

Church of God, The Eternal

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Dear Brethren and Friends:

Another Passover is approaching and it seems hardly possible that another year has already passed.

The Announcement Letter which we regularly receive shows that the past year was a hard year for many of us who had to endure or are still enduring painful situations: illness, loneliness, unemployment, deprivation of freedom, bereavement, many things which we have to experience without ever listening to the treacherous voice of doubt.

God wants us to learn to have implicit trust in Him. As human beings, with our own powers and capabilities, we are in a most desperate condition. In Romans 8:20 we read, ". . . the creature was made subject to vanity . . ." Natural man, deprived of God's call and the revelation of His way of life, was indeed created subject to vanity. But Paul adds, ". . . not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." God created us in hope. And we received such a hope when God called us to a knowledge of His way of life. We know that we shall ultimately be delivered from all our weaknesses, problems and difficulties, inherent to our lives; there will be no more tears of suffering. The day will come when we shall be delivered from all these things, for we shall be born into the glorious liberty of God's children. Such is the promise which God has given to us.

However, brethren, unless God directly intervenes in our lives, we are entirely unable to understand the reasons of the things which we experience. Furthermore, of ourselves we cannot live as God expects. Even Jesus Christ, when He lived on this earth, having put on the nature of man, said, "The Son can do nothing of himself." And He too was submitted to all the trials, temptations and difficulties which you and I go through. But the power of the Holy Spirit made Him an overcomer. ". . . being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death . . ." (Ph'p. 2:8).

Thus, how greatly privileged we are to observe another Passover. Brethren, I do not find it hard to bury my sins under the shed blood of

Jesus Christ and turn the used page of the past year. Christ is our example; and partaking of the Passover emblems means accepting the life which Christ lived and all that He fulfilled for us when He was on this earth. He gave His life for us.

God did not call us to see us grope along in the darkness of the world, whatever trials and difficulties we have to go through. What God wants is not our failure, but our victory. We must therefore maintain faith and confidence. "For we are his workmanship . . ." (Eph. 2:10). What happens in our lives has to do with God's purpose, intent and decision. For we are His workmanship.

Trial, when it is allowed or even sent by God, makes the brave grow. It edifies and purifies those who respond to it submissively. And the greatest trial is the trial of our faith; so, let us strive not to be found wanting through this fearsome test. We know that we have received the Truth, and God wants us to have the necessary strength, conviction, courage and faith to remain faithful to it under any circumstances.

Those of you who suffer from sicknesses: Be patient and continue in the good way which we were given. Let us respect and honor the wounds which Christ accepted for us, so that we could be healed. ". . . he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust" (Psa. 103:14).

For those who are in financial difficulties, David wrote, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Psa. 37:25). We read another promise in Proverbs 10:3, "The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish: but he casteth away the substance of the wicked." If we fulfill our responsibilities as God expects of us, God will provide for our needs in one way or in another, even in times of most serious crises.

Those of you who are prisoners — despised and belittled by our society: Keep your spirits up; for you, too, will dawn the magnificent day of justice and liberty, for the King will come soon in His supreme glory. "To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house" (Isa. 42:7).

To those who mourn, Jesus Christ said, "I am that bread of life" (John 6:48). He is the Word made flesh. If we live up to this Word, we really believe that life triumphs over the grave where man reposes. To God the dead we bury are the living who have reached the harbor.

Brethren, we must prove to our God that we are willing to give up everything physical in order to be born in the glorious family of God. We must not allow ourselves to be destroyed by the sarcasm of arrogant people.

Have you heard the story of the young cherry tree and its stake?

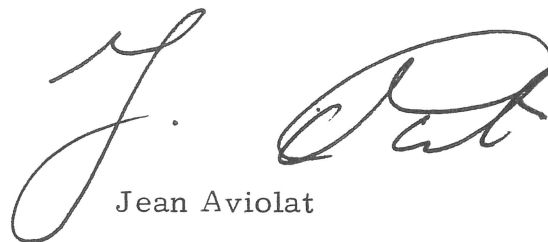
The young blooming cherry tree, very proud of its new leafy finery, said to its stake one day, "Friend, you look very pitiful. What are you but a post without any flowers, or fruit, or leaves? What have you learned in the forest to be so dumb at your age?" The stake replied, "In the silence of thick woods, my teacher the forest has not made an erudite of me but it has taught me a noble spirit of sacrifice. Today I am deprived, I had to give up the self just to be a firm prop, the support for your extreme weakness."

Indeed, to the world we are nothing, and even to the mother Church we are like dry wood. And yet God chose us to be pillars and the ground of the Truth.

Yes, my dear brothers and sisters, as the Apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians, I am "confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

Thank you brethren for being an example to us. On behalf of all the brethren here in Europe, I greet you. We love you and think of you in our prayers.

With all my affection and respect,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, consisting of a large initial 'J' followed by a period and a stylized name 'Aviolat'.

Jean Aviolat