

December 29

In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good. Ecclesiastes 11:6

ALL of the Lord's people, in propor-

ECCLESIASTES 11:6

ZWT JULY 1 AND 15 "Dear brethren and sisters, let us all remember the words of the wise: "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand; for thou knowest not which shall prosper, this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good." (Eccl. 11:6.) Thus we may each have the blessed assurance that we have done what we could to advance the interests of our Redeemer's Kingdom." S. D. Rogers

R3197 "During the two years of the Apostle's imprisonment he had been witnessing, preaching the gospel, both to small and great—such of the soldiers or servants or commanders of the camp as seemed to have a hearing ear undoubtedly were communicated with. We may be sure that the Apostle slackened not at any time his endeavors to serve the great Master, the Captain of our salvation, as a true soldier and faithful servant. So, too, should we continue to serve, even when apparently the most favorable opportunities are withheld from us. "Thou knowest not which shall prosper, either this or that." -- Eccl. 11:6."

R4000 "Sow beside all waters; thou knowest not which shall prosper, this or that."—*Isa. 32:20; Eccl. 11:6...*

God's message is so good, so grand, that whoever receives it into a good and honest heart receives a blessing which so rejoices him that he must desire to live it, to tell it to others. That desire is a spirit of the Truth. He should follow that desire, that leading, that love of the Truth, that desire to lay down his life in its service just so far as possible...

WHAT YOUR HANDS FIND TO DO"

An illustration of the blessed influence of this work comes to our mind as told by a brother who is now deeply interested in the Truth. At the time mentioned he was a railroad accountant, and an attendant of one of the principal churches of Washington City. He was born in China, where his parents were missionaries, and had become accustomed to the religion of formalism. One Sunday as he came from Church he was handed a tract by one of the brethren, whom he recognized as a merchant, owner of several stores in the city. He said to himself, That man is not doing that work for pay, he must be sincere; I will read the tract. Slightly interested from the reading of the tract he obtained further reading matter, the DAWNS [Later renamed "STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES"]. Now a bookkeeper in one of Washington's principal banks, he is one of the most aggressive of the volunteer force there, as well as an Elder of the Church.

We are not to hold back from the service of the Truth because we are well known by our neighbors... Rather we are to remember that we have given our all to the Lord, not only our lives but our physical strength, our mental strength, our reputation and influence and our money. If we made a

tion as they desire to be the servants of the Truth, should be continually on the alert to note opportunities for service, and should expect to be guided and used of the Lord. Wherever we see evidences of devotion to the Lord and His Word, we should be on the alert to extend a helping hand...We are to

full consecration to him we gave our all, and we must judge of our Lord's estimation of our attitude by his words, "He that is ashamed of me and my Word...of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed" (Mark 8:38); and again, we remember the declaration, "They that honor me I will honor." It is not surprising then that we find that those who are most active in serving the Truth and who thus indicate their special love for it and its authority, the Lord, should have special evidence of his love to them in their spiritual health and progress and keeping...

We know not how many more such opportunities will be ours. All around us we see evidences that the shackles of error are breaking, the darkness of superstition fading away, and that new delusions are being brought forward by the Adversary to captivate those who are now awakening and beginning to see a little light. Let us be faithful, us to whom the Lord has been so gracious in the bestowment of such clear knowledge of his own character and of the harmony of his blessed Word in the "Plan of the Ages."

R3296 "Whom will we serve? The Lord, his Truth and his brethren? Or self, or the world, or the flesh, or the devil?"

This is the hour of trial for the consecrated. We have solemnly told the Lord that we love him more than we love houses or lands, or father, or mother, or self, or any other creature, and now he is putting our professions to the test. The measure of our sacrifice of earthly privileges for spiritual ones will mark the degree of our love, our devotion, to the Lord; and our favor with the Lord, our growth in him, in his characterlikeness, will be proportionate.

We all see the issue squarely. Let us each resolve that by the Lord's grace we will yet hear his voice declare of us, as members of his Bride,—"She hath done what she could." This will mean more energetic and more persistent service."

