and the God by whom it came. Seventy-five per cent of Scripture is to be found in the Old Testament. To dismiss it is to destroy the bulk of God’s revelation. It is to sever trunk from roots. It is to tear all but the conclusion from the book. How will a tree survive without a root system? How does a reader understand a story when there is nought but a conclusion? Answers: It will not! They cannot!

With these things said, let us now turn to the questions.

QUESTION 1. CHRIST AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE – WHAT DIFFERENCE COULD HE MAKE?

The shortest answer to this question would be to simply say, ‘Transformation!’ If Christ were

² It may be suggested that legalism can be defined in a multiplicity of ways. We reject this for the following reasons: 1. Legalism is a term derived from a Scriptural understanding. Hence the Scriptural context cannot be ignored. In this sense the term applies squarely to man made salvation. 2. As an extension, Legalism in the broad sense is like Humanism. It seeks to save on the basis of man’s own great works or it seeks to reinterpret and lessen the demands of salvation so that it is achievable from man’s lowly estate and on his terms. On either account “Legalism” becomes a direct attack on God’s Law.

unleashed upon the modern system of justice, it would, without doubt, have to be radically transformed.

The reasons for this are many. Here we will explore three.

A. Humanism. The first place of transformation would begin by replacing Man with God. Through the influence of Humanism, the system of justice that we possess has become a hollow shell. There are a few Christian trappings that hang around in dust-filled corners, but we would suggest that they are decorative only.

Humanism has slowly eroded the rule of the Sovereign in the court. The nett affect of this is that the Objective and Eternal has been replaced by the subjective and the temporal. Consequently, there are different rules for different folks. There are different ideas from different judges. There are interpretations of law; subjective, airy-fairy, transient, and ephemeral. No longer do the words of the law-code mean what they say or say what their authors intended. Postmodernism has made sure that truth has been relativised and subjectified.

In the ultimate sense, God alone is Truth. Therefore, any court that truly seeks the truthful must, of necessity, be founded upon a full knowledge of the One-True-God. Today, one need not swear an oath by God when giving evidence. One is free to ignore God in that sense, and to say what he will. The other obvious effect of this is that the One-True-Judge is removed from the courtroom. Therefore, people are free to lie with impunity. There is no one to hold them to account. After all, if truth is relative, how will any judge say that my account of that reality was not the best, most just, or most accurate – at least without contradicting his philosophy of life?

In summary, we may say that the enthronement of Humanism within the courtroom has removed truth as the only standard; denied true human accountability; disparaged judges to being mere interpreters³ rather than representatives of the true Judge; and made sure that true Justice is rarely achieved.

B. Statism. Concomitant with the rise of Humanism is the equally dastardly rise of Statism.

³ Some may perceive this as progress, for now the judge can wield his own power in the form of opinion. Once more Humanism exalts the tyrannical grab for power rather than urging the contented lot of being a minister, a servant.

Humanism, in one sense, is the movement that dethroned God. However, these clever chaps could not live with the vacuum that was left—the God void. They therefore had to craft a god of their own making.⁴ Enter, the State.

The State was made into the new god, the new supreme standard. The State now makes the rules and administers the same. The State now becomes the ultimate moral. The ethics of the State are the only ethics.

The State is now the all supreme entity (deity) that will give, guide, constrain, administer, admonish, and praise *et cetera* in all aspects of life. This is particularly true in two crucial areas—law and religion. Just as the One True God gave a Law-code which reflected His character and showed man what the appropriate means of worship is to be,⁵ so the travesty had to establish its own law to constrain people to worship it.

Make no mistake. The State is very pleased with being god and constraining men to worship it. To force worship (acknowledgment that the State is worthy of honour), the State manipulates law and (what it calls) justice.

The State is an abhorrent master. It is fickle. It is manipulative. It admits of no wrong. It will not accept criticism. Yet, ironically, because it is totally subjective, it is usually wrong and should be criticised.⁶

So, this new god seeks to make lots of friends. Its moral is one from the slime pit which will appeal to the sinful rebellious heart. Its law code is a mishmash of legislation too high to jump over. It is convoluted and vague by design. Consequently, there is little or no justice.

Under this god, truth is abandoned. This means that if you speak the truth, but it is a ‘truth’ the god does not want to hear, then you have almost certainly something to worry about. Recently, Alexander Downer, Foreign Minister, made a public comment to the effect that ‘Australia is a free country and

⁴ Isaiah 44:15-17

⁵ Micah 6:8: He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

⁶ Here we are not speaking of the concept of government, for this is God ordained. We are speaking of the many actions of modern governments.

people can say what they like.’ This explains a lot of blasphemy and gutter-type language. It explains Sheikh Hilaly’s disgusting rhetoric. What it does not explain is why the Two Danny’s were in trouble before the Victorian courts.

Two men gave an accurate critique of Islam and ended up in hot water. Why? The new god does not want Christians with their solid monotheism anywhere on the playground. History bears out the fact that true Christianity, lived and applied, has the ability to knock down the ivory tower the new god is building. This god knows that a bit of unity and belief in the Old Code will see these people expose the fact that this new god, like the emperor of old, is butt-naked in the public arena. It will expose the fact that this new god has used smoke and mirrors, lies and allusion, to build a fantastic mirage.

Alright, a little more toward the theme. Note, under this new god real justice is absent. Australia-wide, crime and punishment are out of sync. An embezzler receives a greater sentence than does a rapist. A suspected murderer continues to murder, because police have to dot “I’s” and cross “T’s”, jump through hoops, and uphold the criminal’s rights, while he goes about violating both the rights and the lives of his victims.

More importantly, let us look at the victims of crime. A person is convicted of bashing an old lady, for example. What happens? Is he is convicted of a crime against the “Old Lady”? No! He is convicted of a crime against the State! Rubbish. The State was not wronged. The poor old dear suffered. The State was not deprived of anything. The lady lost. Who suffered the scars? Who lost freedoms, items, and security? Certainly not the State! Yet, who puts out their fist to make as many dollars from the episode as possible? The ugly, despicable, State.

What of the Old lady, the one truly wronged, what does she benefit? Nothing! We could go even further and ask concerning the terror wrought on our society because the State, being all wise, has released supposedly reformed criminals into society. When the State releases a rapist or paedophile and they re-offend, who is truly guilty? Is it the criminal alone or the criminal and the State that freed him?

The lesson is this: the State will reinterpret law, write laws, and administer law so that it can work out its master plan. It will manipulate law to achieve its ends and rid itself of its opponents. *It will write*

laws according to its philosophy. It will enforce (or not) laws according to its philosophy.

Seems harsh. Think about current situations.

Case 1. Some years ago, a Victorian State premier allowed a conscience vote on euthanasia whilst, at the same time, categorically ruling out the reintroduction of the death penalty or even having a referendum on the subject.

Case 2. Recently, a Victorian State premier introduced legislation to compel home-schoolers to be registered. Why? For what reason? None that are compelling. It is a push to gain control over all education and therefore destroy, finally and totally, parental control and authority. You see, you can homeschool once registered, but to be registered you must agree to teach a set of core subjects. At present, these will be the parents choice, but how long will it be before some type of audit system is introduced, State ethics are imposed upon ‘religious bigots’, and all freedom is lost.

Now to the scary part. There are people advocating signing on quickly—I speak here of home-schoolers—so that students will be eligible for certain Centrelink benefits. So, the government opens its purse to help deceive people, overcome their fears, and achieve its own corrupt ends.

To this writer, it is the moral equivalent of a lollipop in the hands of a paedophile!

Case 3. Several years ago, a Queensland State premier legalised brothels. He left the administration to local council, but denied the council any right of veto. The programme worked like this. A person proposes a brothel. If it meets all the guidelines stipulated by the State, the council has no choice but to approve it. Despite the concerns of the council or the wishes of the townsfolk, they receive a brothel.

The State legalises and pushes ahead with its programme. To achieve its end, it writes into the law a series of battering rams which destroy both the local council and community’s ability to govern their own affairs.

This act basically made everyone complicit in the State’s moral bankruptcy. It silenced critics, complaints, and community, all the while exalting the State as a god who knows best and therefore deserves absolute rule.

It may be worth noting that this was the same government which ordered a review of Equal Opportunity legislation, noting in its brief, “there is to be no public consultation.”

The Humanist State will make laws and then constrain people to obey. No conspiracy theory. No scare mongering. Just the basic truth: a truth that is borne out everyday.

Therefore, the second area in need of transformation is that of the Humanist State. Government must be transformed into the servant of God and hold the subordinate office to which it was appointed.

C. Redemption. The last area that we will discuss here is based upon Christ’s redemptive acts. The present writer has long been concerned that modern Christianity has not really understood the nature of the redemptive act in its fullness. By this we mean that, too often, we look at the result of redemption whilst failing to understand the process of redemption.

One need not go too far to hear some fairly poor descriptions of salvation. Frequently, these poor descriptions focus on man and leave God in the background. At present, a lot is being said about God’s love for sinful man, in the context of terrorism and terrorists. This example aptly explains what we are talking about. In most of these conversations, God is somehow constrained to love men that rebel against Him and who spit in the very face of God. When these arguments are analysed, one almost always finds that a greater importance is given to the rights and values of the rebel, than to those of a thrice Holy God. The tables are turned in a way that they should not.

This happens all too frequently because we do not grasp well enough the fact that our salvation is a legal transaction that takes place at God’s bar. To illustrate this point, think here of the Biblical picture of the last day—a day of judgement. We read in Revelation 20:12-15:

“And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to

their deeds. And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

It is hard to read these verses of Scripture and not be confronted by a courtroom scene. One can imagine the defendant being brought to the bar. The charges are read. The defendant enters a plea. Then slowly “the books are opened”. These are the witnesses. They contain the deeds of the person at the bar. On the basis of these witnesses, a judgement will be pronounced.

This evidence should lead us to an absolute conviction concerning truth and error, justice and injustice, right and wrong, restitution and punishment, victim and perpetrator, the just and the unjust, principle versus value or person,⁷ equality and inequality.

The point is this. Everything concerning our salvation is a legal transaction. From the covenants in eternity between the Trinity, to the actual act of salvation, to our adoption as sons, to the final judgement; all are legal transactions. This means that Jesus Christ is well versed in Law and the proceedings of a courtroom. He knows from eternity what it is to make and be bound by a legal transaction. Furthermore, His experience is not passive or from a text book. It is lived, actively experienced, felt in His bones at the cost of His life! Consequently, Jesus would transform by brining the standards *par excellence*.

Jesus would also transform because of two other qualities which must be present – the absolute and sovereign – for true justice will never be achieved without either of these.

First, one must believe in an absolute, God. The fact that God exists gives us an absolute by which things can be measured. God has given us His law by which to live so we do not need to guess or take ‘shots in the dark.’ We have concrete laws and principles with which to work. So justice is possible, it is achievable, and it is an ought.

Second, and built upon the first point, we must believe in God’s sovereignty in justice. Think here

⁷ If principle rules then theft does not concern a dollar amount. It concerns ownership. Similarly, if the principle is violated, it should not matter as to what person, rich or poor etc., violates it, the penalty and action of law should be the same.

of verses in the Old Testament where God lays down his law. He obliges authorities to uphold those laws and to cut off violators of His laws. Then, interestingly, God promises to cut off those violators who slip through the human instruments of justice. (Leviticus 20:1-5 c.f. 16:31-35)

Many years ago, Ian Hodge noted that there was a need to trust to God’s sovereignty and faithfulness in economics. His point was simple – What logical correlation is there between obedience, cessation of bugs and mildew, and increasing wealth? From man’s point we can see that the lack of bugs means a better yield and therefore more wealth. However, we struggle with the moral imperative that is the catalyst for these actions. In other words, we understand that if the bugs are removed our crop will have a better yield and we will have more wealth. Where we fail is in understanding that obedience to God will bring about this set of circumstances. Our obligation then is to obey and abide by God’s covenantal stipulations and then trust to God’s sovereign action to remove said annoying critters. The area of Justice requires this same application of the covenantal paradigm. What we mean is this. Sanctioned authorities must act in accord with God’s Law and the positions with which they have been entrusted to ensure that justice prevails. However, living in a sinful world there will be times when law-breakers slip through the cracks or there is not enough evidence to convict. Whilst we trust God at all times, we should be especially willing to implore Him to act at these times. It would be unheard of for the DPP and the homicide squad to hold a prayer vigil, but in such cases this is what should happen. We should pray God to unfurl His mighty right arm and bring to justice all evil doers (Psalm 89:10).

In conclusion then, Jesus would transform the criminal justice system because He has an intimate knowledge of true law and of genuine legal requirements, based upon the Absolute and Sovereign of which He is an integral part.

**QUESTION 2.
IS CHRIST LORD OF THE
JUDICIARY?**

The answer to this question is both “Yes” and “No”.

Yes, Jesus Christ is Lord of the judiciary. As Sovereign and Absolute, He rules over the sphere of law and those juridical agents who operate in

subordinate offices. The further question is this: Do those juridical subordinates acknowledge the rule of Christ? The answer to this is, No.

As with much of society today, we live in a paradox. Judges take certain oaths which logically bind them to a set of ethics. However, as we have seen, these ethics or mores themselves become interpretable. So the oath of office is nothing more than something that needs to be said in order to get into the job you have always wanted.

We will seek to illustrate this confusion by real life oath requirements.

New South Wales is governed by the *Oaths Act 1900 No 20*. This piece of legislation outlines who should take what oath when, and what such an oath should contain content-wise.⁸

This legislation, last updated on 4 December, 2006, displays the above dichotomy very well and will therefore be used for illustrative purposes.

The Oaths Act applies to those who officiate, as well as those who appear in court. This is the first point that needs to be understood. The judge is not exempt from an oath or the penalties applicable to taking a false oath.

Hence, we note the following:

- 8. Judges and justices of the peace: (1) The oath of allegiance and the judicial oath shall be tendered to and taken by Judges of the Supreme Court and justices of the peace.
- 9. District Court Judges and other judicial officers: (1) The oath of allegiance and the judicial oath shall be tendered to and taken by District Court Judges, Magistrates and other judicial officers who are required by order of the Governor to take the same.

This means that the Judges here specified must take the following Oaths:

- Second Schedule -- Oath of allegiance: I [insert], do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, Her Heirs and Successors according to law. **So help me God.**
- Fourth Schedule -- Judicial Oath: I, [insert], do swear that I will well and truly

⁸ I do not know whether this legislation governs other states or not. So I will limit comments to NSW.

serve our Sovereign Lady Queen Victoria in the office of [insert] , and I will do right to all manner of people after the laws and usages of the State of New South Wales without fear or favour, affection or ill-will. **So help me God.**⁹

From these oaths we learn that these judges are to have unwavering allegiance to the Queen and her successors. They are to treat all people as equal, “without fear or favour”. Most importantly, they claim the help of God to undertake this task.

Now this little phrase, “So help me God”, has caused a tad of controversy in recent times. It has so, only because the revisionists and re-interpreters have been at work to muddy the waters.

I would like to digress slightly to put these oaths into a wider context. As we have seen, these judges swear to “serve” the Queen and her successors. So who does the Queen serve?

