

Church of God, The Eternal

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Dear Brethren,

Since my last letter another year has been fulfilled in the calendar of our lives and in the calendar of God's plan and purpose; which brings us closer to the appointed day when Jesus Christ will judge all the secret actions of men.

During the year which has elapsed, have we worked well in order to assimilate the food which has been given to us and which will endure unto the promised eternal life which Jesus Christ will give to us at His return? Have we applied ourselves to living with a right orientation and a right spirit? Despite the inevitable difficulties of this life in the last days and the moral decadence of the society in which we live, have we been stirred by honesty and righteousness, fulfilling the requirements of obedience to the laws of God? Have we allowed God to write indelibly in our hearts and minds all the principles of life which Jesus Christ Himself lived in His own physical body? Have the trials or the experiences which we have gone through taught us anything? Have they strengthened our faith? Have they brought us closer to God? Or, on the contrary, have they discouraged us and taken us away from Him?

So many questions we can ask ourselves to take stock of our own lives. Questions to see if truly we can wait for the return of our Master with joy and confidence; or, if on the contrary, His return will be for us a cause of fear, anguish, and frustration.

Let us not forget that when we willfully live contrary to God's Truth, we fall into one of the categories of people who cannot bear fruit, as Christ shows in the parable of the sower. Why are there so many called—according to that parable—who do not succeed in living the Truth as God expects of them? It is because the Truth is made of absolutes and not of compromises and because humanbeings by nature do not like those absolutes. Jesus Christ shows in that parable that all kinds of circumstances are a stumbling block for a great majority of the called of God. So each one of us must recognize his responsibility toward the knowledge of God's way which he has received and understood. Everyone must be attentive to the circumstances which can make him fail spiritually so that he can overcome them when they come to pass in his life. It is a test which may reveal a weakness which

must be eliminated in our lives so that by the influence of God's Spirit the perfect way of God, the absolute, is an integral part of our lives.

There is a spiritual endurance which God requires of His elect so that whatever the deception, whatever the trial, we will not allow ourselves to be dissuaded, misled, or polluted by concepts, ideas, or even our own emotions. God is training us to make us members of His family—convinced, unshakeable in our resolve to live His way, for it is not possible to honor God, to glorify Him in our activities outside the Truth, that absolute. In Proverbs 12:17 we read, "He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness . . ." Righteousness is established in our lives and will be in the world of tomorrow by the laws, the commandments, all the principles which Jesus Christ prescribed and lived and which must be lived in our bodies by the very life of Jesus Christ in us through God's Holy Spirit. In Titus 1:1 the Apostle Paul says to us, "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness;" There are many who claim to live the truth of God but who refuse to see that their ways, their thoughts, and their words do not reflect godliness at all. Only the truth in our thoughts, in our activities, in our family life brings the picture of righteousness, of godliness. Truth is an absolute. It is that which will transform humankind who is suffering, worried, and captive in deep darkness into a reign of righteousness and peace on this earth.

Do we want to be of those who will open the heavy door of the dark dungeon of despair where humanity is lying in order to bring them peace, comfort, happiness with all the wonderful fruits of the bread of life which God made us able to understand? God did not choose and call us to live only days of happiness in this temporary life. He chose and called us to learn and to be trained to give happiness to others. Jesus Christ, our elder brother, though He was the Son of God, learned obedience by the things which he suffered, the Apostle Paul tells us. And what did He not suffer during His terrestrial life? And yet what did He do? He gave bread to the crowd when they were hungry; He made the deaf hear, the blind see, the paralytic walk; He healed people from their incurable diseases; He gave an enemy his ear back; He resurrected the child of the widow. The Apostle John tells us that if all the things which He accomplished were written in detail, the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. What a lot of happiness He gave while being the bearer of the good news of the Kingdom of God.

It is for us to receive that training that God chose us and gave us the absolute of His way of life. To rule tomorrow with Christ, to be a brother or a sister of Christ, it is also to walk as He walked, the Apostle John tells us. It is being bearers of that righteousness, that godliness, that absolute, that happiness so that on the appointed day by God we can give it to peoples who will be in deep sorrow and in extreme suffering when Jesus Christ comes back.

God the Father Himself established a plan, a calendar, in which every humanbeing having lived on this earth, will be able to learn to live that absolute in order to attain that eternal happiness. To make that plan feasible God gave His Son and let Him be despised. He was spat upon, insulted, smitten and nailed to the stake unto death. Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow in His steps, the Apostle Peter tells us.

