

FEBRUARY 1, 1994

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

WICKED SPIRITS

**Do they
really exist?**

THE WATCHTOWER[®]

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

February 1, 1994

Average Printing Each Issue: 16,100,000

Vol. 115, No. 3

THE PURPOSE OF *THE WATCHTOWER* is to exalt Jehovah God as Sovereign Lord of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as these fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's Kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellowmen and that it will turn the earth into a paradise. It encourages faith in God's now-reigning King, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. *The Watchtower*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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MARCH 7: Divine Teaching Triumphs. Page 8. Songs to be used: 127, 195.

MARCH 14: Enjoy the Benefits of Divine Teaching. Page 13. Songs to be used: 50, 155.

New published in 116 languages.

SEMI-MONTHLY LANGUAGES AVAILABLE BY MAIL:

Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Bicol, Bislama, Bulgarian, Cebuano, Chicheŵa, Chinese, Cibemba, Croatian, Czech, Danish,* Dutch,* Eſik, English** (also Braille), Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish,* French,* Ga, German,* Greek,* Hiligaynon, Hiri Motu, Hungarian, Igbo, Iloko, Indonesian, Italian,* Japanese* (also Braille), Kannada, Korean,* Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Maltese, Myanmar, New Guinea Pidgin, Norwegian, Pangasinan, Papiamentu, Polish, Portuguese,* Rarotongan, Romanian, Russian, Samar-Leyte, Samoan, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona, Sinhalese, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish,* Swahili, Swedish,* Tagalog, Tahitian, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Tswana, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian, Venda, Vietnamese, Walisian, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu

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The Bible translation used is the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*, unless otherwise indicated.

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Publication of "The Watchtower" is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations.

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The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semi-monthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201. Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589. Printed in U.S.A.

Who Believe in Wicked Spirits?

DO YOU believe that unseen spirits can influence your life? Many would answer with an emphatic no. While acknowledging the existence of God, they scoff at the notion of superhuman workers of evil.

Widespread disbelief in spirits in the Western world is partly due to the influence of Christendom, which for centuries taught that the earth was the center of the universe, located between heaven and an underground hell. According to this teaching, angels enjoyed the bliss of heaven while demons administered the affairs of hell.

As discoveries in science caused people to reject wrong ideas about the structure of the universe, belief in spirit creatures became unfashionable. *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* states: "In the aftermath of the 16th-century Copernican revolution (based on the theories of the Polish astronomer Copernicus), in which . . . the Earth was no longer seen as the centre of the cosmos but, instead, merely as a planet of a solar system that is a very small part of a galaxy in an apparently infinite universe—the concepts of angels and demons no longer seemed appropriate."

While many do not believe in wicked spirits, there are millions who do. Fallen angels feature in many religions, both past and present. Apart from their role as corrupters of spirituality, these bad angels are seen as agents of disasters, such as war, famine, and earthquakes, as well as promoters of sickness, mental disorders, and death.

Satan the Devil, the principal evil spirit in Christianity and Judaism, is called Iblis by Muslims. In the ancient Persian religion

of Zoroastrianism, he appears as Angra Mainyu. In the Gnostic religion, which flourished in the second and third centuries C.E., he was seen in the Demiurge, the term given to a jealous and inferior god to whom the bulk of humankind gave worship in ignorance.

Lesser spirits of evil feature prominently in Eastern religions. Hindus hold that the asuras (demons) oppose the devas (gods). Especially feared among the asuras are the rakshasas, hideous beings who haunt cemeteries.

Buddhists conceive of demons as personalized forces that prevent man from obtaining Nirvana, the extinction of desire. A chief tempter among them is Mara, with his three daughters Rati (Desire), Raga (Pleasure), and Tanha (Restlessness).

Chinese worshipers use bonfires, torches, and firecrackers to protect against the *kuei*, or nature demons. Japanese religions also hold that there are many demons, including the fearsome *tengu*, spirits that possess people until exorcised by a priest.

Among nonliterate religions of Asia, Africa, Oceania, and the Americas, spirit creatures are believed to be helpful or harmful according to circumstances and their prevailing mood. People venerate these spirits to ward off calamity and to receive favors.

Add to all of this the widespread interest in magic and spiritism, and it is clear that belief in wicked spirits has a long and pervasive history. But is it reasonable to believe that such creatures exist? The Bible says that they do. However, if they do exist, why does God allow them to influence man to his injury?

Agents of Evil

THE Bible's explanation of the role of demons in man's affairs answers basic questions about evil that would otherwise be unanswerable. Consider, for example, this statement from the *International Herald Tribune* concerning the ongoing war in the Balkans: "A European Community team of investigators has concluded that [soldiers] have raped up to 20,000 Muslim women and girls . . . as part of a systematic policy of terror designed to intimidate, demoralize and drive them from their homes."

An essay in *Time* magazine grappled with an explanation: "Sometimes, young men in war may commit rape in order to please their elders, their officers, and win a sort of father-to-son approval. The rape is proof of commitment to the unit's fierceness. A young man willing to do hideous things has subordinated his individual conscience in order to fuse with the uncompromising purposes of the group. A man seals his allegiance in atrocity."

But why are the "uncompromising purposes of the group" more debased than the individual consciences of its members? As an individual, almost everyone desires to live at peace with his neighbor. So why, in times of war, do people rape, torture, and kill one another? A key reason is that demonic forces are at work.

Understanding the role of demons also provides a solution to what some term a "theologian's problem." The problem is how to reconcile three propositions: (1) God is all powerful; (2) God is loving and good; and (3) terrible things happen. Some hold that it is possible to reconcile any two of

these propositions, but all three can never be reconciled. God's Word itself gives the answer, and that answer involves unseen spirits, agents of evil.

The First Rebel

The Bible tells us that God is himself a spirit. (John 4:24) In time he became the Creator of millions of other spirit beings, angelic sons. In vision, God's servant Daniel saw a hundred million angels. All the spirit persons that Jehovah created were righteous and in harmony with his will.—Daniel 7:10; Hebrews 1:7.

Later, when God "founded the earth," these angelic sons of God "joyfully cried out together" and "began shouting in applause." (Job 38:4-7) But one of them developed a desire to grasp for himself the worship rightfully due the Creator. By rebelling against God, this angel made himself a satan (meaning "opposer") and a devil (meaning "slanderer").—Compare Ezekiel 28:13-15.

Using a serpent in Eden to speak to the first woman, Eve, Satan persuaded her to disobey God's direct command not to eat the fruit from a certain tree in the garden. Afterward, her husband joined her. Thus, the first human couple joined the angel in rebellion against Jehovah.—Genesis 2:17; 3:1-6.

While events in Eden may seem to be a straightforward lesson in obedience, two important moral issues were raised there by Satan. First, Satan disputed whether Jehovah's rulership over his creatures was exercised righteously and in their best interests. Perhaps humans could do a better job

of governing themselves. Second, Satan questioned whether any intelligent creatures would remain faithful and loyal to God when obedience seemed to bring no material benefits.*

A clear understanding of the issues raised in Eden, along with a knowledge of Jehovah's attributes, helps us to understand the solution to the "theologian's problem," namely to reconcile the existence of evil with God's attributes of power and love. While it is true that Jehovah possesses unlimited power and is the very personification of love, he also is wise and just. He exercises these four attributes in perfect balance. Thus, he did not use his irresistible power to destroy the three rebels immediately. That would have been just but not necessarily wise or loving. Furthermore, he did not merely forgive and forget, a course that some might feel would have been the loving option. To have done that would have been neither wise nor just.

Time was needed to settle the issues that Satan raised. It would take time to prove whether humans could properly rule themselves independently of God. By permitting the three rebels to continue living, Jehovah also made it possible for creatures to share in proving false Satan's claim by serving God faithfully under difficult circumstances.[#]

Jehovah had clearly said to Adam and Eve that if they ate of the forbidden fruit, they would die. And they did die, though

Satan had assured Eve that she would not. Satan too is under sentence of death; in the meantime he continues to mislead humankind. In fact, the Bible says: "The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one."—1 John 5:19; Genesis 2:16, 17; 3:4; 5:5.

Other Angels Rebel

Not long after the events in Eden, other angels joined the rebellion against Jehovah's sovereignty. The Bible states: "Now it came about that when men started to grow in numbers on the surface of the ground and daughters were born to them, then the sons of the true God began to notice the daughters of men, that they were good-looking; and they went taking wives for themselves, namely, all whom they chose." In other words, these angels "forsook their own proper dwelling place [in heaven]" and came to earth, materialized in human form, and enjoyed sensual pleasures with women.—Genesis 6:1, 2; Jude 6.

The account continues at Genesis 6:4: "The Nephilim proved to be in the earth in those days, and also after that, when the sons of the true God continued to have relations with the daughters of men and they bore sons to them, they were the mighty ones who were of old, the men of fame." These hybrid sons born to women and fathered by angels were abnormally strong, "mighty ones." They were men of violence, or *Nephi-lim'*, a Hebrew word that means "those who cause others to fall down."

