

We Must Prepare for the Return of Christ

January 2015

To our beloved brothers and sisters,

Greetings to you all who are scattered on this earth. The day will come when we will meet and know one another in the glorious Kingdom which is promised to us. Since we will all speak the same language, what a joy it will be to be able to communicate and share our life experiences with one another and with the whole line of those who preceded us and glorified God by their faithfulness. But before we experience that reality, let us remember that we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God, as we read in Acts 14:22. It is only after we have finished our course—as courageous and faithful fighters—that our sufferings and sorrows will belong to the past.

Here, we are all grateful for having been able to gather together in order to celebrate God's fall feasts. The Feast of Tabernacles filled us with hope, as we lived a foretaste of the promised Kingdom for which we are waiting with the patience required of us by God. Our Father never told us the length of the end time before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. However, the conditions in the world and among the people of God indicate that we belong to the generation who must prepare for the return of Christ. Such preparation requires great willingness on our part, because Jesus Christ warns us that only he who shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

Being ready for the return of Christ is no picnic! Our enduring implies that some enormous pressures are exerted on our minds. Unless we overcome them, there are many reasonings and many thoughts which will draw us into a negative attitude toward our call. Such influence comes from Satan and his demons who play upon our human natures. But our responsibility is clear: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward" (Hebrews 10:35). Enduring to the end is the condition laid down by Jesus Christ. If we fulfill it, we will see one another in His glorious Kingdom where joy and happiness will be the fruits for having worked out our own salvation.

That goal demands all the energy, the determination and the fervor which we can muster with the help of God's Spirit. Every single day, we are looking at a line of demarcation between two ways. We have the broad way which allows us to go about our business according to our thoughts and live as we please—everyone choosing his own independence. And we have the narrow way which requires of us honesty and integrity of heart and mind toward God's way of life. Therefore, we cannot allow ourselves to do all the things that seem acceptable and right in our sight. For, ". . . if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Peter 4:18).

Yes indeed, strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leads to life. Everyone whom God called knows that. And yet, how many—who were the salt of the earth for a number of years—have become indifferent, hostile or reluctant concerning obedience to some of God's laws! They have lost their savor and their respect for God's words; they have forgotten the exhortation of Jesus Christ: ". . . Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). Becoming as little children is manifesting in our lives humility, love and confidence toward God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ even as a little child does toward his parents. It is our loyalty—our faithfulness—to the instruction which we were given. If, as a result of our call, we became the children of God, then this is what we are told by our heavenly Father:

Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law. For I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother [The Church is our mother: do we have the attitude of a tender and only beloved son toward the ministry established by God?]. He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live. Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee (Proverbs 4:1–6).

To love the Truth of God—to have the love of the Truth that we may be saved—means to remain loyal, solid and steadfast in those things which God allowed us to understand. It is a contract with God, which we signed through baptism. Let us not be of those who have pleasure in unrighteousness, as we read in the second chapter of 2 Thessalonians. We are warned of a day of reckoning that is coming. Let us keep that in mind.

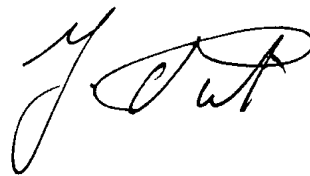
Do we sometimes try to circumvent God's way because of our lack of trust and faith in the Father and His Son Jesus Christ? Every time we do, we know that we have not yet acquired the attitude of a little child. We must repent of it, and then we must be mindful and very careful of the way we think, live and do things. As Jesus Christ stated: "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light . . ." (John 3:20). To do evil is to pursue the way which seems right to the

natural mind. It is to construct all kinds of conceptions and justifications in order to shirk obedience to God's instructions that were given and understood. We would rather live according to our own thoughts.

"But he that doeth truth cometh to the light . . ." (John 3:21). Such a man knows in which path he is walking. He really believes what God says. It affects his mind, his thinking and his responses. He can echo the feelings of David: "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day" (Psalm 119:97). He truly wants God's teachings to take root in his heart and mind. His way of thinking and behaving changes; it reflects his determination to live up to God's principles. In this manner we do walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, who is, by His example, the brightness of that light. Let us show Him that we would rather deny ourselves, forsake our own ways and submit to Him. Let us strive toward the brightness of that Light, and let us achieve the purpose of our call.

Through the circumstances that we encounter in this world, our faith will be tried more and more. Let us not allow discouragement to undermine our spiritual lives. When we go through a difficult time, let us turn to God with confidence and trust, knowing that God neither allows nor does anything that is unnecessary to our training for the responsibilities with which He wants to entrust us in His Kingdom. Being united by the Spirit of God and through prayer, we can rest assured that God will help us. Let us not be doubtful; whatever happens around you and wherever you are, God will be with you. God loves you, and may His blessings follow you.

With all my affection,
Your brother in Christ,

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

Jean Aviolat