

Church of God, The Eternal

P. O. Box 775
Eugene, Oregon 97440
www.cogeternal.org

The late Raymond C. Cole
Founding Pastor
Jon W. Brisby
Pastor, Director

Offices in:
United States
Philippines
Switzerland

In Quietness and Confidence Shall Be Your Strength

January 2003

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Warmest greetings from all of us here in Europe.

As time goes on, people in general live more and more in a state of great worry. Indeed our time is full of unpredictable events; in the current world, numerous circumstances are creating a lot of trouble and turmoil. And yet God created this earth and the whole of mankind with a most precise aim in mind. In this transitional period, God says to His people, the ones to whom He revealed His purpose, ". . . In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength . . ." (Isaiah 30:15). If we read the preceding verses, we see that this is in fact applying to our time, more especially to those who were blessed with a knowledge of God's plan and purpose.

With what orientation, then, should we live in order to experience that rest and quietness, that confidence, that strength promised by God though we are still living in a world of increasing agitation? Let us see what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians:

For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal (2 Corinthians 4:16–18).

The things we can see are transient; yes indeed, everything that causes anguish, sorrow or fear shall disappear. Speaking about the unfaithfulness of His people, God says through the prophet Isaiah:

Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant. And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters' vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit (Isaiah 30:13–14).

Thus we should not let the visible things—which are bound to disappear—destroy us spiritually; instead, our orientation should be turned to things eternal, which can strengthen us with courage.

Let us now see what are some of those things which for a time are not seen but which are eternal and lead to the quietness and confidence which will be our strength.

One of the promises of God is the inheritance of the spiritual body, incorruptible, glorious and full of strength. The Apostle Paul gives us a marvelous description of it. Inspired by God's Spirit he wrote:

So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. . . . For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality (1 Corinthians 15:42–44, 53).

Not only shall our body be perfect, but our spirit, our mind, will be perfect also. We shall no longer be mentally tormented. The Apostle John tells us the following:

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure (1 John 3:2–3).

What we will be has not been made manifest as yet; thus at the present time it is not a visible thing. It is something which we believe through faith. And that same faith empowers us with the quietness and confidence which are to be our strength. Jesus Christ says to us, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. . ." (Matthew 13:43). This shows that not only will our bodies be absolutely perfect, but we shall also be clothed with God's righteousness, His glory and His love.

The prophet Isaiah records another fact which can fill us with courage:

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall

lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea (Isaiah 11:6–9).

All things will be restored as God created them in the beginning. And how will that be realized? Because the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord. When human beings are disgusted at their own ways and are prepared to learn to live according to the Way of God, a momentous change will occur; all things will be re-established into a wonderful balance.

In Isaiah, chapter 52, verse 10, we read, "The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." All the inhabitants of the earth will see the salvation of our God. Something which is not visible as yet, but most encouraging to those who are determined to live by faith and not allow themselves to become discouraged by the visible things of our time, which are the cause of much worry for most inhabitants of this earth.

Another statement of the prophet Isaiah should arm us with courage. We read it in chapter 33, verses 22 and 24, "For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us. . . . And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick . . ." Whether physically or mentally, human beings will be in good health. This is what we are looking forward to, this is the condition in which we want to see all the inhabitants of this earth live. Since we have been given to understand the plan and the purpose of God for the whole of mankind, He is saying to us, "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him" (Hebrews 10:38). Are we able to fasten our eyes on those promises made by God, those promises which we accept and on which we count by faith? If so, then the result in our lives, despite many tests, is what God says to us through the prophet Isaiah; "In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." For we know that the visible things are transient, while those which are not seen are eternal. ". . . and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Revelation 21:4). To see those things to come with the eyes of faith is indeed what gives us courage and strengthens our commitment to God until the end of the present things—that are bound to pass away—which cause trouble, uneasiness and sadness.

Let us note the Apostle Paul's admonition:

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things

on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory (Colossians 3:1–4).

Therefore we are making the right choice when we are practicing God's way in our lives, keeping a mental vision of all the promises of God which will become manifest according to His time schedule. We believe those promises now with implicit confidence, because God declares:

Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure (Isaiah 46:9–10).

While we are waiting for the fulfillment of all those assurances, let us live with the orientation manifested by the Apostle Paul:

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:12–14).

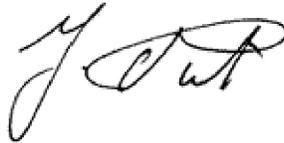
If we live with such an orientation, keeping our eyes fixed on what God promises to us, we are freed from many worries which are created by the circumstances of our time. It is true that the days of trial and distress always seem to be long; but let us not lose our courage: God has always sustained us and He will continue to do so until His purpose be fully accomplished in our lives. As stated by the Apostle Paul in the first chapter of his letter to the Philippians, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ [will make it perfect for the day of Jesus Christ—*French Bible*]" (Philippians 1:6).

So let us not allow the difficulties of our time and the experiences in our lives to trouble or worry us so much that they destroy the work which God is performing in us. We are His workmanship, and God is longing for the work of His hands, desiring to make it perfect for the Day of Jesus Christ. Let us have that confidence, that faith in our Heavenly Father, after the example of Jesus Christ as He lived in His own flesh body. ". . . let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher [perfecter, *Revised Standard Version*] of our faith . . ." (Hebrews 12:1, 2). "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due

season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9). It is worth it for us to remain faithful and persevering unto the end. Let us support one another by praying for one another, because, as James put it, ". . . The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

Dear brothers and sisters, we greet you and we express our most sincere affection for you.

Your worker in Christ,

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

Jean Aviolat