

CHAPTER SIX

WISE PEOPLE HAVE THE LOVE OF THE TRUTH. THEREFORE THEY ACCEPT WHAT GOD SAYS AND REJECT THE WORLD'S IDEAS, POLITICAL CORRECTNESS AND HUMANISTIC THINKING

*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge"....
Hosea 4:6 (a) (ESV)*

*There is a way that seems right to a man,
but its end is the way to death.
Proverbs 14:12 (ESV)*

*"...and a people without understanding shall come to ruin. "
Hosea 4:14(b) (ESV)*

*But he who is noble devises noble things,
and by noble things he stands.
Isaiah 32:8 (RSV)*

*And he said to man,
'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom,
and to turn away from evil is understanding.'"
Job 28:28 (ESV)*

*Whoever is wise, let him understand these things; whoever is discerning, let him know them; for the ways of the LORD are right, and the upright walk in them, but transgressors stumble in them.
Hosea 14:9 (ESV)*

*⁴ Make me to know your ways, O LORD;
teach me your paths.
Psalm 25:4 (ESV)*

Most people choose to fit in with whatever the majority of the population thinks rather than accept what God says

Most of us get our beliefs, attitudes and opinions primarily from the media and from those around us rather than from God. But isn't it obvious that if we wanted to form an opinion about, for example, abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, the roles of men and women, homosexuality, 'gay marriage', pornography, sex outside marriage and so on, we should first of all find out *what God says* about those things? In fact, shouldn't we just find out His view on *everything* and then adopt that view for ourselves, whatever the issue may be?

Finding out what God has to say on a given issue ought, therefore, to be our starting point. It should be our finishing point too. The only exception would be those issues upon which God has not made any pronouncement. For those things it is legitimate for us to form our own views. But, even then, we should still be guided by what God has said *in general terms*, or by what He has said about *other issues or principles* which indirectly touch upon the issue we are considering.

But that is not how the vast majority of us operate, even within churches. We either make up our own minds for ourselves or we adopt the views that are expressed in the media or by people we know. So, we might hear things being said by politicians on *Question Time* or *Any Questions* and then imitate what they say. But few of us ever stop to ask ourselves what God has to say on that issue, let alone feel obliged to adopt His view as our own.

Surely, if a person is a genuine Christian then they ought to accept that the right approach is simply to *find out what God's view is and then automatically and immediately agree with Him*. Most would agree with that if the point was put to them as starkly as I have set it out above. But it is not how most of us actually operate in practice.

It is obviously foolish to be aware of what God says about a certain topic and yet still to disagree with Him and to maintain one's own opinion instead.

Many of us would say that even if God has set out His view on an issue, and even if we are aware of what He has said, we are still entitled to form our own opinions on that issue. In other words, some of us feel free to 'disagree' with God and to maintain our own personal opinion instead, even after hearing what God says. Or we might prefer the view expressed by some politician or celebrity rather than what God has said. Surely, once we stop to think about this, it becomes obvious that that approach is absurd.

But the problem is that most of us don't stop to think about it. We tend just to do what we've always done, without ever asking ourselves whether we should. In fact, many of us do not take the trouble to find out what God thinks on any given issue in the first place. It does not even occur to many of us that we should.

It would be interesting to hear anybody attempting to explain exactly how their own opinion, or that expressed by their favourite newspaper, could be more authoritative than what God says. It is the sort of thinking which cannot survive any close scrutiny. The moment you analyse it you realise that what some of us do is ridiculous.

Perhaps that is one reason why we avoid questioning ourselves about things like this. It's easier to justify maintaining our familiar habits and practices if we don't ever examine too closely what we are doing, or our basis for believing what we believe.

You need to recognise this wrong approach in yourself. Find out any issues where you and God currently disagree. Then simply abandon your own opinions and adopt His instead.

We need to recognise this foolish tendency in ourselves. Then we can start to learn a new way to think and a new way of forming beliefs and opinions. Moreover, we need to be ready to abandon any belief or opinion if we come to realise that it is contrary to what God says. That sounds simple enough, but very few of us actually do it.

In my experience, when people become Christians they tend to keep whatever social, political, or even religious, views they held before they became Christians. Few people abandon an opinion and take up another one solely on the basis that it is what God says. So, if you are willing to do this you will be in the minority and swimming against the tide, even within the churches.

Therefore, be willing to be radical and to be the odd one out. Reject political correctness and throw off its constraints. Find out what God says on every issue, whether directly or indirectly. Then get your thinking into line with His. It won't make you popular. In fact, you'll be seen as a misfit, even within many churches. Nevertheless, it is self-evidently the right approach to take

Wise people resist political correctness, whereas the wicked promote it. The simple and fools go along with it passively

I am not that old, but I have a memory of political events going back to when I was a child in the 1970s. Since that time, due to the erosion of Christianity in the West, biblical values, language and principles have substantially evaporated away. Such things are now far less evident in politics and in our institutions, workplaces, schools, hospitals and courts. Our society is now much more influenced by the principles and values of aggressive, secular, humanist philosophy than by Christianity.

We have come to call all of that bundle of values and beliefs *political correctness*. The advances made by such misguided thinking, and the ground it has captured over the past 30 - 40 years, have been staggering. If a person was transported in a time machine from the 1970s to today they would find it hard to believe how much things have changed in those years. They would be shocked beyond words by things that we now regard as commonplace.

There is nothing accidental about this package of values, principles and philosophies. It is a deliberate Satanic strategy, whereby the thinking of most of the Western world has been diverted onto another path which opposes all biblical values. Indeed, it promotes the direct opposite on every count. That is one reason why we can be so sure that there is nothing accidental about it. It is the product of an intelligent mind which has pulled all the necessary strings to coordinate the social transformation that we have witnessed taking place in just a few decades.

The essence of *political correctness* is for a small minority of the population to promote a set of beliefs, values and principles which are the opposite of what God wants. Then they exert pressure on the rest of us to accept them. It involves squeezing us into a different way of thinking by means of pressure, ridicule and intimidation.

By so doing they force the majority of the population to accept these alien ideas, or at least to remain silent about their disagreement. Only 25 years ago most people felt free to express their own opinions. Now they shrink back from doing so, for fear of who may be listening and the damaging consequences it may have for them.

For example, on the issue of so called 'gay marriage', multitudes of people privately oppose it but feel forced into saying that they support it. They feel afraid to speak against it, or even to appear neutral about it, for fear of being called '*homophobic*'. That word, in itself, is an example of the remarkable victories which have been won by our opponents in the battle over the language.

To be '*phobic*' means to have an irrational fear, not a well thought-out and soundly-based objection. So, a person who opposes homosexual activity is now labelled as '*homophobic*'. Therefore the impression is deliberately given that the person has an *irrational fear of something good*, rather than a *well-founded opposition to something bad*.

We must therefore resist being squeezed into using other people's politically correct words. Resolve always to use your own words instead. I refuse to use the word '*homophobic*' because I don't accept the very premise on which it is based. I have no *fear* of homosexuality, or of homosexuals. The critical views that I express in relation to their actions arise solely out of my biblically based opposition to the practice of homosexuality, not from any fear of it.

Likewise I try hard not to use the word '*gay*'. Instead, I prefer to say homosexual, because I am not willing to be manipulated into using words that I don't agree with and don't want to use. As the Radio Four Rabbi, *Lionel Blue*, once said, "*most homosexuals are not gay, but sad*".

The same technique is used in the debate over abortion. Those who promote abortion are well aware that it would not be good for their cause if they called themselves '*pro-abortion*'. So, they give

themselves the more attractive label, '*pro-choice*'. It is a pure euphemism, which is designed to obscure rather than reveal their position. Yet, it displays excellent tactics.

Moreover, when they refer to pro-life groups they refuse to use the label *pro-life*. Instead, they call their opponents '*anti-choice*'. They are keenly aware of the power that carefully crafted phrases have to shape and modify our thinking.

Their thinking is dishonest but, in propaganda terms, it is very effective. Of course, if we all stopped and thought carefully about the words that we and others use, then we would quickly see the absurdity and dishonesty of all of this. But that is the problem - the vast majority of us don't stop to think carefully, or to examine the words we use. We are therefore influenced by these tactics, and we unconsciously allow other people's euphemisms and propaganda to shape what we believe.

Up to a point, political correctness is imposed on us by human beings. However, the strategic thinking behind it is Satan's and it is coordinated by his demons. There is no way it could have succeeded in taking over the thinking of whole continents in such a short time if it was solely of human origin.

It is accepted unthinkingly by fools and also by the simple. Only those who are determined to get their ideas and beliefs from the Bible, rather than from the world, have enough discernment and courage to resist this straightjacket. Sadly, they are very few in number. Even so, you could still choose to be one of them.

Wise people reject relativist thinking and values

A major ingredient of political correctness is *relativism*. That means the view that nothing is inherently right or wrong and that there are no absolutes. Instead, it is assumed that "*all things are relative*" and that everything depends on your personal perspective. Such thinking appeals to those who are cowardly, intellectually lazy and even dishonest.

