

About ten years ago I wrote in an article *“Is there still sufficient family spirit that young sons look up to their fathers and hang on every word they say?”*

What an indictment on our society today when I estimated of my year ten students about 60% did not have their biological father living at home with them. So in that respect I was lucky.

If anything though my own father underestimated the faith I placed in him. He was never known for his humour but the occasional flash of dry wit caused me years of perplexity.

Once on a family outing when I was eight we were delayed yet again by electricity board roadworks. I asked what they were doing with the cables. “Well they bury them in winter and then dig them up again in the spring again” he replied.

I accepted this at face value. Over the years I reflected that this was a terrible waste of resources or speculated that the conductivity of cable varied with the seasons needing such action. I must have been about halfway through university before the penny dropped.

On another occasion I asked him if committing suicide was a crime (it was). “So if you’re dead, what’s the punishment?”

He was stumped for a moment but then brightened up. “Well you might fail and then you could be punished”.

I asked what the punishments were. “Well”, he said “If you tried to commit suicide to avoid

paying your debts, they’d probably fine you heavily”.

This wisdom I filed away, later realising that such inhuman treatment might lead to further suicides. I resolved to write to the Lord Chancellor to urge a repeal of the legislation but fortunately never got round to it.

Though the most intelligent man I ever knew, just occasionally he was technically wrong. Once when sitting in our new (and first) car I said

“Dad if there was a tiny miniature helicopter flying between my leg why doesn’t it smash against the back of the car because we’re travelling forward”.

He thought for a moment and then said, “Because the air in the car is being carried along with the helicopter.” This put me back about fifteen years. (When Richard Feynman asked his father virtually the same question when pulling his toy brick truck he got the correct answer but I’ve put it all behind me now)

I’m currently reading the new book by Richard Dawkins “The God “. (I checked this out with a fellow Christian first). Though there are a couple of thought-provoking viewpoints, overall it doesn’t shake my faith in my heavenly Father either who when he speaks it’s the absolute truth – make no mistake.

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