If we turn to coronation vows of Queen Elizabeth II we can learn a great deal. On the day of her ascension to the throne, Queen Elizabeth II took these vows: (Italics are the words and vows of narration. Bold is the Queens answer)

“IV. The Oath: The Queen having returned to her Chair (her Majesty having already on Tuesday, the fourth day of November, 1952, in the presence of the two Houses of Parliament, made and signed the Declaration prescribed by Act of Parliament), the Archbishop standing before her shall administer the Coronation Oath, first asking the Queen, Madam, is your Majesty willing to take the Oath? And the Queen answering, **I am willing**,

The Archbishop shall minister these questions; and the Queen, having a book in her hands, shall answer each question severally as follows:

Archbishop: Will you solemnly promise and swear to govern the Peoples of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, Pakistan and Ceylon, and of your Possessions and other Territories to any of them belonging or pertaining, according to their respective laws and customs? Queen: **I solemnly promise so to do.**

Archbishop: Will you to your power cause Law and Justice, in Mercy, to be executed in all your judgements? Queen: **I will.**

Archbishop: *Will you to the utmost of your power maintain the Laws of God and the true profession of the Gospel? Will you to the utmost of your power maintain in the United Kingdom the Protestant Reformed Religion established by law? Will you maintain and preserve inviolably the settlement of the Church of England, and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government thereof, as by law established in England? And will you preserve unto the Bishops and Clergy of England, and to the Churches there committed to their charge, all such rights and privileges, as by law do or shall appertain to them or any of them?* Queen: **All this I promise to do.**

Then the Queen arising out of her Chair, supported as before, the Sword of State being carried before her, shall go to the Altar, and make her solemn Oath in the sight of all the people to observe the premisses: laying her right hand upon the Holy Gospel in the great Bible (which was before carried in the procession and is now brought from the altar by the Archbishop, and tendered to her as she kneels upon the steps), and saying these words: **The things which I have here promised, I will perform, and keep. So help me God.** Then the Queen shall kiss the Book and sign the Oath. The Queen having thus taken her Oath, shall return again to her Chair, and the Bible shall be delivered to the Dean of Westminster.

V. The Presenting of the Holy Bible: When the Queen is again seated, the Archbishop shall go to her Chair; and the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, receiving the Bible from the Dean of Westminster, shall bring it to the Queen and present it to her, the Archbishop saying these words: **Our gracious Queen: to keep your Majesty ever mindful of the law and the Gospel of God as the Rule for the whole life and government of Christian Princes, we present you with this Book, the most valuable thing that this world affords.** And the Moderator shall continue: **Here is Wisdom; This is the royal Law; These are the lively Oracles of God.**

Then shall the Queen deliver back the Bible to the Moderator, who shall bring it to the Dean of Westminster, to be reverently placed upon the

⁹ <http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/fullhtml/inforce/act+20+1900+FIRST+0+N#sch.8> Accessed 01/03/07

Altar. This done, the Archbishop shall return to the Altar.”¹⁰

We apologise for the length taken, but we thought it appropriate that the space be given to showing these words. As we have seen, the judges are swearing allegiance to the Queen. They also ask for God’s help. The moderns now ask, which god? The answer is clear. Based on these words of coronation there can be absolutely no doubt that it is the God of the Bible that is to be called upon. Furthermore, it is clear that it is His Law that is to be upheld and prospered by these judges.

What then of the witness? Well, the witness is constrained in much more specific terms:

11A Manner of taking oath: (1) Any person taking any **oath on the Bible or on the New Testament, or the Old Testament**, for any purpose whatsoever, whether in judicial proceedings or otherwise, shall, if physically capable of doing so, hold a copy of the Bible or Testament in his or her hand, but it shall not be necessary for the person to kiss such copy by way of assent.

(2) The officer administering the oath may repeat the appropriate form of adjuration, and the person taking the oath shall thereupon, while holding in his or her hand a copy of **the Bible, New Testament, or Old Testament, indicate his or her assent to the oath so administered by uttering the words “So help me, God”**; or (3) The person taking the oath may, while holding in his or her hand a copy of **the Bible, New Testament, or Old Testament, repeat the words of the oath as prescribed or allowed by law.**

(4) In all judicial proceedings the officer administering the oath shall, unless the person about to take the oath voluntarily objects thereto, administer the oath in the form and manner set out in subsection (2); but no oath shall be deemed illegal or invalid by reason of any breach of the provisions of this section.

(5) Provided that any witness in any judicial proceeding may swear with up-lifted hand in the following manner and form: The witness with uplifted hand says—**“I swear by Almighty God as I shall answer to God at the Great Day of Judgment that I will**

speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.”¹¹

All this is extremely clear. Jesus Christ is indeed Lord of the judiciary. The import of this is phenomenal. Judge, witness, defendant, all alike, place themselves ultimately at God’s bar. With the bolded words above in mind, we see that anyone present must realise that they are part of a greater scheme and that lies, deceit, injustice, false testimony, and the like, are all under the scrutiny of, and subject to, the decrees of a Higher Power.

This solemnity should be reassuring to all, as it is on this basis alone that true justice can be administered.

Now, the contradiction. At least as far as witnesses are concerned, they have an out. They are given the opportunity to swear an “affirmation” instead of an oath. Now, some may consider this simply semantics. We consider it to be ‘form without power’. Just as the modern marriage vow is anti-covenantal with its pathetic “as long as we both shall love”, so the affirmation robs the oath of substance.

Let me explain. Marriage vows are a covenant. They are ratified in the presence of witnesses precisely because they are legal and binding. God Himself commands, institutes, witnesses, authorises, and, pay attention, *helps* the married couple to fulfil the vows. The *helping* part is often overlooked, but it should not be. The betrothed couple, in marriage, become accountable before God and the “witnesses” for the promises they make. Equally, we must understand, that the witnesses to the promise, *God and the people, are also there to facilitate the success of the marriage.*

Paraphrased, it would read something like this:

God has decreed that it is not good for man to be alone. He has instituted marriage—the melding of two into one. This is not an easy process, but before all we undertake this process to honour God’s design. All, please help us to meet fully God’s expectation of this union.

The moderns destroy the marriage covenant because God is left out. Marriage becomes a cultural convention. It is temporary and depends on no one but the individuals involved. Guests are not

¹⁰ <http://www.oremus.org/liturgy/coronation/cor1953b.html> Accessed 01/03/07

¹¹ <http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/fullhtml/inforce/act+20+1900+FIRST+0+N#sch.8> Accessed 01/03/07

witnesses to a covenant ratification. They amount to nothing more than party-goers, looking for their next free beer. Hence, the vows admit of defeat before they begin. In this system, marriage is not commanded by God. It is not a life-long covenantal commitment and transaction. It is, on the contrary, ephemeral, fleeting, and failure-bound.

By denying God as the beginning and the end, these people enter a marriage based on their own human frailty and passions.

Similarly, the above “affirmation” is a cut-down race version of the oath. It denies God, and sets the speaker up as the ultimate truth. Consider the following:

12 Affirmations: Subject to section 13, when an oath is required to be taken, any person who objects to take an oath may instead of taking such oath make a solemn affirmation in the form of such oath substituting the words “solemnly, sincerely and truly declare and affirm” for the word “swear” or for any other word or words to the like effect and **omitting the words “so help me God”** or any other word or words to the like effect.

What are these affirmations?

Sixth Schedule Declaration: I solemnly declare that the evidence now about to be given (or the statement now about to be made) by me shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.¹²

Seventh Schedule Affirmation: I, [insert], do solemnly, sincerely, and truly affirm and declare, &c.¹³

We see here that the witness etc., is allowed, effectively, to deny their accountability before God. What this section shows, ultimately, are these two points:

1. The judiciary are unequivocally bound to Jesus Christ, Lord of the Judiciary. They are to govern as subordinates of the Triune God over the sphere of law.

¹² Note that this is truth based upon man alone. It is not a man in fear of and accountable to Almighty God. It is postmodern man, maker of his own truth and destiny.

¹³ <http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/fullhtml/inforce/act+20+1900+FIRST+0+N#sch.8> Accessed 01/03/07

2. The Judiciary, by allowing a Godless affirmation, are treasonous to their calling and to the oaths that they themselves have taken. By allowing affirmations into legislation and into the court room, they are effectively throwing off God’s rule in this sphere. Key to any case is not the judge; it is the veracity of the defendant and the witnesses. When this is compromised, testimony becomes nothing and the system fails.

Jesus does command the judiciary. They are under His rule. The real question is this: Will the judiciary acknowledge their subordination to Jesus Christ or will they seek to usurp Christ?

QUESTION 3. WHAT EXACTLY DOES CHRISTIAN JUSTICE LOOK LIKE?

This question is answerable, but we do not have the space to answer in detail.

Put in simple terms, Christian justice would be Biblical justice. It would combine theology, anthropology, and sociology from a Biblical perspective to form a total world-view of life as God intended it to be. It would then form a paradigm or overlay of (a) the proscriptions and prescriptions given by God, and (b) the aberrations He condemns, which would clearly form areas of demarcation.

These two aspects have long been recognised as necessary to a proper interpretation of the Bible and, are therefore, applicable to the concept of Biblical justice. By this we mean that the positive command enjoins the negative command, and vice versa. Hence, the command, “Do not kill!” not only means ‘do not take life’, but, equally, ‘do everything possible to promote life’.¹⁴

To illustrate this, let us stay with the theme of murder. Biblically, we start with God. God gave life. He created it along with everything necessary to sustain it. He pronounced His creation very good. Life was to be enjoyed in fellowship with the Creator. Life was free; a concept too often overlooked. Life was to be productive. Life was eternal. Importantly, life was sacrosanct. It had been

¹⁴ WLC Q & A 99: What rules are to be observed for the right understanding of the Ten Commandments? For the right understanding of the ten commandments, these rules are to be observed: Section 4 – That as, where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden; and, where a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded: so, where a promise is annexed, the contrary threatening is included; and, where a threatening is annexed, the contrary promise is included.

given by God and nothing and no one, but the Creator, had the right to take it.

Consequently, God proscribes murder and sets up stipulations in His law code that deal with those who shed blood. This is clearly outlined in Genesis 9:5-7: “And surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from every man, from every man’s brother I will require the life of man. “Whoever sheds man’s blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man. “And as for you, be fruitful and multiply; Populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it.”¹⁵

Man’s life is regarded as so untouchable that the Creator imposes the death penalty for those who perpetrate such wickedness. If we are to understand this law correctly, we must begin with understanding why a man’s life is sacrosanct. The text we have just quoted states it simply—Man is made in God’s image.

In our modern world, man does not find importance in the inviolable image of God, but in certain sullied aspects of his fallen humanity – hence the rise of Humanism. Note this well, please. The Bible never ascribes worthiness to man on the basis of his humanness or humanity. He has a true and intrinsic worth only in so far as he is created in God’s image and bears within himself the likeness of the One True God.

Here we have the rudiments of a Christian Justice paradigm concerning murder. We start with God. We see His creation of man. We see man live because God breathes life into him. Man’s life is protected, as it were, by divine decree. Hence anyone who takes life must forfeit his life. Here we have the principle of life as given by God, overlaid with God’s proscriptions and stipulations concerning murder.

If we were to build a more substantial paradigm, we would investigate manslaughter and accidents. We would look at the need for care in every endeavour to protect life. These principles would then be extrapolated, so that the paradigm could be built upon in a consistently Biblical way.

¹⁵ The New American Standard Bible, (La Habra, California: The Lockman Foundation) 1977. Note, the proscription of murder is followed by a command to populate. We do not consider this to be accidental.

At every point, we must remember that we are analogues of God, thinking His thoughts after Him. In other words, we must view everything Biblically. This sounds repetitious and trite, so forgive us, but this is the critical point in all ethical situations. God must come first and everything must be viewed from His perspective.

In summary then, Christian Justice is a system that takes into account the total revelation / whole counsel of God as it pertains to God, Man, and Creation.

**QUESTION 4.
HOW WOULD A JUDICIAL
THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS
CRITIQUE THE CURRENT
RETRIBUTIONIST AND
DETERRENCE VIEWS OF CRIME
AND PUNISHMENT?**

As it stands, this question seems to be listing qualities that should stand in contradistinction. It would appear that a “judicial theology” should critically assess / evaluate the current “retributionist and deterrence views” with the result that current theory is proved wrong. The other possibility is that retribution and deterrent are acceptable, but it is being suggested that we are working from a “theology” other than a judicial theology. At any rate, the way the question is formed would suggest a disagreement between the aspects listed.

Whatever the author’s intent, from this writer’s perspective, there is no discord at all between the elements listed. *The theology of the Cross is judicial, and it has at its heart an aspect of retribution and deterrence.*

In the first instance, there can be no doubt that the act of salvation is a judicial act. We have already spoken of this, but shall plumb the depths a little further in this section. Secondly, it is obvious from the import of Scripture that retribution is part of the nature of salvation and cannot be ignored. The third element, deterrence, may be a little vaguer, especially when talking about salvation proper; however, it does have legitimate warrant in terms of justice.

A. The Judicial Theology of the Cross.

Louis Berkhof, in his Systematic Theology, speaking of Justification states:

Justification is a judicial act of God, in which He declares, on the basis of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, that all claims of the law are

satisfied with respect to the sinner. It is unique in the application of redemption in that it is a judicial act of God, a declaration respecting the sinner, and not an act or process of renewal, such as regeneration, conversion, and sanctification.¹⁶

What Berkhof here shows is that Justification is in some ways “unique”. Justification is that raw judicial act in which the Judge declares the sinner to be, not only right with the law, but so right that he is entitled to all the benefits of that standing—positive retribution. This is not a process or a changing. It is not subjective. It is purely objective.

Let me explain. When we are regenerated or when we work at sanctification, we are touched within ourselves. This is subjective. God’s working in salvation makes changes within us, personally. We are transformed from death to life. We are conformed to the image of Christ.

In justification, this is not so. There is no immediate change in us. This is the objective aspect. In this judicial act, the great Judge declares us to be something—free! As Berkhof says, “While it has respect to the sinner, it does not change his inner life. It does not affect his condition, but his state.”¹⁷ Our point here is that the state of the sinner is changed by a judicial act. At the very heart of the Cross is the righteousness of Jesus Christ, which enables an adequate substitution to take place. This is the *sine qua non* of salvation. Without an acceptable substitution and payment for sin—negative retribution—the Judge could never have found us innocent and set us free.

In similar fashion, Charles Hodge, notes that Justification is:

1. An act, and not, as sanctification, a continued progressive work.
2. It is an act of grace to the sinner. In himself he deserves condemnation when God justifies him.
3. As to the nature of the act, it is, in the first place, not an efficient act, or an act of power. It does not produce any subjective change in the person justified. It does not effect a change of character, making those good who were bad, those holy who were unholy. That is done in regeneration and sanctification. In the second

¹⁶ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, (Banner of Truth Trust; London: 1941, reprinted 1966) 513

¹⁷ Berkhof, 513.

place, it is not a mere executive act, as when a sovereign pardons a criminal, and thereby restores him to his civil rights, or to his former status in the commonwealth. **In the third place, it is a forensic, or judicial act, the act of a judge, not of a sovereign. That is, in the case of the sinner, ...it is an act of God not in his character of sovereign, but in his character as judge.**¹⁸

After further arguing for this position, Hodge concludes:

Therefore ... those Symbols [of the Reformation] teach that justification is a judicial or forensic act, i.e., an act of God as judge proceeding according to law, declaring that the sinner is just i.e., that the law no longer condemns him, but acquits and pronounces him to be entitled to eternal life.¹⁹

In summary, we hope that it is evident that **the** theology of the Cross is indeed judicial. Without this forensic aspect, our salvation would be anything but complete, inexorable, and eternal.

Therefore, as pertains to the above question, the theology of the Cross *is* judicial. To view it any other way is to make it a doctrine not recognised by Scripture. Imputation, Adoption, Justification – all are legal terms used in the covenant transaction that is our salvation.

B. Punishment as Retribution.²⁰ This leads us to discuss the concept of retribution.

Whilst I seek to answer these questions from a consistently Calvinistic position (that is the aim!) the point of retribution should be agreed upon by all theological persuasions.²¹

From a covenantal position, we believe firmly in reward and cursing. The former is bestowed for obedience and rightness whilst the latter is meted out for disobedience and un-rightness. The

¹⁸ Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, (3 vols., Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co; Grand Rapids. Reprint 1989) 3:118 Bold added.