At first sight it sounds a reasonable approach, even a supposedly *tolerant* one. That is another of their buzzwords (see below). However, relativism is the opposite of how God thinks. He does not operate on the basis of what is *expedient*, *convenient* or *fashionable*. He thinks in terms of what is *right* or *wrong*. And He takes an *absolute* stance about that question every time.

If a thing is true, then it is true and, if it is false, then it is false. That is always the case, regardless of who you are or where you live. So, if God says homosexual activity is wrong, which He does, then it *is* wrong. Moreover, it is wrong for *everybody*. It does not become right for someone else just because they believe it to be right.

Likewise, if Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism are false religions, which they are, then they are false for *all* of us. They can't be false to you, but true for someone else. Neither can we say that any or all of them can be true at the same time as saying that Christianity is true. They are all contradictory sets of beliefs. We therefore have to choose one or other (or none) of them. What we cannot validly do is to simultaneously believe more than one of them, let alone all of them.

Surely that is undeniably obvious to any honest and reasonable person? Yet it is not obvious to millions of confused, liberal-minded people today who have been taught to think in *relativist* terms. To them a diverse package of mutually exclusive and contradictory ideas can all be accepted at the same time. Such thinking is self-evidently foolish. One hundred years ago, or even 50 years ago, the vast majority of people, even fools, would have conceded that, but not now.

There has been such a dramatic dumbing-down of people's thinking, at least in the West, that it is now commonplace to believe two or more contradictory ideas all at the same time. That *thinking* may

seem commendable to our own dumbed-down generation, but it was not how our parents or grandparents thought. More to the point, it must never be the way that a Christian thinks. At any rate, no wise person would ever think in such an absurd way, or fail to recognise it as nonsense when he hears someone else speak that way.

Wise people don't accept the modern definition of *tolerance*

The new meaning of the word '*tolerance*' is not what you would imagine it to be, and it is not what it used to be. The word has taken on tones of Orwellian double-speak, such that it now means the opposite of what it ought to. In the past, a tolerant person was someone who, while having clear beliefs of his own, and being aware of where and why he disagrees with other people's beliefs, nonetheless gives others the freedom to believe what they want, and to say what they want.

Likewise, he himself feels free to disagree openly with other people. However, he would always maintain his own courtesy, and their dignity, while doing so. That is not what tolerance now means to our politically correct and relativist generation. The new misguided definition of a *tolerant* person is one who:

- a) never tries to say that any belief he holds is *exclusively true*, i.e. the *only* truth or *the* truth
- b) never says that any other person's belief is *wrong*
- c) tolerates other people's beliefs in the sense of accepting that all of them are *also true*, alongside his own beliefs (if he has any)
- d) is intolerant of only one thing, namely any person who claims that what they believe is the exclusive truth, i.e. that it alone is true, and thus that any contrary belief is, by definition, wrong.

This absurd new definition of tolerance creates no difficulties for the majority of the population. Most people have no strong beliefs or convictions on which they would ever need to make a stand. It only presents a problem to one group, namely real Christians who believe that the Bible is true and that Jesus is the only way to salvation.

Nobody else besides a real Christian has much difficulty with this modern notion of tolerance because only Christianity (real Christianity) claims to be the only way to be saved. All other religions, plus of course false, apostate, watered-down, ecumenical forms of Christianity, are quite relaxed about other beliefs. They feel no need to insist that there is only one way to get to God. Indeed, they do not even believe that themselves, let alone insist on saying it.

Therefore the trend towards this new and perverse definition of tolerance is usually only a problem for real Christians. It creates many issues of conscience for them, but not for other people. A person from any other religion, or a liberal, wishy-washy, compromised 'churchgoer', doesn't usually mind what anybody else believes. Therefore, he would not bother to contradict anybody else anyway. He doesn't have enough faith, or feel enough conviction, to be motivated to take a stand on anything. Thus the insistence that we must all be *tolerant*, as per the distorted definition set out above, only creates a difficulty for real Christians.

For example the evangelical Christian hotel-keepers, Peter and Hazelmary Bull, ran a small guest house which was also their own home. They had a policy that they would only let married couples stay in their hotel, not unmarried couples or homosexuals. Then a couple of militant homosexuals, who had no genuine wish to stay at the hotel, but just wanted to attack Mr and Mrs Bull, tried to book a double room for themselves.

When Mr and Mrs Bull refused they then sued them, claiming that they had been *discriminated against* on the basis of their sexual orientation. The two homosexuals won their case. It was held that the Bulls had acted unlawfully, by not allowing them to stay in their home, in which they may well have engaged in homosexual activity, which would go against Mr and Mrs Bull's consciences. Their case went all the way to the Court of Appeal. Sadly, they found against Mr and Mrs Bull by a majority of 3:2. The very fact that the Court was divided in this way shows how controversial this subject is and also that there is every reason for us to continue to fight over these issues.

In the case of the late Harry Hammond, some years ago, an old man was preaching in the open air when some homosexuals began to heckle him. He had a sign in his hand which said that homosexuality is sinful and that what is needed is repentance. Some homosexuals in the crowd then physically attacked him and knocked him to the ground, injuring him.

Amazingly, when the police arrived *they arrested him, not his attackers*. Moreover they then prosecuted him, not them, on the basis that he was guilty of a so called '*hate crime*'. His attackers were not charged with any offence, even though what they had done to him was a clear assault, by any reasonable standard.

In the Hammond case the police chose not to prosecute the two homosexuals for assaulting the old man. However, if the facts had been the other way round, and two *heterosexual* people had assaulted a placard-wielding *homosexual*, it would inevitably have led to a prosecution. Moreover, it would have been classed as an aggravated assault, because sexual orientation would have been seen as the motive. However, the police and the Crown Prosecution Service were not willing to apply that thinking in reverse.

Sadly, Harry Hammond died before he could take his case onwards and appeal to the Court of Appeal. Therefore, he died with a criminal conviction to his name, as if he was a wrongdoer. I feel very sure that at the Judgment Seat of Christ he will be fully vindicated and have his name cleared. Indeed, he is likely to receive a major reward, on the basis of what Jesus Himself said in the Sermon on the Mount:

¹¹ "Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Matthew 5:11-12 (RSV)

Happily, in the recent case of John Craven, another street preacher, vindication has come a good deal earlier. Mr Craven was preaching on John 3:16 when he was stopped by two homosexual teenagers who asked him what he thought of gays. He replied that it didn't matter what *he* thought and that what mattered was what the Bible says.

He then quoted from the Bible. He did not do it publicly, via his microphone. He had switched that off and was speaking quietly, just to the two homosexuals. All he said was that homosexuality is sinful but that "*whilst God hates the sin, He loves the sinner.*" They then responded to that by kissing in front of him and by insulting him with crude and suggestive gestures.

The Greater Manchester police then arrested Mr Craven and placed him in custody. They alleged that what he had said to the two young men was "*insulting*" and that it caused "*harassment and distress*". Yet, all he had done was to politely and privately answer their question to him and to quote from the Bible.

They also denied him food, water and access to medication for his rheumatoid arthritis for almost 15 hours. There was clearly no need for any of that mistreatment, even assuming that Mr Craven had done anything wrong, which he hadn't.

The police were being uncharacteristically harsh with him. In my personal view, as a former police officer, they behaved as they did because they wanted to intimidate him, plus anyone else who might come to hear of it. I believe that their aim was to discourage other people from preaching and quoting the Bible in the street. It was probably also a flesh reaction, arising out of their own anti-Christian bias, given that the police are now a very socially liberal institution on the whole. Many officers have concluded that being politically correct is the way to get on, unlike how it was when I was a police officer from 1983-1986.

As I said, this case had a much more pleasing outcome. The Greater Manchester Police were sued in the civil courts by lawyers for Mr Craven, supported by an excellent organisation called The Christian Institute. Mr Craven was claiming wrongful arrest, false imprisonment and breach of human rights. When the case was only a few days from trial, the Police caved in and settled the claim, agreeing to pay Mr Craven £13,000 in damages and more than £50,000 in legal costs. They clearly feared that they would be soundly defeated at trial.

It was very pleasing to see the police get their ‘come-uppance’ in this case, and that they got it even more publicly than their mistreatment of Mr Craven had been. We can all take encouragement from his legal victory and be further emboldened to speak the truth, politely and lovingly, even when in public. The police may have sought to intimidate people, so as to discourage them from preaching in public. However, it has seriously backfired on them.

Some examples of politically correct, relativist ideas that have been accepted unthinkingly by most of our generation:

a) Abortion

For the last 6000 years the people of every nation in the world have agreed that abortion is wrong. It was considered obvious. Our conscience tells us that, regardless of what the law now says. We also know instinctively that to kill a child is even worse than to kill an adult. Moreover, the younger the child is, the worse the crime is. Then, in 1967 in the United Kingdom, and in 1973 in the USA, there was a reversal of what we had all known and believed since the world began. The law was changed to legalise abortion.

The new law is based on the assumption that the unborn child is not a human being, even though we can all see that it obviously is. Indeed, what else could it be? This is a classic example of how political correctness works. People choose to make themselves blind and deaf to facts which are self-evidently true, because they want to be able to feel comfortable about believing the opposite.