It is noteworthy that these events later found expression in the legends of ancient civilizations. For example, a 4,000-year-old Babylonian epic describes the superhuman exploits of Gilgamesh, a mighty, violent demigod whose "lust [left] no virgin to her lover." Another example, from Greek

* This was clarified later when Satan said of God's servant Job: "Skin in behalf of skin, and everything that a man has he will give in behalf of his soul. For a change, thrust out your hand, please, and touch as far as his bone and his flesh and see whether he will not curse you to your very face."—Job 2:4, 5.

[#] For a detailed discussion of why God permits wickedness, see the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

legend, is the superhuman Hercules (or Heracles). Born to Alcmena, a human, and fathered by the god Zeus, Hercules set out on a series of violent adventures after killing his wife and children in a fit of madness. Although such tales were greatly distorted as they passed from generation to generation, they tie in with what the Bible says about the Nephilim and their rebellious angelic fathers.

Because of the influence of the wicked angels and their superhuman sons, the earth became so filled with violence that Jehovah decided to destroy the world by a great flood. The Nephilim perished along with all the ungodly humans; the only human survivors were righteous Noah and his family.—Genesis 6:11; 7:23.

However, the wicked angels did not die. Instead, they dematerialized their human bodies and returned to the spirit realm. Because of their disobedience, they were not allowed back into God's family of righteous angels; nor were they permitted again to put on human bodies as they did in Noah's day. Still, they continued to exercise a ruinous influence in the affairs of humankind, under the authority of "the ruler of the demons," Satan the Devil.—Matthew 9:34; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6.

Enemies of Mankind

Satan and the demons have always been murderous and cruel. Satan, by various means, took away Job's livestock and killed most of his servants. Next, he killed Job's ten children by causing "a great wind" to demolish the house they were in. After that, Satan plagued Job with "a malignant boil from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head."—Job 1:7-19; 2:3, 7.

The demons show a similarly evil disposition. In Jesus' day, they robbed people of

their speech and sight. They caused a man to slash himself with stones. They dashed a boy to the ground and "violently convulsed him."—Luke 9:42; Matthew 9:32, 33; 12:22; Mark 5:5.

Reports from around the world show that Satan and the demons are as malicious as ever. Some people they strike with illness. Others they harass by robbing them of sleep or by giving them terrible dreams or by abusing them sexually. Still others they have driven to insanity, murder, or suicide.

How Much Longer Will They Be Tolerated?

Satan and his demons will not be tolerated forever. With good reason Jehovah has allowed them to exist until our day, but now their time is short. Early in this century, a major step was taken to limit their sphere of activity. The book of Revelation explains: "War broke out in heaven: Michael [the resurrected Jesus Christ] and his angels battled with the dragon [Satan], and the dragon and its angels battled but it did not prevail, neither was a place found for them any longer in heaven. So down the great dragon was hurled, the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth; he was hurled down to the earth, and his angels were hurled down with him."—Revelation 12:7-9.

What was the result? The account continues: "On this account be glad, you heavens and you who reside in them!" The righteous angels could rejoice because Satan and his demons were no longer in heaven. But what about people on earth? The Bible says: "Woe for the earth and for the sea, because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time."—Revelation 12:12.



Oil wells burning in Kuwait, 1991: Chamussy/Sipa Press

***Is man alone responsible for such things,
or does a sinister, unseen force
share the blame?***

In their anger Satan and his minions are intent on causing as much woe as possible before their imminent end. In this century there have been two world wars and over 150 lesser wars since the end of the second world war. Into our vocabulary have come phrases reflecting the violence of this generation: "germ warfare," "the Holocaust," "killing fields," "rape camps," "serial killers," and "the bomb." The news is bloated with stories of drugs, murder, bombing, psychopathic cannibalism, massacres, famine, and torture.

The good news is that these things are temporary. In the near future, God will again act against Satan and his demons. Describing a vision from God, the apostle John said: "And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven with the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he seized the dragon, the original serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him



***What a wonderful time it will be when the
demons no longer harass mankind!***

for a thousand years. And he hurled him into the abyss and shut it and sealed it over him, that he might not mislead the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended."—Revelation 20:1-3.

After that, the Devil and his demons will be "let loose for a little while," and then they will be destroyed forever. (Revelation 20:3, 10) What a wonderful time that will be! With Satan and his demons out of the way for good, Jehovah will be "all things to everyone." And everyone will truly "find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace."—1 Corinthians 15:28; Psalm 37:11.



DIVINE TEACHING TRIUMPHS

"Your eyes must become eyes seeing your Grand Instructor. And your own ears will hear a word behind you saying: 'This is the way. Walk in it, you people.'"

—ISAIAH 30:20, 21.

JEHOVAH GOD is the Source of the best teaching anyone can receive. If we listen when he speaks, especially through his Sacred Word, he will be our Grand Instructor. (Isaiah 30:20) The Hebrew Bible text also calls him "the Divine One." (Psalm 50:1) Hence, Jehovah's instruction is divine teaching.

² The world is proud of its many educational institutions, but not one of them imparts divine teaching. Why, all the worldly wisdom of the ages amounts to little when compared with divine instruction based on Jehovah's infinite wisdom. Romans 16:27

1. Why can Jehovah's instruction rightly be called divine teaching?
2. In what sense is it true that God alone is wise?

says that God alone is wise, and this is true in the sense that only Jehovah possesses absolute wisdom.

³ God's Son, Jesus Christ, is a paragon of wisdom and is the greatest teacher ever to walk the earth. No wonder! For ages Jehovah had been his Teacher in the heavens. In fact, divine teaching began when God started to instruct his first creation, his only-begotten Son. Jesus could therefore say: "Just as the Father taught me I speak these things." (John 8:28; Proverbs 8:22, 30) Christ's own words recorded in the Bible add much to our knowledge of divine teaching. By teaching what Jesus taught, anointed Christians obey their Grand Instructor,

3. Why is Jesus Christ the greatest teacher ever to walk the earth?

whose will it is that “the greatly diversified wisdom of God” be made known through the congregation.—Ephesians 3:10, 11; 5:1; Luke 6:40.

The Quest for Wisdom

⁴ Gaining the wisdom that results from divine teaching calls for diligent use of our God-given thinking faculties. This is possible because the human brain has tremendous potential. Says the book *The Incredible Machine*: “Even the most sophisticated computers that we can envision are crude compared to the almost infinite complexity and flexibility of the human brain—qualities made possible by its intricate, calibrated system of electrochemical signals. . . . The millions of signals flashing through your brain at any moment carry an extraordinary load of information. They bring news about your body’s inner and outer environments: about a cramp in your toe, or the aroma of coffee, or a friend’s funny comment. As other signals process and analyze information, they produce certain emotions, memories, thoughts, or plans which lead to a decision. Almost immediately, signals from your brain tell other parts of your body what to do: wiggle your toe, drink the coffee, laugh, or perhaps make a witty reply. Meanwhile your brain is also monitoring your breathing, blood chemistry, temperature, and other essential processes outside your awareness. It sends out commands that keep your body on an even keel despite constant changes in your environment. It also prepares for future demands.”—Page 326.

⁵ Though the human brain unquestionably has wonderful capacity, how can we use the mind in the best way? Not by immersing ourselves solely in arduous study of lan-

guage, history, science, or comparative religion. We should use our thinking faculties primarily to receive divine teaching. It alone results in genuine wisdom. But what is true wisdom? In the Scriptural sense, wisdom lays emphasis on sound judgment based on accurate knowledge and real understanding. Wisdom enables us to use knowledge and understanding successfully to solve problems, to avoid or avert dangers, to help others, and to achieve goals. Interestingly, the Bible contrasts wisdom with foolishness and stupidity—traits we surely want to avoid.—Deuteronomy 32:6; Proverbs 11:29; Ecclesiastes 6:8.

Jehovah’s Great Textbook

⁶ There is plenty of worldly wisdom around us. (1 Corinthians 3:18, 19) Why, this world abounds with schools and libraries containing millions of books! Many of these are textbooks that impart instruction in language, mathematics, science, and other fields of knowledge. But the Grand Instructor has provided the textbook that outstrips all others—his inspired Word, the Bible. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17) It is accurate not only when touching on such subjects as history, geography, and botany but also when foretelling the future. Moreover, it helps us to live the happiest and most productive life right now. Of course, just as students in a worldly school need to use their books, we must become well acquainted with and use God’s great Textbook if we are to display true wisdom as those “taught by Jehovah.”—John 6:45.

⁷ Yet, intellectual acquaintance with the Bible is not the same as true wisdom and compliance with divine teaching. To illustrate: In the 17th century C.E., a

4. What has been said about the capacity of the brain?

5. In the Scriptural sense, what is wisdom?

6. If we are to display true wisdom, what must be put to good use?

7. Why would you say that intellectual acquaintance with the Bible’s contents is not enough?

Jesus maintained integrity to death—the bruising of the Seed in the heel

Catholic man named Cornelius van der Steen sought to become a Jesuit but was rejected because he was too short. Says Manfred Barthel in his book *The Jesuits—History & Legend of the Society of Jesus*: “The committee informed van der Steen that they were prepared to waive the height requirement, but only with the proviso that he would learn to recite the entire Bible by heart. The story would hardly be worth telling if van der Steen had not complied with this rather presumptuous request.” What effort it took to memorize the whole Bible! Surely, however, it is far more important to understand God’s Word than it is to memorize it.