R1332 "Every opportunity for serving the Lord by the spread of his Truth means (during this age when evil abounds) an opportunity for *self-sacrifice* on the part of his consecrated ones. Our Master intends it to be so, because he would prove both to himself and to us the sincerity of our love. We may think that we love him and his Word more than we really do; and these opportunities, as they come, serve to show us our real attitude--the real depth of our love. And those whose hearts are really and fully consecrated, if they find a wincing of the flesh when an opportunity for sacrifice offers, will be put on guard thereby to see that their human will, pride, love of self and ease, etc., are more fully *crucified*--to the death.

Ah! says some one, I have consecrated all to the Lord, and would gladly give both time and means in his service, but the *necessities* of this life absorb almost all of both, in caring for those dependent on me. I wish that I could see some way of attesting

be on the alert to pass along the blessing which we have received, and to esteem that this is the chief business of life with those who have consecrated themselves to the service of the King of kings. Z. '02-71 R2965:3

my love... But how to do it I find not: there are so many demands for every spare hour and every spare dollar.

To such we believe that the Lord would have us deliver the following message which others will please not read:--

Your difficulty lies in trying to do too much -- more than you have ability to do-- and in overlooking the little things which are within your ability. You would love to preach the truth to great audiences with a thrilling "silver tongue," but have you such a talent? If not you had better begin humbly at home, and in a simple, quiet way tell the story of redeeming love to such of your family and neighbors as are "meek" and have "an ear to hear." It is to him who uses faithfully the talents which he *has* that the Lord promises to give greater talents and opportunities. Or perhaps, more humbly, you aspire to be the most successful colporteur or tract distributor--to sell and distribute thousands over vast extents--but cannot. Then turn and see how faithful you have been or can be in the use of opportunities which lie just at your hand on a smaller, humbler scale -- humility may be one of your most needed lessons. Or perhaps you are saying, Would that I had thousands or millions of dollars, how gladly would I spend them in spreading the truth.

You perhaps forget for the moment the great Master's remark (Luke 21:2-4), that the poor widow's two mites were *more* in his sight than the large bequests made by those who merely gave out of their abundance. "The Lord your God doth *prove you*," whether ye do love him and his truth supremely; and therefore he permits his work often to seem to lag for want of means, that the seeming necessity may give us the opportunity to deny ourselves in his service --for our benefit, our development, our blessing. (2 Cor. 8:1-15; 9:5-12.)"

R1440 "None of us can afford to exercise or cultivate a spirit of idleness. Those who idle away their time, and those who absorb it all in the service of business, or pleasure, or family, or self, are laying up no treasure in heaven, however much or little they may be laying by on earth. Present opportunities for sacrificing service are therefore to be esteemed, not only as the greatest privileges of the present life, but also as the greatest privileges ever offered or to be offered.

Let each one, then, ask himself--What am I *doing* for God, his plan and his people? If you are *doing* all that you *can do*, be glad and rejoice, even though that *all* be miserably small, even in your own estimation. It is the *will* and *effort* to DO and to BE that our Redeemer regards with loving favor. But if you are not doing *all* that you could do, be dissatisfied with yourself; and uneasy lest your listlessness and carelessness for his service settle it with the Master that you are unworthy to share in the work of glory as a member of his Church glorified.

Let each one resolve to do something each day to serve our gracious King--not to *merit salvation*, but as the expression of our

love for him through whom we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins.

Our Lord does not despise our feeblest efforts when prompted by warm, overflowing hearts. The servant who has but one talent and uses it faithfully will be welcomed as a *good and faithful* servant... every one who uses his talents faithfully finds them increasing daily...

Be assured, dearly beloved, that neglect to use your privilege of serving the truth will react to your spiritual degeneracy. As a sound faith is for the purpose of leading to good works, so the activity of service is necessary to continued purity of faith. It is from this cause that many are stumbling into the "outer darkness" of agnosticism--doubt, uncertainty."

R566 "God is not unrighteous to forget your *work and labor of love.*" Is it possible, we sometimes say, that God will thus esteem our poor, imperfect works? And what are they? They seem so small that we feel ashamed to mention them; and yet it is our *little all*; rendered with carefulness according to our covenant, and though imperfect, it is rendered acceptable through him *whose imputed righteousness* makes up all the deficiency...