Thus the Western nations are now carrying out abortions on an industrial scale, killing millions of unborn babies every year. Great Britain has killed over 8,000,000 unborn children since 1967. In the United States it is close to 50,000,000. The people of ancient Judah killed their own children too by offering them as sacrifices to demon gods like Baal and Molech. However, instead of killing millions, they only killed hundreds, or at most thousands. Yet note how intensely God felt about what they did. One can only wonder therefore how strongly He must feel about what our nations are doing today:

³ and say, ‘Hear the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, “Behold I am about to bring a calamity upon this place, at which the ears of everyone that hears of it will tingle. ⁴ Because they have forsaken Me and have made this an alien place and have burned sacrifices in it to other gods, that neither they nor their forefathers nor the kings of Judah had ever known, and because they have filled this place with the blood of the innocent ⁵ and have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal, a thing which I never commanded or spoke of, nor did it ever enter My mind; ⁶ therefore, behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when this place will no longer be called Topheth or the valley of Ben-hinnom, but rather the valley of Slaughter. ⁷ I will make void the

counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place, and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies and by the hand of those who seek their life; and I will give over their carcasses as food for the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth. ⁸ I will also make this city a desolation and an object of hissing; everyone who passes by it will be astonished and hiss because of all its disasters.

Jeremiah 19:3-8 (NASB)

Note also what the Psalmist says about how God viewed the wickedness of those who killed their own children and how He responded to it with judgment:

³⁷ *They sacrificed their sons
and their daughters to false gods.*

³⁸ *They shed innocent blood,
the blood of their sons and daughters,
whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan,
and the land was desecrated by their blood.*

³⁹ *They defiled themselves by what they did;
by their deeds they prostituted themselves.*

⁴⁰ *Therefore the LORD was angry with his people
and abhorred his inheritance.*

⁴¹ *He gave them into the hands of the nations,
and their foes ruled over them.*

Psalm 106: 37-41 (NIV)

If that is how God chose to deal with the people of Jerusalem and Judah for the small numbers of children they murdered, then how much more strongly must He feel about the atrocities being carried out today, and on such a massive scale, in our hospitals and abortion clinics?

As we saw earlier, those who promote abortion have been very careful to invent new words and phrases. Their aim is to obscure the truth and prevent us from seeing how wrong abortion is. We are meant to tell ourselves that what is being done is not “*killing a child*”. It is merely “*terminating a pregnancy*”.

Also, instead of referring to a *child*, we now hear doctors and others making sure to speak of the unborn child as a *foetus*. They even go so far as to refer to it as a “*product of conception*” which is a truly Orwellian phrase.

The purpose of contriving such absurd new words is to *deliberately dehumanise the child*. They want to draw your attention, and even their own, away from what is really being done. We must therefore go out of our way to resist that and to insist on using the correct words, even if we are the only person doing so.

I remember when I was on the Research Ethics Committee of a large hospital. I was invited to join it because I was a lawyer. One of the issues that came up before us had to do with a research project on contraception. The researcher who came to present their project before the committee became uncomfortable because I used the word “*child*” to refer to an unborn baby. She didn’t like me saying that and corrected me. It really mattered to her and she really wanted me to stop saying *child*. But I refused to be told how to speak.

The word ‘*foetus*’ is one which I choose never to use. Its sinister implications matter to me. For the same reason, the implications of the word ‘*child*’ really mattered to that researcher. If not, she would not have become so agitated, or been so determined to alter my choice of words.

We also need to make sure that when we consider the issue of abortion, or any other issue, we think about it in a biblical way and use biblical words and principles. If we are not aware of any biblical words for the thing in question then we should at least express ourselves in terms of clear, honest, unambiguous words and principles. By contrast, the usual starting point for a person who supports abortion is to argue along these lines:

- a) Abortion is an issue affecting the woman's 'own body' and they allege that every woman has the right to do anything she chooses to do with her own body.
- b) Nobody has any right to interfere with that woman's right to choose, least of all male politicians.

Their argument is based upon two false premises. Firstly the woman's body is *not* her own. Indeed, it does not actually belong to her at all. In fact, *it belongs to God*, as does everything and everybody else in the entire universe. Therefore she is not free to choose to do anything she wants to do with the child's body, or even her own body, because, neither body actually belongs to her. That is how God sees it, as these verses demonstrate:

***For everyone belongs to me, the parent as well as the child—both alike belong to me.....
Ezekiel 18:4 (NIV)***

¹⁹ Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NIV)

Secondly, given that He created us and then bought us back, that means that God doubly owns us. Accordingly, He has every right to tell us what we can and cannot do, whether with our own bodies or anyone else's body. Therefore, in forbidding abortion, He is not interfering. There is nothing illegitimate about Him pronouncing on this issue, or on any other issue.

It is actually He who has all the rights. We don't have any rights at all, so far as God is concerned. See the further arguments made below concerning the wider errors of the so called 'Human Rights' agenda, because the reality is that the Bible never speaks in terms of rights, but only responsibilities.

Therefore the whole pro-abortion argument starts from the wrong place. It is also based on wrong assumptions and is conducted using wrong principles and flawed logic. As with every other issue, the starting point should not be ourselves, or our own supposed 'rights' or 'entitlements'. We should always begin with God's commands, instructions and pronouncements. That is how we can ensure that we start from the right place on abortion and on every other issue. It is also how we can make sure that our thinking remains soundly based and biblical

One feels obliged to conclude that God's judgment is bound to come upon the Western nations because of their policies on abortion. Moreover, it would seem clear that God's judgment will be more severe on us in the Christianised European nations and in the United States, Australia, Canada etc than on countries like Japan and China which have little or no Christian heritage.

Japan, China and others are doing the same wicked things as we do, but they are surely going to be held less accountable than us because they have not had the centuries of Christian teaching that we have had. Until the 19th century, the gospel was virtually unknown in Asia.

Therefore, we in the West ought to tremble at the prospect of God's coming judgment, even for our policies on abortion alone, leaving aside all the other sins we commit. Indeed, His judgment has already begun, because He will not leave it all to be dealt with on the Day of Judgment. For example, the financial crisis facing the Western nations, plus the crises over healthcare and pensions are directly related to the abortions we have carried out.

We are missing millions of people aged from zero to their mid-forties. They would now be working and paying taxes were it not for the fact that we have aborted them. Their absence is one of the primary reasons for our various social and financial problems. These problems are a kind of grim justice in themselves.

As you look through the comments made about some of the other issues discussed below, see if you can identify similar errors being made which would cause our society's thinking to become illegitimate and unbiblical

b) Opposition to discipline in schools

In 1987 the British Government allowed a free vote in the House of Commons on whether corporal punishment should be banned in schools, i.e. the use of the cane or slipper. They foolishly voted to ban it. Ever since that time there has been a drastic decline in discipline in our schools. The change was made based on misguided thinking along the lines that the '*child is at the centre*', and '*has rights*'.

They argued that all corporal punishment is automatically and inherently "*child abuse*", regardless of how or why it is done. Such thinking is the exact opposite of what the Bible says. It clearly tells us that physical punishment is appropriate, and indeed essential, if children are to be properly disciplined.

Due to choosing politically correct ideology instead of Biblical wisdom, Britain's schools have seen a collapse of discipline and respect. That is one of the main reasons why academic standards and behaviour levels have declined so dramatically. Successive governments since the 1980s have chosen to hide that decline by deliberate grade inflation. Therefore, until 2012, exam results improved by about 1% every year. That went on for over 25 years, even though real standards were actually falling steadily throughout that period.

c) Opposition to parents disciplining and smacking their own children, even within the home

Despite the obvious decline in school discipline and academic standards, the politically correct are blind to the harm that has been done by their campaign to ban corporal punishment in schools. Therefore once they had achieved that objective, they immediately set about trying to ban all smacking of children anywhere, even by their own parents within the home. However smacking is God-ordained and an essential part of bringing up children.

Because in their thinking it is the child who is at the centre, rather than God, or the parents, the politically correct wrongly conclude that even to smack one's own child is abuse, no matter how it is done. The vast majority of parents disagree with that, but feel intimidated into silence. If those who are lobbying to ban all smacking of children succeed, it will be an even bigger disaster than what has already happened in our schools.

Sadly, many liberal churches are actively involved in supporting that misguided lobbying. They even imagine themselves to be doing God's will. They are so steeped in human rights based thinking that they assume that that is how God thinks. In fact, it is the reverse of how God approaches issues.

This deception has taken such a firm hold within our churches that even many real Christians now believe that any smacking of children is inherently *child abuse*, irrespective of how or why it is done. It is not, and Christians need to take a stand on that point and speak up openly to resist the tide of humanist thinking on this issue.