¹⁹ Hodge, 3:119

²⁰ This title is taken from a paper by D.B. Knox. It is referred to in Leon Morris, *New Testament Theology*, Academie Books: Grand Rapids, 1986) 27 fn 8. It was found to be web accessible at: http://www.acl.asn.au/dbk_punishment.html.

²¹ The only real exception would be that small, unbiblical group, who believe in annihilation.

Covenantal Calvinist²² should see this as operating in all of life. In short, we see that God holds men, here and now, to account for their actions, as well as in the final judgement.

Our brethren from other theological backgrounds may prefer to emphasise the final judgement only or temper the aspect of transitory judgement. The important point is that there is almost universal agreement that God shall judge and that there shall be retribution.

At this point, we would like to expand the understanding of retribution. We use this term, generally, in a very negative view. We think mainly of “pay-back” for an unjust deed. Can we start to think of this term positively, please?

Here we would like to look at two aspects of positive retribution. First, we think of the case wherein someone gains a reward for just action. A person who does right is rewarded for doing that right. Paul states in Romans 13:3-4, “*For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behaviour, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same; for it is a minister of God to you for good.*”²³

Second, even in the case of negative retribution we would do well to think of the positive aspect. The one who is guilty before the law is said to be under a *negative* sanction. This is correct viewed from the laws perspective. However, we must not forget that the sanction handed out is the just reward – measured payment – for the deeds done. In short, the wrong-doer *has earned* this sanction, fair and square.

This balance is necessary for two reasons. First, it is Biblical. Second, it will help us deal with this subject more clearly.

Before moving on, we must underscore the intrinsic relationship between judgement and retribution. One does not simply judge and leave the matter there. To judge implies the establishing of the case, the guilt

²² We use this term to describe Calvinism in its widest extent as a Biblical World-and-Life View. It has become all too fashionable to speak of certain elements in Christianity as Reformed or Calvinistic when these elements do not believe in covenantalism. Here we must distinguish between those who believe in the five points of soteriology (TULIP) only and those who believe in these five points, but who also believe in the covenantal operation of God in every day life.

²³ *The New American Standard Bible*, (La Habra, California: The Lockman Foundation) 1977. Italics added.

or innocence of the defendant, and the state in which the law views this person as a consequence of the finding.²⁴

For us, the importance of this understanding is to be found in the fact that God will not simply judge the world and leave the matter there. His judgement will be followed by a determination that will have consequences.

“The Bible makes clear that God treats us on the basis of justice. Constantly throughout the Bible, the phrase occurs that ‘God renders to every man according to his works’.²⁵ Justice is two-sided: to those who deserve a reward it is unjust to keep it back and to those who deserve punishment it is unjust to disregard it. *Justice, then, is distributive and retributive: rendering to every man his due, whether by reward or punishment.*

“Christ taught that God will not overlook even the most insignificant action that deserves a reward. He said that those who even gave a cup of water in his name would receive their reward (Mk. 9:41). At the same time he taught that God would not overlook even the most insignificant wrong-doing, but warned that we will have to give an account even for every idle word (Mt. 12:36). How much more, therefore, for every other wrong action or thought?

“Justice, then, includes the double aspect of reward and retribution. Sometimes retribution, which is the basis of punishment, is confused with revenge; but the difference is very clear. Revenge is selfish, and the Bible makes clear that there must be no revenge in the administration of justice. You must render what is due, not what gives you satisfaction. That is why the Bible lays down in the beginning of the Old Testament that, in meting out punishment, justice (or what is due) must not be exceeded.”²⁶

In these few paragraphs, Broughton Knox brings several important aspects to the fore. First, God is judge and He is judging. Second, all acts are included in God’s view. Third, there will be positive and negative covenant sanctions from the

²⁴ It is this point that causes much frustration today. People in general do not feel that there is a correlation between the judgement and the retribution.

²⁵ These texts are added. See for example, Proverbs 24:12; Hosea 12:2; Matthew 16:27; Romans 2:5-6; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Timothy 4:14

²⁶ DB Knox, Punishment as Retribution and Capital Punishment: A Criticism of the Humanist Attitude to Justice (Accessed online 06/03/07 at http://www.acl.asn.au/dbk_punishment.html) Italics added.

perspective of the law and the Law-giver. Fourth, retribution will be fully earned—negatively and positively.

Leon Morris is equally helpful when he notes:

Paul sees God as active in judgement right now. For believers this is a merciful provision of God in which “we are disciplined by the Lord in order that we may not be condemned with the world” (1 Corinthians 11:32). The sufferings we encounter are an evidence of God’s love. His discipline is to prevent us from suffering the fate of the worldly. We should bear in mind that judgment is part of the gospel (Romans 2:16); we may not easily adjust to the thought that judgment belongs to the good news, but if we are to understand Paul’s view of judgment, we must make the attempt. Sin reaps its own harvest, for sinners receive “in themselves the fitting recompense of their going astray” (Romans 1:27). It would be easy to see this as a natural process of cause and effect, by which the inevitable consequences of sin are themselves the punishment of sin. But although Paul recognizes that there is truth in this, he insists that the hand of God is in it all. Three times he says of Gentile sinners that “God gave them up” to the unpleasant consequences of their sin (Romans 1:24, 26, 28). God is never neutral; he is always opposed to evil.²⁷

So it is that God judges all the actions of men. However, we must move beyond this point to see that retribution is intrinsically tied into this judgement.

Morris continues: “God does not take sin as a matter of course. Sin inevitably leads to what Paul calls “the wrath of God” or simply “the wrath”. This wrath is revealed from heaven against all impiety and unrighteousness (Romans 1:18). Notice that it is something “revealed”, not a matter of human observation, and that it is directed against “all forms of wickedness.”²⁸

This observation by Morris is most excellent. We think of God’s wrath as being synonymous with God’s anger. However, the concept of “wrath” contains a nuance of punishment or retribution. “Wrath” is not simply an emotion or state of being; it contains the idea of a result or action as a consequence of the anger. In short, God sees a sinful

²⁷ Morris, 28.

²⁸ Morris, 63.

action; He is angered by this; He becomes wrath—meaning that He gives vent according to precept and justice and acts against that which has angered Him.

Paul’s words (Romans 2:5-9) are applicable at this point: “**But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds:** to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.” (Emphasis added.)

Note well three points. First, there is righteous judgement. Second, it is according to deeds. Third, there are positive and negative sanctions – there are the blessed and the cursed.

In rounding out this section, we would like to make a few other observations. Beginning with the Book of Revelation, we would like to look at some very relevant texts.

In the first three chapters of Revelation, we are faced with a very interesting dialogue. This dialogue has been made more and more real the further we have studied it. One interesting point continually comes to the fore. It is a point that is almost universally overlooked in many of today’s controversies. The point is this: the letters to the churches are messages from the resurrected, sitting on the throne, ruling with all authority and power, Lord of the Church, Jesus Christ!

Many controversies arising today concern the nature of Jesus’ love and how He would have dealt with certain issues. Too often, Jesus is portrayed as the epitome of ‘he who would not hurt a fly’. If we believe these letters in Revelation, then we seriously need to reappraise such pious drivel.

Here, in Revelation, the Lord of All and of His Church, calls upon John to pen messages to His people.²⁹ Seven churches are addressed in this correspondence. Five times Jesus says, “I know your deeds” (2:2, 5, 6, 19, 22, 23, 26; 3:1, 2, 8, 15.) To three of these, He adds further comment regarding “deeds”.

²⁹ We are not concerned with eschatology here, as it is largely irrelevant to our purpose. The point is that Jesus speaks sternly to His people and threatens judgements as well as promises blessing.

The Church at Ephesus is told to “do” the former “deeds” whilst being commended for hating the “deeds” of the Nicolaitans. The Church at Thyatira is told to repent of Jezebel’s “deeds”, for Christ will judge them sorely so that all the churches will know “that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.” Then they are promised a reward, but this reward is only for those who “keep” the “deeds” of Christ. In the third instance, Jesus rebukes those at Sardis for He has not found their “deeds completed.”

Of the seven churches addressed, five are charged with failing to live up to the standard. Only two churches are exempt from this (Smyrna and Philadelphia) and these two seem to be exempt on the basis that they are in for imminent persecution and / or tribulation. Five times, churches are told to “repent” or they would face savage rebuke at the hands of Church’s Head. Which five? Yes, the same five who are charged with dropping the ball in some way.

The point to extrapolate or draw out is this: Jesus is not passively sitting upon His throne, waiting for the Father to wind things up so He can come and tell us what should have been. No. He is actively engaged in His Church, in Her battles, in Her trials and tribulations, in Her victories, and, yes, in Her mediocre performances, sin, and rebellion.

The picture given to us, eschatological views notwithstanding, is of Jesus Christ, Head of the Church, totally involved in a ministry to His Church. He cares for those who have strayed. He cares for those who suffer. He cares that error has come to His people. He cares, very much, that His people have believed error. That He cares so much is seen in the five calls to repentance! Yet there is one more thing He truly cares about: *Sharing His victory and the Covenant reward with His people!*

Whilst five churches are told to repent, *all seven are called to be victorious*: “To him who overcomes I will grant ...!” (2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21.) Each church is exhorted to persevere unto the end. This exhortation and desire on the part of Christ is underscored by the reward He places before each one. The true desire of Jesus for His Church is repentance, where necessary, that a complete victory may be enjoyed.

This leads to the final point. Who will Judge the world? Is it not Jesus Christ! Again a great lesson

needs to be learnt at this point. Jesus has not only been crucified in History, but He is currently *wedged* by so many faulty theologies. We mean no blasphemy in this. The truth is simply this; some try to fit the Person and Work of Christ into a single pigeon hole and thus destroy the totality of His being whilst others try to drive *wedges* into His person and rend His nature in ways that are not right.

Jesus came to this world as the Saviour of His people whom God the Father had given Him from eternity. This is one truth. Equally, He is judge!

Scripture testifies:

John 3:16-20: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. “For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. “*He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* “And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. “For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, **lest his deeds should be exposed.** “But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”

Acts 10:38-43: “You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power ... And we are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. ...”And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that **this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead.** “Of Him all the prophets bear witness.”

Acts 17:30-31: “Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, because **He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.**”

We must grasp this wondrous and solemn aspect concerning our God. He is Just, He is Gracious, He is Love, yet He is Terror, Wrath, and Indignation. The Hebrews are solemnly warned concerning the

terror that awaits those who “fall into the hands of the living God” without a mediator.

Whilst God judges in Christ now, there shall also be a great reckoning. A day when books are opened (Revelation 20:12 ff) and the deeds of men are weighed. Those found wanting shall be cast into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:15) and those, and only those, whose names are found in the Lamb’s Book of Life shall dwell peacefully in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:27).

Retribution is a very Biblical concept. It is a concept that should be implemented in our society. Our judges should give a just retribution, but they cannot because they have perverted the whole concept of justice.

We noted at the outset how the State has perverted the justice system by turning it to their own deceitful ends. As long as this is the case, just retribution will not be a concept of the courts. Why? Because the institution of justice is enslaved to the State rather than being set free unto God. The godless State only knows how to bind and repress.

This said, retribution is a just Biblical principle of which no one calling himself “Christian!” should ever be ashamed.

C. Deterrence: A Valid Concept or No?

When it comes to the topic of “deterrence”, we must be very sure that we have the correct context. Broughton Knox makes this observation:

The alternative Humanist theory is that punishment is inflicted for deterrence as a safeguard to society. This is an even worse base for punishment, as it involves using people as a means to an end; and the benefit aimed at is not the culprit’s, as in reformatory theory, but that the community in general; that is to say it uses people for somebody else’s end, which is morally reprehensible. This theory means that punishment need have no relation to the crime but only to effect, as to whether it actually deters or not. It might well be argued, if our society were to become non-Christian, that grossly cruel punishments are the most effective deterrents. This was the case in society before Christianity made its influence felt. The cruel punishment of crucifixion, for example, was inflicted for the sake of deterring criminals as a safeguard to society. But it was unjust to use people this way, even criminals.

What D.B. Knox says here is very true. When we think to history we can envisage bodies hanging in steel cages. Whether pirates or others, guilty or

innocent, these bodies were placed on display for all to see. The message was clear: you do not want to end up like this! We see a similar episode in the Bible with Jesus Himself. He was crucified alongside two robbers.³⁰ Death by crucifixion for robbery! There are also some other snippets from this time that would suggest that roads may have been lined with the crucified to form a very public and brutal display.³¹ The whole point of these grisly exhibitions was nothing less than deterrence. This being the case, every Christian should be opposed to this *type* of (supposed) deterrence.

This perversion exploits the one on whom the negative sanction falls, supposedly to the benefit of those completely unrelated to the transgression. More importantly, there is no restraint. Anything goes. Anything is acceptable. A very relevant modern application of this is the supposed “War on terrorism”. We have no love of terror or terrorist. Neither can we support a system in which people are denied justice on pretence – no judge, no court, no hearing, no charge, and no trial.³² Neither can we support a system that supposedly supports the use of torture.³³

All of this has happened for two reasons. The first reason is very simple. The Humanists have lost the plot. They have contrived so many contradictory philosophies and self-defeating ideologies they no longer know what justice is or how to arrive at that point. Equally, in some cases, they simply cannot tell friend from foe.³⁴ The second reason is

³⁰ Matthew and Mark speak of two “Robbers”. John speaks of two “other men”. Luke speaks of two “Criminals”.

³¹ “Crucifixion was most frequently used to punish political or religious agitators, pirates, slaves, or those who had no civil rights. In 519 BC Darius I, king of Persia, crucified 3,000 political opponents in Babylon; in 88 BC Alexander Jannaeus, the Judaean king and high priest, crucified 800 Pharisaic opponents; and in about AD 32 Pontius Pilate had Jesus of Nazareth put to death by crucifixion.” **Crucifixion.** Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica 2007 Ultimate Reference Suite. Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica.

³² Just for clarity, we are not speaking necessarily of the David Hick’s of this world. Primarily, anyone can be charged under terrorism laws that could see them snatched and detained without trial.

³³ In the European Middle Ages, St. [Augustine](#) pointed out its moral perversity: “If the accused be innocent, he will undergo for an uncertain crime a certain punishment, and that not for having committed a crime, but because it is unknown whether he committed it.” **“torture.”** Encyclopædia Britannica from *Encyclopædia Britannica 2007 Ultimate Reference Suite*. (2007).

³⁴ This point must be well understood. Here in Australia, our society is in danger because Humanism demands such things as equality. Define this, please? Are we talking about a person’s

deterrence. They hope that by making an un-public spectacle or example of some, that it will deter others from following this path.

As stated, such things must be rejected. This then leads us to ask, is deterrence applicable to Christian justice?

The real key to this issue of “deterrence” is summed up in D.B. Knox’s use of the term “Humanist”. The above travesty is the Humanist version of justice. It is a travesty because it is a poor, twisted, charade of the real justice that God gives and intends. This type of deterrence happens because the Humanistic State wields its power to its own ends. Justice, in this scheme, is completely redefined. It is not punishment or acquittal based on right and wrong, guilt or innocence. Justice becomes the State’s defined outcome to any situation. Stealing guns from the innocent is justice. Thievery through excessive taxation is justice. Allowing evil to speak and censoring the truth, is justice.