⁸ If we are to benefit fully from divine

8. What will help us to benefit from divine teaching and display true wisdom?



teaching and are to display true wisdom, we need accurate knowledge of the Scriptures. We must also be guided by Jehovah’s holy spirit, or active force. This will enable us to learn profound truths, “the deep things of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:10) Hence, let us diligently study Jehovah’s great Textbook and pray for his guidance by holy spirit. In harmony with Proverbs 2:1-6, let us pay attention to wisdom, incline our heart to discernment, and call out for understanding. We need to do this as though we were searching for hidden treasures, for only then will we ‘understand the fear of Jehovah and find the very knowledge of God.’ Consideration of some triumphs and benefits of divine teaching will enhance our appreciation for God-given wisdom.

Progressive Understanding

⁹ Divine teaching triumphs by imparting to Jehovah’s people a progressive understanding of the Scriptures. For instance, we have learned that it was Satan the Devil who spoke through a serpent in Eden and falsely charged that God lied when He said that death would be the penalty for eating the forbidden fruit. Nevertheless, we see that disobedience to Jehovah God did bring death upon the human race. (Genesis 3:1-6; Romans 5:12) Yet, God gave mankind hope when he told the serpent, and thus Satan:

9, 10. What did God say, as recorded at Genesis 3:15, and what is the proper understanding of those words?

"I shall put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed. He will bruise you in the head and you will bruise him in the heel."—Genesis 3:15.

¹⁰ Those words embodied a secret that has been progressively revealed through divine teaching. Jehovah has taught his people that the Bible's foremost theme is the vindication of his sovereignty by means of the Seed, a descendant of Abraham and David having the legal right to Kingdom rulership. (Genesis 22:15-18; 2 Samuel 7:12, 13; Ezekiel 21:25-27) Our Grand Instructor has taught us that Jesus Christ is the primary Seed of the "woman," God's universal organization. (Galatians 3:16) Despite every test that Satan brought upon him, Jesus maintained integrity—even to death, the bruising of the Seed in the heel. We have also learned that 144,000 Kingdom joint heirs from among mankind will share with Christ in crushing the head of Satan, "the original serpent." (Revelation 14:1-4; 20:2; Romans 16:20; Galatians 3:29; Ephesians 3:4-6) How we appreciate such knowledge of God's Word!

Into God's Wonderful Light

¹¹ Divine teaching triumphs by bringing people into spiritual light. Anointed Christians have had that experience in fulfillment of 1 Peter 2:9: "You are 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for special possession, that you should declare abroad the excellencies' of the one that called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." Today, God-given light is also enjoyed by "a great crowd" that will live forever on a paradise earth. (Revelation 7:9; Luke 23:43) As God teaches his people, Proverbs 4:18 proves true: "The path of the righteous

ones is like the bright light that is getting lighter and lighter until the day is firmly established." This progressive learning process refines our understanding of divine teaching, even as students make advancement because of a teacher's fine help while they study grammar, history, or some other subject.

¹² Another triumph of divine teaching is that it protects its humble recipients from the "teachings of demons." (1 Timothy 4:1) On the other hand, look at Christendom! Back in 1878, Roman Catholic prelate John Henry Newman wrote: "Confiding then in the power of Christianity to resist the infection of evil, and to transmute the very instruments and appendages of demon-worship to an evangelical use, . . . the rulers of the Church from early times were prepared, should the occasion arise, to adopt, or imitate, or sanction the existing rites and customs of the populace, as well as the philosophy of the educated class." Newman added that such things as holy water, sacerdotal vestments, and images were "all of pagan origin, and sanctified by their adoption into the Church." God's people are grateful indeed that divine teaching protects them from such apostasy. It prevails over all forms of demonism.—Acts 19:20.

¹³ Divine teaching triumphs over religious error in every way. As those taught by God, for instance, we do not believe in the Trinity but acknowledge that Jehovah is the Most High, Jesus is his Son, and the holy spirit is God's active force. We do not fear hellfire, for we realize that the Bible hell is mankind's common grave. And whereas false religionists say that the human soul is immortal, we know that the dead are conscious of nothing at all. On and

11. Why can it be said that divine teaching triumphs by bringing people into spiritual light?

12, 13. Against what doctrinal dangers has divine teaching protected Jehovah's people?

on goes the list of truths acquired through divine teaching. What a blessing it is to be free of spiritual bondage to Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion!—John 8:31, 32; Revelation 18:2, 4, 5.

¹⁴ Because divine teaching triumphs over religious error, it enables God's servants to walk in spiritual light. In effect, they hear a word behind them saying: "This is the way. Walk in it, you people." (Isaiah 30:21) God's teaching also protects his servants from false reasoning. When "false apostles" were causing trouble in the congregation in Corinth, the apostle Paul wrote: "The weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but powerful by God for overturning strongly entrenched things. For we are overturning reasonings and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God; and we are bringing every thought into captivity to make it obedient to the Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:4, 5; 11:13-15) Reasonings contrary to divine teaching are overturned by the instruction given with mildness in the congregation and by the preaching of the good news to those outside.—2 Timothy 2:24-26.

14. Why can God's servants go on walking in spiritual light?

What Have You Learned?

- ☐ How may true wisdom be defined?
- ☐ What has God progressively revealed concerning Genesis 3:15?
- ☐ How has divine teaching triumphed in spiritual matters?
- ☐ What does it mean to worship God with spirit and truth?
- ☐ How has divine teaching helped Jehovah's servants to triumph over trials and the world?

Worship With Spirit and Truth

¹⁵ As the Kingdom-preaching work forges ahead, divine teaching triumphs in showing the meek how to worship God "with spirit and truth." At Jacob's well near the city of Sychar, Jesus told a Samaritan woman that he could provide water that imparted everlasting life. Referring to the Samaritans, he added: "You worship what you do not know . . . The hour is coming, and it is now, when the true worshipers will worship the Father with spirit and truth, for, indeed, the Father is looking for suchlike ones to worship him." (John 4:7-15, 21-23) Jesus then identified himself as the Messiah.

¹⁶ But how can we worship God with spirit? By rendering pure worship from grateful hearts filled with love of God based on accurate knowledge of his Word. We can worship him with truth by rejecting religious falsehoods and by doing the divine will, as revealed in Jehovah's great Textbook.

Triumphant Over Trials and the World

¹⁷ When God's people face trials, divine teaching triumphs again and again. Consider this: At the start of World War II, in September 1939, Jehovah's servants needed special insight into his great Textbook. Of great help was an article in *The Watchtower*, November 1, 1939, that clearly presented divine teaching on the matter of Christian neutrality. (John 17:16) Similarly, in the early 1960's, *Watchtower* articles on relative subjection to governmental "superior authorities" helped God's people to comply with divine teaching in the face of social unrest.—Romans 13:1-7; Acts 5:29.

15, 16. What does it mean to worship Jehovah with spirit and truth?

17. How could you prove that divine teaching has helped Jehovah's servants to face trials?

¹⁸ Divine teaching helps us to triumph over temptations, such as enticements to seek debased entertainment. Note what was said by professed Christians of the second and third centuries of our Common Era. Tertullian wrote: "We have nothing to do, in speech, sight or hearing, with the madness of the circus, the shamelessness of the theatre, the savagery of the arena." Another writer of that period asked: "What does a faithful Christian do among these things, since he may not even think upon wickedness? Why does he find pleasure in the representations of lust?" Even though these writers lived some years after the first-century Christians, they condemned debased amusements. Today, divine teaching gives us wisdom to shun obscene, immoral, and violent entertainment.

18. How did professed Christians in the second and third centuries C.E. view debased entertainment, and what help does divine teaching provide in that regard today?

¹⁹ Complying with divine teaching enables us to triumph over the world itself. Yes, applying the teaching of our Grand Instructor makes us victorious over the evil influences of this world lying in Satan's power. (2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 John 5:19) Ephesians 2:1-3 says that God has made us alive though we were dead in our trespasses and sins when we walked according to the ruler of the authority of the air. We thank Jehovah that divine teaching helps us to triumph over worldly desires and the spirit emanating from his enemy and ours—the archdeceiver, Satan the Devil!

²⁰ Clearly, then, divine teaching is triumphant in many ways. In fact, it would seem impossible to cite all its triumphs. It affects people around the world. But what is it doing for you? How is divine teaching affecting your life?

19. How does divine teaching help us to triumph over the world?

20. What questions merit further consideration?

ENJOY THE BENEFITS OF DIVINE TEACHING

"I, Jehovah, am your God, the One teaching you to benefit yourself."—ISAIAH 48:17.

JEHOVAH GOD knows best. Nobody surpasses him in thought, word, or action. As our Creator, he is aware of our needs and supplies them abundantly. He certainly knows how to instruct us. And if we apply

1. How will we fare if we apply divine teaching in our lives?

divine teaching, we benefit ourselves and enjoy true happiness.

² Divine teaching reveals God's earnest desire that his servants avoid calamity and

2, 3. (a) How would God's ancient people have benefited themselves if they had obeyed his commandments? (b) What will happen if we apply divine teaching in our lives today?

enjoy life by complying with his laws and principles. If Jehovah's ancient people had listened to him, they would have enjoyed rich blessings, for he had told them: "I, Jehovah, am your God, the One teaching you to benefit yourself, the One causing you to tread in the way in which you should walk. O if only you would actually pay attention to my commandments! Then your peace would become just like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea." —Isaiah 48:17, 18.