In fact, there is a desperate need for *more* discipline for our children, not less, and it needs to be physical. Non-physical correction alone will never be enough to discipline a child properly,

especially a young one, aged 2-12. During those early years they need real firmness. That is not just my own subjective view. *It is what God says*, clearly, repeatedly and unmistakably. Therefore, if you disagree, you are disagreeing with God, not me, because His views are as follows:

*He who withholds his rod hates his son,
But he who loves him disciplines him diligently.
Proverbs 13:24 (RSV)*

*Discipline your son while there is hope,
And do not desire his death.
Proverbs 19:18 (RSV)*

*Train up a child in the way he should go,
Even when he is old he will not depart from it.
Proverbs 22:6 (RSV)*

*Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child;
The rod of discipline will remove it far from him.
Proverbs 22:15 (RSV)*

*The rod and reproof give wisdom,
but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.
Proverbs 29:15 (ESV)*

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), ³ so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth. ⁴ Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

Ephesians 6:1-4 (NASB)

d) Opposition to parental authority and to the very role of parents

The humanist lobby are also going further and undermining the very idea of parents being in authority at all. Many object even to the very concept of parental authority, regardless of how it is exercised. People who hold such views claim to be *pro child* and to be promoting the interests and welfare of children. In fact they are doing the opposite. That is what comes from rejecting God’s wisdom and replacing it with men’s ideas and what Paul calls *doctrines of demons*. Those are false ideas and doctrines that demons have whispered into men’s minds to lead them into error.

As a mark of the absurdity of modern thinking in this area, much of which comes from the European Union, it is being seriously proposed in Scotland that the state should appoint a ‘guardian’ for every child at birth. That legal guardian would not be one of their parents. On the contrary, the idea is that that guardian will represent the child against its parents and ‘protect’ it from its parents and from their antiquated, illiberal views. One of the main aims of these so called a ‘guardians’ would be to prevent any parent from disciplining their own child. They could commence legal proceedings to take the child into local authority care if the parents were to smack them.

The likely next step after that will be to stop parents from home-schooling their own children and from giving them their own Christian values and beliefs. Adolf Hitler was well aware of the importance of influencing the minds of young children. He therefore made home-schooling illegal in Germany because it prevented him from being able to brainwash children into accepting Nazi philosophy. He wanted to take the place of parents so that he could instil his own ideology into the minds of a generation of children. Western governments are now seeking to take the same approach that Hitler took.

At present the British government is seeking to make it compulsory for children as young as five to be shown DVDs teaching them about sex and promoting homosexuality and 'gay marriage'. They also want to make it illegal to withdraw your child from these lessons, whereas it has always been the case in the past that no school or education authority could force any child to attend lessons about sex or religion.

The British government, like many other Western governments, are so determined to impose their liberal ideology on our children that they are willing to do whatever it takes to get their own way. Indeed, the British government is proposing to take the same approach with the issue of creation and evolution. It is now being seriously proposed that the teaching of creation should be made illegal, even in private schools, and also for those who are home schooled.

In due course, the point is likely to be reached where children may be taken into council care if their parents oppose or contradict such perverse teaching. It is already the case that people are not allowed to adopt, or even foster, children if their views on these issues are not sufficiently political correct. Before being allowed to take on a child, they are literally asked what they think about homosexuality and other such topics.

Contrary to what our law now says, a child is not, and never should be, at the centre of anything. Putting him there will only spoil him, not benefit him. We need to resist this tide of political correctness about children's so called rights. We must emphasise instead the parents' duty to bring up their own child in the way that God says they should. That plainly includes smacking and it also involves sheltering the child from any activity or teaching which goes against God's standards.

e) Disrespect for the elderly in general and support for euthanasia in particular

In Britain, over the last few decades, there has been a steep decline in the level of respect and honour that we show to the elderly. We see it all around us and in the media. Old people are not valued and very often they are not properly cared for. That has become apparent in recent years with the cascade of shocking disclosures about how old and dying patients are treated in hospitals and nursing homes. We are frequently doing the very opposite of what the Bible commands, which is that we must honour the elderly.

"You shall stand up before the gray head and honor the face of an old man, and you shall fear your God: I am the LORD".

Leviticus 19:32 (ESV)

Instead of honouring every old person and caring for them fully and properly until the day they die, an alarmingly high proportion of the staff in hospitals and care homes are systematically neglecting, and even abusing, their elderly patients. However the problem doesn't originate in our hospitals. The terrible things that have been happening there are really just a symptom of a much deeper and wider problem in the hearts and minds of the British population as a whole.

That proportion of doctors and nurses who behave in those ways (by no means all of them) are simply reflecting the way that the wider British community has come to see the elderly. A high proportion of British society now has a disregard, and even a contempt, for the old. The worst hospital staff simply reflect that wider callousness, which is endemic within a growing proportion of the general public.

The elderly are not only neglected. Active steps are actually being taken to try to legalise euthanasia, i.e. bringing forward the deaths of the old and sick. That is not technically legal at present, though I expect it soon will be, for economic reasons if nothing else. The fact that since 1967 we have aborted over eight million babies in Britain alone means that the distribution of our population has become seriously skewed.

There are at least eight million people missing from the United Kingdom who would, by now, have been aged between zero and 46 years old. That doesn't even take into account the further millions of children, and also grand-children, that those aborted babies would have gone on to have themselves, if they had been allowed to live. The likelihood is that in total we are actually missing something like twelve to fifteen million people.

So the proportions of the British population are not as they should be. There are relatively too many old people and far too few young people. In particular, there are too few people of *working age* who can pay the *taxes* that we need. For that reason alone, it is now felt to be necessary, in the opinions of an increasing number of people, to solve our financial problems by disposing of the elderly.

The pressure for that is only going to increase in the next few decades as our society's average age continues to increase. We shall soon be at a point where there will be only one tax payer for every pensioner, which is clearly unsustainable.

But even leaving the legalisation of euthanasia to one side for a moment, the reality is that more and more doctors are already taking practical steps to hasten the death of the elderly, even without officially calling it euthanasia. They refer to it as putting the patient on a 'pathway' whereby they cease to provide medical treatment. They do this without the patient's consent, and even without their knowledge. They even stop giving the patient food and water.

The objective is to cause death, which can hardly be a surprise, given that all food and water is denied to them. But the doctors hide behind the technicality that this is not deemed to amount to euthanasia. They maintain that they are not directly *causing* death, but merely ceasing to take any active steps to prevent it. There may, perhaps, be a time and a place for that, with those who are in the very final hours or days of life. However, in creating this distinction between causing death and merely failing to prevent or delay it, they are being disingenuous.

One feels sure that those who advocate this approach will keep on pushing the boundaries further and further until we eventually have a policy of compulsory euthanasia. Even if we do not call it by that name, that is what it will be. The reality therefore is that in many places we already have a de facto policy of euthanasia. It is being put into practice by those doctors who are currently willing to operate in that way and their numbers are growing.

All of this is a very long way from what God wants. He wants the elderly in general, and those old people who are sick and dying in particular, to be honoured and cared for. Any human being, whatever their age, is made in God's image. That fact alone gives them a hugely important status. It implicitly makes them worthy of honour, even if God had not expressly commanded it.

But in addition to that, they also have the gift of life. That is a gift which God gives to every person and which only He can take away. It is not ours to take, even from a person whom we know is already dying. The only exception is for murderers, whom God has said should be executed, precisely in order to underline the sacredness of human life.

Therefore a profound change is urgently needed in the way that many of us view the old and the dying. We need to base our view of them upon how God sees them. And we need to adopt policies and procedures, right across the board, which reflect a biblical approach to honouring and caring for the old and the sick.

As with all the other issues we have looked at, we need to get our attitudes, values, practices and policies from the Bible, not from the thinking of our misguided society, which is diverging ever farther away from God's standards and from a biblical world-view. At any rate, that is what the churches ought to stand for and to speak up for, irrespective of whether we ever succeed in implementing any of what the Bible teaches.

f) Homosexuality

The Bible is unmistakably clear in saying that homosexual activity is wrong. It says so just as clearly as it says that adultery and fornication between men and women are wrong:

You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.

Leviticus 18:22 (ESV)

²⁴Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, ²⁵because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. ²⁶For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; ²⁷and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

Romans 1:24-27 (ESV)

However our society, even including much of the Church, has now been mentally reprogrammed. Thus homosexuality is now presented as if it was a *valid lifestyle choice*. Initially, those who campaigned in favour of homosexuality only sought to change society's view to the extent that it would no longer be considered a *criminal offence*. However, having succeeded in that, they wanted to go further, so as to *prevent even the expression of any disapproval* of homosexuality and to silence anyone who speaks the truth about it. They have now largely achieved that objective too.

Therefore, emboldened by the startling success of the second stage of their campaign, they are seeking to go even further still. They are no longer content merely with our silence. The absence of our disapproval is not enough for them. They now want *to compel us to positively approve of what they do* and to make us express that approval.

They have even changed the legal definition of marriage so as to include homosexual couples, which is plainly absurd. Few things will now produce more rage than if one publicly expresses the belief that homosexual activity is wrong. Consequently, very few preachers are now willing to say that. But we must hold firm to what God says, no matter what our society says, or does, to us for speaking the truth.

Having said all of the above, it also needs to be emphasised that in saying that homosexual activity is sinful and wrong, we are not to judge or despise the people who commit those sins. Homosexuals are just sinners, as we all are. We have no right to look down on them, or to judge them. Neither can we assume any position of superiority.

