

Church of God, The Eternal

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Greetings to you all, brethren:

Who among us can claim that he does not thirst for meekness, quietness, and peace? Who does not dream of living in a country where there would be wonderful and lasting happiness, because frustration would be banished? Well, brethren, it is for the realization of such a plan that God called us to live now in solidarity, unity, dedication, loyalty, integrity, honesty, and in the conviction of our call and of the faith which God has given us. It is by applying ourselves to living these principles *now* that we shall have the privilege someday of being with Christ and bringing to the inhabitants of this earth that which they have always dreamt of but never experienced. God worked out a plan and it will be realized in His own chosen time. But we must individually ask ourselves the following questions: Are we prepared, are we qualified? Can we be allowed to collaborate in the realization of such an undertaking, which will eventually bring quietness, peace, and happiness on this earth? Are *we* working on it already, with all our might, with a determination and a zeal that nothing could weaken? Are we examples of solidarity, mercy, kindness, love, and affection? Do people around us sense in us a stability which is to be envied? Do they see the solidness of our faith, confidence, unity, and assurance as they see us live the principles of life which God has given us? For it is by living these principles that we manifest faith, honesty, and integrity.

In Deuteronomy 32 we read an example: ". . . The Lord alone did lead him [Israel], and there was no strange god with him" (Deut. 32:12). So it is with the people of God in the last days. The Eternal alone led His people—His Church—and there was no strange god with them. Only God could lead us in the way of Truth. And as ancient Israel received great blessings, the Israel of God in the last days received rich and abundant spiritual food.

But once blessed with abundance, either physical or spiritual, if he is not strict with himself man becomes lifted up in pride and arrogance. He believes that he deserves what he has received, or even more, he comes to believe that he has acquired it on his own and that henceforth he can manage by himself. That is why we read, ". . . he [Israel] forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation" (Deut. 32:15). This is what many called are doing in our time. Unless we come to perfectly master the self and submit ourselves to the interventions which God works in our lives, and thereby acquire the end result which God expects of us, we can ourselves become like those who despise the Rock of their salvation.

In Hebrews we are told about Christ, "Think of the persistent struggle which he had to sustain against sinful men; consider the way in which He endured their hostility; and do not let discouragement weaken you. After all, you have not yet had to shed your blood from having striven against sin. Will you have forgotten this word of encouragement which is addressed to you as sons: My son, do not despise the correction of the Lord and do not become discouraged

when He reproves you. For the Lord disciplines the one whom He loves, He corrects all those whom He recognizes as His sons. The corrections which you have to endure are useful for your education. They prove that God treats you as sons" (Heb. 12:3–7, translation of the French *Parole Vivante*). Christ is training, teaching, and correcting us so that we will be capable someday of bringing the peace and happiness which the whole creation of God is longing for. Would it not be tragic to be judged wanting in that day because of our hardness of heart? "Learn therefore to discern what pleases the Lord; examine and check your life from this angle. Do not compromise yourselves by participating in the unfruitful undertakings of darkness. Rather oppose them, renounce their futile and evil nature" (Eph. 5:10–11, *Parole Vivante*). Paul tells us that we must not let ourselves be led into imitating the conduct or the behavior of some; and we must not let these things discourage us. Did Christ not say that the tares and the wheat will grow together until the harvest? God allows certain situations to test His elect, to see if they can set a good example regardless of the circumstances. As said the Apostle Paul, thereby will those who are truly faithful and stand fast be recognized. "Therefore conduct yourselves as such [as children of light], shedding brightness around you. The fruits which the light ripens are the opposite of the sins listed. They are all that is good, righteous, and true: kindness, uprightness of heart, scrupulous honesty, the love of the truth, in brief, all that bears the mark of the light" (Eph. 5:9, *Parole Vivante*). So the true proof that we are qualifying for the realization of the purpose of God for this earth is that we are living a righteous life, a life in accordance with the Truth.

