

# Church of God, The Eternal

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January 2008

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Very affectionate greetings to you all.

According to the Gregorian calendar, another year is behind us. Our God—who is infinitely merciful and good—is still at work. He is giving us time to work on our lives, to ponder our thoughts and actions in the light of the instructions which we received and understood, to measure ourselves against the perfect example which Jesus Christ lived on this earth in a body like ours. The passing of time requires an ever-increasing amount of courage, conviction and faith for us to maintain our loyalty and to grow year by year in a sincere love for God's way of life and for one another, in order to achieve the perfect unity which God expects of us.

And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me (John 17:22–23).

Yes indeed, with Christ in us, the love of God takes on an even greater meaning and radiance when we learn to honor, respect and love one another in the Eternal.

A great reward is certainly reserved for us, but God will give it to us only after we have endured all the trials of this existence without letting the love of God—which was given to us—wax cold in our lives. "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Romans 11:29). To love truly as God requires is a manifestation of the life of Jesus Christ in each one of us. Therefore, let us watch that we do not despair while we go through the trying circumstances of this present life, because God does not want us to let up in our spiritual growth. A place in His Kingdom is assured to every one of us if we remain faithful to Him unto the end. It is with implicit confidence that we can wait for the confirmation of that great blessing which God promised—sharing eternity together with those who have already gained the victory. Though they have not yet received the promise, they left us a marvelous testimony until we too reach the goal and are made perfect by the grace of God.

We must not grow tired of meditating on those things, for meditation is necessary if we want to walk in the narrow way which leads to life. Meditating is not emptying our minds; on the contrary, it is directing our thoughts on a particular subject—a problem, a worry, a need or maybe an order received from the authorities—in order to know God's point of view, His thinking, on the matter which we are considering, because sometimes many ideas and wrong conceptions encumber our minds. So we ask ourselves questions: Why is my mind occupied with some thought or other? Why do I react as I do? Why is my mind agitated? and so forth. Meditating is thinking, but it is thinking on the basis of the Word of God. We want to know, understand, receive and accept the will and the instructions of God. Thus, meditation is part of the process of changing our minds by ridding them of what is wrong and filling them with what is right.

Furthermore, meditation prepares our minds before we speak to God. "Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation" (Psalm 5:1). Meditation comes before prayer. We ponder over the circumstances of our lives; we reflect on the cause of our worries or our needs, whether they are physical or spiritual. We regret our failures and we meditate to know how we can do better or what we need to do better. Then, like David, we confidently turn to God and say:

Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray. My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up. For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee (Psalm 5:2–4).

When we are awake during the night or in the evening before we go to sleep, there is not a better time to consider how we conduct our lives, to replace the wrong and negative thoughts of our minds with what is right and encouraging. Meditation is important because it is part of our walk with God. We can say to Him, "Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray."

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night (Psalm 1:1–2).

So the righteous ponder all things in the light of God's law. And let us not forget that we must live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, according to the example of Jesus Christ who lived with the thoughts of God the Father and analyzed all things on that basis.

For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish (Psalm 1:6).

We all have a serious responsibility: it is the influence which we have on others. Through meditation we can examine that responsibility carefully to see whether we fulfill it according to the law of the Eternal or according to our natural minds.

Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still [Lie quietly upon your bed in silent meditation—*The Living Bible*] (Psalm 4:4).

Stand in awe before whom? Before God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. Let us fear to do evil willfully. "Commune with your own heart upon your bed." When we wake up in the middle of the night and cannot go back to sleep, it may be that God is inviting us to meditate and then pray. In the times in which we live, when we have to fight against the wicked spirits in the spirit world, it is vital to weigh carefully the things which come to our minds and know the source of our thoughts. Let us meditate to know who rules in our hearts: the old man or the new man?

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward (Psalm 19:9–11).

If we want the judgments to be precious in our lives, we must meditate on how to apply them. It is important, for God says, "In keeping of them there is great reward." So, as David wrote, let us stand in awe and not sin. Let us not practice sin, but let us meditate and manifest the respect which we owe to God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. Let us tell them our worries, the things which are close to our hearts, and let us be willing to follow the solutions which God gives to us. Let us not be enslaved by our own thoughts which create disagreement and turmoil in our lives and among God's people. Let us give direction to our lives by following the example of Christ. "I will meditate on all thy work, and muse on thy mighty deeds" (Psalm 77:12, *Revised Standard Version*). Let us consider, ponder and focus our attention on the way we behave. Let us count the cost of our decisions and attitudes. Let us reflect in light of God's instructions upon the events which we must face. Then our ways will be well regulated. God will back us up and strengthen us, and we will enjoy the peace which comes from His Holy Spirit.

Meditating is considering all things from God's point of view. It is important to learn to think as God thinks; it is important to learn to evaluate all situations as God evaluates them. We learn to do so by analyzing things on the basis of the Word of God and all the knowledge which was revealed. Such meditation guards our lives from corruption and the influence of the forces of evil which induce the elect of God to become discouraged, cause trouble and to depart from His way.

When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice (Psalm 63:6–7).

So meditation makes us receptive to God's mind; it prepares our minds for prayer; it gives us the mental orientation which we need to live lives which are pleasing to God. Meditating is also assimilating the spiritual food which we receive; it is writing it indelibly in our hearts. From that we derive confidence, an increase in the faith which is essential in order to please God.

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success (Joshua 1:8).

To what did we commit ourselves? To the way which leads to the Kingdom of God. And to be successful, we must walk in His way of life. "My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes" (Psalm 119:48). Let us meditate on them! It is then that we receive a wonderful promise as we wait for the Kingdom of God.

. . . Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest (Joshua 1:9).

As was the case with David, who was a man after God's own heart, our minds must be filled with the way of God.

I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word (Psalm 119:15–16).

I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies (verse 59).

O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day (verse 97).

There are many texts which show how important it is for us to take the time to meditate in order to be able to follow God's way as perfectly as we possibly can.

"May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the Lord" (Psalm 104:34, *Revised Standard Version*). When we think about the circumstances of a sister or a brother who is going through a trial and suffering, and we pray for her or him fervently, that is a meditation which is pleasing to God. Let us meditate on the example we set, the words we speak, the conduct we demonstrate, the faith we manifest in trial and the affection we show



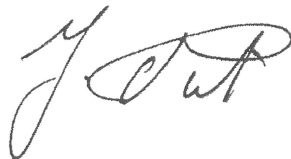
to others. We were called by God; we are in the world but not of the world. Therefore we cannot live and react in any way we please if we want God to be with us until we achieve the supreme purpose of our call.

Meditation renews us; it transforms our thinking, it changes our lives. However, those who do not meditate on the things which God made known to them grow weary and end up being discouraged. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them . . ." (Hebrews 11:13). They saw the promises of God because they meditated on them. And they derived such courage therefrom that they died in faith. Thus meditation persuades us, it fills us with confidence, conviction and courage. Let us make it an integral part of our daily living. My dear brethren, this is how all the fullness of Jesus Christ will dwell in each one of us. And the result is another magnificent promise:


And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him (Malachi 3:17).

Our heavenly Father always does and will continue to do what is best for His children. He wants all of them to walk successfully in the way which leads to their salvation. Therefore, let us find great confidence therein, and may the peace of Christ be with you all.

With all my love and affection,  
Your brother and servant in Christ,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J. Aviolat', written in a cursive style.

Jean Aviolat

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Jon W. Brisby', written in a cursive style.

Jon W. Brisby