³ God's ancient people would have benefited themselves if they had paid attention to his commandments and instructions. Instead of suffering calamity at Babylonian hands, they would have enjoyed peace and prosperity as full, deep, and perennial as a river. Moreover, their righteous deeds would have been as innumerable as the sea's waves. Similarly, if we apply divine teaching in our lives, we can enjoy its many benefits. What are some of these?

It Changes Lives

⁴ Divine teaching has been benefiting many people by changing their lives for the good. Those who apply Jehovah's instruction abandon "works of the flesh," such as loose conduct, idolatry, spiritism, strife, and jealousy. Instead, they display the spirit's fruitage of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:19-23) They also heed the counsel of Ephesians 4:17-24, where Paul urges fellow believers not to walk as the nations do, in the unprofitableness of their minds and in mental darkness, alienated from the life that belongs to God. Not being led by insensible hearts, Christlike individuals 'put away the old per-

4. How has divine teaching been affecting the lives of many people?

sonality that conforms to their former course of conduct and are made new in the force actuating their mind.' They 'put on the new personality created according to God's will in true righteousness and loyalty.'

⁵ A fine benefit of applying divine teaching is that it shows us how to walk with God. If we walk with Jehovah, as Noah did, we follow the life course outlined by our Grand Instructor. (Genesis 6:9; Isaiah 30:20, 21) People of the nations "walk in the unprofitableness of their minds," as the apostle Paul said. And how unprofitable some writings of those minds can be! Noting the writings of others on a wall in Pompeii, one observer himself wrote: "It is a wonder, O wall, that thou hast not yet crumbled under the weight of so much written nonsense." But there is no nonsense in "the teaching of Jehovah" and the Kingdom-preaching work it makes possible. (Acts 13:12) By means of that work, truth-loving people are brought to their senses. They are taught how to stop walking in their sinful way, in ignorance of God's purposes. No longer are they in darkness mentally, nor are they motivated by insensible hearts seeking unprofitable goals.

⁶ Divine teaching also benefits us in that it acquaints us with Jehovah and his dealings. Such knowledge draws us closer to God, increases our love for him, and heightens our desire to obey him. Says 1 John 5:3: "This is what the love of God means, that we observe his commandments; and yet his commandments are not burdensome." We also comply with Jesus' commandments because we know that his teaching is from God. (John 7:16-18) Such obedience pro-

5. How does divine teaching affect the way people walk?

6. What relationship is there between our obedience to Jehovah's teaching and our happiness?

**Divine teaching shows us how to walk
with God, as Noah did**

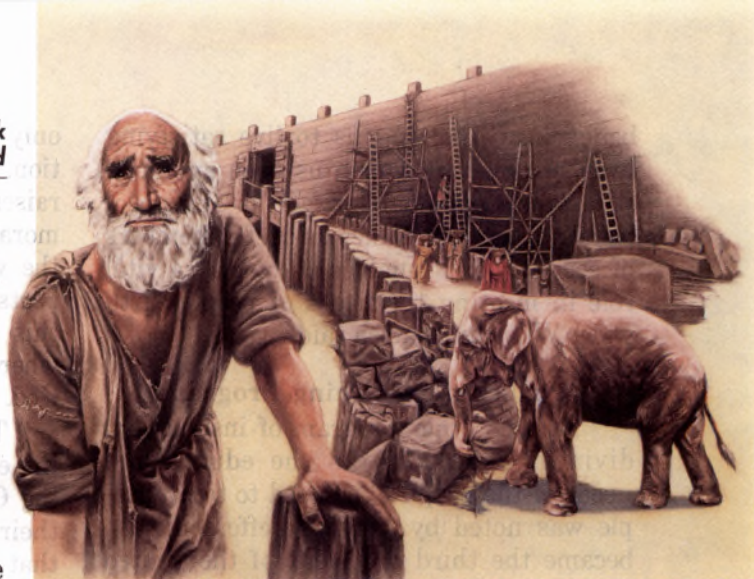
protects us from spiritual harm and promotes our happiness.

A Real Purpose in Life

⁷ The teaching of Jehovah is beneficial in showing us how to use our life in a purposeful manner. In fact, divine teaching shows us how to count our days in a special way. A life expectancy of 70 years holds promise of some 25,550 days. A person 50 years old has already spent 18,250 of them, and his 7,300 remaining hoped-for days seem few indeed. Especially then may he appreciate more fully why the prophet Moses prayed to God at Psalm 90:12: "Show us just how to count our days in such a way that we may bring a heart of wisdom in." But what did Moses mean by that?

⁸ Moses did not mean that God would reveal the exact number of days there would be in the lifetime of each Israelite. According to Psalm 90, verses 9 and 10, that Hebrew prophet recognized that a life span might be some 70 or 80 years—brief indeed. So the words of Psalm 90:12 evidently expressed Moses' prayerful desire that Jehovah show, or teach, him and His people to exercise wisdom in valuing 'the days of their years' and using them in a God-approved way. Well, then, what about us? Do we appreciate each precious day? Are we bringing in a heart of wisdom by seeking to spend every day in a worthwhile way to the glory of our Grand Instructor, Jehovah God? Divine teaching helps us to do just that.

7, 8. (a) How are we to understand Psalm 90:12? (b) How can we bring in a heart of wisdom?



⁹ If we learn to count our days to Jehovah's glory, we may be able to keep right on counting, for divine teaching imparts knowledge for life eternal. "This means everlasting life," said Jesus, "their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." (John 17:3) Of course, if we acquired all the worldly knowledge available, it would not bring us life eternal. But everlasting life can be ours if we gain and apply accurate knowledge of the two most important persons in the universe and really exercise faith.

¹⁰ No matter how long we have already lived, let us remember this notable benefit of divine teaching: It gives those applying it a real purpose in life. *The World Book Encyclopedia* states: "Education should help people become useful members of society. It should also help them develop an appreciation of their cultural heritage and live more satisfying lives." Divine teaching is

9. What can be expected if we learn to count our days to Jehovah's glory?

10. What does one encyclopedia say about education, and how does this compare with the benefits of divine teaching?

beneficial in helping us to live satisfying lives. It develops within us keen appreciation for our spiritual heritage as God's people. And it surely makes us useful members of society, for it enables us to play a vital role in meeting the needs of people earth wide. Why can that be said?

Worldwide Teaching Program

¹¹ Like no other program of instruction, divine teaching meets the educational needs of the people. The need to teach people was noted by Thomas Jefferson, who became the third president of the United States. In a letter of August 13, 1786, to George Wythe, a friend and a cosigner of the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson wrote: "I think by far the most important bill in our whole code is that for the diffusion of knowledge among the people. No other sure foundation can be devised, for the preservation of freedom and happiness. . . . Preach, my dear sir, a crusade against ignorance; establish and improve the law for educating the common people. Let our countrymen know . . . that the tax which will be paid for the purpose [of education] is not more than the thousandth part of what will be paid to kings, priests, and nobles who will rise up among us if we leave the people in ignorance."

¹² Far from leaving righteously disposed people in ignorance, Jehovah's teaching provides the best program for global education for their benefit. While World War II was still raging 50 years ago, the U.S. Committee on Educational Reconstruction saw an urgent need for "global education." That need still exists, but divine teaching is the

11. How did Thomas Jefferson highlight the need for proper education?

12. Why can it be said that divine teaching is the most successful and beneficial program for global education?

only successful program for global education. It is also the most beneficial because it raises people out of despair, uplifts them morally and spiritually, saves them from the world's pride and prejudice, and imparts knowledge for eternal life. Above all, this program is benefiting people everywhere by teaching them to serve Jehovah God.

¹³ The benefits of divine teaching are being enjoyed by the multitudes now becoming God's servants. They are conscious of their spiritual need and are fully aware that Jehovah's day is near. (Matthew 5:3; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6) Right now, "in the final part of the days," these people of all nations are streaming to Jehovah's mountain, his pure worship. It is firmly established and is exalted high above all worship that is contrary to God's will. (Isaiah 2:2-4) If you are a dedicated Witness of Jehovah, are you not delighted to be among the ever-increasing throngs worshipping him and benefiting from divine teaching? How wonderful it is to be among those who exclaim: "Praise Jah, you people!"—Psalm 150:6.

Beneficial Effect on Our Spirit

¹⁴ Among the many benefits of divine teaching is the fine effect it can have on our thinking and spirit. It prompts us to think on righteous, chaste, virtuous, and praiseworthy things. (Philippians 4:8) Jehovah's teaching helps us to follow Paul's counsel: "Be babes as to badness; yet become full-grown in powers of understanding." (1 Corinthians 14:20) If we apply this admonition, we will not seek knowledge in wickedness. Paul also wrote: "Let all malicious bitterness and anger and wrath and screaming and abusive speech be taken

13. How is Isaiah 2:2-4 being fulfilled today?

14. Of what benefit is it to follow Paul's counsel at 1 Corinthians 14:20?



People of all nations are streaming to Jehovah's mountain

ing them on television or in motion pictures. The heart is treacherous, can easily acquire a desire for bad things, and can be tempted to do them. (Jeremiah 17:9) Let us therefore avoid such temptations by adhering to divine teaching. It can affect the thinking of "lovers of Jehovah" to such a beneficial extent that they "hate what is bad."—Psalm 97:10.