Paul here mentions specially their labors of love in *ministering* to the saints. Many Christians seemingly fail to appreciate their privilege in this direction, and spend their principal effort for the world, forgetting the injunction: "Do good unto all men as you have opportunity, *especially* to the household of faith." The time is coming, and is not far distant, when there will be abundant opportunity to do good to the world; but the opportunity to do good to the saints, the body, the bride of Christ, will not long continue. Soon they will be glorified and no longer need your ministrations.

Remember the Master's words: A poor woman had brought a box of very precious ointment and poured it on his head as he sat at meat; and when his disciples saw it they said, "To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor." But Jesus answered, "The poor ye have always with you, but me ye have not always; she hath wrought a good work upon me." (Matt. 26:7-13.)

So, the body of Christ will not always be here to be ministered unto... Let us appreciate our privilege of ministering to the saints in whatever way we find it possible, whether in temporal or spiritual things. In the language of our beloved brother Paul: "We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the *full assurance of hope* unto the end." Since our covenant is to sacrifice and spend ourselves completely, *full assurance* of receiving the reward can only come by diligence in self-sacrifice -- ministering."

R1281 "HOW SHALL WE PAY OUR VOWS?... When we consecrated ourselves fully to the Lord, we thereby signified that

we would hold nothing back for self. That consecration included all our possessions, our time, our physical energies and our mental attainments. And it implied the sacrifice of all our former earthly ambitions, hopes and aims, so that we should no longer pursue them to any extent. This, and nothing less, is what our vow of full consecration signifies. But it signifies, further, that these possessions or personal qualifications, which the Lord terms talents, are not only to be released from the service of the worldly ambitions, etc., but that they are to be so released, not for aimless inactivity, but for the purpose of being utilized in an opposite direction--in the service of God, of his plan and of his children.

In the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30) the Lord illustrated very clearly how we are expected to pay our vows of consecration to the Most High...

Each servant had *at least* one talent; and for the right use of that one talent he was just as accountable to his master as were those who had more.

But the professed servant with the one talent was unfaithful to his master... He had taken good care of the talent...but he had simply buried it -- failed to use it... He was simply an idler, willing, if he could, to draw a servant's approval and compensation, but lacking any real, active interest in his master's business... He did not feel the responsibility he had assumed in becoming a "servant," nor take a proper interest in his master's affairs. Yet, as a faithless, slothful servant, he was really a covenant-breaker, and therefore "wicked" and certainly unfit to be trusted with still greater responsibilities on the master's return...

If the illustration fits your individual case, let it not lose its effect upon you. The very object of the parable is to arouse such to a sense of their short-comings, and to recover them from the lethargy into which they have relaxed, by reminding them of their responsibilities. Activity in the Lord's service to the full extent of our ability or talents is what the Lord has a right to expect of all who profess to be his servants; and it is what he does expect. Therefore, if you have but one talent, do not bury it, but cultivate and use it; do what you can...

After providing things decent and honest for ourselves and those dependent upon us, let us judiciously appropriate our talents to what we profess to consider the chief business of life. Here are the testing points of true loyalty and devotion. Let us ponder them well, and not lightly set them aside."

R5334 "The great business in life of those who would honor and serve the Lord is to serve the brethren and the Truth. Everything that represents the Truth these soldiers of the cross are to uphold--everything that is right, just, true. They will give their approval to such things and their disapproval to other things. This is what causes the opposition of the flesh and of the world and of the Adversary.

So, then, Christians have become dead to the world and alive toward God. Having thus been received and counted in as a member of Christ, every such one has as his special business the service of the Lord, the brethren and the Truth. And according to his abilities and opportunities is he to engage in this business. And this is to be his mind or disposition--to serve the Lord. And he is to be fervent in spirit, not indifferent, not lukewarm. As the Lord Jesus was fervent in spirit, even so are we to be. The fervency of His spirit for God and His arrangements consumed His life. So it must be with all those who serve God--those who walk in the Master's footsteps. This must be, necessarily, the chief business in life for these people of God.

