

Church of God, The Eternal

P. O. Box 775
Eugene, Oregon 97440

Switzerland
Case Postale 2 701
CH 1002 Lausanne

Canada
P. O. Box 76946, Station "S"
Vancouver, B.C. V5R 5T3

October 1981

Dear Brethren and Friends:

Very sincere greetings from the Old Continent. We very much enjoyed a sunny month of August, and now Fall has arrived. In His great mercy, God has granted favorable weather circumstances for farmers to harvest the produce which He made grow through the earth.

For us who were called by Almighty God and love the Truth of God, Fall is the season when the second part of God's Holy Days takes place; and the Feast which everyone anticipates with great enthusiasm is the Feast of Tabernacles. For some people it is the only occasion of the year to meet their brethren and share a few days of their existence with people of the common faith. It is a time which brings much joy and rejoicing to all those who attend it with a sincere and honest heart. God says, ". . . and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days" (Lev. 23:40, last part). God wants us to rejoice before Him. He wants us to be happy, because for seven days we shall live a foretaste of God's Kingdom; once established, the whole world will learn to live happily, to know the true values of life.

Today every human being, rich or poor, is overloaded with worries. But what are our worries? What are the things in our lives which during the Feast could keep us from fulfilling perfectly the requirement which God has imposed upon us, ". . . ye shall rejoice . . ."? Work, finances, health, family problems? God wants us to eradicate the anxieties from our minds. He can and will help us to overcome our fears, because He wants us to rejoice. Our happiness and peace of mind will proceed from Him, providing we always manifest with perseverance and steadfastness that which God expects of us. In Psalm 119:165 we read, "Great peace have those who love thy law; nothing can make them stumble" (RSV). Nothing will turn them from the Truth; none of the spiritual things which God gave to them will become fruitless in them. Because they love the Law of God, they love His Holy Days. They do not count it an obligation, but rather a satisfaction, to go to the place chosen by God. Their obedience comes from the heart. They love the Law of God and consequently have happiness and peace of mind.

Brethren, it is so easy to do something unwillingly — to attend God's Feasts without having the attitude, the gladness of heart, which God expects of us. In Isaiah 1 God indicts His people; He reproaches those who attend the

solemnities of the Eternal God but do not celebrate them legitimately, rightly, with the heart. They present themselves before God, keep certain laws but do not love them. Let us beware, brethren, lest we obey only on the surface or with indifference, for God severely indicts those who do not wholeheartedly fulfill His requirements. God says to us, ". . . I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly" (Isa. 1:13, RSV). God does not accept people who make a pretense of loving His Law and rejoicing in it. God wants us to be honest and sincere. We must always manifest gratitude and respect for that which God gave and revealed to us — His Truth.

The purpose of life — the reason for man's existence — is to become a member of God's Family, a child of God. Therefore God says, ". . . ye shall rejoice" This Feast depicts the time when we are in God's Kingdom with Christ.

What a privilege to meet in the Truth!

How are we going to really and sincerely rejoice before God?

First of all, we must love God's way of life. We manifest our love for God by our faithfulness and loyalty to the Word which He gave to us.

Let us take the time to review the tremendous blessings which we have received since the time of our call. Let us not allow our minds to be plagued with worries, but let us think of the joys and enthusiasm which we have had and can experience again during this Feast. In Psalm 139:17, we read: "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!" How many thoughts has God had towards us during the past year? "If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee" (vs. 18). What a blessing! Whether we awake in joy or in trial, God is present every morning, day after day — ever willing to help, strengthen and guide us, providing we will it so. If we do not allow our minds and thoughts to become polluted under the influence of evil spirits, but use the power of God's Holy Spirit, we can be overcomers.

In order to really rejoice, let us avoid foolish and vain conversations. Why argue because of a mere difference of opinion? Truth will always remain Truth. Let us live with conviction the Truth which we were given, and be determined to live a foretaste of God's Kingdom according to His expectations.

Let us also be willing to serve one another. Our rejoicing will depend on the intensity of our resolve to serve one another. Service characterized Christ's behavior when He lived on this earth. He never waited for someone else to serve Him, but He always sought to serve others. Writing to the Corinthians, Paul said, ". . . the love of Christ controls us . . ." (II Cor. 5:14, RSV). Let us allow it to dominate in our lives. In I Peter 1:22 we read, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto

unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." Again, appearance is cheap; whatever we do, let us do it sincerely, with all our hearts.

Further, let us remember that our physical bodies, created by God for our terrestrial sojourn, need rest. God expects us to take care of them. Let us exercise judgment in regard to our eating and drinking. Too many times our sicknesses stem from too much drinking and eating. Let us be moderate in all things. "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men . . ." (Ph'p. 4:4-5). Doing all we possibly can to stay healthy will only add to our joy during the Feast.

Then let us be examples to the newcomers. Let us not be filled with fears and doubts or with pride and self-righteousness, but let us live in faith and be calm and simple. Such a life is fundamental to our rejoicing. James wrote, ". . . the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (James 3:17-18). That is the seed of God! How marvelous is the seed which God planted in our lives! We must cherish it, and eradicate all evil thoughts which germinate in our hearts and minds. Let us make peace and bear good fruits. By so doing, we shall be the salt, the light, the example to those who have just come out of the trauma caused by the apostasy. Let us create harmony and order so as to be an encouragement to others. Let us beware, brethren, lest we destroy — by our attitude, our behavior, or any words — the work which God has started in the life of a brother. Are the strong not to bear the burdens of the weak? To be strong is to be capable of sacrificing oneself for others.

Accidental circumstances may develop, but let us not be the victims of them. Let us use the help of God's Holy Spirit to live up to His will.

In Romans 12:11-12 we read, ". . . serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer." Something which requires effort and determination. Let us never grow weary of praying for one another. Let us be a people who pray without doubting, fervently. God is with us. He has blessed us. He has encouraged us. He has helped us. We have every reason in the world to live this Feast of Tabernacles according to God's expectation, ". . . ye shall rejoice"

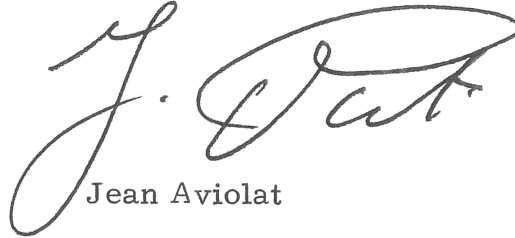
We must will to rejoice; it requires purpose and self-control. Brethren, we want to rejoice because we love God as our Father and want to obey Him. We believe, honor and respect His way of life. We are going to live a foretaste of the soon-coming Kingdom of God. The Scripture says: "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

Now the just shall live by faith . . ." (Heb. 10:36-38). "Salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed." Let us therefore endure till the end.

On behalf of all the brethren here in Europe, I greet you and wish you a most beautiful, meaningful and joyful Feast of Tabernacles. Let us remember that it will depend on each of us. I know that you will it so. And I am sure that it will be realized, because God is with us.

Separated in the flesh, but united in the Spirit, we convey to you all our affection and our most sincere and respectful feelings.

In deep love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'J. Aviolat', written in black ink. The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large initial 'J' and a long, sweeping tail.

Jean Aviolat