In very sharp contrast to this Humanistic perversion, the Bible gives us a clearly defined concept of deterrence. We would like to illustrate this with a detailed reference to Deuteronomy 13:6-11. There we read:

“If your brother, your mother’s son, or your son or daughter, or the wife you cherish, or your friend who is as your own soul, entice you secretly, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods’ (whom neither you nor your fathers have known, of the gods of the peoples who are around you, near you or far from you, from one end of the earth to the other end), you shall not yield to him or listen to him; and your eye shall not pity him, nor shall you spare or conceal him. “But you shall surely kill him; your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. “So you

ability? Few are equal. Are we talking about strength? Few are equal. Are we talking about normality? We once heard a speaker say “that it is by common consent we call each other normal, as every person has many [forget the exact number, but it was many, tens if not hundreds] congenital defects.” So what is normal? Are we talking of worth? If so, then we are getting closer, but there are still hurdles. Is Amin or Hitler of the same worth as Washington, Edwards, or Stonewall Jackson? Is a lie equal with the truth? Is light equal with dark?

You see, the Humanist philosophy creates chaos and disorder. It does not bring peace and harmony. All the while the humanist State says that all things are equal – Christianity /atheism or heterosexual / homosexual – it is holding that its dictates are in fact “true” and therefore more equal / worthy than those of others.

shall stone him to death because he has sought to seduce you from the Lord your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. “Then all Israel will hear and be afraid, and will never again do such a wicked thing among you.”

This text breaks into four definite sections. Verses 6-7 recount God’s proscription of false worship. Of note, it is directed against close relations. This is important as it highlights our susceptibility to those in close and familial relations. Equally, it underscores our responsibility to hold our close relations accountable. This is borne out in verses 8-9. The one hearing this heretical suggestion must not remain quiet. It becomes our obligation to make the heresy known.

In the second instance, these same verses bear out that justice must be implemented and that the required punishment be given. In this case, the person has committed a capital crime and is to be executed. It is a crime against God and His people and therefore, the execution is to be championed by the one who was propositioned and by the people at large.

The third section, verse 10, is almost a post-script to the trial. It reads like the judges summary, first giving the sentence – You shall stone him to death – then comes the reasoning behind the law and the sentence – he has sought to seduce you from the One true God!

Fourthly, and relevant to our discussion, the Lord then states: “Then *all Israel will hear and be afraid, and will never again do such a wicked thing among you.*”

We can think of no better term to describe this sentence than “deterrence”. Most importantly, they are words spoken by God Himself. In short, God sees deterrence as a legitimate aspect of justice.

Now we must understand this clearly. We are not arguing for deterrence as a defining principle of justice. Rather, we are saying that **when justice is truly affected, it shall have as its natural and distinct consequence, deterrence.**³⁵ In other words,

³⁵ Please compare these texts also. Deuteronomy 17:12 and 22:22 speak of “purging” the evil from Israel. The obvious intent here is that justice has a cathartic element for the nation. Similarly, Deuteronomy 17:13 and 19:20, in concert with 13:11, speak of Israel “Hearing and being afraid.” These five texts all point in one clear direction. To receive the positive covenant

the humanist concept encountered above can hold as its only principle of justice the idea of deterrence—we will do this action to this person so that others will take note. In this scenario, the person dealt with is really just a pawn. The goal / target has always been the wider community. This is wrong.

In contrast, the Biblical picture is that the one found guilty is duly dealt with according to all the principles of justice. Punishment and retribution take place. The guilty party is always the focal point, with the exception of those who have been truly wronged. When justice is so conducted, it will have as its natural consequence a deterrent value.

Some moderns may disagree with this, by positing that the deterrent value is limited. As to the modern case, we would agree. Two points must be raised. First, the deterrent value has been limited in society because the State has taken control of justice. It must be remembered that justice in the Old Testament was a very intimate act. There was the kinsman redeemer. We have seen in the text above that the person was approached by a wife, brother etc., and not some stranger in a trench coat under a shady tree. In short, the family and community were involved.

These themes have been passed over for too long. In our day, Court is often conducted behind closed doors. The guilty have their names suppressed. The guilty cannot be identified. Executions take place in small rooms with few witnesses.

This then leads directly to the second aspect. In our text, the witness was first against the guilty, followed by the community. The execution of just punishment was public and championed by the public. In short, the community was involved. Think here of the interesting Biblical case of the man who takes a life by accident. He flees to the city of refuge. He cannot leave until the death of the High Priest. Even here, community is involved, albeit in a very different way.

Then there is the case where a body is found. The duty of cleansing falls to those in the nearest city. They do not say, “We didn’t do it. It’s not our problem!” No, they take it seriously because they realised that the judge of all the earth has been offended. Innocent blood has seeped into the ground

sanction – God’s blessing – there must be obedience. Thus the nation must be holy as God is holy. Evil must be purged. It must be deterred.

and cries out to God. The blood must be expiated before God’s judgement is aroused.

Justice was a communal activity. In this context, the deterrent value was all the more real and all the more potent, in comparison to our day—again showing that the modern system is full of pitfalls, contradictions, and inadequacies.

This said, we conclude this section by stating that true justice is about retribution, with deterrence being a natural concomitant.

**QUESTION 5.
WHICH THEOLOGIES OF THE
ATONEMENT OF CHRIST BEST
INFORM AND EMPOWER A GRACE-
SHAPED WHOLISTIC SHALOM
JUSTICE PRODUCTIVE OF WHOLE
PERSONS IN WHOLE
RELATIONSHIPS IN WHOLE
COMMUNITIES IN HARMONY WITH
THE WHOLE (NEW) CREATION?**

This question is a bit of a challenge in that it is unpunctuated and some of the concepts could do with a definition. We shall attempt to break the question up and respond to each section as necessary.

A. Which theologies of the atonement of Christ best inform and empower...? At the outset, we object to the term “theologies”. There is absolutely no place when talking about the theology of redemption to use the plural. God has specified one way. That way is encompassed in one theology. Says the Apostle Peter, by the power of the Holy Spirit, “There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

Paul in similar vein states:
But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed. (Galatians 1:8-9)

The import of these texts is clear. They admit no plurals. There is but **one** Name. There is *no other* name. There is **one** gospel. Anything contrary to that preached by Paul and the body of Scripture is to

be accursed. It is false. It has no place being discussed, spoken of, or digested; let alone believed!

This point must be made forcefully. The terms “heretic”, “heresy”, and “anathema”, have disappeared from Christian circles. This would be wonderful if it were because there were no false beliefs to be labelled. Sadly, we do not believe this is true. The reality is to be found more in the fact that the Christian community has imbibed too much Post-Modern philosophy and the ideology of Political Correctness.

The sum of these beliefs is that we feel compelled to pander to any who have an erroneous view. We see no widespread condemnation of the Uniting Church and its evil stances. We have not heard solid condemnation from Christian communities concerning paedophilia and child abuse within Romanist and Anglican circles. There has been little or no condemnation of the “Jesus loves Osama” theology.

Yes, there has been some condemnation, but sadly, it has come predominantly from the world! While the Church fiddles, the world raises the alarm and condemns the action. Yes, some of that is simply to deride the Church. Yet we must ask, Where are the protesting protest-ants?

If God alone is Truth and we have sworn allegiance to Him by blood oath, why do we tolerate error so easily? Why do we pretend that this little bit of error is acceptable, palatable, or of no consequence?

Many often wonder why the nation or the Church at this time is in a mess. The answer can be traced back to the days of compromise. Pick any day on which error was allowed to trump truth and you have a beginning of a headlong plunge into the miry pit.

So many of the problems of our day can be directly linked to a faulty theology of redemption. *If we modify redemption at any point, we modify God!* Think about this. The doctrine of redemption is based squarely in the Character of the Triune God. As we have seen already in this series, there is an aspect of justice, and law. Equally, there is wrath and mercy. Yes, there is also love. All these just attributes of God play their part in redemption. If we hold any of these out of balance, then we not only arrive at a faulty view of redemption, we modify God’s character to do so.

As an example, we often talk about grace and law. These are two just concepts. However, they often hold the field as though there were no other worthy contenders. Think for a moment of God’s *will* or God’s *decree* in these matters. The theology of redemption is often divorced from the *purposes of God*. Man makes his mind up as to what God purposed to achieve and then builds a theology around this. All the while, God is walked on. His purposes are set aside. His will is discarded. His attributes are confused and set against each other.

The result of this is that the One God is divided. The foundation is shattered. Man once more seeks to ascend to God’s throne, albeit in the name of religion.

If we would move forward in an obedient manner, we must first make the effort to correctly understand the doctrine or theology of redemption. Let us illustrate this.

The main theological groups that exist in Protestantism are Calvinists and Arminians. Both these groups would agree that evangelism is a Christian endeavour. The “how to”, though, will differ markedly because of the presuppositions involved. If a Calvinist and an Arminian agreed on this point, it would show that one or both are out of touch with their theology—particularly the theology of redemption and of God’s purpose.

The point here is this: theology proceeds in a linear and logical fashion. If A is true, then a non-A must be false. These lines then grow like branches and support other truths. Think of a honey comb. Each line connects to another. In the end, these lines build a hexagonal cell. It is an individual cell. Yet, it also has a corporate nature. For several walls of this cell form walls in adjoining cells. So it is also in theology. This doctrine is individual, yet it supports another, becomes a foundation for another, or builds upon another.

In short, the correct theology of redemption will only be arrived at when we immerse ourselves in the whole counsel of God. We must understand God’s purposes as He has revealed them. We must believe what God says regarding Himself and man. We must only believe what Scripture teaches us in these important matters. We must not be empty-headed in approaching Scripture, but we must rid ourselves of prejudice and be willing to learn from God.

There is but *one true* theology of salvation. It is revealed by God in the Scripture. If we do not believe this doctrine, then we commit error and go astray. Anything built upon such a corrupt view will equally be distorted and will not prosper the hearts of men nor glorify God.

Lastly, a corrupt view of the theology of redemption will never inform or empower. It will only distract and weaken. That which is built upon a faulty foundation cannot last. The demise may be long. It may be short. Yet in the end, confusion and weakness will conspire to collapse the edifice.

B. ...a grace-shaped, wholistic, shalom justice ...? Here again, we begin by questioning the concertinaed adjectives. These terms add confusion as their exact meaning is, no doubt, best understood by the original author. Equally, the current writer does not see that they really add anything to the question. *Justice will be shaped by the Biblical paradigms or it will not. If we follow the Biblical frame work, then these elements will be, without fail, incorporated.*

We offer these three points:

(1) Grace-shaped: More will be said on this later, but we must differentiate between grace as a motive to action and grace as an ethical standard.

(2) Holism: This is a very Biblical perspective. There we read:
 “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.
 “And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart;

Again,

“What commandment is the foremost of all?” Jesus answered, “The foremost is, ‘Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ (Mark 12:28-30)

Matthew Henry Comments:

We are also commanded to love God *with all our heart, and soul, and might*; that is, we must love him, [1.] With a sincere love; **not in word and tongue only**, saying we love him when our hearts are not with him, **but inwardly, and in truth**, solacing ourselves in him. ... [2.] With a **strong love**; the heart must be carried out towards him with great ardour and fervency of

affection.... [4.] With an **intelligent love**; for so it is explained, Mk. 12:33. To love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, **we must know him, and therefore love him as those that see good cause to love him.** [5.] With an **entire love**; he is one, and therefore our hearts must be united in this love, and **the whole stream of our affections must run towards him.** O that this love of God may be shed abroad in our hearts!³⁶

We must understand that God speaks to His people and commands that their whole being be addressed toward Him. Man is not viewed simply as a lump of meat blessed with ability to move. No, he is made in God’s image. He thinks. He feels. He is a Biblical rationalist.

Sin, in the fall, corrupted man in totality. He became enslaved. He lost his might—he was in bondage to sin. He lost his mind—“Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that *every intent of the thoughts* of his heart was only evil continually.” (Genesis 6:5) He lost his heart—“The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?” (Jeremiah 17:9)

For us, we need to grasp a theological point. Men who are unregenerate are still in this might-less, bound to sin, evil-intended state. The words spoken above are required of all men, but can only be fulfilled by those in God’s covenant community. Release and restoration only come through reconciliation to God via Christ’s substitutionary atonement.

In this state man is free from bondage, thinks aright, and has a heart that is in tune with God. It is at this point, and in this estate, that man is truly whole.

(3) Shalom. This is an interesting choice of word. Like many words, *shalom* has entered service as a general term for “hello”, “goodbye”, or “peace” and in so doing has lost much of its real meaning.³⁷

³⁶ Henry, Matthew, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Bible*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers) 1991. Bold added.

³⁷ In Hebrew, words are built around a consonantal root, usually a tri-consonantal root. In this case the root is SLM. Vowel pointings, suffixes, and prefixes are then added to form various forms. The root SLM is very popular at the moment. All are familiar with **Islam**. Ignore the “I” and you will see the same root. Though it is a cognate language, the same theory applies. In the designation “Islam” the root has been formed into a term that expresses peace or ‘submission’. The same can be seen in

When we look at the full range of words in Hebrew built around this same root (or stem), we find meanings such as: be complete, sound, completeness, welfare, peace, be in a covenant of peace, sacrifice for alliance or friendship, peace-offering, recompense, requital, and retribution.³⁸

For this study, we need to note the aspect of *completeness* or *soundness*. Shalom is not a general peace, as we would tend to use the term. We would say we are at peace in this country, yet we are not really. We may not be at war, but we are not at peace. We still suffer strife. The news each night is a morbid affair. It is carnage from first to last. Someone murdered, someone robbed, someone violated, someone injured. Not really all that peaceful. Then there are those who would promote abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality, racism, and the like. No, we are not at peace.

The idea of true *shalom* is that there is no corruption that can lead to war or strife. Man can only have peace with God when peace is sued through Jesus Christ. In this completed state, there is no warfare or possibility of warfare. This is peace. This is the true shalom.

It is for this reason that some of the variants of this root point in the direction of retribution, requital, and offering. For true peace to be achieved there must be justice. Justice must be dispensed. The ledger must squared. Then, and only then, can there be peace.

True peace with God rests in a covenant peace established in law through the complete, redeeming work of the Triune God. Everything else is a falsehood. Tombs are often marked R.I.P! Yet those interred are not at peace because they have no Covenant of Peace with Almighty God. True peace occurs only in such a relationship when both parties abide fully by the terms of the covenant.

Two scriptural examples, if we may:

A. Isaiah 53:5b: “The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed.” Literally, this is the ‘chastening for our peace (shalom).

the term “Muslim.” Our apologies for such a dark illustration, but we thought it would be one well grasped.

³⁸ This list is taken from Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius, *Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Hendrickson Publishers: Peabody, 1979) s.v. שָׁלוֹם.

B. Isaiah 9:6: “For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.” Here, the Messiah is said to be the Prince of Peace, he is literally the Sar – Shalom!

Significantly, both these texts speak of the task of the Messiah and in each case *shalom* is an integral part. Whether as Suffering Servant or Ruling Prince the concept is at the fore. We have peace (shalom) because He took the punishment due to us. When He rules over David’s kingdom, He does so, “to establish it and to uphold it with **justice and righteousness** from then on and forevermore.”

We would therefore say that “shalom justice” is a justice that leads to everlasting peace. More accurately, we would say that Biblical justice leads to *shalom*!

C. ...productive of whole persons in whole relationships in whole communities in harmony with the whole (new) creation? The remainder of this question is really nothing more than the consequence of Biblical justice. As we have just seen, the *shalom* concept is one of completeness and wholeness. Therefore, true justice should be productive of whole relations because it has eradicated the impediment and brought peace.