Most of us know that but I still say it, for the avoidance of doubt, because the criticism is often made of those who oppose homosexuality or gay marriage that they are being judgemental. That is not the case. It is simply that we must call sin what it is and say what God says about it. That is equally true whether we are referring to homosexual activity or to any of the various other sins which we commit ourselves.

g) Ecumenism

This is a fashion which took off in Western churches after World War Two. It involves the belief that all the churches should come together and be *united*. However, they have a misguided and unbiblical definition of unity. What they call unity can only be achieved by each of us abandoning, or at least putting to one side, any important doctrinal beliefs which might *create division between us*. Their hope is that by such wholesale compromise we can then achieve unity.

This comes from a distortion of the legitimate idea that God wants Christians to be *united*, which of course He does. However, the unity that God wants for us is that which comes *from all of us believing the truth*, i.e. from knowing and accepting true biblical facts and from having *accurate doctrine*. It has nothing to do with abandoning, or even adjusting, our beliefs so as to fit in with whatever is currently the majority view amongst the world around us.

It is ironic therefore that in order to achieve this kind of shallow and artificial and unity, the ecumenical movement urges us to abandon the very things that God wants us to keep. That is our commitment to the truth and to the maintenance of accurate biblical doctrines. Man-made, unity, which is based on lukewarmness and compromise, actually destroys the kind of real unity that God wants for us. Genuine unity can only be based on truth. Otherwise, our so called *unity* would consist of nothing more than the fact that we are all engaging in the same kinds of error and apostasy.

h) Feminism

Again, it now takes a courageous man to say anything in public, even in a church meeting, to express the truth of what God says about the way that men and women should relate to each other and to God. Indeed, for any man even to speak about women at all, and especially so called “women’s issues” is now seen as an outrage. It is felt that only women are allowed to say anything about women. Therefore woe betide any man who intrudes into this area, especially if he dares to say that men and women are not the same.

However, the truth is that God has made men and women different. He did so deliberately, for a number of important reasons. God wishes for the husband to be in authority over his wife and for the wife to submit to her husband. All of this is meant to take place in the context of love. It is intended to mirror the relationship between Jesus Christ and His Church. Indeed, the husband actually has the harder task. He is required to love his wife “*as Christ loves the church*”. That is a very tall order, which none of us has ever fully achieved.

However, feminist thinking, which very few people are now brave enough to contradict, has led to the very opposite of what God wants. It has promoted hostility, suspicion and contempt towards men in general. In particular they reject the leadership role of the husband. It also promotes anger, stridency and the practice of women seeking to imitate men, whereas God deliberately designed men and women to be different.

The thinking behind feminism is unbiblical and misguided. It has resulted, unsurprisingly, in a great deal of unhappiness, not least in terms of the widespread collapse of marriage in the West and an epidemic of broken homes and fatherless children. Ironically, feminism has probably done its greatest damage to women themselves. They have responded to their real or perceived mistreatment with a rage which has made them receptive to this ideology. It then harms children, families, husbands, society as a whole, and women most of all.

One of the errors of feminism is the way in which it has tended to devalue the role of mother. It especially frowns on those mothers who choose to stay at home and care for her children rather than go out to work and send their children to a nursery or child minder. It is a central tenet of feminism that a woman can *and should* do everything that men do, including going out to work.

But this is not something which they merely wish to make possible for those who want it. They push their ideology aggressively so they implicitly devalue those mothers who do not share their priorities and who prefer to put their emphasis on meeting the needs of their children during their crucial formative years.

The policies of successive British governments, and especially the Coalition which began in 2010, has been to do all they can to push mothers to go out to work as soon as possible and to place their children in nurseries. To that end, the Coalition announced that they will pay a further £1,200 per

annum to working mothers to pay for child care fees. But they are giving nothing at all to those mothers who choose to bring up their own children at home. They refer to such women disparagingly as having made a “*lifestyle choice*”, as if caring for their own children at home was something inappropriate and even selfish.

i) Pornography

The changes that have occurred since the trial in the early 1960s of the publishers of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* on the charge of obscenity have transformed Britain. The same explosion of pornography has occurred throughout the Western world. In the space of one decade the legal and social measures that we had put in place to uphold decency were swept away. We are now in a position where things are shown on TV, and even more so on the internet, which used only to be seen in places like Soho.

It is now so widespread that pornography no longer shocks most of us, not even when explicit magazines are displayed on low shelves in newsagents. Though that is now seen as acceptable by our lawmakers, it is not acceptable to God. Therefore we should not accept pornography or consider it to be normal, however widespread it becomes.

There are many ways in which pornography harms our society, and everybody in it. It degrades women and corrupts the minds of men. Countless men are drawn to it and unable, or unwilling, to break free of its hold over them. It also has a corrupting effect on children, promoting promiscuity and destroying innocence. For those very reasons, and more, the demons have sought to pull the strings of our politicians to ensure that pornography was legalised and promoted. Such consistent and widespread changes could not have occurred, all over the world, without the involvement of demons.

Perhaps the worst feature of pornography, although one which few people recognise, is that it is a desecration of the image of God. The human race have been created by God in His own image. That means what it says, quite literally. God made us to look like He looks, which was a great honour to us. He allowed us, and also the angels, to share His appearance.

Therefore, to take the human body, which is made in God's image and likeness, and to use it for pornography is an abuse of that privilege and even a desecration. Indeed, it is a blasphemy. We may not see it that way, but God does. It is an insult to Him, quite apart from all the other harm it causes.

j) Promiscuity

Alongside all the above changes there has also been a vast increase in promiscuity. It is now considered normal, *even in many churches*, for people to have sex outside of marriage. It is no longer even a basis for comment, let alone disapproval, if people live together before marriage, or even instead of marriage. The idea that there should be faithfulness between husband and wife, forsaking all others, is now considered by many to be unrealistic, or even ridiculous.

The resultant chaos and misery that we now see in terms of unfaithfulness and divorce particularly harms women and children. It is the direct and foreseeable end-product of this new permissive attitude to sex before and outside of marriage which our society, and many of our churches, have adopted.

k) The abolition of the death penalty

It is peculiar that the politically correct generally believe in abortion but do not believe in the death penalty for murderers. You might imagine that their approach to both issues would be consistent. But it isn't. They do not even recognise, let alone seek to protect, the life of an unborn child. Yet they do defend the lives of convicted murderers. On both counts they say the exact opposite of what the Bible says. But that ought not to surprise us.

What then is God's stance on the question of whether convicted murderers should be executed? We are told clearly in the book of Genesis. Also bear in mind that *this is not part of the Law of Moses*. It was given long before then. It is a clear commandment *given to all of mankind not just to Israel*. Therefore, unlike the Law of Moses, it has never been superseded or abolished. This is what God has to say *to every human being*, whether we are Jewish or Gentile:

⁵ ***And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man.***

⁶ ***“Whoever sheds the blood of man,
by man shall his blood be shed,
for God made man in his own image.
Genesis 9:5-6 (ESV)***

Nevertheless, let us also look at what the Law of Moses had to say about capital punishment. Even though we are no longer under the Law of Moses, its principles are still of relevance to us. This is what Moses said:

²⁹ ***“And these things shall be for a statute and ordinance to you throughout your generations in all your dwellings. ³⁰ If any one kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the evidence of witnesses; but no person shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness. ³¹ Moreover you shall accept no ransom for the life of a murderer, who is guilty of death; but he shall be put to death. ³² And you shall accept no ransom for him who has fled to his city of refuge, that he may return to dwell in the land before the death of the high priest. ³³ You shall not thus pollute the land in which you live; for blood pollutes the land, and no expiation can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed in it, except by the blood of him who shed it. ³⁴ You shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the Lord dwell in the midst of the people of Israel.”***

Numbers 35:29-34 (RSV)

Although the death and resurrection of Jesus has fulfilled the Law of Moses and brought it to an end, that does not mean that the death penalty has been revoked. Remember, the commandment to put murderers to death was given to *all of mankind*, long before the Law of Moses was given. Moreover, Jesus has not done anything to abolish it.

Note the words of apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans. He is discussing how rulers and governing authorities *“bear the sword”* in order to do God's will. When murderers are put to death it is done with God's approval to *“execute His wrath on the wrongdoer”* Everything that Paul says indicates that he endorses the death penalty. He certainly says nothing to challenge it:

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ² Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. ³ For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of him who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, ⁴ for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain; he is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the wrongdoer.

Romans 13:1-4 (RSV)

As we have seen, every human being is made in the image of God. For that reason, and for other reasons too, every human life is sacred. The reason that God ordained the death penalty for every murderer was to uphold the sanctity of human life. It makes a clear statement that nobody has the right to *murder* any other person. If they do so, then their own life is justly forfeited. That demonstrates the seriousness of murder and how precious every human life is to God.

So, it is precisely because human life is so sacred that the life of a murderer has to be taken away from him. Of course, it also serves as a deterrent and as a punishment, both of which are valid additional reasons, for the death penalty. However, the main purpose of the death penalty is not punishment or deterrence. It is to uphold the sanctity of human life and to send a clear message to all of us about its infinite value.

It is no coincidence, therefore, that when capital punishment was abolished in the United Kingdom in 1965 it quickly led on to the passing of the Abortion Act in 1967. Our legislature made a loud and clear statement in 1965 that, in the United Kingdom, human life is no longer sacred. Therefore we followed that up only two years later by deciding that it is alright to kill an unborn child. The one led to the other by a clear chain of logic.

