

Church of God, The Eternal

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Dear Brethren and Youth:

These few lines allow me to greet you and express that you are in my thoughts daily.

Here we are witnessing the moving phenomenon of the earth going dormant. It is the season of its rest. After the long days of summer, it produced its fruits—the fruits which are essential for the maintenance of this physical life. Now the trees are stripped of their foliage. The cycle of the seasons is uninterrupted. Tender green in the spring, sweet-scented in the summer, golden in the fall, the leaves fulfill a vital role: they absorb carbon dioxide and give off oxygen—an absolute necessity of life in the flesh. Eventually the leaves wither, they are blown away by the wind and they decay. Snow falls and covers the dormant earth silently. Here below, all things pass away, but then all things come back to life.

Nature around us speaks loudly of the awesome plan and purpose of God for mankind. As the Apostle Paul stated to the Romans, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead . . ." (Romans 1:20).

For many people, the times in which we live are a gloomy road leading them into an unknown future which arouses much fear and anguish. It is true that living in the present world is difficult. Many are experiencing deep uncertainty and heavy disappointments. But what about those who have been called to know God's purpose? Jesus Christ is saying to them, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me" (John 14:1). Then how do we prove that we believe in God and in Christ? By walking with resolve and steadfastness in the way of the Eternal God. Let us consider the example of a young king which was recorded in God's Word.

It is King Jotham who was twenty-five years old when he was made a ruler, and he did what was right in the sight of the Eternal (2 Chronicles 27:1–2). So he got off to a good start, which shows us that this young man's upbringing had been founded on God's way of life. He understood the fundamental spiritual principles by which he had to regulate his life.

So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God [he ordered his ways before the Lord his God—*Revised Standard Version*] (2 Chronicles 27:6).

Jotham controlled his conduct, he directed his ways according to the instructions of God, and as a result he became mighty. While the people around him were corrupting themselves, he was determined to do what was right, he did not let himself be influenced, he remained firm, and he was blessed because of it. He *became* mighty: it did not happen overnight, it was a process. It can be the same with us spiritually if we are determined, if we have made up our minds to live up to God's requirements. We will most certainly reap magnificent blessings.

Under the Old Covenant, when human beings did what was right in the sight of God, physical and material blessings made their might. Today we are required to live not only the letter but also the spirit of God's law. When we do, we are given spiritual might and strength. We are delivered from all fears and apprehensions, knowing that though God tries the righteous, He does not forsake them. Having such confidence, we can live in this troubled world with peace of mind, even when we experience grief.

It is not in the flesh or financially that we are going to become mighty. For eternal life will not depend on our possessions—on the abundance of material wealth with which we surround ourselves. But it will depend on the extent of our faith, our loyalty to God and our humility before Him. Jesus Christ shows us that principle by the example of the young man who had great possessions but went away sorrowful after having heard what he had to do in order to be an heir of eternal life (Matthew 19:16–22). We are told by Jesus Christ, ". . . be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10). The one who will inherit the crown of life will have become a mighty being. Although Jesus Christ performed great miracles, He was not a mighty being in the flesh—as the Son of man. He was described by the Prophet Isaiah:

Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not (Isaiah 53:1–3, *New International Version*).

And yet Jesus Christ really was the number one representative of the Kingdom of God. He said to the Pharisees, ". . . The kingdom of God cometh not with observation . . . for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you [the kingdom of God is in the midst of

you—*RSV*]" (Luke 17:20–21). It is the same for all those whom God has chosen. It is not in the flesh that they will become mighty and be ambassadors in this world. Jesus Christ will let His glory and His power shine forth at this Second Coming. It is then that in the eyes of the world the elect of God will have become mighty.

Therefore, brethren, let us continue to do what the young king did at the beginning of his reign. Let us keep our good beginning alive. Let us remember that it requires as much effort to keep our ways active before the Eternal God as it did to order them at the beginning. How can we keep our ways active? God tells us how.

Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life . . . (Deuteronomy 4:9).

God urges us to pay attention to what goes on in our minds. "Take heed to thyself." He wants us to search our lives, to examine them closely. "Keep thy soul diligently." We must never grow slack in our self-examination which is for the purpose of keeping active what we have seen, understood and established in our lives. And we must always look at ourselves in the light of that perfect law of God. God wants us to remember, because once we have reached a goal, the natural tendency is to become lax and forget the very principles which are the roots of our success. In whatever area, in order to be successful in the sight of God, it takes courage, strength of character, a lot of humility and a lot of effort. We need to submit to God and obey Him fully in order to achieve the greatness and the power which He promised to each one of us.

We have received the knowledge of God's way. Therefore it is with resolve that we must act on what we have learned and understood in order to keep that knowledge active in our lives and thus go forward to the ultimate goal.

The example of the young king shows us that although as a child he had been trained well by his parents, once an adult he could not merely stagnate on the foundation laid by them. In turn he had to arm himself with enthusiasm and order his ways before the Eternal his God so that he could attain his personal level of integrity.

It is the same for each one of us. In order to grow spiritually, we absolutely need to live up to what we know, realizing that the closer to the goal we get, the more fierce the attacks become and the more we have to watch ourselves. God is saying to us, "Take heed to thyself, keep thy soul diligently." That is a daily responsibility.

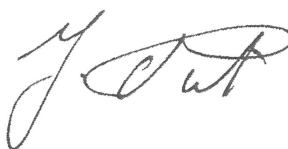
Eternal splendor is not far off. This troubled age indicates that the future needs our perseverance and our endeavors. Let us remain faithful to God; let us fulfill our duties

without fear of men. Then, as we are reminded by the seasons, a great rest will follow the struggles and the efforts which we will have maintained for many years. Then we too will have done what is right in the sight of the Eternal. As we are instructed by the Apostle Paul:

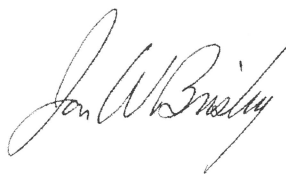
But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain (1 Corinthians 15:57–58, *NIV*).

To you all I send my affectionate and respectful regards in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Your brother in Christ,

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

Jean Aviolat

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Jon W. Brisby'.

Jon W. Brisby