Here again we see cause and effect. When we are at peace, truly, we can be productive, ultimately. The Old Testament code gave clear covenantal instruction on this relation. Think here of the blessings and curses listed at the end of Deuteronomy. When these are distilled, it boils down to this: *ultimate peace with God brings ultimate productivity.*

Too often, the extent of this relation is minimised. You see, the promises of God for obedience (or disobedience for that matter) go way beyond the basic idea of a father saying, “Cos I said so!” We need to realise that God gives positive divine decrees that extend to the whole of creation. As we have noted elsewhere, what is the logical connection between tithing and a bumper harvest? How does sexual fertility arrive as a consequence of holy living?

Humanly speaking, there is absolutely no connection between one activity and a certain result. Biblically speaking, when one obeys God and is

ultimately at peace with God, then God orders the laws of nature to work in your favour. Peace leads to productivity. Peace is life. Christ Jesus gave His life that we might have life. Yea more, that we may have life and have it abundantly! (John 10:10)

This message is the consistent theme of Scripture. **Genesis:** a perfect Garden in which peace reigns. Productivity. **Revelation:** the consummation. The New Jerusalem. A river of life. Tranquillity. No pain. No tear. No thief. No war. Peace! Peace eternal. In between these two sections: Banishment. Curse. Thorns. Thistles. Pain. Bloodshed. War. Crime. Chaos.

Benediction: Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all!

This emphasis we would highlight. However, we must now look at the aspect of relationships as raised by the question.

Essentially, we stay with the theme of peace and productivity. If peace does not exist then there can be no productive relationships and indeed no engine to produce such a relationship or community.

In the context of this discussion on justice, we must state categorically that justice will not always repair a relationship. Should the murderer or rapist be reconciled in a close relationship to their victim? Take recent events in Victoria. Should the Hoddle Street murderer, Julian Knight, be allowed to write to all his victims and their families? Should our justice system facilitate reconciliation?

We say, No! God’s Word is clear. He who sheds man’s blood should be put to death. These victims are still victims in this case because true justice has not been forthcoming. The murderer is alive and still creating a nuisance of himself long after the victims have been bereft of loved ones or freedoms.

In such cases closure should come with the execution of the perpetrator of the crime. There is no relationship and no community for such people. Thinking back to our discussion on deterrence, we see that God would not have these people in a community. When the judiciary fails to cast these out, God Himself will set His face against them.

We should seek peace and productivity by eradicating evil-doers from our society. Rape victims should not live with the fear that their

attacker will someday return. This is not peace or productivity. The child stealer should not be free to set parents hearts racing. This again is not peace or productivity.

As to those guilty of lesser crimes, then justice must be affected so that the punishment can be served and freedom restored. Think of those in Jail for theft. They are associating with the worst of fallen humanity. Are they being bettered? Are peace and productivity on the agenda? Better that justice be swift and the guilt expiated so that an opportunity for peace and productivity arrives the sooner.

QUESTION 6.
HOW CAN THE GOSPEL OF GRACE AND THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST BE INTEGRATED WITH LEGAL THEORY AND PRAXIS? HOW CAN THE PERSON AND WORK OF JESUS CHRIST TRANSCEND THE TENSION BETWEEN LAW AND GRACE? IF WE DO NOT USE TWO DIFFERENT SETS OF GLASSES TO VIEW TWO DIFFERENT WORLDS, HOW CAN WE AVOID DOUBLE OR BLURRED VISION, SHORT OR LONG SIGHTEDNESS? HOW DO WE KEEP THE FOCUS ON CHRIST?

Please allow that we break these apart in order to give an answer.

A. How can the Gospel of grace and the kingdom of Christ be integrated with legal theory and praxis? The first question that comes to mind is, ‘Whose legal theory and praxis?’ If we are looking at the modern situation, we would suggest that integration is an erroneous notion. The modern situation, as critiqued earlier, is a God-less, man-made phenomenon that in reality has little to do with that which is lawful. In this situation, we would suggest reformation, not integration. That which does not meet the Biblical standard must be removed completely and replaced by Biblical law and practice (principle of action).

As there are two law-givers and two legal systems, compromise is never an option. At present, humanism has seduced and supplanted most of that which resembled Biblical law. Even in areas where the Biblical law remains, say murder, *the penalties show that the Biblical design and intent have been abandoned.*

Humanism realises that it cannot compromise with the Law of God, so it seeks a way to neutralise and eventually discard it. The true light of Biblical truth will expose the hollow shell of humanism as mere shadow without substance. So humanism makes every effort to dim the Biblical light.

Therefore, if we love our God, we will not accept a compromised legal code that does not exalt and honour our God as ruler and law-giver at every turn — In Him, through Him, and to Him! Theory based on God’s revelation. Practice consistent with that theory, in which obedience is exercised and blessing sought. This is that for which every Christian should yearn.

Too long have we dwelt in shadow. Too long have the cold peaks of Humanism deprived our land of God’s true light. Too long have people shivered below the miasmatic clouds of Statist law. Too long have people been deprived of the free, clear air through which the suns warming rays flow.

This situation has come about because of a narrowed theology, a theology hinted at in the question under review. This question asks about the “gospel of grace” and of “the kingdom of Christ.” Whilst we can live with these terms in a general sense, the concern is that they point to a dichotomy in Scripture rather than a unity.

In short, the question hints that the New Testament has implemented a different standard of conduct – a standard that is different *and opposed* to that found in the Old Testament.

This is the typical understanding found in most Arminian and Dispensational theologies. It is so, because the New Testament is seen as something radically different from the Old Testament. Jesus has not only come in the flesh, but He has introduced a completely different standard of living—grace!

The weakness with this position is that it does not take into account the overwhelming teaching of Scripture that there is unity and commonality throughout the Bible. On the road to Emmaus, Jesus taught the two of Himself; how? *“Beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.”* (Luke 24:27) Jesus does not tell them to ignore the Old Testament as outdated and redundant and then begin a new stream of teaching.

No, He goes to the Law and the Prophets and explains that He is right there in those pages.

It seems to this author, that this very text really explains many modern problems. The disciples, in the above text, were puzzled not because they did not expect Messiah, but because *they did not understand from God’s revelation* who and what Messiah would be.

Similarly, today, we have created a Messiah founded upon our own expectations, based on upbringing, culture, personal preference, and the like. Using these we have shaped a Saviour according to our own image and liking. The one thing we have not done, generally, is gone back to *God’s revelation*, studied it, digested it, and allowed it to shape our thoughts, understanding, and practice.

It may come as a surprise to some to find that the gospel is never referred to in Scripture as a “gospel of grace.” The closest we come to any such reference is in Acts 20:24, where Paul says concerning his ministry: *“which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.”*

In this construction, ‘grace’ occurs in the genitive case and is therefore a possessive. Thus, we could render this clause, as does the NIV, “the gospel of God’s grace.” The point is simple. The gospel is of God and/or an attribute that flows from His being. Hence, the grace mentioned must be understood in Biblical terms. We cannot pump new meaning into the idea of grace or posit that its meaning has relevance apart from the Character of God. Yet this is what many seek to do in our day. Wedges are driven where no separation was intended. Meanings are invoked which have no basis in exegesis or Biblical study.

If we would understand and apply a solid theory for our legal system, we must begin with God; sovereign, eternal, immutable, righteous, and just. We must learn from this God about His standards and His ways and forget the articulation of our own case.

B. How can the person and work of Jesus Christ transcend the tension between law and grace? The dichotomy that we have been speaking of comes clearly to the fore in this particular question. The present author sees this question as a logical fallacy. Whilst the question

may look acceptable, we must ask one very simple question, 'Is there **really** a "tension" between law and grace?'

Our answer is this: There is absolutely no tension between law and grace! This supposed tension has come about through a continued ignorance in which the Bible's teaching on a range of issues has been discarded.

People who peddle this "tension" theory are often those that also posit that salvation in the Old Testament was by Law and that salvation in the New Covenant is by grace. Error! Salvation is and always has been by God's promise. One of the greatest tragedies of our day is the inability, or sheer unwillingness, of many Christians to see the difference between redemption and sanctification.

The Jew lived by the Law, not *to become holy* and enter into a relationship with God, **but to continue to be holy** as his God was holy, and thereby to enjoy fellowship with God. The Israelite's law-keeping was about maintaining the standard of the new life and the relationship with God in which he now gratefully lived.

Let us be clear about this. No Israelite entered the covenant relationship with God because he executed a bull. He executed the bull because he was in a covenant relationship.

Is this not the import of Paul's argument in Galatians chapter three?

"Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ. What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise."

Note here that Abraham received a promise. Israel was taken from bondage in Egypt not by works of the law, but because of a promise. It was only after the shackles of bondage had been broken and the people gathered unto God that the Law was given in written form.

The whole thrust given in this section is that everything began with promise. Even though the

Law was established, it did not nullify the promise or invalidate the covenant.

Therefore, the obligation upon us is to discern how these themes work together for our salvation. It is **not**, repeat, *not*, to tear God's character to shreds in a vain attempt at the un-Biblical and impossible.³⁹

Allow me to illustrate. Some years back John Gray told us that "Men were from Mars, Women are from Venus." How earth shattering! This was not, or should not have been, news to anyone who has read the Bible. God's word directs us to see significant differences between men and women. More importantly, however, God directs us to see the unity achievable between men and women. God made man and He made him *male and female*. God then instituted marriage between these two. He made a covenant bond in which the two become so intertwined that they can truly be called "one."

In God's creation, the two distinct and different sides of the coin are forged to become one. Diversity is not a shackle or encumbrance. Knitted together as God intended the one becomes greater than the two. The sum of the whole far exceeds the single entity.

Space does not allow us to elaborate on this, but we will touch upon two aspects quickly.

In our society, a great deal of harm is created through the condoning of single motherhood.⁴⁰ Many times have we witnessed the female voice being ignored by children, especially with teenage boys. The female was not created to perform within this role. Their voice is not that of authority and women in this situation often struggle with discipline and control.

Equally, fathers tend to be a bit challenged in the nurture stakes. Together, the two form a complete environment. A hurt child will seek its mother whilst a frightened child often its father. Cultural conditioning? No. Created character!

The second notable aberration today is homosexuality. These deviants seek to make double-headed coins. They despise God's created order and yet they feel compelled to follow it. Have

³⁹ The justification of believers under the Old Testament was, in all these respects, one and the same with the justification of believers under the New Testament. Westminster Confession 11:6.

⁴⁰ We speak here of those in particular who choose this role.

you noted how lesbians, rejecting men, try to look like them? Similarly, homosexuals forsake women, but then begin to act like them? Again, why do homosexuals want marriage? If homosexuality is better than heterosexuality, why bother? Why do homosexuals feel compelled to be married? Why are they seeking registers that recognise their union?

These relationships, and we really desire a better term, will never reach the heights of heterosexual unions because they ignore diversity as a key to unity and oneness. They mimic God's order by striving to put two together, but the glue never takes. Such efforts are like trying to place the same poles on separate magnets together. They do not attract. They reject.

God created diversity through which we can achieve a greater unity. However, this is not the case with the world. Humanism, especially Feminism, sees these same differences and turns them into grounds for debasement and detraction. They are the ones that create a war between the sexes by seeking to dwell on and in diversity.

The exact situation exists in our theology at this point. Before us, we have two options. We can either see Law and Grace as aspects that can compliment each other and work with each other for a greater good or we can vainly pit them against each other in a war that detracts and debases both.

One option is Biblical, the other is not.

C. Law versus Grace? So how do we understand these two Biblical terms? At this point we would like to try and put these terms in their appropriate place and give an understanding of each.

A. Grace: We noted earlier that there is a genuine need to distinguish between *grace as motive* and **grace as a moral standard**.

When modern Christians speak of salvation by grace, they tend to use grace in a moral sense with the meaning of "pardon" or "excuse". Thus, they understand that they are saved by grace, meaning that God has excused them or pardoned them. We would posit that this is erroneous.

When we look at the typical situation surrounding a pardon, we are looking at the remission of a crime, not at the penalty. Typically, when a criminal is pardoned he is viewed as having committed no crime. He is not liable to punishment because there

has been no crime. It is for this reason, generally speaking, that those who are pardoned freely have any record of the incident expunged. To all intents and purposes, there is no incident to report.

Such, however, is not the case with God. When man fell, there was never any option of God simply closing His eyes and pretending as though nothing had happened. God could neither "pardon" nor "excuse". Understand well that this is not due to any imperfection in God. Rather, we see God's perfection come to the fore. God was bound to man via a covenant. Both beings were bound by its terms and its sanctions. When man proved unfaithful to God and to the covenant, God had to act in accord with the covenant stipulations, because He is by nature Perfect, Just, and Righteous. For God to do anything other than that which was stipulated in the covenant would have been a sin equal to that of Adam's transgression and God would have ceased to be God!

Thus we arrive at a key point. This critical juncture must be approached with accurate theology. We must understand these points:

In respect of God:

- God could not overlook sin.
- God could not and would not overlook sin, because He was bound by covenant.
- Covenant demanded justice—the implementation of negative sanctions for the covenant breach.
- Justice is an essential part of God's character and is, therefore, essential to covenant ratification and satisfaction.
- To deny Covenantal Justice would mean that God has denied Himself. God would cease to be God.

In respect of Man:

- Man transgressed the covenant terms.
- Man was held culpable of covenant contravention.
- Man reaped the negative covenant sanction.
- The negative covenant sanction was death.
- Man was alienated from God—fellowship ceased.
- Man was ejected from God's presence. The way back was barred.
- Man and that over which he ruled was cursed.

- Man is dead.
- Man is in eternal bondage, unable to pay the required price for freedom.

This is the situation as we find it written in God's Word. Chapter six of the Westminster Confession makes these points:

1. Our first parents, being seduced by the subtilty and temptation of Satan, sinned, in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin, God was pleased, according to His wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to His own glory.
2. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion, with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the parts and faculties of soul and body.
3. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed; and the same death in sin, and corrupted nature, conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation.

Likewise, question 22 and 23 of the Larger Catechism reinforce this point:

Did all mankind fall in that first transgression? The covenant being made with Adam as a public person, not for himself only, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, (Acts 17:26) sinned in him, and fell with him in that first transgression. (Gen. 2:16–17, Rom. 5:12–20, 1 Cor. 15:21–22)

Into what estate did the fall bring mankind? The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery. (Rom. 5:12, Rom. 3:23)

Man must be judged according to the covenant standard. Man must die. Man must be cast from God's presence forever! Man is totally lost. He is in bonds of darkness and without hope. He cannot reason his way back to God. He cannot add anything to his situation in order to curry favour with God. Man's heart continues to beat, but he is condemned to an existence of death.

Now the sixty-four dollar question: How does God deal with this situation?

God could have justly left the situation in this state. God is still God. He is just and above reproach. He has acted in accord with every aspect of His character. Equally, man is dead, cursed eternally. He is rewarded with everything he deserved. He is in

that state because of his own sin and failing. God is in no way to blame.

The covenant was ratified, transgressed, executed. Each being bound by the covenant is in the exact situation that the covenant demanded. There can be absolutely no complaints. Everything is as it should be.

Please understand this very well. God in heaven and man in hell eternally is a completely acceptable position. Some moderns find this offensive to their delicate senses and reject this position, but to do so is to reject the Biblical teaching. God in heaven and man in hell is exactly the picture painted. It is exactly the situation demanded by the covenant, based on the Biblical evidence.

John Murray is correct when he notes: "Truly God is love ... Yet it belongs to the very essence of electing love to recognize *that it is not inherently necessary* to that love which God necessarily and eternally is *that he should set such love ... upon utterly undesirable and hell-deserving objects.*"⁴¹

After a similar manner, Loraine Boettner says, "the Bible from beginning to end declares that man is ruined – totally ruined – that he is in a state of guilt and depravity from which he is utterly unable to deliver himself, and that *God might in justice have left him to perish.*"^{42 43}

This brings us to the point of this section—*grace!* God was in no way bound to act favourably toward any man. God was bound to do nothing more than justly condemn Adam and his posterity. That He did not is grace.

