

Church of God, The Eternal

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

One year has gone by since the last *Monthly Letter* which I wrote to you. One year—that may seem short for some and long for others. Time goes very fast for those who are busy, who are in good health, who have enough to provide for their needs, and who live in a country where war is not raging. On the other hand, time seems long for the homeless, for those who suffer the consequences of unemployment, or live in areas where human beings are fighting like mad, where fear, hunger, diseases and all kinds of suffering prevail.

The word which we hear daily from all directions is: restructuring. Which means the power to reorganize, or make new starts. That happened in the Church of God, and those who have eyes to see saw the result of it. This is also occurring in our society, and year after year we can evaluate the effects which result therefrom. For example: In industry where people fight over work as famished dogs fight over a piece of meat, in factories the work is not done by robust arms and vigilant hands anymore; the skillful accomplishments of the computer and of robotics are replacing a good number of workers. As a result you have some people who are accumulating large fortunes while others are sinking into poverty and wretchedness. We are living in times when there are too many students, too many engineers, too many workers, and in some countries too much farm produce, too much food, while in those same countries some people are starving. Which shows us that the best in the hand of man who divorces God always becomes the worst; the results are only absurd.

Of course computers and other sophisticated machines can be useful, providing they are used in a way which God approves. These implements must not cut out jobs and force families to live on air.

The greatest privileges which a human being can be given are health and work. This is why God tells man while speaking of the weekly cycle, "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath . . ." (Ex. 20:8) So God wants six days of the week to be reserved for work. God knows that without work man cannot achieve the purpose for which he was created. In John 5:17 Jesus Christ says, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Thus the Father and the Son work. How do they work? How do they

view work? In Psalm 111:3 we read, "His work is honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever." Their work is perfect, it is beautiful and honest, there is no deceit, no speculation, it is a glorious work, it is useful, full of specific purposes for the well being of all humanity. Therefore God, beholding His work, says to human beings, "May you be blessed by the Lord, who made heaven and earth!" (Psa. 115:15, RSV) Work carried out with the orientation which God gives is aiming at a blessing for all human beings. The condition of our world with its millions of unemployed does not reflect the way of God, the work of God, but rather man who is constantly greedy for production and money. If work does not bring him what he wants with human arms, the human element will be replaced by the robot; and if the robot does not succeed in yielding the expected profit, then he closes down the firm and does not work anymore. This is what man calls restructuring. But the commandment of God stands. God did not create work for the robot but for man, and He says to man: You shall work six days and you shall rest on the seventh day as well as on the seven annual holy days. Those who eliminate jobs through robotics or those who shun work because they are lazy, not wanting to fulfill the responsibility which God gave to man, are revolting against the authority of God. For it is God who created for man the necessity of working six days and resting on the seventh.

Jesus Christ while in the flesh, being both the son of man and the Son of God, did not live without doing anything. In Mark 6:3 we see that people were saying of Him, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary . . ." Being brought up by Joseph the carpenter, Jesus as a young man assisted him in this work. As soon as He was invested with the power of the Spirit of God in order to fulfill the ministry for which He came on this earth, He used all His strength, all His power for the good of others. In Matthew 4:23 we read, "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." In chapter 15, verse 32, we read, "Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way." Verse 37, "And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full." In Luke 7 we see that He comforted a widow by bringing back to life her son who was being carried out to be buried. All these recorded examples, and how numerous they are, show us the orientation which Christ had in the use of His capabilities and powers. It was always for the good of others, it was always for the happiness of others, it was always for a service rendered to others.

As called of God this is the orientation which we must have, whatever is our education, whatever is our work; the most modest occupation pursued with the honesty along with the orientation of Jesus Christ is honorable in the sight of God. A forehead wrinkled through

sweat, and calluses on the hands are witness to the most estimable nobleness. He that digs, chisels, files, cuts, plows, sows, prunes, or he that teaches, calculates, plans, leads, let him do it with a spirit of service, with that orientation which Christ manifested when He lived in the flesh. The Apostle Paul reminds us of this instruction in Ephesians 6:5-9, "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him." When the world understands the value of work, the purpose of work, and the orientation which everyone must have in his occupation, there will be no more masters who replace the servant with a robot in order to make more money, and there will be no more nonchalant workers, wasting their time and thus stealing from their employer; there will be no more frustrated human beings because of the simplicity of their job or because of the contempt which others show for them. Everyone will know that with God there is no partiality. A job, however modest it is, whose reward would merely be daily bread set before the hunger of a family, has a great value in the sight of God, if that job is performed with the orientation which allows one to achieve the spiritual purpose which God created for man—the necessity of working. What counts in the sight of God is not the income which results from a job; Jesus Christ merely said that the workman is worthy of his meat (Matt. 10:10) or of his hire (Luke 10:7). What is important in the sight of God is achieving the purpose which He wants.