Had we done what God wanted, then we would have done the exact opposite on both points. We would have retained the death penalty for murder and continued to forbid abortion. Both of those policies would have upheld the sanctity of life. But we chose instead to undermine it on both fronts and we are already paying the price in a host of ways.

D) The overall ‘Human Rights’ agenda

This is a very big and far-reaching subject, but sadly few of us have ever given it any real thought. I am referring to the increasingly widely-held belief that human beings are born with a number of inherent, automatic rights or entitlements, which cannot be taken away from them. At first sight, that sounds like it must surely be a good thing, and that Christians ought to support it.

However, even at the risk of being considered awkward, I feel I must challenge it. I would put it to you that, in fact, we have *no inherent rights at all*. That may be the way that human beings have been taught to think, especially since the Second World War, but it is not how God thinks. At any rate, the Bible does not speak of any such rights. Instead, it speaks of duties and responsibilities.

The Bible takes a completely different approach. It is God-centred rather than man-centred and that makes all the difference. Indeed, there are many profound implications which flow from each of these diametrically opposed ways of thinking. We shall explore some of those differences below. My own personal conclusion, as both a lawyer and a student of the Bible, is that any legal or social system which is based on the assumption that we have rights, as opposed to duties and responsibilities, will lead to unhealthy and unjust consequences.

As to where rights-based thinking began, the first traces of it were in the French Revolution of 1789, which was occurring at about the same time as the American Constitution and Bill of Rights were being formed. As part of that very violent upheaval in France, a document was written entitled the ‘*Declaration of the Rights of Man*’. It was intended to set out a wholly new basis for a French Constitution. In the third article within that document it states:

“The source of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation; no body, no individual can exercise authority that does not proceed from it in plain terms”

But anybody who remembers what Jesus said to His disciples after His resurrection will know that the above statement cannot be true. In Matthew 28:18 Jesus said: *“All authority in Heaven and on Earth has been given to me.”* It is God’s Word, not the Declaration of the Rights of Man, which we have to believe. But if we do believe the Bible, then the implications and outcomes that flow from doing so are very different. For a start, all authority comes from God, not the state. Moreover it is He, not us, who has all the rights.

Although God gives us *freedom*, He does not give us any *inherent* rights that we can claim are ours by *birth*, without having to earn them, or qualify for them, by meeting His conditions. Moreover,

although God does give us freedom, which includes free will and freedom of choice, it is *not absolute*. It is subject to a number of different constraints, boundaries and prohibitions which He imposes.

In other words, the biblical way to view our position is that we are *free to do anything unless it is prohibited* by God's Word, or by our conscience, or by the various duties that we owe to our fellow men. For example, in the Garden of Eden, Adam was free to do anything at all, other than eat fruit from one particular tree.

Likewise, in the English legal system, which developed what is known as the 'common law', we always used to think along those lines. That was primarily because, for centuries, our legal system was constructed on biblical principles. However, the arrival of rights-based thinking has largely changed all that.

Let us look firstly at how things used to be dealt with. In 1958, in his book '*The Approach to Self Governance*,' in which he discussed the merits, or otherwise, of the new developments which had been arising since the end of the war, *Sir Ivor Jennings* wrote:

"...in Britain we have no rights; we merely have liberty, according to the laws; and we think - truly believe - that we do a better job than any country which has a Bill of Rights or a Declaration of the Rights of Man."

Likewise, in Halsbury's Laws of England, Volume 8(2) Constitutional Law and Human Rights (4th edition 1996) which was written just before the Human Rights Act 1998 was passed, it states:

"Although the rights of the individual lie at the heart of common law they are not 'human rights' in the modern sense: in constitutional law, the individual is a subject of the Crown, not a bearer of rights."

The traditional position of the English legal system, as it stood prior to the Human Rights Act was put very well by *Sir John Laws* in his judgment in *R-v- Somerset County Council* [1995] 1 AER 513, 524. In that case he identified two first order constitutional principles:

- *the common law rule that private individuals can do everything which is not forbidden and*
- *the general principle forbidding a public body from doing anything which is not allowed*

In other words, what he meant was that the general default-setting, or starting point, is that every *individual* has freedom, except where that is curtailed by some specific law. By contrast, the general default-setting for *public bodies*, such as governments and councils, was that they should keep out of things and that they have no basis for interfering, unless they have been granted a specific authority to do so. This approach maximised the freedom or liberty of every individual. Nevertheless, it was not based on rights and did not even think in terms of rights.

So, let's examine where our modern concept of 'human rights' came from and how it came about that we got these new and very different laws. In the immediate aftermath of World War Two the governments of the United Kingdom and the United States pressed for the newly formed United Nations to make a declaration about fundamental human rights. This resulted in the '*Universal Declaration of Human Rights*' which was adopted by 48 members of the United Nations in 1948.

What they had in mind as the backdrop to this declaration was the array of brutal atrocities which had just been committed by the Nazis. In particular it was a reference to the Nazis attempt to wipe out the Jewish race. We gave that policy the name 'genocide'. That was the kind of behaviour which the members of the United Nations were seeking to prevent ever happening again. Sadly, the way they went about trying to do that led to far wider ramifications, which they had almost certainly never envisaged. It is a classic example of the operation of the '*law of unintended consequences*'.

Three years later, in 1951, the United Kingdom ratified the *European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*. It went further than the United Nations had gone and specified a series of other things which it maintained were also fundamental human rights. The British Government were signatories to this, but did not give full effect to it within the United Kingdom until after the passing of The Human Rights Act in 1998. There is no room in this book to examine each of these alleged human rights. We shall therefore confine ourselves to speaking of rights as a whole and evaluating the consequences of this overall approach, and the attitudes which it tends to produce.

As stated, at first sight, all of these so called rights sound like they must be good for us. At any rate, it doesn't seem that any of them could do us any harm. Accordingly, many people within Great Britain, including Christians, see the Human Rights Act as a good thing. It is widely taken for granted that to stand up for human rights must surely be what God wants and that no reasonable person could ever be opposed to the Human Rights Act, or at least to the concept of rights as a matter of principle.

However, I would argue that the whole human rights agenda does not actually represent God's way of thinking. It is, in many ways, the very opposite of how a biblically-based legal system would operate. That is because the very idea that we have rights, of any description, is based on *humanist beliefs and human reasoning*. It does not reflect the way God thinks about these issues. I will try to explain why I make that claim

The best place to start would be to say that God has never actually given any of us any rights at all. You can search the whole Bible, but you won't find any rights being given to us. Indeed, *we do not even have a right to live at all*, let alone to any particular standard. Our very lives are in God's hands and are only provided to us for as long, or short, a period as *He* chooses, entirely at His discretion. Indeed, we ourselves, our very bodies, are His property and so is everything that we think we own.

God is therefore under no *obligation* to keep us alive. Or, viewed from the other direction, you could say that we have no legitimate *right* to be allowed to continue living. God is free to end our lives Himself, or to allow them to be ended by someone else, whenever He chooses to do so. We would have no valid basis for complaint, whatever He might choose to do with us, or take from us. The same applies to our property, homes, careers and so on.

I was speaking to a young woman recently who is in her early twenties and has grown up since the passing of the Human Rights Act of 1998. Like many of her age, she is somewhat steeped in rights-based thinking. Therefore she was chafing a little when she heard me say that the Bible does not give us any rights, but only freedom, subject to a number of prohibitions, duties and responsibilities. She got out her phone and did a word search in the Bible for the word '*right*'. She then came up with this verse from John's gospel and quoted it to me:

Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

John 1:12 (NIV)

However, what apostle John is speaking of in John 1:12 is not an *inherent, automatic entitlement* that a person is born with. He is referring to what a believer receives *as a result of meeting God's qualifying conditions* i.e. His requirement that we *receive* Jesus and *believe* in His name. A person who is truly converted and born again will, of course, receive a great many benefits and privileges, including the '*right*' (or '*power*', as the KJV and RSV choose to put it) to become children of God. However, there is nothing *inherent* in that. One is not born with that, as if it was an entitlement. Such status is only given *to those who respond to the gospel* and not to those who don't. Moreover, it is given to them *because* they respond to the gospel.

That is the crucial distinction between the way the Bible speaks and the way a rights-based system operates. If John 1:12 was to use the word '*right*' in the same way that it is used in the Human Rights

Act, then the meaning would be utterly different. It would then mean that *everybody* has the benefits of being a Christian, even those who do *not* believe and do *not* receive Jesus. But that is not the case.

So, in terms of how the Bible speaks, which was the foundation for how the English legal system used to operate before the arrival of human rights, a person can obviously become entitled to *receive*, or *do*, or *be*, something. That is clearly biblical. We need look no further than Romans, where Paul speaks of how a worker's wages are not seen as a *gift*, but as his *due*, or entitlement. He has worked, and he therefore has a *right* to his wages, if you want to put it that way:

Now to one who works, his wages are not reckoned as a gift but as his due.
Romans 4:4 (RSV)

However, the crucial distinguishing point is that the worker to whom Paul refers only has a 'right' to wages *because he has met the employer's conditions*. That is he worked a certain number of hours and is thus entitled to wages for that work, under the terms of his contract of employment, just as the employer was entitled to receive his labour. But that payment of wages has nothing at all to do with the modern concept of *inherent* rights.