¹⁶ Paul told his coworker Timothy: "The Lord be with the spirit you show. His undeserved kindness be with you people." (2 Timothy 4:22) The apostle desired that God, by the Lord Jesus Christ, approve the actuating force motivating Timothy and other Christians. God's teaching helps us to display a loving, kind, mild spirit. (Colossians 3:9-14) And how it differs from that of many in these last days! They are haughty, unthankful, lacking in natural affection, not open to any agreement, headstrong, pleasure-loving, and bereft of true godly devotion. (2 Timothy 3:1-5) As we continue to apply the benefits of divine teaching in our lives, however, we display a spirit that endears us to God and fellow humans.

Beneficial in Human Relations

¹⁷ Jehovah's teaching helps us to see the benefits of humble cooperation with fellow worshipers. (Psalm 138:6) Unlike many people today, we do not violate righteous principles but are open to agreement. For example, much good results because appointed overseers are open to agreement during meetings of elders. These men can speak calmly in the interest of truth, while not allowing emotion to overshadow logic or

away from you *along with all badness.*" (Ephesians 4:31) Heeding such counsel will help us to avoid immorality and other gross sins. While this can be beneficial physically and mentally, it will especially bring us the joy of knowing that we are pleasing God.

¹⁵ If we are to remain virtuous in thought, one help is to avoid 'bad associations that spoil useful habits.' (1 Corinthians 15:33) As Christians, we would not keep company with fornicators, adulterers, and other wrongdoers. Logically, then, we must not associate with such individuals by reading about them for sensual pleasure or by view-

15. What can help us to remain virtuous in thought?

16. How can God's teaching affect the spirit we display?

17. Why is humble cooperation so important?

cause disunity. All members of the congregation will benefit from the spirit of unity we enjoy if all of us keep on applying divine teaching.—Psalm 133:1-3.

¹⁸ Divine teaching is also beneficial in helping us to have a proper view of fellow believers. Jesus said: “No man can come to me unless the Father, who sent me, draws him.” (John 6:44) Since 1919 in particular, Jehovah has had his servants proclaim his judgments, and Satan’s world system has been rocked and shaken by this global warning. At the same time, God-fearing humans — “the desirable things” — have been drawn by God to separate themselves from the nations and share with anointed Christians in filling Jehovah’s house of worship with glory. (Haggai 2:7) Surely, we should view such desirable ones drawn by God as beloved associates.

¹⁹ Because all of us are imperfect, of course, things will not always go smoothly. When Paul was about to set out on his second missionary trip, Barnabas was deter-

18. Divine teaching helps us to have what view of fellow believers?

19. What does God’s teaching reveal about settling personal difficulties with fellow Christians?

What Have You Learned?

- ☐ What effect can divine teaching have on our lives?
- ☐ How is Jehovah’s teaching meeting educational needs?
- ☐ What beneficial effect can divine teaching have on our thinking and attitude?
- ☐ How does God’s teaching prove beneficial with regard to human relations?

mined to take Mark along. Paul did not agree because Mark “had departed from them from Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work.” At that, “a sharp burst of anger” ensued. Barnabas took Mark with him to Cyprus, whereas Paul had Silas accompany him through Syria and Cilicia. (Acts 15:36-41) Later, this breach was evidently healed, for Mark was with Paul in Rome, and the apostle spoke well of him. (Colossians 4:10) One benefit of divine teaching is that it shows us how to settle personal difficulties between Christians by following such counsel as that of Jesus at Matthew 5:23, 24 and Matthew 18:15-17.

Ever Beneficial and Triumphant

²⁰ Even from our brief consideration of some benefits and triumphs of divine teaching, doubtless all of us can see the need to persevere in applying it in our lives. With a prayerful spirit, then, let us continue to learn from our Grand Instructor. Soon, divine teaching will triumph as never before. It will be triumphant when this world’s intellectual ones have drawn their last breath. (Compare 1 Corinthians 1:19.) Moreover, as millions more learn and do God’s will, the knowledge of Jehovah will fill the earth as the waters cover the very sea. (Isaiah 11:9) How grandly this will benefit obedient mankind and vindicate Jehovah as the Universal Sovereign!

²¹ The teaching of Jehovah will always be beneficial and triumphant. Will you continue to benefit from it as an ardent student of God’s great Textbook? Are you living in harmony with the Bible and sharing its truths with others? If so, you can look forward to seeing the complete triumph of divine teaching, to the glory of our Grand Instructor, the Sovereign Lord Jehovah.

20, 21. Our consideration of divine teaching should move us to do what?

KINGDOM PROCLAIMERS REPORT

"The Name of Jehovah Is a Strong Tower"

WE LIVE in unstable times. Our apparently stable lives can change overnight, and without warning some have found themselves in great peril before they realized it. Danger may come from political upheaval, a violent assailant, a natural disaster, or a serious illness. Whatever the case, where should a Christian turn when his life is in danger?

David, a missionary living at one of the Watch Tower Society's branches, learned the answer to that question from a frightening experience. An assigned driver, he set out early one morning to pick up some commuter Bethelites (volunteers who live outside the branch). It was still dark. He had picked up Rosalía and was passing a police station when he heard the first shot.

Then things happened quickly. He heard a noise like a large firecracker and realized that air was hissing out of one of the tires. Suddenly he saw a soldier standing in the middle of the road aiming a rifle straight at him. Three things happened almost simultaneously: A volley of shots riddled the side of the Jeep, shattering the windows; David and Rosalía ducked; the soldier fired through the windshield at eye level.

As the Jeep was being peppered with bullets, David braked as best he could while still bent down. Both David and Rosalía thought they were going to die. They prayed aloud to Jehovah, asking him to watch over them. Rosalía later said that in those moments she wondered how her family would react when they heard of her death!

Still Alive!

The noise of shots and shattering glass finally stopped, and David glanced over at Rosalía. When he saw a small, round bloodstain on her back, his heart almost stopped. But a piece of flying glass, not a bullet, had embedded itself there. Her knees were bleeding from cuts made



Fotografía de Publicaciones Capriles, Caracas, Venezuela

by falling glass, but otherwise she seemed all right.

Men in military uniforms with white armbands came up to the Jeep and ordered them to get out with their hands up. One, who seemed to be of higher rank, turned to a soldier and said: "You were told *not* to shoot at civilians." The soldier made excuses, claiming that he heard shots and thought they came from the Jeep.

When David identified Rosalía and himself as Jehovah's Witnesses, the reaction was favorable. He explained what he had been doing, but the soldiers still wanted to detain them. Apparently, in the early hours of the morning, a military faction had staged a coup d'état, and these soldiers had been in the process of taking over the police station as David and Rosalía passed in the Jeep.

Rosalía was badly shaken but bravely kept calm as David pleaded for them to be released. Eventually they were allowed to leave—without the Jeep. They had to walk to a nearby avenue and catch a bus to the branch, where the infirmary attended to Rosalía.

The Power of Prayer

David learned something from the experience—never underestimate the power of earnest prayer, and never forget that courageously identifying oneself as one of Jehovah's Witnesses is often a protection. It may literally be true that "the name of Jehovah is a strong tower. Into it the righteous runs and is given protection."—Proverbs 18:10; Philippians 4:6.



WE HAVE SOUGHT FIRST THE KINGDOM

AS TOLD BY OLIVE SPRINGATE

Mother had just blown out the candle and had left the room after hearing our prayers. My younger brother immediately asked me: "Olive, how can God see and hear us through brick walls?"

"MOTHER says he can see through *anything*," I replied, "even right into our hearts." Mother was a God-fearing woman and an avid Bible reader, and she infused in us children a deep respect for God and for Bible principles.

Our parents were members of the Anglican Church in the small town of Chatham, Kent County, England. Although Mother was a regular churchgoer, she believed that

being a Christian meant more than just warming a seat in church once a week. She was also sure that God must have just one true church.

Appreciation for Bible Truth

In 1918, when I was about five, Mother acquired the volumes entitled *Studies in the Scriptures*, written by Charles T. Russell, the first president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. A few years later, while

living in a small place called Wigmore, Mother was contacted by one of the Bible Students, as Jehovah's Witnesses were then known. She accepted the Bible study aid *The Harp of God*, and from it she began finding answers to many of her Bible questions. Every week a pink card with printed questions on each chapter came in the mail. The card also showed where in the book the answers could be found.

In 1926 my parents, my sister Beryl, and I left the Anglican Church because we were disgusted with the church's involvement in politics, as well as with many of its unreasonable teachings. A prominent teaching was that God would torment people for all eternity in a hell of fire. My mother, who was truly searching for Bible truth, was convinced that the Anglican Church was not the true one.

Shortly afterward, in answer to Mother's earnest prayers, Mrs. Jackson, a Bible Student, visited us. For nearly two hours, she spoke with Mother and me, answering our questions from the Bible. We were delighted to learn, among other things, that our prayers should be directed to Jehovah God, the Father of Jesus Christ, and not to some mysterious Trinity. (Psalm 83:18; John 20:17) But to me the most unforgettable question that Mother asked was this one: "What does it mean to seek first the Kingdom?"—Matthew 6:33.