Grace is that sovereign choice whereby God decided to save some,⁴⁴ without obligation.⁴⁵ Grace is *not the*

⁴¹ John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Banner of Truth Trust, 1961) 10. Italics added.

⁴² Loraine Boettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, Philadelphia, 1963) 72. Italics added.

⁴³ Speaking of election, Packer states: "This divine choice is an expression of free and sovereign grace, for it is unconstrained and unconditional, not merited by anything in those who are its subjects. **God owes sinners no mercy of any kind, only condemnation**; so it is a wonder, and matter for endless praise, that he should choose to save any of us; and doubly so when his choice involved the giving of his own Son to suffer as sinner for the elect" (Rom. 8:32). Packer, J. I., *Concise Theology*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1993. Bold added.

⁴⁴ Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His

means of our salvation; **grace is the motive** for our salvation. Grace is the disposition that God showed toward some of His fallen, unworthy creatures. It is this grace that lay behind God’s decision to save His people.

Now let us be clear. This grace in and of itself does not save. The situation above was still the just, legal, and covenantal position and God could not simply pass over it – and this for all the reasons stated.

It is at this juncture that most error occurs. God was motivated to save His people and that motive is nothing less than God’s good and free grace. However, the salvation motivated by grace, still had to account for the demands of the covenant and satisfy justice and law.

That is why we are categorically saying that grace of itself is not salvific. Over the years, Christians have heard the phrase “salvation by grace alone” so many times that it has taken on a meaning that is entirely new. We are saved by grace in that God purposed to save His people — a people bound in sin and unable to do anything for their own salvation. Thus our salvation is of grace; it is not earned or deserved.

Equally, we are not saved by this grace in the sense that grace is the be-all-and-end-all of the mechanics necessary to our salvation. God’s purpose to save is grace. The means by which He saves, or the mechanics necessary to bring about salvation, go far beyond grace. God’s grace, as explained above, does not excuse or pardon our crime or our sin. Covenant, law, and God’s very being bind God. Hence any gracious act on God’s part toward the condemned sinner (grace) must satisfy law and covenant.

It is at this point that we must turn to the Law.

B. Law: For too long, God’s righteous Law has been spurned. Our modern day

eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen, in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith, or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving Him thereunto: and all to the praise of His glorious grace. Westminster Confession 3:5.

⁴⁵ *The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of His own will, whereby He extendeth or withholdeth mercy, as He pleaseth, for the glory of His sovereign power over His creatures, to pass by; and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice. Westminster Confession 3:7.*

theologies, being to a large degree unorthodox, have created theories and concepts that are simply un-Biblical.

One could argue for hours concerning these theories, but we would prefer to cut straight to the heart with this question: What did Jesus Christ do to merit a worthiness acceptable to God and, therefore, able to be imputed to His people?

There is only one answer. He kept and died under the Law according to Scripture: the very Law that we had broken and which had condemned us!

When Paul argues for the surety of the resurrection in first Corinthians chapter fifteen, he makes an innocuous statement twice; the importance of which most moderns overlook. Says Paul:

*Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you ... For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.*⁴⁶

These bolded phrases deserve our attention. You see, Jesus death and resurrection were not happenings of random chance. He was not the unfortunate victim of religious zealots that could not comprehend true religion. Nor was this a case in which God could not control history in order to save His Son. No, Jesus died as per the plan devised by Yahweh’s sovereign wisdom and counsel.

The phrase “according to the Scriptures” does not mean “as recorded by Scripture” as some today think. It means, rather more importantly, that Jesus died in accordance with the law and with all the prophecies concerning Him. Jesus did not walk unannounced onto histories stage and surrender His life hoping that His followers would make something of His life and death. No! One thousand times, No! Jesus life, death, and mission were foretold many years before. His substitutionary role was embodied in the sacrificial system given to God’s people and which spoke of their ultimate deliverance and reconciliation to their God.

We would like to consider this under the headings, Law and typology:

Law and Substitution:

⁴⁶ Bold added.

The following texts look at the fact that Jesus died as our substitute according to the Law's requirements:

❖ Galatians 4:4-5: But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, *born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law*, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

❖ Isaiah 53:5-6 and 11b: But He was *pierced through for our transgressions*, He was crushed for our iniquities; *The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed*. All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But **the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him**. ...My Servant, will justify the many, as *He will bear their iniquities*.

❖ Hebrews 2:10-18: For it was fitting for Him ... in bringing many sons to glory, to *perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings*. For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one *Father*; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, "I will proclaim Thy name to My brethren, In the midst of the congregation I will sing Thy praise." And again, "I will put My trust in Him." And again, "Behold, I and the children whom God has given Me." **Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives**. For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. *Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people*. For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

❖ Romans 3:21-31: But now apart from the Law *the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as*

a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.... Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law*.

❖ Ephesians 5:1: Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, *an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma*.⁴⁷

❖ 1 Peter 2:21-25: For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth ... **and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed**. For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

❖ Philippians 2:8-11: And being found in appearance as a man, **He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross**.

❖ Matthew 26:39-42: And He went a little beyond *them*, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt." ... He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Thy will be done."

⁴⁷ One should not miss the very strong Old Testament overtones in this phraseology. The sacrifice burnt upon the altar in the Holy of Holies ascended as a pleasing aroma to Yahweh. Genesis 8:20ff: "Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. **And the LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing ..."**

❖ John 4:34: Jesus said to them, “*My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work.*”

❖ Matthew 5:17-18: “**Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.** “For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished.

When the weight of Scripture is brought to bear we see clearly that there was simply no excusing or pardoning of sin as many seem to think. Jesus was crushed for our iniquity! The Scriptures placed above clearly bear this out. The great Messianic prophecy of Isaiah 53 establishes Christ’s substitutionary role. There can be, and should not be, any confusion on this point.

All these texts help to build a complete picture. He was pierced for our transgressions. Read in the context of our thesis it means that God did not simply excuse. Grace did not magically save us. Punishment still had to fall upon the guilty. The grace was that God, the wronged, provided a substitute, Jesus Christ.

Jesus was offered as a “fragrant aroma” to be a propitiation. He was born under the law that He might redeem His people from the covenant curse based in law. He became as us that He might bring many sons to glory. This was the will of the Father. It was Jesus’ food. So He learnt obedience and in obedience humbled Himself to the point of death, even death upon a cursed tree!

Yes my friends, this is Jesus, a priest forever in the line of Melchizedek. The Great High Priest who did not make atonement for His sins, but who offered Himself upon God’s altar for the sins of His people; to redeem them and the creation from the covenant curse.

Jesus became cursed by the covenant in order to be a cure for covenant transgression.

So let us restate this clearly. Grace is a motivation by which God purposes to provide a substitute for unworthy sinners incapable of saving themselves or rolling back the covenant curse. However, to achieve this end, the substitute had to bear the penalty due to the guilty party.

Typology

These texts look at Jesus as the fulfilment of Old Testament types, particularly those relating to the paschal lamb. In short, Jesus is not a newcomer, but One prophesied about and typified in ritual.

❖ John 1:29, 35-36: The next day he *saw Jesus coming to him, and *said, “Behold, **the Lamb of God** who takes away the sin of the world! Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked upon Jesus as He walked, and *said, “**Behold, the Lamb of God!**”

❖ 1 Peter 1:18-21: knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, **as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.** For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

❖ Revelation 5:6-10: And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders **a Lamb standing, as if slain**, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. And He came, and He took *it* out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they *sang a new song, saying, “Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; **for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. “And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”**⁴⁸

❖ Luke 22:7, 14-20: Then came the *first* day of Unleavened Bread on which the **Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.** ... And when the hour had come He reclined *at the table*, and the apostles with Him. And He said to them,

⁴⁸ Please note very well the correlation in this text between the “slain” and “didst purchase”. The currency is blood. No slaying, no legal tender, no purchase.

“I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” And when He had taken a cup *and* given thanks, He said, “Take this and share it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes.” And when He had taken *some* bread *and* given thanks, He broke *it*, and gave *it* to them, saying, “**This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.**” And in the same way *He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.”*

❖ John 19: 32-37: The soldiers therefore came, and broke the legs of the first man, and of the other man who was crucified with Him; but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs; but one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water. And he who has seen has borne witness, and his witness is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe. For these things came to pass, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, “Not a bone of Him shall be broken.” And again another Scripture says, “They shall look on Him whom they pierced.”⁴⁹

Thinking about this issue from a typological point we see even more light and a greater continuity. The Passover lamb which signified Christ did not go unpunished, did it? It gave its life. It was consumed by fire. Whilst some sacrifices allowed the priest or supplicant to partake of a part of the offering, the offering for sin (atonement) was a whole “burnt offering”. There was no sharing because it was not fellowship. It was consumed totally because it was, as it were, an object of wrath.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Numbers 9:12: ‘They shall leave none of it until morning, nor break a bone of it; according to all the statute of the Passover they shall observe it. Zechariah 12:10a: “And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced.

⁵⁰ Leviticus 1:10-13: ‘But if his offering is from the flock, of the sheep or of the goats, for a burnt offering, he shall offer it a male without defect. ‘And he shall slay it on the side of the altar northward before the Lord, and Aaron’s sons, the priests, shall sprinkle its blood around on the altar. ‘He shall then cut it into its pieces with its head and its suet, and the priest shall arrange them on the wood which is on the fire that is on the altar. ‘The entrails, however, and the legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall offer all of it, and offer it up in smoke on the

In this line Jesus firmly stood. He bore God’s wrath in our stead to fulfil the Law’s demand and satisfy the terms of the covenant.⁵¹ “The cross had this propitiatory effect because in his suffering Christ assumed our identity, as it were, and endured the retributive judgment due to us (“the curse of the law,” Gal. 3:13) as our substitute, in our place, with the damning record of our transgressions nailed by God to his cross as the tally of crimes for which he was now dying.”⁵²

“God’s justifying judgment seems strange, for pronouncing sinners righteous may appear to be precisely the unjust action on the judge’s part that God’s own law forbade. Yet it is in fact a just judgment, for its basis is the righteousness of Jesus Christ who as “the last Adam”, our representative head acting on our behalf, obeyed the law that bound us and endured the retribution for lawlessness that was our due and so (to use a medieval technical term) “merited” our justification. So we are justified justly, on the basis of justice done and Christ’s righteousness reckoned to our account.”⁵³

In light of this, we are obliged to state as strongly as possible that any denial of this scheme is antinomianism and, therefore, heresy. Grace does not save of itself. It cannot. It is a trait. It is a quality possessed by a person, in this case, God.

To say that we are saved by grace, as a trait, and nothing else is to raise an old error and to trample the blood of Christ under foot. God purposed to save. This is grace. Beyond this though, we must wrestle with the mechanics of Christ’s substitutionary atonement. We must see that He earned favour with God through obedience and that God’s disfavour (wrath) fell upon Him as he stood in our place before God’s bar.

altar; it is a burnt offering, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the Lord. Leviticus 6:29-30: ‘Every male among the priests may eat of it; it is most holy. ‘But no sin offering of which any of the blood is brought into the tent of meeting to make atonement in the holy place shall be eaten; it shall be burned with fire.”

⁵¹ We would point out that Jesus sacrifice turns back the total curse. In short, He redeems the whole of creation from corruption. Our Arminian brethren often overlook this crucial point when they focus so much on the salvation of people. Christ redeems all that was cursed. As the covenant condemned man and saw the fields cursed and corrupted so the second Adam restores the harmony: earth to man, man to God. Peace shall reign.

⁵² Packer, J. I., *Concise Theology*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1993

⁵³ Packer, J. I., *Concise Theology*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1993.

Summary

When we weigh the Biblical teaching on this matter we see very clearly that there is indeed a positive correlation between Law and Grace. However, we must go to great lengths to understand how each works and the place each holds in the salvation of God's people.

Christianity has many mottos. Each can portray a truth and understood in its context each is plausible and right. However, if we push that motto too far we travel into error.

For example, consider the old motto, "Christians are not perfect, just forgiven". This is a truth, for now. As such it can stand. However, if this becomes a maxim for sloppy mediocre living, it is an error, a falsehood.

We could equally look at all the *solas* that came out of the Reformation. Each is true, yet only in its right context. *Sola Christus* is true, but does it mean that the Christian has no obligation to pursue righteousness? This *sola* came about precisely because Rome posited a works based salvation. This was wrong. Christ alone can save us. However, we cannot stop at this point. Redemption implies obligation, citizenship, priesthood, etc. So, in the words of Francis Schaeffer, How should we then live? In reply, we would suggest we should live worthily as a Kingdom of Priests under God and in His service. We cannot rest with, 'Christ did it all for me'. Rather we must follow Paul's call to "work out your salvation with fear and trembling."

So it is in salvation with regard to *sola gratia*. As rebels, dead in trespass and sin, estranged from God, we deserved nothing but judgement and wrath. That God moved to love His enemies (Romans 5:8) is nothing but grace and we should extol God with our every breath for this gracious benevolence. However, as stated, this alone did not save. The demands of covenant and law had to be met. God's grace again came to the fore in that He provided Jesus Christ to be a substitute. All this is grace, and may God be praised eternally. However, this does not mitigate that Jesus Christ had to die as the law demanded. God did not simply excuse. Jesus died according to the Scriptures, the Just for the unjust, and the Sinless for the sinner (1 Peter 3:18).

It is for this reason that the Scriptures declare that we have been "bought with a price". Salvation was an exercise that cost and cost dearly. Yes, it was

freely given of God's grace, but it was an extremely expensive gift!

Grace and law do not oppose each other in God's salvation. The demands of Law and Covenant are perfectly met. The penalty and curse are fully applied. The cup of God's wrath is drained to its dregs—"And when the sixth hour had come, darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Mark 15:33-34). The grace, as far as God's people are concerned, is that Jesus drank that cup in their stead.

This brings us to consider a point not yet touched upon, the fate of the unrepentant. If the theory that grace is all conquering and mitigates against all sin stands, then hell should be an empty place. Universalism rules and all humanity ends up spending an eternity with God through Jesus sacrifice.

This however is not the case. Jesus spoke very specifically about hell and those who would be cast into its fires. Those who have no substitution in Jesus Christ, no righteous One to pay the Law's demand, must pay this penalty themselves—a penalty they are incapable of paying. This is the second death.

The point here is very, very simple. If grace rules over law, then hell should not exist, at least under the "New" dispensation. All should be forgiven. All should be set free from bondage. This however is not the case. The demands of Covenant and Law have not vanished. They stand. Every man born in Adam's likeness must wrestle with this question—How will I pay the demands of Law and Covenant?

Without the Substitute there simply is no grace! The grace of God in salvation exists only in the offering of the substitute. God's grace is that He offered Jesus Christ to bear the sins of His people. Grace does not assuage nor diminish the requirements of the Law. It offers a substitute. Hence it is simply erroneous to look for some diminution of the Law's claim because of God's grace. The doctrines of Hell and Eternal Punishment in no way support such an understanding.

7. CASE STUDY:

A Christian critique of the New South Wales mandatory reporting laws. Question: Do the MR laws

coerce and coopt the Church of Christ into compromising its essential Christian values and core Christian commitments namely; a. supreme and undivided loyalty to Christ as Lord of all and His gospel of saving grace and restoring love for all men and societies; b. consequential confidentiality, trust, fiducial responsibility and fidelity; c. grace over but not necessarily against justice; d. truth over power; e. reconciliation over alienation and litigation; f. redemptive and restorative justice over retribution and deterrence; g. needs of deserts; h. love over vengeance and victimisation; i. persons over impersonal bureaucracies and institutions; j. personal and communal responsibility over command and control power structures and legislative tyranny; k. Christ OVER all, IN all, and THOUGH ALL.