In Acts 9:36-40 we have the example of a woman who as a seamstress fulfilled a spiritual purpose by the orientation which she gave to her work. She was afflicted by illness and died, but for our instruction, through Peter, Christ brought her back to life. That is a reward for a job well done, for honest work performed with the orientation which is perfectly exemplified by Christ. That ultimate reward which God would like to give to all human beings is life.

One is a mother who takes care of her family and home, who sews, who does her laundry. Another is an elderly person who devotes time to prayer and who, by the orientation he or she gives to his or her life, is a model of wisdom and confidence for the youth. The purpose of our occupation, whether physical or intellectual or both, is to bring us to fulfill our spiritual duty perfectly; and, it is to be a people blessed by the Lord. That great ultimate blessing is life. Jesus Christ says in John 11:25, ". . . I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." To believe in Christ is to work. It is to live with the same orientation as Christ did so that His example can be accepted at every

social level of humanity. God did not want His Son to live in the flesh as a spoiled child. Right from His birth He was not allowed comfort. The Bible tells us that there was no room for them in the inn. Jesus was laid therefore in a manger. As a young man He had to work with His hands. And when He was carrying out His ministry and a scribe told Him, ". . . Master, I will follow thee withersoever thou goest . . . Jesus saith unto him, the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Matt. 8:19, 20). David, prophesying, said of Jesus Christ, "I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me" (Psa. 22:17). Christ understood the lowest social level, and He also mixed with the most well-to-do and the most educated people of His time, who were saying of Him, "Whence hath this man this wisdom?" So Christ is the perfect example for all, whether rich or poor. His orientation was so perfect, whatever situation He faced, that He assumed His work always submitting Himself to the will of His Father. Thus the result, according to God's promise, could be nothing else than the resurrection and eternal life.

Through the deception of Satan, man has a totally distorted concept of the reason why God commands man to work. The situation in our time can be compared to the one which is described in Matthew 9:36–38, "But when he [Christ] saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad [because they were harassed and helpless, RSV; because their problems were so great and they didn't know what to do or where to go for help, *Living Bible*], as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples [today it is to us who were called], the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers in to his harvest." Why are there few workers while the harvest is approaching? And yet He says in Matthew 22:14 that there are many called. Yes indeed, many are called but have not qualified by giving to their daily occupations the orientation which is proper in God's sight that would have enabled them to achieve the spiritual purpose and be workers with God.

Thus, brethren, let us be careful not to pervert—because of the oppressions of Caesar—the orientation which God wants us to have in our work. The Bible tells us that we must watch out for evil workers, deceitful workers, that we must not follow their example. We must become well-proven men and women, workers who do not need to be ashamed. God knows the possibilities, the capabilities, the living conditions of everyone. What He expects of us who are waiting for the day of the harvest is expressed through the Apostle Paul, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58). Always abounding in the work of the Lord includes being engaged in our occupations, carrying out our responsibilities with the orientation which Dorcas the seamstress manifested, which Jesus Christ manifested throughout His life. The little child laid in a manger became

the Savior of the world through the fulfillment and the sacrifice of His life. He will return as King of kings to show to all humanity, with the workers who will be in His service, what is work, how one must work, and the wonderful purpose which it leads to.

Our duty is to pray, that is an occupation which must not be neglected; there are few workers and the multitudes, fainting and scattered abroad, are only increasing year after year. Christ says to *each* one of us, "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Matt. 20:27). It is by working, by keeping ourselves occupied with that orientation, that we will join the harvest with Jesus Christ to bring the joy of life to this harassed and helpless humanity.

By this letter I convey all my affection to you and I greet you all respectfully.

Jean Aviolat