

Church of God, The Eternal

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Dear brethren and friends:

The end of July is approaching and it is already my turn to write you a few lines. First, let me thank you for your leniency and mercy towards me; writing is not easy for me and I often fear that my letters do not meet your needs. Any way, let us put all things into God's hands, since He alone understands all things perfectly, knows the needs of each of His children, and has the power to give everyone according to His pleasure what is necessary to reach the final goal -- to be born into His family.

Let us be thankful to serve a God who knows our past, present, and future, and does all things for our good so that we may become brothers and sisters of Christ, sitting with Him on His throne in the world of tomorrow.

All the brethren here derived happiness and encouragement from Mr. Cole's visit and the presence of a few brethren who came from America to join us for the Feast of Pentecost. Although we do not know most of you, when we meet for the first time we sense the quality of life being lived through the power of God's Spirit dwelling in you. This is heartening and most comforting.

Here the summer has been very hot; once again God is giving abundant crops; trees are weighed down with fruit; vines are also heavy with grapes. An article in a daily paper in our area reads as follows:

Vine harvest 1986: How to manage abundance. To learn how to manage an abundance, a third of the bunches of grapes must be destroyed. For the last five years grape crops have notably exceeded the consumption potential, such conditions have never been experienced before. Political authorities and professional associations consider the problem extremely serious. Now we must manage abundance. One bunch of grapes in three must be cut off.

This reminds me of the seven years of abundance which God gave to the land of Egypt, followed by the seven years of famine. And as it

says, ". . . and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land" (Gen. 41:30).

My brethren, it is interesting to see the difference between the instructions which God gives and the decisions which are made by men, who profess themselves to be wise. At the time of Pharaoh the instructions did not come from a man but from God. They were merely conveyed to Pharaoh through a man. Joseph said, ". . . It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace" (Gen. 41:16). If God was going to give a favorable answer to Pharaoh's dream, then He was also going to make known the right measures to take. We read: "Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine" (Gen. 41:34-36).

Nowadays in our countries there is abundance, even overproduction, of everything. And since man does not want to resort to God's instructions, he is incapable of managing properly such an abundance; so he wastes and destroys the surplus. God addresses men, saying: "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you" (Prov. 1:20-27).

God wants us to be mindful of all His generosity and blessings and He wants us to use or manage them wisely. God does not give abundance to our nations for them to waste it; such a way of managing the surplus is going to be fraught with consequences.

Jesus Christ Himself drew our attention to this when He multiplied the loaves and fish. "And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full" (Matt. 15:37). Christ could have very easily satisfied without having any leftovers. But by this example He shows us that once we have been satisfied we must not waste or neglect what is left.

If such is the case in the domain of physical things, how careful must we be not to neglect the spiritual riches which God gives us! What do we do with all the teachings and all the knowledge which God dispenses through His servants? With God's wisdom are we capable of benefiting from them in our lives? Do we keep these things in store in our hearts to live them at the right moment, at the moment of trial? God says to us, "Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes" (Deut. 11:18). Brethren, let us be careful not to allow ourselves to be influenced by the way our society does things; let us not be indifferent to all that God gives us and allows in our lives. Each effect has a cause; and too often we take teachings for granted and through negligence we do not benefit from them in our lives.

Brethren, I have made a lot of mistakes in my life, and I still make some; sometimes the price to pay is painful; I accept the consequences thereof, thanking God for making me aware of the mistakes which I make and asking Him to forgive me for them. What a blessing to serve a God who does not grow weary of forgiving and correcting us in order to make us His children.

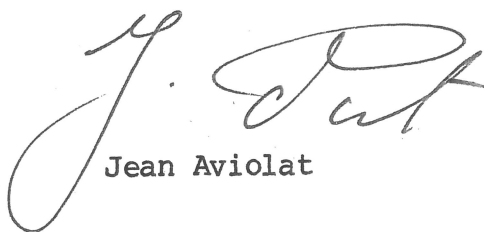
The forthcoming Holy Days herald a new Ruler, establishing a new Government. Brethren, if we want to take part in it and someday be capable of managing a whole nation perfectly, as did Joseph, let us not refuse to listen to rebukes, let us love God's knowledge and be attentive thereto. "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints. Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path" (Prov. 2:1-9). Brethren, as time goes by, we can only love God's way more and more. Without God's rebukes, advice, and instructions, where would we go?

What a joy on that day when we all, together with our elder Brother Jesus Christ, will be able to manage perfectly -- for the good and happiness of all humanity -- the physical and spiritual riches which God gives generously! Meanwhile, let us not grow weary of working on our lives, loving one another, and praying for one another. As we remain united by the mind of Christ, we will succeed in doing

great things; the greatest for the present is to remain faithful to the covenant which we made with God.

To you all, my dear brothers and sisters and friends, my greatest respect and warmest greetings.

Your brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'J. Aviolat', written in dark ink. The signature is fluid and somewhat stylized, with a large initial 'J' and a long, sweeping tail that loops back under the name.

Jean Aviolat