That means a right to which one is *automatically* entitled, *without having to do anything in return*, merely by virtue of being a human being. If it did have that meaning, then the worker in Romans chapter four would be entitled to receive wages, as of right, regardless of whether he had worked or not, and irrespective of the *quality* or *duration* of his work.

Any legal system which is founded upon the man-centred notion that human beings have inherent rights and, indeed, a wide assortment of these, is starting from the wrong place. What then *should* our law assume, and on what *should* it be based? The short answer is that it should be God-centred. It should reflect the way that God thinks and operates, as is set out in the Bible, not the way that sinful and misguided human beings think.

The biblical approach is that no inherent rights are conferred by God upon anybody at all. Instead, the Bible takes a radically different approach. It begins from the starting point that every person is *free*, and has freedom of choice, *but that they also owe a series of duties*. These duties are owed mainly to God, but also indirectly, at a secondary level, to our fellow human beings.

For example, every one of us is under a primary duty to worship God and to obey Him. That puts God firmly at the very centre and, equally firmly, it removes us from the centre. Then, at a secondary, or subordinate, level, we are also under a duty to love our neighbour and to do to him as we would wish him to do to us.

So, our neighbour benefits, *indirectly*, from the fact that we are under a duty to obey God's commands. But that duty does not arise because of any merit on the part of our neighbour, or any inherent entitlement on his part. It is our duty *because God says so*, not because of anything our neighbour has done.

On that basis, the only reason we may not kill people, or mistreat them in a host of other ways, is because *God forbids us to do so*. Strictly speaking, it is not that other people have a *right not to be killed or mistreated*. The correct way to put it, if we wish to approach this biblically, is that we have a *duty* not to kill or mistreat them, or you could say that we are *not free* to kill or mistreat them.

In other words, it works in the opposite direction to that of any legal system which is founded upon human rights. The biblical way of viewing things is that the basis for everything is the need for us to obey God's laws, and not to do anything which He has forbidden. A legal system which is constructed along those lines *makes God important*, rather than making *us* important. Conversely, any system based on human rights elevates man and makes him important.

More to the point, it makes *oneself* important. Furthermore, most rights-based systems do not even recognise that God *exists*, let alone acknowledge any duty to obey Him. Therefore, the concept of human rights promotes human pride and a general emphasis on self. It also feeds our flesh nature and panders to it, which is the very opposite of what God wants for us.

Accordingly, any Christian who wants to think about law, politics and social policy in a biblical way needs to consider very carefully the source or origins of their thinking. They must ask whether it is man-made, and thus reflects the flawed ways in which *we* think, or whether it comes from God and reflects the perfect ways in which *He* thinks. Likewise, we also need to ask *who is exalted by it*, and whether it puts *man or God at the centre*.

Any set of laws or public policies which is based on biblical thinking will always be expressed in terms of words like *duty, obligation, responsibility, stewardship* and, of course, *freedom*. Above all, it will speak in terms of *right and wrong*. It will not contain anything about rights or entitlements, except, as we saw, where those arise as a consequence of our fulfilling the terms and conditions of some contract or covenant.

This distinction which I draw is not just theoretical hair-splitting about abstract, philosophical concepts. It makes a real and practical difference. Indeed, the ultimate outworking of any rights-based system is that it will inevitably result in a number of injustices, and even absurdities. One sees that regularly in reported cases, where the application of the Human Rights Act in a criminal case, or in a civil dispute, results in the wrongdoer being protected and even rewarded and the interests of the victim, witnesses, or public being ignored. At the very least, they are usually considered to be subordinate to the wrongdoer's 'rights'.

As a result of the London bombings of 2005, even the then Labour Government's enthusiasm for the Human Rights Act cooled down markedly. They discovered, as subsequent governments have also found, to their deep frustration, that they cannot deport suspected, or even *convicted*, terrorists. That is because they might face the risk of torture, or of degrading and inhuman treatment, if they were returned to their own countries.

Therefore, to avoid that potential risk to them, it is held that we must let them stay in the United Kingdom. Consequently, the wrongdoer is protected from perceived risk, but innocent members of the public are put at risk in order to make that possible. However, no equivalent hand-wringing takes place over the prospect of putting the general public at risk, or even at endangering specific witnesses who have cooperated with the police by providing evidence. Their interests and safety count for little or nothing because a rights-based system has no real place for them, or at least no prominent place. At any rate, the Human Rights Act doesn't.

But if the prosecution do not have enough *admissible* evidence, or evidence which they are *willing to make public*, then they cannot convict the suspect either. So, in many instances, he can't even be imprisoned. Therefore, given that we cannot convict them and cannot deport them, we have no other option but to let them go free. Having done so, we then have to provide them with ongoing social security benefits, and even housing, to which they are also entitled. We even have to provide them with legal aid to enable them to fund their applications to resist our attempts to deport them.

Even Tony Blair himself, the man who gave us the Human Rights Act, spoke of his frustration at these unintended consequences of his legislation. As he put it, mainly in relation to Islamic terrorism, "*the rules of the game are changing*". He therefore began to wonder, at least to some extent, about the value of the Convention and of the Human Rights Act itself. Many Home Secretaries have also expressed similar concerns since then, although with equal inability, and unwillingness, to do anything about these problems.

When those undesirable consequences or side-effects occur, as they so often do, it is not a coincidence. They arise because a rights-based system does not think in terms of *good and evil* or

right and wrong. Neither does it think in terms of *justice*, in the sense of people being treated as they *deserve* to be treated in view of their actions. It is not designed to think in any of those terms and thus makes no attempt to do so. Those concepts are not even recognised by, and do not fit easily within, any such system.

That is why rights-based systems do not differentiate adequately, or at all, between offenders and victims, or even between wrongdoers and witnesses. They see them all as essentially equal. Indeed, if anything, where their interests come into conflict, the human rights agenda consistently promotes the welfare of wrongdoers ahead of the victim, the witnesses, or the general public.

A rights-based system also has difficulty in accommodating concepts like *punishment* or *retribution*. Again, it does not even think in those terms. Many people who work within the criminal justice system today are somewhat embarrassed by such words and even object to them. They consider them outdated, or even primitive, and are uncomfortable about any policy or practice where the aim is to punish. Thus punishment, which is an essential aspect of justice, *and which the Bible clearly endorses*, is toned down or even rejected.

By contrast, the aim of *rehabilitation of the offender*, which is a valid, albeit a secondary, part of any biblically based criminal justice system, is then made central. But that is not its proper place. Moreover, rehabilitation is changed from being an *objective* on the part of the *justice system*, to being a *right* on the part of the *wrongdoer*.

But he has no such right, at least not in any biblically based system. Rehabilitation is an aspect of God's *grace*, i.e. His *undeserved favour*, and is delivered via rulers and governments. To convert it into a right is to seriously distort the proper position. For one thing, it would cease to be grace because that is, by definition, *undeserved*.

However, someone might ask what the alternative is. Should we say that we are in favour of torture? Of course not. All that is needed is for us to make torture illegal, i.e. to ban it. That is how the objective can best be achieved, not by declaring that each of us have a 'right' not to be tortured or, even less, a right never to be *put at any risk* of being tortured.

That approach, whereby the things that we deplore, such as torture, are simply prohibited, may sound similar to creating a right not to be tortured, especially if you say it quickly. However, the difference is seen in the *outcomes*. If we simply make it a crime to torture people we achieve a large proportion of the objective, without any of the unintended consequences or ramifications.

It is these undesirable side effects of a rights-based approach that create the problems. Simply banning torture, or any other activity which we wish to prevent, creates few, if any, knock-on effects to the detriment of victims, witnesses, the public or even the taxpayer.

But that apparently slight adjustment of turning it from a prohibition into a right creates a mass of problems as we try to tackle all the implications of what we have declared a person's rights to be. All sorts of other people then have to be disadvantaged, or even put at risk, to enable those rights to be observed. None of that occurs when we think, as we always used to, along the much simpler lines of banning what is not in the public interest and leaving everything, and everyone, else well alone.

Sooner or later, the way the unbelieving world thinks, on this subject of human rights, or any other issue, will begin to influence your own thinking. That is inevitable unless you take active steps to prevent it and to resist being squeezed into the world's mould. Rights-based thinking has already extended its influence way beyond the realms of criminal law, the civil justice system and so forth. Once one begins to look out for it, one sees the signs of rights-based thinking, and its accompanying attitude of entitlement, all over the place. One might even go so far as to say that in Great Britain we are steadily developing a '*culture of entitlement*'.

I have witnessed this trend at first hand as an employer. It is increasingly the case that employees, especially those in their teens or twenties who are entering their first job, come into the workplace with an inbuilt sense of entitlement and of having rights. It is typical for them to have at the forefront of their minds what they can expect to *get*, as opposed to what they are expected to *give*. They will also have a mind-set which is concerned not to have to work too hard, or for too long, or not to have to do more work than their colleagues do.

