

# Church of God, The Eternal

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Warm greetings to all:

As I am sitting to write this letter in the small building which serves me as an office, the north wind is blowing; it is cold, winter is here. Being warm and comfortable, I look through the window and cannot help admiring the many birds which come and eat seed on the windowsill. Their determination to face the bad weather is manifest; their vitality is extraordinary. Although the elements are not favorable to them, they do not worry, they are not concerned about tomorrow; they do not even know whether or not they will find something to eat on the windowsill tomorrow. They live in the present with a confidence and vitality which can make every human being envious. Without doubt, there is a lesson to be learned from that.

In the depths of trial, Job said to his friends who plagued him with reproaches, "But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee. . . . Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind" (Job 12:7, 9-10). How true that is! And yet it is hard for man with all his learning and technology to manifest the same confidence and assurance which birds have as they face unfavorable conditions. Anxiety seems to be glued to our skin. We worry about hostile people who live around us; we worry about unemployment; we wonder whether or not we will be able to keep our jobs and provide for our families. Our health is a source of concern, it affects us greatly because we are deeply concerned with our physical lives. There are many things which trouble us. And worry generates a lot of discussions, complaints, and anguish which get us nowhere at all. In Job 35 we read, "By reason of the multitude of oppressions they make the oppressed to cry: they cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty. But none saith, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night; Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven? There they cry, but none giveth answer [but he does not answer, RSV], because of the pride of evil men" (Job 35:9-12). It is not by means of our arguments and complaints that we are going to be delivered from our ills, our worries, and everything that troubles us. "Surely God does not hear an empty cry, nor does the Almighty regard it" (v. 13, RSV).

God wants us to remember that in His hand is the breath of all mankind. He is the One who has the true remedy for everything which worries us. And He wants us to learn to put all things into His hands and trust Him. We must learn to live without letting the perplexities of life and the agitations of human beings trouble us. God expects us to turn to Him and have confidence in Him. But truly having confidence in God implies a certain type of conduct in our lives. It is not an arrogant and conceited spirit; it is a confidence accompanied by humility, a confidence which comes from our submission to the Word of God and our great respect for the promises which He makes to us. If the breath of all mankind is in God's hands, if God has made all things, then He also has the solutions for all things!

It is interesting that Jesus Christ used the birds and even the grass of the field to illustrate the confidence which we should have. "And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for [do not be anxious about, RSV; don't worry about, Living Bible] your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment" (Luke 12:22-23). Christ said, "Don't worry!" Everyone knows this does not mean that we can be remiss in our responsibilities in life, for the Apostle Paul said that "if any provide not for his own, he is worse than an infidel." Therefore we must work in order to fulfill our physical responsibilities in a some way. "Don't worry" means not being always anxious and concerned about these physical things. So Christ shows to those whom He has chosen that the birds are not troubled, they have no worry, no frustration; God provides for them and by their vitality they manifest this assurance and confidence which we should have. Christ says to us, "Of how much more value are you than the birds!" (Luke 12:24, RSV.) And yet how many times we are frustrated, filled with anxiety and misgiving. That is the proof that we have not come to have a perfect confidence in God and in His promises. As God provides for the birds, so has He purposed to provide for all our needs, in whatever situations we find ourselves, if we trust Him and fulfill the responsibilities which He has given to us. Concerning the necessities of this physical life, David, considering the past, said, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Ps. 37:25). This text shows us how God loves to provide for us abundantly; His goodness extends to our children; if they do their part, they will not have to beg bread.

What about difficulties which we can encounter with an unconverted relative or neighbor or whomever else? In Proverbs 16:7 we read, "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." God has the most effective remedy for any situation in which we could find ourselves.

Are we concerned about an illness? If we truly had confidence in God, we would have no doubt whatsoever about divine healing. For we know that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and that His name is "I am the Lord that healeth thee" (Ex. 15:26). God does not give Himself titles without fulfilling the duties which go with them; so, then, healing is an absolute. When God decides to intervene and heal someone, he will be healed. "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand" (Deut. 32:39). Brethren, are we yet people who have confidence in nothing more than what we can accomplish by ourselves? If so, then we are not done being devoured by anxiety. We are going to have to take this problem in hand and learn to put certain things into God's hands with confidence; we must learn not to limit God's powers in our thinking. We have a beautiful example in Luke 8:49, "While he [Christ] yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master." "She is dead, it is over, nothing can be done anymore." Jesus had restored people's health by healing all kinds of serious diseases. But in that case it was over, death was the end of it all, there was no use in troubling the Master. But Jesus Christ said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Fear not [do not be anxious, worried]: believe only [have confidence], and she shall be made whole" (Luke 8:50). And Christ brought that young girl back to life.

Thus, brethren, we do not even have to worry about death. Even on the threshold of death, when this tent we live in is wearing out, deteriorating through the years, we can still rekindle this spark of hope, conviction, and confidence in a new life. If Christ lives in us, even on the threshold of death we can manifest peace, serenity, and confidence, for we know that what is mortal will ultimately be swallowed up by life, as the Apostle Paul said. It is such confidence that God wants to see in us. That is why Christ says to each one of us, "Do not worry, do not

fear, do not be anxious, believe only, trust God and His Way of life, endure unto the end, and you will be saved."

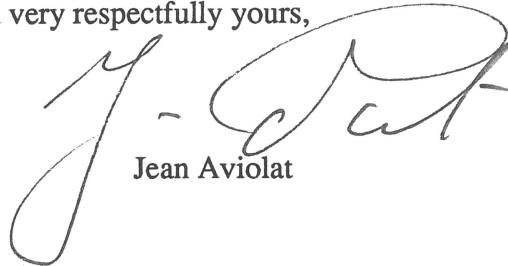
Yes, God allows all kinds of circumstances in our lives in order to make it possible for us to know what our level of confidence in Him is. When I am tormented by anxiety, I am forced to recognize that there are weaknesses in my own life, that I am not doing things as I should, or I have not behaved as I should have. Anxiety is revealing; it is a proof that I think, reason, conceive, evaluate, and decide according to my own mind, for anxiety comes from the natural mind, while confidence comes from the Spirit of Christ.

Brethren, we know the value of God's Word; we are going to have to learn to trust God, to have confidence both in Him, in obedience to His Word, and in His promises and in His powers. Jesus Christ left us a magnificent testimony and example; therefore, He tells us not to worry about the things which we need in this physical life. Our Father knows that we need them. What a privilege God gives to us to learn to trust Him by the circumstances which we go through. Let us be an honor and a glory to God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ in triumphing over our anxieties by an absolute confidence. It is in this way that we in turn are going to leave a testimony for many people.

Let us end with an exhortation from the Apostle Paul, "Be careful for nothing [have no anxiety about anything, RSV]; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Ph'p. 4:6-7).

My dear brethren, may the God of peace be with you and bless you with His priceless gifts.

I remain very affectionately and very respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Aviolat', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Jean Aviolat