

January 2016

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Warmest greetings to you all.

Since my last letter, twelve months have already gone by. During that space of time, we have encountered many experiences that God has allowed in our lives in order to bring His workmanship to completion for the day of His Son's return. His desire is to create in us implicit trust in Him—a heart rid of all hidden unbelief.

Twelve months are behind us: that much less time in our human existence to prepare to be the people who will welcome their King, while all the nations of the world will be angry. In that day, those who did not fail to work out their own salvation with the help of God, will say:

. . . Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation (Isaiah 25:9, *New International Version*).

He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it (Isaiah 25:8).

Since the first coming of Jesus Christ, God has called human beings in various nations and with different standards of living. He has purposed to make them His people—a people who will share in the glory of His Son when He sends Him again to the earth. Whatever our social standing, we must continually ask ourselves the following question: Am I living as God expects of me? God, who is no respecter of persons, called us to live up to His expectations. As we are told:

Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts (2 Chronicles 19:7).

Thus, all of us, both small and great, rich and poor, must give the right orientation to our lives, be mindful of our obedience to God and manifest the required faith and trust in Him. In this life, "The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all"

(Proverbs 22:2). Jesus Christ warns both, saying: "... Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed [avarice, cupidity]; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" (Luke 12:15, *NIV*). Jesus Christ shows that avarice (or cupidity) is the transgression of a spiritual principle and that we can easily fall into a state of mind which violates that commandment given by Him: "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed." He goes on to explain the meaning of this life and the purpose for which God called us. He says: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21). What resides in our hearts matters a great deal to God. He is seriously evaluating the orientation of the poor toward what he receives, and the orientation of the rich toward what he has.

In Luke 12:16–21, we read the parable of a certain rich man. Jesus Christ does not condemn the fact of his being rich. Although the man was wealthy and had more than enough for his needs, God still blessed him through his land that brought forth plentifully. Sometimes, abundant material blessings may be a test. God searches our hearts and thoughts, and He watches our actions. In this parable, Jesus Christ points out that the orientation that the rich man gave to his life was most selfish. He was eager to accumulate. He thought only of his own belly and his own comfort; he looked only to his own interests. Taking his ease and living a life of leisure was his plan. So God tries us; He sees how we respond, whether we suffer poverty or enjoy abundance.

"Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted" (James 1:9). What exaltation? "Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?" (James 2:5, *NIV*). Conversely, we read: "But the rich, [let him rejoice] in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away" (James 1:10). Being made low in what? "The rich man's wealth is his strong city . . ." (Proverbs 10:15). He puts his confidence in his wealth. The richer he is, the more secure he feels. But he is called to learn to rely on God and use his riches wisely and judiciously in order to fulfill his obligations before God. In so doing, he too can become rich in faith and an heir of the Kingdom. "... [F]or a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15). Faith and confidence in God is essential for the inheritance of salvation. God requires us to trust Him, whether we are rich or poor. We manifest our trust in Him by the way we conduct ourselves through the tests that God creates or allows in our lives.

By nature, man is trapped in a vicious circle: he constantly seeks after more material things because his greed is never satisfied. And he puts his confidence in his possessions. But to us, God says: "Put no confidence in extortion, set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart on them" (Psalm 62:10, *Revised Standard Version*). The Apostle Paul emphasizes this principle: "Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, 'I will never fail you nor forsake you'" (Hebrews 13:5, *RSV*).

Furthermore, "The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep" (Ecclesiastes 5:12).

We are living in a time when the love of riches has created an empire in the world. The day is coming when God will expose the shame and the baseness of man's behavior. Read it in James, chapter five, verses 1–6. How many needy people have endured all their lives the contempt and the oppression of an elite class who glory in hoarding fortunes? It is happening before our very eyes in these last days. Man tends to take such pride in his success that he will oppress the poor to achieve it. His actions reveal the evil motives of his heart.

He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor (Proverbs 14:31).

The story of the rich young man recorded in Matthew 19:16–24 points to the root of the problem. It is not because he was wealthy; it is because his heart was filled with the love of wealth rather than the love of God's Truth. The rich young man obeyed the commandments, for he knew that it was prerequisite to the inheritance of eternal life. However, he still had one thing to do in order to be perfect. Christ said to him: "If thou wilt be perfect . . ." He had to part with his earthly treasure in which his heart and mind were completely wrapped up. Then he could put on a spiritual treasure that would make him a disciple of Christ. Sadly, the rich young man could not make that choice. He was quite willing to obey God's commandments provided he could cling to and trust in his riches.

Let us not allow ourselves to be ruled by the power of money, which leads to so much violence in our society. As the called of God, we can pray to Him:

Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain (Proverbs 30:8–9).

Let us be rich in faith while God is working in our lives to bring His plan to completion for the day of Jesus Christ, as we are promised in Philippians 1:6. Let our hearts and minds be filled with the treasures of God: His way of life, His Spirit and the fruits thereof listed in Galatians 5:22–23. We must *will* that perfection to be wrought in our lives, believing that it will be absolute when we are born into the Family of God.

Until that day, what will we do? Will we be like Lazarus who bore his trials until his death, or will we end up like the rich man who begged for mercy because he did not have part

in the desirable resurrection? This parable in Luke 16:19–31 tells us that God is judging our lives right now and that everyone will find out at the resurrection on which side of the chasm he stands.

So, brethren, let us not take liberty in challenging or disbelieving what God says in His Word. God knows whether we heard and understood. The Apostle Paul talked about the glorious riches that we were given. My dear brothers and sisters, it behooves each of us to keep them with faith, confidence and a pure conscience. That is how we are rich toward God.

With my affection and respect for each of you,  
Your brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Aviolat', written in a cursive style.

Jean Aviolat