Being the last question and having dealt with some aspects raised here in earlier answers, we will deal with this in as brief a manner as possible.

Mandatory Reporting does raise some interesting questions however, *we would reject the premise that it “coopts” or “compromises” the Church* in regard to its core values or mission.

The Church is, if you will, a legal entity. She is founded upon and operates according to God’s Law and is, in this respect, God’s true society.⁵⁴ As such, the Church has a twofold task in this area. First, She must model a true society in a fallen world. Second, She must permeate and eradicate the false societies that exist in God’s created order. The task is simple: To bring all spheres of sovereignty under the Lordship of Jesus Christ to the glory of the Father.⁵⁵

The question of Church and magistrate has been wrestled with and settled in Church history. In previous issues of *Storming Fortresses*⁵⁶ we have canvassed this issue and shown how the orthodox rejected the unorthodox in their belief that the

⁵⁴ A thesis for another time would be the exploration of the intrinsic link between law and society, particularly the link between the veracity of the code and the success of the society. Empirically, all societies have law codes. Some are simple, some complex. Some are moral and ethical, others are superficial and external. Is there a link to be made?

⁵⁵ Answer to question 26 of the WLC reads: *Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, (Acts 15:14–16) in ruling, (Isa. 32:22) and defending us, (Isa. 32:1–2) and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies. (1 Cor. 15:25, Ps. 110)*

⁵⁶ Originally published in the FACS REPORT under title Of Evangelicals and Antinomianism, available at <http://reformationministries.com.au/oldfacs/FACSEvangelAntinomiansFeb00.pdf> See especially page 6 following on the radicals associated with the Reformation.

magistrate was an unholy office to be shunned by Christians.

For example, the Westminster Confession states:

God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, **hath ordained civil magistrates** to be under Him, over the people, for His own glory, and the public good: and, to this end, hath armed them with the power of the sword, for the defense and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evil doers. 2. It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate, when called thereunto: in the managing whereof, as they ought especially to maintain piety, justice, and peace, according to the wholesome laws of each commonwealth; so, for that end, they may lawfully, now under the new testament, wage war, upon just and necessary occasion.⁵⁷

The Belgic Confession takes a similar stance, stating:

“We believe that because of the depravity of the human race our good God has ordained kings, princes, and civil officers. He wants the world to be governed by laws and policies so that human lawlessness may be restrained and that everything may be conducted in good order among human beings. For that purpose He has placed the sword in the hands of the government, to punish evil people and to protect the good. And being called in this manner to contribute to the advancement of a society that is pleasing to God....⁵⁸

Of equal importance both Confessions makes these statements — **WC**: *Infidelity, or difference in religion, doth not make void the magistrates’ just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to them: **from which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted.***

BC: *Moreover everyone, **regardless of status, condition, or rank, must be subject to the government** ... and obey them in all things that are not in conflict with God’s Word.*

So our starting point is this: The magistrate is a just and lawful office appointed by God and to be respected by the Church and the Christian. In this there is absolutely no compromise between

⁵⁷ Westminster Confession of Faith 23:1-2

⁵⁸ Belgic Confession Article 36

Christian duty and a “supreme and undivided loyalty to Christ as Lord of all.” In fact, a right understanding of this relationship reinforces Christ’s claim to Lordship.

The real issue that brings about the *divergent view* is to be found in the second part of point a.: “His gospel of saving grace and restoring love for all men and societies.”

We believe that this statement is one that is theologically false. The current author does not find any Scriptural warrant for a statement that suggests that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is one of complete love *that restores all men and societies*. By introducing this standard, the author of the questions has injected a false standard which then complicates and confuses this topic. This then runs through the remainder of the categories raising conflicts that do not exist and introducing aspects that are largely irrelevant.

Christ’s Gospel is **not** one of saving grace and restoring love **for all men** and societies. We have shown this already in various ways, but particularly by highlighting how grace specifically works in salvation. At this point we shall add but a little more:

❖ God hath appointed a day, wherein He will judge the world, in righteousness, by Jesus Christ, ... **The end of God’s appointing this day is for the manifestation of the glory of His mercy, in the eternal salvation of the elect; and of His justice, in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient.** For then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fullness of joy and refreshing, which shall come from the presence of the Lord: *but the wicked, who know not God, and obey not the Gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.*⁵⁹

❖ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel about on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him *twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.*”

❖ 2 Peter 2:4-9: *For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into*

hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly thereafter; ...then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment.”

❖ Ephesians 1:3-6: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ... just as **He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love **He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself**, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.”

❖ 2 Timothy 1:8-9: “Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with *me* in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, *who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity.*”

❖ 2 Thessalonians 2:13: “But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because *God has chosen you* from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.”

❖ John 15:18-27: “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before *it hated* you. “If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, *but I chose you out of the world*, therefore the world hates you... “But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me. “If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. “He who hates Me hates My Father also. “If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well. “But *they have done this* in order that the word may be fulfilled that is written

⁵⁹ Westminster Confession 33:1-2.

in their Law, 'THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE.' "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is* the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me, and you *will* bear witness also, because you have been with Me from the beginning."

❖ Isaiah 66:22-24: "For just as the new heavens and the new earth which I make will endure before Me," declares the Lord, "So your offspring and your name will endure. "And it shall be from new moon to new moon and from sabbath to sabbath, All mankind will come to bow down before Me," says the Lord. "*Then they shall go forth and look on the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched; and they shall be an abhorrence to all mankind.*"

❖ John 8:42-44: "If God were your Father, you would love Me; for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. "Why do you not understand what I am saying? *It is because you cannot hear My word. You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies.*

The point to be made here is very simple. The Scriptures do not contain a universal declaration of salvation to all men and societies. Right from the very beginning of Scripture two lines are viewed in contradistinction. This is most clearly seen in the narrative concerning Cain and Abel. One is declared righteous (Genesis 4:4). The other is condemned—judged by God Himself—for His rebellion and lack of obedience (Genesis 4:11-13).

More evidence can be adduced for this by taking a step backward into the garden and witnessing the covenant between God and Adam. The very fact that Yahweh laid down a covenant, demanded obedience, and threatened any contravention of the covenant with punishment leaves this issue beyond doubt—God will only show favour to those who are in a positive relationship with Him.

Let us now deal with the issue of Mandatory Reporting. In principle we see no conflict here with

Christian duty or the mission of the Church. Earlier we spoke to category (f) when we dealt with retribution and deterrence. At that point we quoted from Deuteronomy 13:6-11 which states:

"If your brother, your mother's son, or your son or daughter, or the wife you cherish, or your friend who is as your own soul, entice you secretly, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods' (whom neither you nor your fathers have known, of the gods of the peoples who are around you, near you or far from you, from one end of the earth to the other end), you shall not yield to him or listen to him; and your eye shall not pity him, nor shall you spare or conceal him. "But you shall surely kill him; your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. "So you shall stone him to death because he has sought to seduce you from the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. "Then all Israel will hear and be afraid, and will never again do such a wicked thing among you."

Note here that the one enticed to false worship is not to "spare or conceal" the heretic. Equally, the fact that the congregation is to rise up against this person clearly indicates that they had been informed or are to be informed of the transgression.

This would seem to be a clear case of mandatory reporting.

So as not to stand in isolation, let us look at two other texts:

A.1 Timothy 5:20: "Those who continue in sin, *rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also may be fearful of sinning.*"

B. Matthew 18:15-17: "And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. "But if he does not listen *to you*, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. "And if he refuses to listen to them, **tell it to the church**; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer."

Again, both these texts hold an element wherein it is appropriate to report sin on a wider scale. Granted, both are in an ecclesiastical setting, but both bear out the principle that at a certain point *those in authority and who have rightful governance of that sphere* are to be informed.

To this author, the issue of Mandatory Reporting is really a non-issue as any Christian should have a moral sense of duty which forbids them to be complicit in the illegal and unrighteous. The consequence of such an attitude is that illegal and contrary actions would be reported according to Biblical principle.

Such is neither wrong nor compromise, but being a good citizen.

For us there are three major issues that come to the surface here.

First, given the *in principle* correctness of mandatory reporting as ethical and correct, we must ask, why governments of today need to legislate such things? It seems the true evil is the design of government to enslave people through legislation rather than educating them to have right behaviour through right morals and a pure conscience.

It is at this point that we see the need for Christ's Lordship. As we noted earlier, Humanistic governments will turn law into a weapon to be wielded against their opponents. They will manipulate and coerce to see their own agendas completed.

Herein lays the deception. The Humanistic Statists will not educate people to have (Biblical) morals. They will not use the compulsory education system to equip with ethics that elevate and enhance society so that people will self-govern to righteousness. No, they do the exact opposite. They do this to create a mob rule that can be manipulated when and where necessary. However, this mob is fickle, so laws need to increase so that the control is complete. Then the people are invited to participate in the policing of these laws by "dobbing" in wrong doers. Thus completing the circle.

This type of reporting should be queried and opposed because its basis is not a concern for justice but a means to enslave the community, a means to divide and conquer by sowing discord amongst the people.

The Prophet says:

"Woe is me! For I am Like the fruit pickers and the grape gatherers. There is not a cluster of grapes to eat, Or a first-ripe fig which I crave. The godly person has perished from the land, And there is no upright person among men. All

*of them lie in wait for bloodshed; Each of them hunts the other with a net. Concerning evil, both hands do it well. The prince asks, also the judge, for a bribe, And a great man speaks the desire of his soul; So they weave it together. The best of them is like a briar, The most upright like a thorn hedge. The day when you post a watchman, Your punishment will come. Then their confusion will occur. Do not trust in a neighbor; Do not have confidence in a friend. From her who lies in your bosom Guard your lips. For son treats father contemptuously, Daughter rises up against her mother, Daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; A man's enemies are the men of his own household."*⁶⁰ (Micah 7:1-6)

This is the tyranny of which we must be aware. Not of the Biblical command: "Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead **even expose them.**" (Ephesians 5:11)

Second, a great concern should be expressed regarding the *co-opting and compromise of the Church*. Whilst we disagree with the supposition of the question in regard to Mandatory Reporting, we do believe the church has been lead astray from fundamental aspects of her calling.

We would mention two recent issues which highlight this:

1) There is a debate at present, which has existed for a number of years, concerning denominations incorporating. The primary argument in favour of this is that it allows the denomination to own land. The downside is that the State is invited to rule in the denominations affairs. As we have seen, there is a just place for the magistrate to uphold God's Law, but to invite modern humanistic governments into the Church's affairs can only have disastrous consequences.

2.) Some months ago we read an article published in a popular Christian magazine. The article dealt with life and its devaluation in our society. It raised excellent points. In the article reference was made to political parties and certain political decisions. In the editorial introduction, reference was made to these views and the readers were asked to judge for themselves. Then, much to our bewilderment, there was a warning notice. Yes,

⁶⁰ Mark 13:9: "And brother will deliver brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death."

a warning notice!—raising the alarm that some may be offended by a “pastor” making political comment. Alas, how the mighty have fallen! Is it not the prophetic role of the minister to speak out? Is he not to give the “whole counsel of God” applied faithfully to every area of life?

We wonder why the Church is going nowhere when its prophets are gagged because certain subjects are considered taboo and the God-hating State is invited into the Church to be arbiter and judge!!

Mandatory Reporting is not the root issue, not by any means. The whole sad situation has come about because the prophets who are to speak out and declare “Thus says the Lord!” have been silenced or have deliberately decided to keep their heads down and not rock the ecclesiastical boat. If God’s word is not proclaimed with authority, then there is no voice to be heard and no voice worth hearing. In such circumstances do not be surprised that evil abounds and that unholy schemes are propounded.⁶¹

Third, the question which naturally arises is, ‘When should we report incidents to authorities?’ We admit that it is not a question easily answered, but answered it can and should be.

Ecclesiastical Realm: When it comes to dealing with persons within the Church we have some very clear guidance. Luke 17:3-4 gives one example: “If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. “And if he sins against you

⁶¹ Here is the problem of our day. We do not have prophetic preachers anymore. Preaching has gone through a dramatic shift which has debilitated the Church. First, in many denominations preaching is no longer considered to be a primary function. Music and form have taken over from preaching. Second, where preaching is seemingly valued it is often faulty and this for two reasons: a) as stated, the preacher does not want to be unpopular so he becomes a political animal who skirts issues, treads carefully, and generally limits forceful pronouncements; and b) there is a complete misunderstanding of the preaching role. Let me illustrate with this story. I once asked a minister what he was going to preach on the following day. His retort was, “I am going to stand in the pulpit and talk about God for twenty minutes.” Now this was partly in jest, but there was also a very serious side to this. I would also add that I have heard similar comments. Now, what is wrong with the above? Substantially, the error is that he, as with most ministers today, was going to talk / speak *ABOUT* God, he was not going to speak *FROM* God. This may seem like hair-splitting to some, but there is a real difference. When the preacher speaks from God he speaks on God’s authority and fulfils the ambassadorial and prophetic roles to which he was commissioned. When he speaks about God, he is little more than a storyteller. To put it bluntly, we have too many storytellers occupying pulpits today. Conversely, we have too few ambassadors who are convinced that when they speak they speak from God and with the very voice of Christ.

seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ forgive him.”

Two things are to be noted in this text: First, the obligation of the wronged *to forgive*; Second, the obligation of the perpetrator of the wrong *to repent*.

Much is spoken of concerning forgiveness today, but we do not receive the balance concerning genuine repentance. Now this is not an isolated text thrown in to support our singular argument. Consider Matthew 18 and the text on Church discipline. The very same is implied. The wronged are to go to their brother. The situation only escalates when repentance is not forth coming. The witnesses are brought to verify this fact. Then the matter is taken to the Church.

Paul also addresses a similar issue in 2 Thessalonians 3:6,14-15, saying, “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you **keep aloof from every brother who leads an unruly life** and not according to the tradition which you received from us.... And if anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that man and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame. **And yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.**”

The very basic principle taught in these passages is that there is a standard that must be maintained. Variance invites rebuke and obliges to repentance. In our day, we make forgiveness the standard, but we pass over the concepts of rebuke and repentance.

Consider further the very well known text of 2 Timothy 3:16-17 that most can quote from memory: “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, **for reproof, for correction**, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work”

We have oft referred to this text as it is used for the singular purpose of supporting the doctrine of Biblical Inspiration. Yet it is much richer. The Bible is breathed out by God so that His people may be “adequate” and “equipped”. These qualities come through “training in righteousness”. Yes, this training requires, “reproof” and “correction”.⁶²

⁶² 2 Timothy 4:1-2 adds further weight to this point: “I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; **be ready in season and out**

Pulling these threads together, we see clearly that each Christian has a responsibility to be His brother's keeper. Equally, the Christian has real role to play in maintaining the purity of the Church. We, as the first cab off the rank, need to be prepared to approach our erring brethren and point out their failing—and this always with an attitude aimed at restoration. Equally, we need to be willing to be approached if we have erred. Only once we have hit the proverbial “brick wall” need the situation be escalated to higher authorities.

The principle we would like to espouse is that of sphere sovereignty. The modern concept is to “dob” someone in to a higher authority, but this is un-Biblical. Scripture would posit that our responsibility is to address our grievance to the person concerned. This is borne out by Mathew 5:23-24: “If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.”

Here, then, we simply suggest that recourse be made to the person who has wronged you or whom you believe has wronged you. To bypass this crucial step is to invite a great deal of danger.

Wisdom, of course, must be used. There may be situations where such appeals need to be in the presence of others to maintain integrity and the like. In such situations one should only recruit the reliable and trustworthy. More could be said, but it would go beyond the purview of this answer.

