

# Church of God, The Eternal

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Dear Brothers and Sisters:

We hope that you all benefited from a very beautiful Feast of Tabernacles and that everyone received all the strength and encouragement necessary to face the Winter months ahead of us.

We heard the instructions and warnings of God and we received spiritual food in abundance through the many Biblical texts which were read during the Feast. But now, brethren, what are we going to do with all that which we received? Will we follow the example of our fathers who refused to take seriously what God had given to them? In Nehemiah 9:16-17 we read: "But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments, and refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them. . . ." Here we see that they gave priority to their natures—natures which do not like God's commandments—and they willfully refused to obey what had been given to them. Such behavior on the part of the called of God is serious.

Another condition which God calls folly is spiritual sleep. God does not allow us to store food and then fall asleep spiritually until the Spring holy days, to be like marmots, which abandon themselves to sleep all winter long. Christ illustrated this type of condition in Matthew 25: "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept" (vv. 1-5). The wise fell asleep with a reserve of oil. In other words, they had not grown weary of listening to what God wanted to make known to them; they had not willfully closed their eyes and ears; they had heard, and they had responded by living what had been given to them. The result was that reserve of oil in them, filling them with strength and wisdom. They were waiting for Christ with patience and conviction, without growing weary of living God's Way of life; without growing weary of praying, without growing weary of being instructed; without growing weary of considering the things which were happening in their lives, knowing that the purpose of those things was to bring them closer to God. They loved the Truth of God, they believed it, they were living it; therefore, though they fell asleep, they had that oil which would enable them to see clearly and be ready in order to go in with Christ to the marriage feast. The foolish fell asleep, but sank into aberration because they did not want to live the Word of Truth uprightly—they did not want to be taught and corrected in order to put on the nature and character of God. God calls them foolish because they followed the example of their

ancestors, who refused to take seriously what God gave to them and refused to obey. It had been given to the foolish, as to the wise, to understand the plan and the purpose of God, but because of their negligence and lack of obedience they were lacking in the power of the Spirit of God. Moreover, since the bridegroom tarried, they found themselves in insufficiency, whereas they were given time to fill their lack of oil.

How, then, brethren, are we going to avoid being foolish in the sight of God? Let us see a few basic principles.

First, we must not take lightly the fundamental things of God's Word. We must conscientiously and resolutely live them. Christ said in Luke 16:10, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." So we must know God's thoughts and ways in every circumstance in which we may find ourselves. God shows us what we must do and how we must correct ourselves. In I Peter 3:15 we are exhorted to sanctify Christ in our hearts. To sanctify Christ is to know and do what He expects of us.

So, then, let us not grow weary of praying. As we are told in I Thessalonians 5:17, we are to "pray without ceasing." Let us pray with faith and confidence, allowing the Spirit of God to work in our lives.

Let us be able to see the world of tomorrow, to have a vision of it, and let us not grow weary of being patient. ". . . Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (Jas. 1:4). So, let us be patient day after day; let us keep our assurance, our determination to do what is right and good in God's sight. Patience will allow us to reach the goal.

Let us remember the kindnesses and the mercy which God does not grow weary of showing to us, and let us also show these things to one another. "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him" (I John 2:10). If we practice that, we shall progress and advance more and more in the Way which leads to the Kingdom of God.

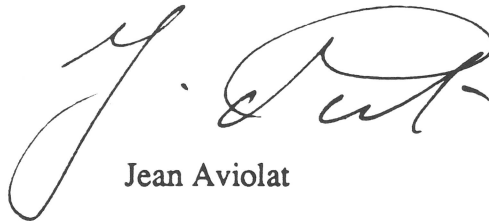
Let us always be thankful for the things which God has taught us, and let us be strengthened by faith. "If [we] continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which [we] have heard . . ." (Col. 1:23), then we can appear before God blameless.

Let us love perfection. Whether in our daily work or in our obedience, let us apply ourselves, doing all things "as to the Lord, and not to men" (Eph. 6:7).

Let us not glorify ourselves. "For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil" (Jas. 4:15-16). Evil things are those things which lead the people of God into folly. The virgins whom Christ calls foolish are those who trusted their arrogant thoughts; they believed that they could get by on the oil which they already had. Like the wise, they went forth to meet the bridegroom, but in the face of reality they were short. Although they cried out: "Lord, Lord, open to us!", it did not help them.

Therefore, brethren, let us not waste the time which God is granting to us; let us not allow slumber to dominate our lives. In order to keep ourselves awake, let us compare our lives with the life of Jesus Christ and let us become victorious with the help of God's Spirit. Christ tells us in Matthew 25:13, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." Watching and persevering will lead us to victory, and we shall be called wise. Whereas, spiritual weariness and slumber and the pride of our natural minds will lead us to failure, and thus we shall be like those foolish virgins in the sight of Christ. It is only when we can go in with Christ to the marriage feast that we will be able to say: We are victorious! Until then we must resist slumber, we must watch, and we must do what God expects of us. It is now that God is sifting us. "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator" (I Pet. 4:17-19).

To you all, dear brothers and sisters, my most respectful and brotherly feelings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'J. Aviolat', written in black ink.

Jean Aviolat