HOW TO REDEEM THE TIME

It is necessary for us to engage in some kind of occupation in order to secure a livelihood. God has so arranged in order to prove our faithfulness. Further, as other people are engaged in these same occupations, laboring for the comforts of life, we are compelled to compete with these to some extent. But as we see that we have a nobler business, we shall see to it that all these secular things in life are cut off, as far as possible, in order that we may have the more time for the Lord's service. The old ambition to gain earthly things would lead us to lay up treasures on earth. But the hope set before us in the Gospel leads us rather to lay up treasures in Heaven, "where moth doth not corrupt," etc.

So this class do with as few luxuries in life as possible, in order that they may lay down their time and strength in His service. And the more they do this, the more they become copies of God's dear Son. Thus, if any one is engaged in the carpenter business -- the same in which our Lord engaged when He was a youth -- he will say, How can I minimize the affairs of life so that I can give more of my time to the Lord and less to earthly matters? And so it will be his endeavor to cut off the desire for earthly luxuries. More and more he will count the affairs of this life as loss and dross in comparison with the glory of the life beyond.

In proportion, therefore, as we imbibe the Truth, in that same proportion will be our desire to be fervent in spirit -- in that same proportion we shall be striving to sacrifice, to cut off, to devote to the Lord this time and talent and energy. We do not think that the Lord would wish us to be too particular regarding earthly things and waste valuable time. For instance, we might say, I will keep this house as *unto the Lord*. And we might give too much of our time and attention to different matters about the house. But the Lord is inviting us to choose the better part and not to give too much time and attention to procuring and caring for ornaments and bric-a-brac. Whoever would give too much time to the housework or to other earthly affairs would show that he did not appreciate the privilege of the Lord's service."

R2964 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0) GOD'S PROVIDENCES COOPERATE

--ACTS 8:29-39.--MARCH 16.--

"With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."--Rom. 10:10.

DIVINE PROVIDENCES in our experiences as Christians should be sought for, if we would find them and enjoy their blessings to the full. But this requires faith, in a larger measure than we at first possess; and the increase of faith requires knowledge and expe-

rience. Our lesson illustrates God's providential care over his people from two standpoints: (1) His care for those who are seeking the light of truth; his intention that their earnest longings for it shall be rewarded, and his provision that the truth shall reach them under favorable conditions. (2) The Lord's willingness to use in his service, as instruments of his providence, those of his consecrated people who put themselves in the proper condition for his service.

Deacon Philip, the instrument of divine providence in starting the Ethiopian eunuch in the narrow way of discipleship--and through him possibly introducing the good tidings into Africa--we have already seen was just such a man as the Lord is pleased to use as his mouthpiece in the service of the truth. Having proven himself faithful in the inferior work of serving tables, he had been advanced, and been made an ambassador for God in the preaching of the Gospel at Samaria; and the present lesson shows him still further guided and used of the Lord in his blessed service. There is an encouraging lesson here for all who have the same spirit--the same desire to serve the Lord and his cause. Faithfulness in little things is sure to bring larger opportunities.

We are not informed by what means the Lord "spake to Philip," sending him to the road in which he would find the eunuch's chariot. We may be sure however, that the indication was sufficiently clear to Philip to be more than a mere guess or impression. We are to remember, too, that it was at a time when the Lord used miraculous means of communication, more than at present--doubtless for the very purpose of establishing the faith of his servants as well as their work. Today we walk more by faith, less by sight and miracle. Yet so bright is the light of truth now shining upon the divine plan and Word that we may safely say that we have much advantage every way, even over those of that time. We are to remember that up to the time of this lesson there were no New Testament writings; nothing, therefore, aside from the Law and the Prophets to assist and guide the apostles and early evangelists except the more or less miraculous interpositions of God's providence.

Even after we have learned of God's particular care for all of his people, we are inclined to surprise that a solitary individual should be so particularly cared for as was this eunuch;--that a special messenger should be sent to him for his instruction in righteousness. Very evidently divine providence does not guard the going of all mankind to this same degree. Very evidently there was something in the character of this eunuch, something in his heart-attitude toward God, that was pleasing and acceptable to the Lord, and caused the working of this miracle on his behalf--that he might have needed instruction in the truth.