The Bible-based answer deeply affected our lives. From that very week, we started to attend meetings of the Bible Students and to share the things we learned with others. We were convinced that we had found the truth. A few months later, in 1927, Mother was baptized in symbol of her dedication to serve Jehovah, and in 1930, I too was baptized.

Getting Into the Pioneer Service

Our family attended the Gillingham Congregation, which was made up of about 25 persons. Several of them were full-time ministers, called pioneers, and all had the heavenly hope. (Philippians 3:14, 20) Their Christian zeal was contagious. While still a teenager, I pioneered for a short time in Belgium in the early 1930's. This fired my desire for further Kingdom service. At that time we shared in distributing to every clergyman a copy of the booklet *The Kingdom, the Hope of the World*.

In time my father became very opposed to our Christian activity, and owing in part to this, I moved to London in 1932 to go to college. Later I taught school for four years and during that time associated with the Blackheath Congregation, one of only four in London at the time. It was then that we began hearing reports of the imprisonment and suffering of our Christian brothers and sisters in Hitler's Germany because they refused to support Hitler's war efforts.

In 1938, the very month I finished paying off a debt for books I had acquired, I left my job to fulfill my desire to become a pioneer. My sister Beryl started pioneering in London at the same time, but she lived in a different pioneer home. My first pioneer partner was Mildred Willett, who later married John Barr, now a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses. Along with others in our group, we would cycle to the territory and stay out all day, often despite the rain.

War clouds were already hovering over Europe. Gas-mask drills were being held for citizens, and preparations were under way to evacuate children to the English countryside or to small towns in the event of war. I had only enough money saved to buy

Olive with Mildred Willett beside an information cart, 1939

a pair of shoes, and there was no possibility of financial help from my parents. But had not Jesus said, 'All these other things will be added if you seek first the kingdom'? (Matthew 6:33) I had complete faith that Jehovah would supply all of my needs, and he has done so abundantly all these years. During wartime I at times supplemented my small rations with vegetables picked up along the road after loaded trucks went by. And I often obtained food by trading Bible literature for fruits and vegetables.

My sister Sonia was born in 1928. She was only seven years old when she dedicated her life to Jehovah. Sonia says that even at that young age, pioneering had become her goal. In 1941, soon after symbolizing her dedication by water baptism, she realized that goal when she and Mother were assigned as pioneers to Caerphilly, South Wales.

Our Ministry During War Years

In September 1939, World War II began, and our Christian brothers and sisters in Britain were being imprisoned for the very reason their fellow believers in Nazi Germany were—their neutral stand regarding participation in war. The bombings of England began in mid-1940. Night after night, the blitzkrieg was earsplitting, but with Jehovah's help we were able to get some sleep and be refreshed for the preaching work the next day.

At times we would go to our preaching territory only to find most of the houses in ruins. In November a bomb dropped just a few yards from the home in which a number



of us were living, smashing the windows into a thousand pieces. The heavy front door came crashing down, and the chimney collapsed. After spending the rest of the night in an air-raid shelter, we separated and went to live in the homes of different Witnesses.

Shortly thereafter I received an assignment to Croydon, in Greater London. My pioneer partner was Ann Parkin, whose brother Ron Parkin later became the Branch Committee coordinator in Puerto Rico. Afterward I moved to Bridgend, South Wales, where I continued pioneering, living in a horse-drawn van for six months. From there we would cycle four miles to the nearest large congregation, in Port Talbot.

By this time the public was becoming quite hostile toward us, calling us conchies (conscientious objectors). This made it difficult for us to find lodging, but Jehovah cared for us as promised.

Later, eight of us were assigned as special pioneers in Swansea, a port town in South Wales. As the war grew in intensity,

so did prejudice against us. The words "rats" and "cowards" were painted on the wall of our pioneer home. This hostility was largely provoked by newspaper reports that condemned us for our neutral stand. Eventually, one by one, seven of us were sent to jail. I spent a month in Cardiff jail in 1942, and later my sister Beryl also spent time there. Although we had little materially and suffered ridicule and reproach, we were rich spiritually.

Meanwhile, Mother and Sonia were pioneering in Caerphilly and were having similar experiences. The very first Bible study that Sonia conducted was with a lady whom she arranged to visit on a Friday evening. Sonia was confident that Mother would accompany her, but Mother explained: "I have another appointment. You have made the arrangement, so you'll just have to go alone." Even though Sonia was only 13, she went by herself, and the lady made good spiritual progress and later became a dedicated Witness.

Postwar Activity—Then Gilead

When World War II ended in 1945, I was working in isolated territory in Whaley Bridge, Derbyshire. On the morning the cease-fire was announced, we visited and comforted the people who were by then completely fed up with warfare—its orphans, widows, and mutilated bodies.

Some months later, the Society asked for volunteers to preach in Ireland, the Emerald Isle. At the time there were only about 140 of Jehovah's Witnesses on the island, so it was considered missionary territory. Within a few months, some 40 special pioneers were assigned there, and I was among them.

After working for a time in Coleraine and Cookstown in the north, I was assigned,

along with three others, to Drogheda on the east coast. Though the Irish by nature are very warm and hospitable, religious prejudice was great. Thus, during one whole year, we were able to leave with the public only a few Bible study aids (actually only one book and some booklets).

During our stay in Drogheda, I was cycling from one farm to another when a young farm worker suddenly burst through the hedge onto the roadway. He looked up and down the road, then asked in a low voice: "Are you one of Jehovah's Witnesses?" When I replied that I was, he continued: "Last night I had a terrible argument with my fiancée about you girls, and we broke up. She insisted that you are Communists, as the Catholic priests and newspapers say, but I argued that it couldn't possibly be true, since you go openly from house to house."

I gave him a booklet to read, which he hid in his pocket, and we arranged to meet and talk more after dark, since he said: "If I'm seen talking to you, I'll lose my job." That night two of us met him and answered his many questions. He seemed convinced that this was the truth, and he promised to come to our house another night to learn more. He never came, so we felt that he must have been recognized the first night by some cyclists who passed by and probably lost his job. We often wonder if he ever became a Witness.

After attending the district convention in Brighton on the south coast of England in 1949, several of us received invitations to the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead in New York State. A total of 26 from Britain attended the 15th class, which graduated on July 30, 1950, during the international convention at Yankee Stadium.

Our Ministry in Brazil

The following year I was assigned to São Paulo, Brazil, one of the fastest-growing cities in the world. At the time it had just five congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses, but now there are nearly 600 of them! What a contrast it was to working in Ireland! Many of the homes in our territory in São Paulo were mansions, surrounded by high iron fences with artistic wrought-iron gates. We would summon the owner of the home or the maid by clapping our hands.

As the years went by, there were new assignments. I was privileged to help form new congregations in various places in the interior of the state of São Paulo, including one in Jundiaí in 1955 and another in Piracicaba in 1958. Later, in 1960, my sister Sonia became my missionary partner, and we were assigned to Pôrto Alegre, the capital of the state of Rio Grande do Sul. How, you may wonder, did she get to Brazil?

Sonia and Mother continued to pioneer together in England after World War II. But in the early 1950's, Mother had cancer surgery that left her too weak to go from house to house, although she was able to conduct Bible studies and write letters. Sonia continued in the pioneer work, and at the same time she helped care for Mother. In 1959, Sonia had the privilege of attending the 33rd class of Gilead and was assigned to Brazil. Meanwhile, Beryl cared for Mother until her death in 1962. Beryl by then had married, and she and her family are faithfully serving Jehovah.

In Brazil, Sonia and I assisted several people to dedication and baptism. However, one of the problems that a number of Brazilians had was that of legalizing their marriage. Because of the difficulty in obtaining a divorce in Brazil, it was not uncommon

for couples just to live together without the benefit of marriage. This was especially the case when one of the mates was separated from a former legal marriage mate.

One lady, named Eva, was in that situation when I contacted her. Her legal mate had disappeared, so in order to locate him, we had an announcement made over the radio. When her husband was found, I accompanied her to another city to get his signature to a document that would free her so that she could legalize the union with the unmarried man with whom she was living. In the hearing before the judge, he asked both Eva and me to explain why she wanted to straighten out her marital situation. The judge expressed surprise and also satisfaction when this was explained to him.

On another occasion, I went with one of my Bible students to arrange for a lawyer to handle her case. Again a good witness was given regarding marriage and God's moral standards. In this instance the cost of the divorce was so high that both mates had to work to pay the fees. But to these new Bible students, it was worth the effort. Sonia and I had the privilege of being witnesses to their marriage, and thereafter, along with their three teenage children, we listened to a short Bible talk in their home.

A Rich, Rewarding Life

When Sonia and I dedicated our lives to Jehovah and became pioneers, we intended, if at all possible, that the full-time ministry would be our life's career. We never gave much thought to what would happen in our later years or in the event of illness or financial difficulties. Yet, just as Jehovah promised, we have never been abandoned.—Hebrews 13:6.

Oh, yes, lack of money has sometimes



Olive and Sonia Springate

been a problem. At one time, my partner and I ate parsley sandwiches for lunch for a whole year, but we have never starved, nor have we lacked the basic necessities.

As the years have gone by, our energies have diminished accordingly. During the mid-1980's, both of us had serious operations that resulted in a severe trial for us,

since our preaching activities were greatly curtailed. In January 1987, we were invited to be members of the headquarters staff of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brazil.