In Romans 12, the Apostle Paul exhorts us, "I ask you therefore, brethren, to consecrate your whole being to God, because of the goodness that He has shown to you. Let your body, your strength, and all your faculties be put at His disposal as a living and holy offering, one which is worth accepting. Thus your whole life will serve God. . ." (Rom. 12:1, *Parole Vivante*). Do not merely cast yourselves in the mold of everybody else. Do not conform your life to the principles which govern the present age; do not copy the customs and the habits of the day. Rather let yourselves be entirely transformed by the renewal of your mind. Adopt a different inner attitude. Give a new orientation to your thoughts so that you can discern what God wants of you. Thus you will be capable of recognizing what is good in His sight, that which pleases Him and which leads you to a true maturity" (Rom. 12:2, *Parole Vivante*). This has to do with the way we think, behave, and conduct ourselves. It is only following a transformation of our minds that we will be able to reject, without hesitation, the customs and habits which govern the present age and that we will be able to live the kind of life which will prove to God that we will be true servants in the world tomorrow. The duty which God has given us now is to live—and live strictly—this knowledge which He reveals to us through this abundant spiritual food which He gave us and is still giving us. We cannot allow ourselves to call into question what we have understood and lived or to depart from certain things because we want to live somewhat in accordance with the principles which govern the present age. We have the choice between two ways. To live both of them at the same time and to persist in doing so is to doom our life to failure. Unfortunately, we have had countless examples of this. Brethren, the only way for us to succeed in this present life is to accept the way God does things and to live what we understand as honestly and as loyally as we possibly can.

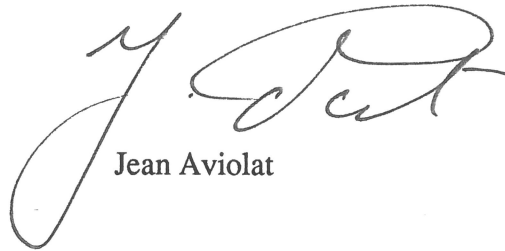
". . . Therefore we have acquired our righteousness before God through faith. . ." (Rom. 5:1, *Parole Vivante*). Faith is the capability to continue to believe, without ever doubting, and live, without ever flagging, what God revealed to us. "If, therefore, we have acquired our righteousness before God through faith, we are at peace with Him thanks to our Lord Jesus Christ; let us enjoy this peace and let us maintain it. Yes, it is Christ who made us enter the place where the divine benevolence reigns; by Him we have free access to the grace and to the

privileged position which is ours; we have the joy of being able to contemplate the glory of God from now on, and we look towards the future with implicit confidence. We know that we shall be made partakers of this glory; our hope makes us exult, for someday all the divine splendor will be ours" (Rom. 5:1-2, *Parole Vivante*). Brethren, for us a world where peace and happiness will reign is not a dream but a hope which makes us exult even now, because we believe it firmly and live the very principles which will bring this peace and happiness. We have seen living proofs of it in our own lives through certain experiences which we have had.

When God called us, He did not make us victims of any illusions. When He led us to His Church, He wanted us to be fed and treated with tenderness as a loving mother takes care of the child whom she feeds. The child smiles at life, for he senses in his mother all the affection and protection which he needs. Brethren, we had such confidence, trust, and serenity when we were yet children in the Truth; we, too, smiled at the spiritual life which was offered to us; we were devoted to the Truth as a little child is to his mother. Are we still as much so, and even more so? We must be, brethren, for we still have to go through that most painful and tragic period, the one Jesus Christ described when He stated, ". . . the most terrible of all that which has been known since God created the world; and never again will such suffering be seen" (Matt. 24:21, *Parole Vivante*). Yes, never again will such suffering be seen, for with authority Christ will make peace and happiness reign here below. Will we be with Him? We have been called for that purpose! "Moreover, I consider that there is no possible comparison between the sufferings of the present life and the glory to come which will be revealed soon. In comparison with the magnificent future which God has prepared for us, the vexations of this life count for less than nothing" (Rom. 8:18, *Parole Vivante*).

We think of you all in our prayers and we know that you do the same.

With all our affection and our sincerest love,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Aviolat', with a large, stylized initial 'J' and a flourish at the end.

Jean Aviolat