The eunuch belonged to the kingdom of Meroe, which lay on the right bank of the Nile River, from its junction with the Atbara--as far south as Khartoum, and thence to the east of the Blue Nile to the mountains of Abyssinia. He was a court officer, evidently deeply religious, who had come in contact with, and been impressed by, the Jewish religion; and in his religious fervor he had gone up to Jerusalem to worship, and to gain additional knowledge of the true God. His case, like that of the Samaritans and of Cornelius, indicates that this occurrence was after the close of Israel's "seventy weeks," of special favor, for this eunuch was not a Jew in the fullest sense,--eunuchs not being fully accepted as proselytes, nor granted the privileges of the congregation. (Deut. 23:1.) Up to this time the eunuch, like Cornelius and the believing Samaritans, had been a part of the Lazarus class, lying at the gate of Dives, desiring to be fed with some of the crumbs from the bountiful table of blessing and promises which God had spread for Israel. Now the change had come. The house of Israel had been cast off; the end of Israel's special favor as respects the Gospel had come; and the time for receiving the Lazarus class to Abraham's bosom had arrived. Philip, as an angel or messenger of the Lord, was sent to carry this representative of the Lazarus class to the arms of father Abraham, as a true child of Abraham, through faith.

The eunuch had been to the head centre of the religion which he esteemed to be the true one. He had come away from Jerusalem with a manuscript copy of one of the holy prophets--Isaiah--a treasure in those times, costly. That his manuscript was written in the Greek language, and not in the Hebrew, seems to be indicated by the word *Esaias*, which is the Greek form of Isaiah. He was hungering and thirsting for the truth, and making his best possible endeavor to obtain it, as is evidenced by his purchase of the manuscript, and his long journey, and his reading. That he was doing more than simply reading,--that he was studying, is evidenced by his language to Philip. Can we wonder that God's special providences would be manifested toward such an one--toward a person in such a condition of heart, hungering and thirsting for the truth? We cannot wonder at it. It is in full accord with the Lord's promise, that such shall be filled;

that such seekers shall find; that such knockers shall have the door of truth opened to them. Let us remember that we are under the care of the same God, and that he changes not; and let us learn the lesson that he is as well able today as ever to assist the sincere truth-seeker.

Another lesson connected with this matter pertains to times and seasons. God could have directed the eunuch to the meeting of the Church at Jerusalem, and to the instructions of the apostles there. But this probably would not have been so favorable for the eunuch. After receiving the apostolic instruction he might have referred the matter to the scribes and Pharisees, and have received in return explanations more or less confusing. In the Lord's providence he quite likely heard something of the Christians, and their claims that Messiah had come and had been crucified, and he quite probably knew the other side of the story, that the chief priests and teachers claimed that the whole matter was a fraud, an imposition. Possibly these very thoughts had led him to procure the manuscript he was reading, and had brought him into the attitude of mind favorable for the reception of the truth when Philip expounded it.

Let us learn from this, not only in respect to our own affairs, but also in respect to the general service of the truth, to trust implicitly in divine wisdom and power--to remember that the Lord knoweth them that are his, and that he knoweth how best to bring them in contact with the truth. Properly learned, this lesson will not slack our hands in the divine service; for true servants will still be anxious and ready to serve, as was Philip; but it will serve to strengthen our hearts and to take from us that fearfulness that is a hindrance to the peace of many of God's children. Let us not fear for the Lord's Word, but remember his declaration, through the Prophet, "My word, that goeth forth out of my mouth, shall not return unto me void; it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."--Isa. 55:11.

The chariot probably overtook and passed Philip in the road, the eunuch driving leisurely, in order that he might read. He was reading aloud, after the custom of that time and country, and according to the injunctions laid upon the people by the Jewish teachers. Indeed, it was one of the Jewish rules that the faithful, in traveling, should read if they had no companionship. We are not informed how the spirit told Philip to hail the eunuch; possibly in the same miraculous way in which he was sent to this road, or possibly having been sent to this road he was on the look-out for the object of his mission, and hearing the eunuch reading from the prophecy, Philip may have understood at once that this was the favored person, and a favorable time for delivering the message to the service of which his life had been consecrated. This gives us a suggestion--⁽¹⁾all of the Lord's people, in proportion as they desire to be the servants of the truth, should be continually on the alert to note opportunities for service, and should expect to be guided and used of the Lord. All of the Lord's people are ministers, servants, of the truth; and each should seek to use every opportunity presenting itself, knowing not which may be specially prospered of the Lord. Wherever we see evidences of devotion to the Lord and to his Word, we should be on the alert to extend a helping hand. We should, as Philip did, *seek* an opportunity for conversing with such, with a view to giving them the help which they need, the very assistance which the Lord has extended to us through some channel. We are to be on the alert to pass along the blessing which we have received, and to esteem that this is the chief business of life with those who have consecrated themselves to the service of the King of kings.