God called us to be trained and to be able to participate in that wonderful purpose. For us God fulfills His part daily and He goes beyond all that we could hope for. But are we ourselves willing to fulfill our part by bearing in our lives the marks of Jesus as the Apostle Paul bore them in his body? It is recorded in Hebrews 5:7, "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared" ["and he was heard for his godly fear (*Revised Standard Version*)" or "and he was heard for his godliness (French translation)"]. We will also be heard, if we allow ourselves to be moulded spiritually in the hands of God and through the experiences of this life, if unto tears we sustain that love for the Truth and we live that absolute which God gave to us. He who is afraid to love, to suffer in order to be a bearer of that absolute is a coward, and God will have no need of him in His family.

Has God not backed us up unto this day? Has He not supported, sustained us in the difficult, painful moments of this life? If we desire, if we trust Him, He will remain by our side, He will accomplish His work in our lives until we have acquired the necessary mastery to receive those wonderful gifts, those wonderful powers which Jesus Christ exercised at His first coming for the happiness of humanbeings. His work was a type, a picture of the wonderful things which will happen when His reign is established on this earth—in which we have received the invitation to participate.

For the present we must prove ourselves in the firmness of that absolute, of God's way of life. We must show courage and will. It is then that we can count on His support. He will make us gain the last victory which will be the most beautiful of all those victories which we will have already experienced in this present life.

Do we want to participate for a thousand years under the authority of Jesus Christ in the restoration of all things on this earth? Do we want to help remake the earth into a Garden of Eden, to deliver humanity from the darkness of the power of Satan so that mankind can live in the brilliant light of God's way under the authority of a King and princes who will reign with righteousness and uprightness? Do we want to be of those who will be able to say to those whose hearts are troubled, "Take courage, fear not, we are here for your happiness, for your security, we are here to show you the way to a happy marriage, to a happy family, to a happy society?" And as the prophet Isaiah announces to us, "Then the

eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing . . ." (Isaiah 35:5, 6). And for us, do you not think that our joy will be overflowing when those people themselves have become part of the Divine Family? Jesus Christ certainly did say that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

What about the end of the one thousand years when we see this multitude of bodies sown in weakness being raised full of strength on an earth which has become a paradise? The time when everyone will be established according to his family—to be taught, trained and to finally be born with a spiritual body into the family of God. What joy will be ours to see mothers who lost their children through war or other circumstances be privileged to clasp them again in their arms.

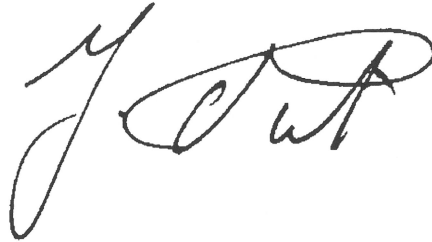
What a joy when humankind and the earth will be purged of all defilements and sins and God the Father will come and live with His family as we are told in Revelation 21:3–4; 22:3–5. Soon we will not have to count the bad days anymore, we will be able to forget them and greet eternity as the prophet Isaiah reports to us, "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain." (Isaiah 66:22).

Can we maintain the necessary faith not to grow slack and discouraged in waiting for such a future which is promised to us? It is true that fighting the self and overcoming it is the most difficult war, but when we consider what God has in store for us, the victory is worthwhile. And to gain it, can we bow down humbly before God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ to show them our gratitude for the call and for the fulfillment of such an absolute in our lives? By our obedience, our faithfulness, our faith in the fulfillment of that great purpose in our lives, may our prayers be likened to that pure and costly perfume which Mary poured on Jesus' feet, wiping them with her hair afterward. A gesture of humility, worship and gratitude toward the One who gave His life to make possible the realization of such a purpose for all humankind.

Let us be able to glorify God by our conduct, disciplining our lives according to that absolute which God gave to everyone. Let us exhort one another to be diligent in our respective obligations with an attitude of humility. Jesus Christ says to us, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." (John 13:17). And the Apostle Paul who applied himself to living that absolute, despite the pressures put on him, tells us, "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). Let us revive and preciousely keep this fruitful strength which will allow us tomorrow to participate in the construction of a new world.

I greet you and through these few lines I express to you all my affection with the hope which is now offered to you and which tomorrow will be given to you by our Lord Almighty.

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