Our large family of over a thousand ministers is located some 90 miles outside São Paulo in a beautiful complex of buildings, where we print Bible literature for Brazil and other parts of South America. Here we receive loving care from devoted servants of God. When I first came to Brazil in 1951, there were about 4,000 preachers of the Kingdom message, but now there are over 366,000! Our compassionate heavenly Father has indeed added to us 'all other things' because we have sought first his Kingdom.—Matthew 6:33.

Do You Dignify Others When Offering Counsel?

HOW good and how beneficial it is to be counseled with dignity! "Kind, considerate, caring counsel makes for good relationships," says Edward. "When you feel that the counselor honors and respects you by showing a willingness to listen to your side of the story, the counsel is a lot easier to take," claims Warren. "When a counselor treats me with respect, I feel

free to approach him, asking him for counsel," remarks Norman.

Man's Natural Right to Dignity

Warm, friendly, and loving counsel is indeed welcome. Counseling others the way you want to be counseled is beneficial. (Matthew 7:12) A good counselor takes the time to listen and seeks to understand the

Christian elders need to dignify others when giving counsel

one being counseled—his thinking, his position, and his feelings—instead of criticizing and condemning.—Proverbs 18:13.

Today's counselors, including Christian elders, need to be alert to dignify others when giving counsel. Why? For the simple reason that a prevailing attitude in society is to deal with others in an undignified manner. This is contagious. Very often the ones from whom you expect dignified treatment are the ones who fail to provide it, be they professionals, religious leaders, or others. To illustrate, in the workplace a job dismissal is traumatic and stressful for both the employer and the employee. It is damaging to self-esteem, especially if the one being fired is treated without dignity. Supervisors in this setting must learn how to deliver the "hard message so that it comes across clean, crisp and professional, and keeps the individual's dignity intact," reports *The Vancouver Sun*. Yes, all humans merit dignified treatment.

The General Assembly of the United Nations proclaims: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." Since the dignity of man is under attack, it is with good reason that the Charter of the United Nations and the preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes this quality. They affirm "faith in funda-



mental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person."

Jehovah Created Man With Inherent Dignity

Jehovah is a God of dignity. His inspired Word correctly states, "Dignity and splendor are before him," and, "[His] dignity is recounted above the heavens."—1 Chronicles 16:27; Psalm 8:1.

As a dignified God and Universal Sovereign, he confers dignity upon all his creation, heavenly and earthly. Outstanding among those so honored is his glorified and reigning Son, the King, Christ Jesus. "Dignity and splendor you put upon him," David wrote prophetically.—Psalm 21:5; Daniel 7:14.

Sadly, this basic human right has been much abused throughout history. A powerful angel, who by his actions became Satan the Devil, challenged the rightfulness, righteousness, and deservedness of God's sovereignty. In so doing he showed disrespect for Jehovah and dishonored His dignified name while challenging His right to rule.

He arrogated excessive dignity to himself. Like the Devil, powerful human monarchs, such as Nebuchadnezzar of Bible times, have boasted of their 'might and their majesty.' They have assaulted Jehovah's dignity, attributing unreasonable dignity to themselves. (Daniel 4:30) Satan's oppressive rule, imposed upon the world of mankind, has attacked and continues to attack the dignity of man.

Has your dignity ever been undermined? When counseled, have you been made to feel excessively guilty, ashamed, disgraced, or degraded? "I did not sense concern, compassion, and dignity. I was made to feel worthless," claims André, adding: "This led to feelings of frustration and anxiety, even depression." "It is difficult to accept counsel from someone you feel does not have your best interests at heart," says Laura.

For this reason, Christian overseers are admonished to treat the flock of God with respect and honor. (1 Peter 5:2, 3) If situations arise in which it is necessary and beneficial to counsel others, how can you protect yourself from the thinking and conduct of worldly men who, without hesitation, assault the dignity of others? What can help you to preserve the dignity of fellow Christians, as well as your own?—Proverbs 27:6; Galatians 6:1.

Principles That Preserve Dignity

God's Word is not silent on this subject. A skillful counselor will put implicit trust in the counsel of God's Word, rather than look to the wisdom of this world. The Sacred Writings contain valuable advice. When followed, they dignify both the counselor and the one being instructed. Thus, Paul's direction to the Christian overseer Timothy was: "Do not severely criticize an older man. To the contrary, entreat him as

a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters with all chasteness." (1 Timothy 5:1, 2) How much sorrow, hurt feelings, and embarrassment can be avoided by adhering to these standards!

Notice that the key to successful counseling is proper respect for the other person and his right to be treated in a dignified, caring manner. Christian elders, including traveling overseers, should endeavor to follow this advice, seeking to determine why the one needing readjustment thinks and acts as he does. They should want to hear his point of view, and make every effort to avoid shaming, degrading, or disgracing the one being assisted.

As an elder, let your brother know that you care and want to help him with his problems. That is what a good doctor does when you visit his office for a physical examination. The thought of disrobing in a cold, sterile room may leave you embarrassed and humiliated. How you appreciate a doctor who shows sensitivity to your self-esteem and dignifies you with a covering garment while he performs the necessary examination to determine the cause of your illness! In like manner, a Christian counselor who shows proper respect for the

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Are Jehovah's Witnesses a Cult?

**"Tell Us, When
Will These Things Be?"**

**Keep Your Distance
When Danger Threatens**

individual is kind and firm, yet clothes the recipient with dignity. (Revelation 2:13, 14, 19, 20) Conversely, counsel that is harsh, cold, and unfeeling is like a figurative undressing that makes you feel ashamed, disgraced, and stripped of your dignity.

Theocratic Ministry School overseers are especially careful to counsel with dignity. When counseling the elderly, they reflect the same love that they would show to their fleshly parents. They are considerate, friendly, and warm. Such sensitivity is necessary. It generates an atmosphere conducive to the proper giving and receiving of counsel.

Elders, bear in mind that practical counsel is elevating, encouraging, upbuilding, and positive. Ephesians 4:29 states: "Let a rotten saying not proceed out of your mouth, but whatever saying is good for building up as the need may be, that it may impart what is favorable to the hearers."

There is no need to employ harsh terms, language, or reasoning. Rather, respect for the other person and a desire to preserve his feelings of self-worth and esteem prompt you to present matters in a positive, constructive way. Preface any remarks with sincere, genuine commendation for his good points or qualities, rather than emphasize views that make him feel frustrated and worthless. If you serve as an elder, use your 'authority to build up and not to tear down.' —2 Corinthians 10:8.

Yes, the effect of any counsel from Christian overseers should be to give needed encouragement, to impart what is favorable. It should not discourage or "terrify." (2 Corinthians 10:9) Even one who has committed a serious wrong needs to be accorded a measure of self-respect and dignity. Counsel must be balanced with kind, yet firm, words of reproof so as to move him to re-

pentance.—Psalm 44:15; 1 Corinthians 15:34.

Significantly, God's Law to Israel embodied these same principles. It permitted counsel and even physical discipline, while simultaneously preserving an individual's right to a measure of personal dignity. Beating with strokes "by number to correspond with [the] wicked deed" was allowed, but this was not to be excessive. A limit was imposed on the number of strokes administered so that the wrongdoer would not be "actually disgraced."—Deuteronomy 25:2, 3.

Concern for the feelings of repentant wrongdoers was also characteristic of Jesus. Of him, Isaiah prophesied: "No crushed reed will he break; and as for a dim flaxen wick, he will not extinguish it. In truthness he will bring forth justice."—Isaiah 42:3; Matthew 12:17, 20; Luke 7:37, 38, 44-50.

Further emphasizing the need for empathy are Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount: "All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them." (Matthew 7:12) So pivotal is this principle in promoting good relationships that it is commonly called the Golden Rule. As a Christian elder, how can it help you to treat others with kindness and dignity when counseling?

Keep in mind that you too make mistakes. As James observed, "all stumble many times." (James 3:2) Remembering this will help temper your remarks and control your feelings when it is necessary to talk to others about their shortcomings. Recognize their sensitivities. This will help you to avoid excessive criticism, drawing attention to minor mistakes or flaws. Jesus stressed this when he said: "Stop judging that you may not be judged; for with what judgment you are judging, you will be judged; and with the measure that you are

Counsel That Dignifies

- (1) Give genuine and sincere commendation. (Revelation 2:2, 3)
- (2) Be a good listener. Clearly and kindly identify the problem and the reason for the counsel. (2 Samuel 12:1-14; Proverbs 18:13; Revelation 2:4)
- (3) Base your counsel on the Scriptures. Be positive, reasonable, and encouraging, and show empathy. Keep the recipient's dignity and self-worth intact. (2 Timothy 3:16; Titus 3:2; Revelation 2:5, 6)
- (4) Assure the recipient that blessings come from accepting and applying the counsel. (Hebrews 12:7, 11; Revelation 2:7)

measuring out, they will measure out to you.”—Matthew 7:1, 2.