The World: When it comes to dealing with the situation of reporting to the magistrate we need to invoke slightly different principles. The idea of making an approach to the one who has wronged you is still sound, however, we need to remember that we are dealing with the unregenerate.⁶³ In the ecclesiastical realm there are reasonable grounds to expect an amicable reception and or response. If things get a little heated, harsh words are about the worst one will receive. When dealing with the world, this is far from the case. Hence prudence is needed. If you were to witness a heinous crime, trying to confront the person on your own is

of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.”

⁶³ We have kept these areas separate for ease. There may well be times when Christians are reported to the magistrate and the Church deals with the unregenerate.

probably the unwise move. We need only think here of acts of road rage and the like where people have been killed and injured.

In dealing with reporting in the world we need to weigh each situation as to the ethical importance and best response. What we mean by this is that witnessing a murder, rape, or bashing would rank high as an ethical violation. The situation needs to be reported and reported to those who are readily equipped to deal with such situations. In the case of the rape and bashing, one may render needed assistance to the victims after or whilst reporting the incident. If we witness the commission of a crime we need to intervene. As Christians we do not have the option to overlook acts of great sin and thereby become complicit in them.

If, on the other hand, we witnessed a child stealing a lolly, ringing the police may be an option, but this is a situation where a word of rebuke may be an act that turns the child from a wayward path. To turn it into an official offence may not help the child at that particular point.⁶⁴

The difficulty in these circumstances, and the reason that this topic is not simple, is that each human will respond differently. One child may be fulfilling a dare. Stupid thing, but is a brush with the law going to change things. Probably not. The child, we will say, is on the right track, but has succumbed to youthful exuberance and made a bad choice. On the other hand, there is the child that comes from the wrong side of the tracks, who has no respect, and may even be taught that thievery is acceptable. To this child the words of an adult would be discounted and may even be met with a few choice adjectives.

Summary: We do not believe that there is any Biblical warrant for being critical of the concept of Mandatory Reporting. Our brief excursion through Scripture has lead us to texts that not only decry the covering of sin, but also require that it be exposed.

This reporting should always be done for the Glory of God and from a desire that His ways be exalted. For this reason the modern concept does raise some disquiet. The Statist slavery is a genuine concern. So is the implicit idea that the authorities must be notified as the first port of call. This is dangerous. Human responsibility is such that a person should address grievances to the individual involved first.

⁶⁴ Please remember that this advice is general in nature. I am in no way discounting the Biblical requirements for restitution and the like. To probe all those elements would be a thesis in itself.

There have already been significant cases where children have been taken from parents on the basis of anonymous or false accusations. In such cases the parents are presumed guilty, the children are taken, and then the investigation begins. This is not right.

Here we have a classic case of Humanism destroying an otherwise good and righteous principle. Our advice is to embrace the exposure of evil, but in a righteous way.

Our counsel here, once again, is to remember the concept of sphere sovereignty, a principle that holds true for all instances. Each sphere is rightly governed by a particular authority. For example, a complaint concerning an errant child should first be addressed to its parents. Every chance for resolution should be given and taken at this level. To take the matter to a higher authority is to escalate the issue in an unnecessary manner. Such an action could see a much greater harm perpetrated, including the sidelining and overruling of parental authority where this is by no means warranted.

Listed Categories

Last of all let us put a quick commentary on the categories listed in the question:

A. Comment passed above.

B. Consequential confidentiality, trust, fiducial responsibility and fidelity. This complicated terminology really points to the basic principle that Christians should display toward each other. These properties are requisite to ensure a genuine interaction. The only comment is in regard to confidentiality. Romanism has made much of the keeping of secrets especially when information has been divulged in the confessional. We do not believe that such an attitude is Biblical. No representative of God should cover up a sin or something which they know God hates and then pretend that keeping silent is the greater good.

C. Grace over but not necessarily against justice. We believe that this statement is false as it stands. Justice is always primary, and justice does not exclude grace. Grace can never be the primary concept, especially in the modern understanding, as it will always militate against justice. Numbers 35:30-31: ‘If anyone kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death at the evidence of witnesses, but no person shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness. **Moreover, you shall not take**

ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death. Exodus 21:28-30: ‘And if an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox shall surely be stoned and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall go unpunished. ‘If, however, an ox was previously in the habit of goring, and its owner has been warned, yet he does not confine it, and it kills a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned and its owner also shall be put to death. **‘If a ransom is demanded of him, then he shall give for the redemption of his life whatever is demanded of him.’**”

These texts place beyond doubt that justice must always hold the place of prime importance. The first text categorically states that no ransom is possible for the murderer. Hence, we cannot in our day roam about demanding that murderers should be freed on the basis of or under the guise of “grace”. God demands that murderers be put to death. The second text highlights that grace may intervene, but only to mitigate the penalty. In the second text, the owner of the ox is open to the death penalty because his inaction has caused the death of an innocent party. However, room is left for the aggrieved to place a substitute demand upon him for the ransom of his life. What we must note here is that the guilty party must still pay. Justice must be done.

This case law does not posit that grace intervening means that there is no justice and no penalty. No, it declares that justice must be done whilst allowing the injured party to set a ransom instead of the specified penalty. Again, not well please, that the injured party does not have to take up this offer. In other words, the injured party is under no obligation to sue for other terms.

D. Truth over Power: Always. We have nothing without truth. Power founded upon itself and devoid of truth will fail.

E. Reconciliation over Alienation and Litigation: Complicated categories. Reconciliation is not always possible nor is it always to be sought. We will go out on a limb here - (time does not permit a full study) – but we would hazard a guess that when the Bible talks of reconciliation it does so in the context of man to God and Christian to Christian. We struggle to think of a text that would say *we must be reconciled to evil*. Yes, we are told to love our enemies; to pray for those who persecute, but we are not commanded to be reconciled to such—for what fellowship does light have with darkness!

Consequently, alienation becomes a legitimate state. Even in terms of Church discipline alienation is used. Paul clearly says that we should have nothing to do with wayward brethren (2 Thessalonians 3 quoted earlier). Paul equally tells Church authorities to hand the rebellious sinner over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that his spirit may be saved (1 Corinthians 5:5). Paul then reiterates the fact that he had told these Corinthians not to associate with “immoral” people, especially immoral Christians. He then adds a very terse, “to not even eat with such!”

Sin deserves alienation. Man sinned. He was cast from God’s presence, cast out of the garden. Cain sinned. He was condemned to be a wanderer of the earth. He was cast out. Jesus tells us that Satan is cast out.

Righteous judgement upon sin will often lead to alienation.

As to litigation, this is a modern minefield. Basic principles to be observed: 1. Christians should not go to court against each other. 2. One must not be drawn into modern litigious “get rich quick” scheme with all its attendant errors. 3. Litigation must be for justice.

This said, Christians must always be prepared to be reconciled when wronged or wronging others. However, this must always be based upon true repentance.

F. Canvassed previously.

G. Needs over Deserts: This category is largely a false one. It is often brought to the fore to mitigate human responsibility. If a man murders someone, what is his greatest need? There may have been a series of events where intervention may have averted the consequent murder. However, none of these events makes this person into a murderer. It comes down to one point in time and to a decision made by this person. To place blame anywhere else is to play the modern psychological game of “victimisation”.

Biblically there is no legitimate justification for murder. If there is a legitimate reason, it is not murder. It is that simple.

Equally, why does the perpetrator take centre stage? What of the victim? What is there greatest need?

What of God? What is His greatest desire at this point?

In this category we can be lead astray by every type of scenario. What about the drug addict? What of the abused child? What of the adult that was sexually abused as a child? All have one answer. A wrong action in the past does not justify a wrong action in the present.

The drug addict made a bad choice. That does not excuse his stealing to support a habit. He has not been wronged; he has inflicted the situation upon himself. The abused child was wronged, but that does not justify a life of vandalism. The sexually abused person has been betrayed, but that betrayal does not justify a lifetime of sexual promiscuity, viewing life through the bottom of a bottle, or existing on prescription drugs because of depression. Last, none of these positions can justify the perception that they are a victim and therefore helpless and hopeless—particularly if they are professing Christians.

Now we do not want to sound unsympathetic or unconcerned. However, the modern approach does nothing to resolve such issues because it passes over true justice. Biblical justice is what will give peace to the wronged. True peace will only be given to genuine victims when true justice abounds. When the perpetrators of crime are dealt with, then the victims can dwell at peace. Only a Biblical society will help deter violence, drug abuse, and a whole raft of evils.

H. Love over Vengeance and Victimisation: Love is a key attitude of the Christian life and should be present in all dealings. However, we must qualify this love and more importantly its object. As noted, we are to love our enemies, yet we are commanded to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. In this, our love for God must prevail over all other loves. Therefore, our love for man, manifest as a positive desire to seek their welfare, must always be subordinate to our love for God and this all the more when justice is in sight.

This then leads to speak of vengeance. To this author there has been, for far too long, confusion in Christian circles between vengeance and justice. The Scripture declares that it is God’s right and prerogative to take vengeance. Importantly, God

assures His people that He will avenge their blood.⁶⁵ Romans 12:17-21 equally reminds Christians that room must be left for the vengeance of God.

What we must understand, however, is that the seeking of justice is nowhere excluded in these texts. Paul states that the Christian must not repay evil for evil. In short, if the Christian is wronged then he needs to seek appropriate justice. If this is not available or possible then he needs to trust such matters to a Sovereign God who has promised to stand for the cause of His people.

To want satisfaction because you have been wronged is not revenge, it is justice. Equally, to seek justice is not to “play” the victim, it is *to be a victim* and therefore to be a person entitled to justice. *The incongruous aspect of arguments against law and justice, supposedly on a Biblical basis, is that the Bible is full of law and justice. It is hard to read a page and not have these concepts before you.*

I. Persons over impersonal Bureaucracies and Institutions: This is a both/and situation. Not an either / or. This is the one and the many.

J. Personal and Communal responsibility over Command and Control power structures and Legislative tyranny: Tyranny in any form is wrong. Lawmaking is not wrong. Command is not wrong. Personal and Communal responsibility are good and correct. In our day, however, the socialist mentality has taken over. When people are confronted with an issue their immediate response is to turn to the government for a solution. In doing this, they hand over control and the slide to tyranny hastens.

As we have seen, government is a correct institution; as is the Church. Both, however, can be corrupted. In this state both become tyrannical. When God given freedom is subdued and outlawed it is a sure sign tyranny lurks in the shadows. To avoid such an outcome, *persons and communities*

⁶⁵ Revelation 6:9-12: “And when He broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, wilt Thou refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until *the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, should be completed also.*”

must take more responsibility for their own welfare and survival.

To this end we must recapture the concept of sphere sovereignty as it pertains to all social structures. Precedence has to be given here to the familial structure and the right of a father to govern his household according to God’s Law. This is the crucial area of the battle at present. Tyranny reigns, in part, because fathers, on the whole, have abdicated this responsibility. Others have been fearful of “Big Brother” and have therefore been reluctant to exercise familial government as they should.

The story unfolds something like this. Parental rights have been eroded and sabotaged by philosophies predominantly propounded by the compulsory, State-run, education system. Parents, unaware and unprepared for this onslaught, have struggled to understand the situation. They in turn have turned to this system for help and in so doing have handed responsibility back to the State. Parents believed the lie that assured them that the State and its trained teachers were better equipped to instruct their children in the issues of life.

The State education system abandoned discipline and corporal punishment thereby setting the agenda for the home. It was deemed inappropriate for a child to be disciplined at school and, therefore, for a child to be disciplined anywhere or by anyone – parents especially.

This constituted a major assault on the family and its right to exist as an independent governmental unit within the broader context of society. In the forefront of this failure were the men. Decades of feminism had robbed them of the desire and ability to stand up and rule their households as they should have under God.

This was a major battle tactic. Remember the old ‘Cowboy and Indian’ movies on television. The secret, on the part of the cowboys, was to kill the chief because the Indians would not fight without a leader. In a similar way, feminism assassinated the family chief and left the clan open to attack, abuse, and even extinction.

A concomitant action was to enthrone the women as the new rulers of society’s spheres.⁶⁶ Thus the

⁶⁶ In context, education is a prime example. The State system is desperately short of male teachers. They have left in droves because they are fearful. They do not fit into the new system. Their natural authority is not wanted – authority is bad. Their

mainstays of society were feminised. This further isolated the males and left them more and more unsure of their purpose and role within society. As a consequence, leadership was effectively destroyed in all spheres, especially within the family as a governmental unit, as the feminised approach took hold.

The battle then shifted to the individual. The familial castle had been destroyed. There was no longer safety in numbers or the security and surety historically provided by the family—the male gone there was no longer a true defender. Like a route on the battlefield, survivors were open to attacks from all sides and ultimately to destruction.

This shift aims to invest total power in the hands of the few – all the while trying to convince the masses that this is the best or only way forward. The common refrain sounds like this: “If we only had total control or more extensive powers we could fix this problem.”

With the family all but gone, the individual is left to the mercy of the elements. The division has taken place, now the agenda moves to conquering. Terrorism has seen individuals agree to the signing away of rights and freedoms for a supposed peace. These actions are simply pyramidal in design. The masses sink to the wide base line. Power constantly ascends to the few at the apex.⁶⁷

As Ben Franklin correctly noted, “They who would give up an essential liberty for temporary security, deserve neither liberty or security.” One might add that the surrender of liberty leads to chains, not peace and freedom.

Communal and personal responsibility will only succeed when the family unit is once again restored to its God-given position. It is in the family that the

sexuality is not wanted and in the modern climate only leaves the male open to unjust claims of sexual abuse and impropriety. So, compulsory education under the State’s control, has done much to emasculate our society. The nett result is that boys rarely become men. Look at how the whole “metrosexual” fashion fad had captured a generation. Why did it take off? Because boys did not want to be men. Boys did not know how to be men. Everything that was “manly” was portrayed as draconian and barbaric. From this it is only a short step to homosexuality.

⁶⁷ One should draw a direct parallel between this action and the push to eradicate local councils or at the very least downgrade their status to that of local bureaucrats doing the bidding of the State masters. One might even include, here, the push by the Howard government to take control of Australia’s Murray-Darling Basin.

individual learns to live communally. It is in the family that the individual learns and understands the importance of the community. Equally, it is the family that will treasure the individual and will seek their welfare at every turn.

The undoing of tyranny will naturally occur when the family functions as it should in accord with the rules, roles, powers, and responsibilities given by God.

K. Christ Over all, In all, and Through all: Amen. So let it be! One would suggest that this should have been the starting point for these questions, not the conclusion. This paradigm would certainly help fix a number of these issues in their respective places and help eliminate ambiguities and other confusing aspects.

We would simply add that the Christ of which we speak is the One and only Son of God revealed in Scripture and the Revealer of God the Father. This Christ dwelt with God in eternity and became flesh in the fullness of time. He is therefore at one with the Godhead and is in solitary agreement with that same Godhead. He is not a new god with a new message that starts with Matthew and ends with John. His words are not different to those as revealed by the Holy Spirit in the rest of Scripture. In fact, He is the One who sent the Spirit that we may be lead into all truth. He went that the Comforter may come.

When this Christ is exalted over all, the unity and purpose of the Scripture will be seen and experienced. This Christ and this Christ alone must rule.

My friends, do not race into the desert to look for false christs! The christ who is supposedly all about grace and love, but knows nothing of Justice and judgement—this is not **The Christ!** The christ who only has a few words in the gospels – words which differ from Paul or Moses – this is not **The Christ!** A christ that is not at One with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit—this is not **The Christ!**

The Scriptures testify: “*There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.*” Equally, there is but one Christ who is in complete harmony with the Scriptures and all that is revealed for our benefit. This is The Christ! Follow Him! Submit to His teaching! Implement His rule!