A person who has been brought up to think in terms of rights and entitlements will ask himself what his job involves, but he does so primarily so that he can make sure that he does “*no more than he has to*,” or “*no more than others do*.” By contrast, a worker who does not take that approach, and thinks instead in terms of duty, will ask himself “*How can I make sure I pull my weight and do no less than I should, and preferably more than, is expected of me?*”

I may possibly meet the legal definition of an ‘expert witness’ on this point, given how many people I have employed over the years and the perspective which that very varied experience has given me. In other words, I have seen enough employees at close quarters, as their boss, and before that as a colleague, for my conclusions to have a fair amount of statistical reliability.

At any rate, rightly or wrongly, my overall assessment of the *average* British worker (there are many shining exceptions) is that they are deficient. Many are like spoiled children. Indeed, for some, that is literally what they are. They habitually put themselves at the centre and think primarily, or even solely, in terms of what they can expect to *get* from their job, not what they can *put into it*. That is why so many British employers, especially in the service sector and also in jobs like fruit picking, prefer to recruit their staff from Eastern Europe and Africa etc, where the culture of entitlement has not taken over, or at least not yet.

Whenever I have been to hotels, restaurants, or other service providers, I have frequently found that foreign staff, from Eastern Europe or Africa, work *harder*, do *more* work, and operate to a *higher standard*. They also have a better *attitude*, show better *manners*, and have a better overall understanding of the concept of ‘*service*’, than native British workers who have grown up in the UK and been to British schools. The contrast is more than just detectable. It is stark.

Of course, no politician will admit any of this, or at least not if he knows what’s good for him. Neither will any employer. Indeed, if an employer was to say openly what I have just said above, he would put himself at risk of an action for discrimination. So, employers who recruit from abroad will say that they are “*not discriminating*” and that they only do so because there is a “*labour shortage in that sector*”, not because foreign workers are ‘better’.

Now, there is an element of truth in that claim that they can’t find enough British staff, but it is not because our population is too small. It is largely because some British people would rather be unemployed than apply for certain jobs. Many are not willing to do “*dirty work*” or “*demean themselves*” by taking a manual job or a job cleaning in a hotel or serving in a restaurant.

However, even that is not the whole truth. Where native British workers are willing to apply for such jobs, many employers will still ensure that they select their workers from abroad. Many do so for the very reasons I have outlined, namely the fact that most of those workers do not have a culture of entitlement and therefore do not create anywhere near as many problems.

Let me give a specific example, though I could give dozens. I once recruited a young man aged 19 to work in my law firm. He wanted to be a ‘legal clerk’, and also to be trained up in the IT department. In his very first week in the job it became necessary to move some heavy furniture from one office to another. The whole task would take about 20-30 minutes. I was attending to this myself and was being assisted by another man, the firm’s IT manager. So, we were both senior people in the business but, even so, there we were moving furniture. I then said to the young man who’d just joined us: “*Can you come and give us a hand carrying this furniture to the other end of the office?*”

I said this with the full expectation that he would leap up and join in willingly. But he didn't. He said that moving furniture was "*not part of my job description*" and that he "*should not be asked to do it*". I was amazed by his view of himself, his place in the world, and of what he could, and could not, be asked to do. That attitude was so deeply ingrained in him that he was even willing to argue with his brand new boss, in his first week in the job, and to refuse, point-blank, to assist.

He did not see himself as doing anything wrong, or even unusual. As he saw it, an illegitimate request was being made of him and he was standing up for himself, because he was being '*wronged*' or '*treated unfairly*'. He felt that moving furniture was beneath his dignity and was demeaning, i.e. to be seen doing manual labour in front of other staff.

Yet the extraordinary thing is that the IT manager and I, who were both very much senior to him, were already tackling the task, and continuing to do so. We didn't feel demeaned, or that manual labour was "*beneath us*", whereas he did. Indeed, even when this irony was pointed out to him, he still did not alter his view, or even recognise that the point had any merit.

You may not be surprised to note that that young man did not get through his probationary period. In fact I parted with him later that very week, because of his appalling attitude, at least as I saw it. I then had his Dad on the phone, taking his side and remonstrating with me, even when I explained what had happened.

He too felt that his son had done nothing wrong and "*should not have been asked to do manual work*". He, likewise, pointed out to me that it was "*not in the job description*" and therefore that it was "*wrong for him to be told to do it*." I told him that it wasn't in the IT manager's job description either, or mine for that matter. But that argument did not cut any ice with him, any more that it had with his son. So far as he was concerned, his son was being "*taken advantage of*."

This culture of entitlement, which is creating so many prima donnas, is by no means confined to the workplace. It has radiated out across many other areas of British society and is continuing to do so. That is why I have spent so much time focusing upon this issue of human rights or rights-based thinking, which some might regard as an obscure subject. I would contend that it has now become for us a major aspect of worldly thinking, whereas past generations never had to deal with it. Thus, it is well worth making the effort to understand what this new philosophy is, where it comes from, and how we can avoid adopting such beliefs, or being influenced by them.

Most important of all, we need to ensure that the culture of rights, or even the language of rights, does not creep into our churches or our theology. It is entirely inconsistent with our being called to a life of *servanthood* and, even more so, to the need for us to '*die to self*' and '*crucify our flesh nature*'. No disciple can achieve any of those things, all of which we are commanded to do, by taking unto ourselves these, or any other, imaginary rights, which God has never given us.

Wise people fear God and seek only for His approval, not for the approval of other people

God commands us not to fear the reproach or disapproval of other people:

⁷"Hearken to me, you who know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear not the reproach of men, and be not dismayed at their revilings. ⁸For the moth will eat them up like a garment, and the worm will eat them like wool; but my deliverance will be for ever, and my salvation to all generations."

Isaiah 51: 7-8 (RSV)

Whether we receive God's approval or disapproval is all that really matters. One of the many benefits of the fear of the LORD is that it greatly reduces our desire to be approved of by others. That craving

for people's approval gets us into all kinds of temptations and problems. Wanting the praise of men may even cause us to deny Jesus rather than be openly identified as one of His followers:

⁴²Nevertheless many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: ⁴³for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

John 12:42-43 (RSV)

By way of contrast, note the approach taken by apostle Paul. He saw pleasing God and pleasing men as mutually exclusive alternatives, such that you can please one or the other, but not both:

Am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ.

Galatians 1:10 (RSV)

Wise people seek to understand the times in which they live. They want to know what God is saying to their nation and where we are on God's prophetic timetable

It is possible for us to increase our knowledge and understanding of the times in which we live and to develop a better grasp of what God is saying to our generation. Moreover, we have a duty to seek such understanding. We can and should also aim to identify where we are on God's prophetic timetable. By that I mean to keep a close eye on biblical prophecies and their fulfilment in our own times.

The classic example of a historic event which is of seismic importance within God's prophetic timetable is the rebirth of the nation of Israel in 1948. That event was prophesied within the Hebrew Scriptures over 2500 years ago. Yet it was fulfilled within my parents' lifetime. Then the recapture of the city of Jerusalem and its inclusion within the nation of Israel occurred in 1967. That was within my own lifetime. Events such as these, and many others, need to be recognised for what they are if we are to have a proper understanding of the times in which we live. God wants and expects us to seek to develop such understanding, as the men of Issachar did:

Of Issachar, men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, 200 chiefs, and all their kinsmen under their command.

1 Chronicles 12:32 (ESV)

Understanding the events of our own day is one of the things that a wise person is expected to seek to achieve. It was expected of the men who were appointed to advise King Ahasuerus of Persia. It is even more essential now, in our day, for God's servants to develop such an understanding.

Then the king said to the wise men who knew the times (for this was the king's procedure toward all who were versed in law and judgment,.....

Esther 1:13 (ESV)

In our own day we have complete access to the whole Bible, including the New Testament. We have also already seen major fulfilments of key prophetic events. Therefore we are all the more obligated to keep a close eye on what is happening in the world and on the events which we are told to expect. If there was no such duty upon us then what would be the point of God having included so much prophecy within the Bible? It makes up over 30% of the total content of the Bible and God wants us to take careful note of all of it.

What is more, a high proportion of the things prophesied are events which have occurred in recent years, such as the rebirth of Israel, the capture of Jerusalem, the two world wars, the spread of the gospel worldwide, the forming of the European Union, the widespread development of apostasy

within the churches, the increase in the number and strength of earthquakes and many other things. All of these things, and more, have been occurring within the past 100-200 years and especially during the last 50-100 years. And they are gathering pace.

Accordingly, the Bible has more to say about our own day than about any other period of time since Jesus Christ's birth, and death. There are many reasons to believe that we are now moving with increasing speed towards the time of the rapture. We cannot set any date for that, but the increasing speed of change, and of the fulfilment of prophecies, indicates that the rapture must be getting very close. It might well be within our own lifetimes.

The point is that the prophecies were recorded in the Bible so that believers could take them seriously and watch for their fulfilment. We are meant to be alert and to have our lamps ready, like the wise virgins in the parable Jesus told. Then we can recognise and appreciate the significance of what God is doing in our own day, plus of course what our adversary, the Devil, is doing.

To be aware of such matters and to take them seriously is amongst the least of the things that can be expected of a person whose aim is to become wise. In the next chapter we shall focus a little more closely on the question of Bible prophecy and its importance in our lives.