Dignify Others—Oppose the Devil

Satan's tactics are designed to strip you of dignity, to produce feelings of disgrace, worthlessness, and despair. Notice how he used a human agent to stimulate negative emotions in faithful Job. Hypocritical Eliphaz claimed: “In his servants he [Jehovah] has no faith, and his messengers [holy angels] he charges with faultiness. How much more so with those dwelling in houses of clay [sinful humans], whose foundation is in the dust! One crushes them more quickly than a moth.” (Job 4:18, 19) So according to him, Job was of no more value to God than a moth. Indeed, the counsel of Eliphaz and his companions, far from being upbuilding, would have left Job bereft of even the memory of better times. In their view his past faithfulness, family training, relationship with God, and gifts of mercy were worth nothing.

Likewise today, repentant wrongdoers are particularly susceptible to such feelings, and the danger exists of their being ‘swal-

lowed up by being overly sad.’ Elders, when counseling such ones, “confirm your love” for them by allowing them to preserve a measure of dignity. (2 Corinthians 2:7, 8) “Being treated with a lack of dignity makes it difficult to accept counsel,” admits William. It is essential to strengthen their belief that they are valuable in God's eyes. Remind them that Jehovah is “not unrighteous so as to forget [their] work and the love [they] showed for his name” during their past years of faithful service.—Hebrews 6:10.

What additional factors can help you to dignify others when offering counsel? Recognize that all humans possess a natural right to dignity, since they are made in God's image. They are valued by Jehovah God and Jesus Christ; the dual provisions of the ransom and the resurrection attest to that fact. Jehovah adds further dignity to Christians by “assigning [them] to a ministry,” using them to entreat a wicked generation to make peace with God.—1 Timothy 1:12.

Elders, remember that the vast majority of your Christian brothers are prospective foundation members of the new human society in the cleansed earth. As such valued and precious individuals, they merit being assigned honor. When counseling, recall how both Jehovah and Jesus show consideration for them, and continue to do your part to help your brothers preserve a feeling of dignity and self-worth in the face of Satan's challenges.—2 Peter 3:13; compare 1 Peter 3:7.

The Parliament of the World's Religions WILL IT SUCCEED?

HUNDREDS of religious leaders gathered at the second Parliament of the World's Religions held in Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A., in the summer of 1993. Buddhism, Christendom, Hinduism, Judaism, and Islam were all represented. Witches and goddess-worshippers were present too. They discussed their role in bringing an end to war. The chairman of the parliament acknowledged that "two-thirds of the major conflicts in the world today have religious overtones."

A Hundred Years Ago

Was the parliament successful? Take a look at what happened a hundred years ago at the first Parliament of the World's Religions. It too was held in Chicago, in the summer of 1893, and more than 40 religions were represented. The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions admits that those who attended in 1893 "believed that it would be the first of a series of international interfaith gatherings that would contribute to understanding, peace and progress. It was not to be. Religious intolerance and violence have been part of the wars of the past 100 years, and continue so today." Why the failure? Because the entire concept of interfaith is not approved by God. The Bible says: "Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers."—2 Corinthians 6:14-17.

Appropriately, the September 1893 issue of *Zion's Watch Tower* highlighted the lack of Scriptural support for the Parliament of the World's Religions when it said, not without a trace of satire: "They have dug up

many wonderful baked-clay cylinders out of the ruins of Babylon and other ancient cities, but there are some not yet found. . . . They have not found any which speak of Moses and Joshua having called a 'Parliament of Religions,' of Moabites and Ammonites, and Edomites . . . They have not found any which speak of sturdy old Samuel having sent to Gath and Ekron to get a deputation of the priests of Dagon to come up to Shiloh and hold a conference with the priests of Jehovah . . . They have not found any which speak of old leather-belted Elijah having proposed a 'congress' with the priests of Baal and Moloch for a week's discussion of the tenets of their respective faiths, with a view to the promotion of mutual respect for each other's religion."

God's Kingdom—The Only Hope

The Parliament of the World's Religions will not succeed. Newspapers and delegates used such terms as "chaos," "turmoil," and "bedlam" in connection with the parliament. According to one report, even the police got involved in quieting down two disturbances caused by political divisions. In a 1952 document, the parliament listed as one of its purposes: "To establish a permanent World Parliament of Religions to work with the UNITED NATIONS in the attainment of world peace and understanding among all peoples." In contrast, Jesus said that his Kingdom was no part of this world. The Bible points to God's Kingdom as the only solution to mankind's problems.—Daniel 2:44; John 18:36. ♦

QUESTIONS FROM READERS

God warned Cain that 'sin was crouching at the entrance and for him was its craving,' which seems to allude to a wild beast and its prey. (Genesis 4:7) Why would that language be used if before the Flood, animals ate only vegetation?

In the books written by Moses, we find a number of verses that reflect facts or historical developments that might seem strangely out of place in their historical setting.

For example, the account at Genesis 2:10-14 gives geographical details about the garden of Eden. Moses wrote that one river was "the one going to the east of Assyria." But the land of Assyria derived its name from Asshur, Shem's son born after the Flood. (Genesis 10:8-11, 22; Ezekiel 27:23; Micah 5:6) Evidently, in his accurate, inspired account, Moses simply used the term "Assyria" to refer to a region that was familiar to his readers.

Consider another example from the early chapters of Genesis. After Adam and Eve sinned and were expelled from the garden, Jehovah prevented them from returning. How? Genesis 3:24 says: "He drove the man out and posted at the east of the garden of Eden the cherubs and the flaming blade of a sword that was turning itself continually to guard the way to the tree of life." Notice, "the flaming blade of a sword." Did God invent swords?

We need not conclude that our loving Creator was the first one to make what we know as swords. Adam and Eve saw turning in front of the angels something that was blazing. What exactly was it? By the time Moses wrote the book of Genesis, swords were well-known and used in warfare. (Genesis 31:26; 34:26; 48:22; Exodus 5:21; 17:13) So Moses' words "the flaming blade of a sword" enabled his readers to visualize to a degree what existed at the entrance of Eden. The information known in Moses' day contributed to the understanding of such matters. And the language Moses employed must have been accurate,

for Jehovah had it included in the Bible.—2 Timothy 3:16.

Now what about Genesis 4:7? There God warned Cain: "If you turn to doing good, will there not be an exaltation? But if you do not turn to doing good, there is sin crouching at the entrance, and for you is its craving; and will you, for your part, get the mastery over it?" As noted, the language seems to portray the image of a hungry wild beast crouched to pounce on and devour prey.

Nonetheless, evidence in the Bible points to Adam and Eve's having been at peace with all animals. Some of the creatures may have been quite comfortable around humans, even benefiting from the nearness. Others were wild beasts, animals that naturally sought habitat away from humans. (Genesis 1:25, 30; 2:19) Yet, the Bible does not suggest that any of the animals preyed upon other animals or upon humans. Originally, God specifically assigned vegetation as the diet for both animals and humans. (Genesis 1:29, 30; 7:14-16) That did not change until after the Flood, as Genesis 9:2-5 indicates.

What, then, of God's warning to Cain, as we read at Genesis 4:7? Certainly the image of a savage beast crouched and ready to spring on prey would have been easily understood in Moses' day, and we understand it too. So, again, Moses might have been using language adapted to readers familiar with the post-Flood world. And even if Cain had never seen such a creature, he would have been able to get the point of a warning that likened the sinful desire in him to a hungry, ravenous beast.

The primary aspects that should have greater impact on us are these: God's kindness in warning Cain, the value of humbly accepting counsel, how easily jealousy can corrupt one, and how seriously we should take other divine warnings that God put in the Scriptures for us.—Exodus 18:20; Ecclesiastes 12:12; Ezekiel 3:17-21; 1 Corinthians 10:11; Hebrews 12:11; James 1:14, 15; Jude 7, 11.



The Complete Encyclopedia of Illustration/J. G. Heck

“More Than a Strong Town”

“AT CURRENT rates, about 40% of U.S. children will witness the breakup of their parents’ marriages before they reach 18.” (*Science*, June 7, 1991) What a frightening statistic! Why does this happen?

Family and probate court judge Edward M. Ginsburg, in an interview with *The Boston Globe*, gave his view. He said: “We are a selfish society. We want for ‘me.’ We ask, ‘What’s in it for me now?’ We want instant gratification.”

Such immature selfishness leads to bitterness and conflict in marriage. Judge Ginsburg says that when couples finally reach the divorce court, husband and wife want vindication. They want someone to tell them that they’re right and that their partner is wrong. They want someone to say: “You’ve won the battle.”

His words remind us of the inspired proverb: “A brother who is transgressed against is more than a strong town.” (Proverbs 18:19) Yes, when strife breaks out in a marriage, the warring parties can be unreasonable and rigid. Often, they adamantly refuse to make concessions, like “a strong town” under siege.

Do things have to be this way? No, there is an alternative. Marriages are strong and enduring when both parties, right from the start, heed the apostle Paul’s words: “Become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, freely forgiving one another just as God also by Christ freely forgave you.” (Ephesians 4:32) Is it easy to cultivate such qualities? Not always. But how easy is divorce? How painful are the emotional and financial burdens of a broken marriage? And what of the children, who often carry the scars of their parents’ divorce into adult life?

It is far better for both partners to work to preserve a marriage and not to be intransigent toward each other, like “a strong town.” Paul’s counsel to Christians applies especially to married couples: “Clothe yourselves with love, for it is a perfect bond of union.”—Colossians 3:14.