Philip's inquiry, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" may not always be well received; but it was a very direct way of approaching his errand. It is well to use tact, but we have the thought that many of the Lord's people are inclined to use rather too much tact, and are not sufficiently direct in their endeavors to present the Gospel message. Had Philip been too much under the control of this wrong sentiment respecting tact, he might have talked to the eunuch quite a while about the weather and the crops; about his home in Ethiopia; the peace and prosperity of that country; its exports and imports; and the religious status of the people; and might thus gradually have gotten his hearer's mind quite off the most important of all subjects. Considering that he heard him and knew the subject of his study, we cannot think of a better introduction to his message than the method and language which Philip adopted: "Understandest thou what thou readest?"

This was a test question, so to speak. If the eunuch did have an understanding of what he was reading he would take no offence at this, but would gladly have said, "Yes, friend, I thank God that I do, and the knowledge is very precious to me. Do you also understand it?" But had he been of the wrong condition of heart his answer

⁽¹⁾ Dec. 29 Manna, Ecc. 11:6

might have been, with more or less manifestation of offence, "What is that to you? Mind your own business." Or had he been of a hypocritical cast of mind, like the Pharisees to whom Jesus spoke, he would have professed a knowledge of the subject, and then, to cover his own ignorance of it, he would have made some general remarks and have turned the subject into another channel. We are not to expect those who are in the Pharisaical condition to receive the truth from us, any more than from the Lord. We are to know, according to the Lord's Word, that the truth is purposely hidden from all not in the right attitude of heart to receive it--it is indefinite, indistinct, unintelligible to them. This is one difficulty with the teachers of churchianity today; like the Pharisees and scribes and chief priests of old, they say, "Are we blind also?" They claim to know; but we know that they know that they don't know. Therefore, as our Lord said to their prototypes, their blindness continues; for no one can expect to be taught of God while in that self-sufficient and dishonest condition of mind which boasts of knowledge and the faith which it lacks.--John 5:40,41.

All those to whom the Lord specially sends the message of his grace during this Gospel age are in considerable degree like this eunuch of our lesson-- earnest, honest, truth-seekers, not afraid to acknowledge that they do not know, and not afraid nor ashamed to receive whatever assistance the Lord may provide. The eunuch did not stop to inquire of Philip, "Are you a priest? or a Pharisee? or a Doctor of the Law?" It was sufficient to him that he held in his hand what he believed to be a message from God, and that he knew it contained various statements, promises, etc., which he did not understand. He believed that the God who gave this prophecy was both able and willing to furnish an interpretation of it, and he was seeking that interpretation; and whoever could give such an interpretation as would shed light upon his questions would by that means be proven a teacher of God, a servant of the truth, a light-bearer.

The eunuch's answer implied this, when he said, "How can I understand, unless some man should guide me?" So earnest was he in his quest of the truth that the bare suggestion of assistance implied in Philip's question was sufficient to arouse fully his interest; and he entreated Philip to have a seat with him in his chariot, and thus grant him the benefit of whatever information could be given. We are not surprised that a heart so noble, and yet so humble and teachable, should be specially favored of the Lord, and have a messenger sent specially to him for his instruction, while others by the million were passed by--not esteemed worthy. It is the same today; and while the Lord does not generally direct his people in the miraculous manner in which he directed Philip to the eunuch, we nevertheless have general instructions along the same line; viz., "Preach the Gospel to the meek." "He that hath an ear, let him hear."--Isa. 61:1; Matt. 13:9; Rev. 2:7.

Our message, as the Prophet declares, is to bind up broken hearts, and not to break hearts: we are to preach to the meek, and not to the froward, the Gospel of Christ. The hard hearts, and the froward, God will deal with in another way. He will break them upon the anvil of affliction and trouble and discipline in his own due time and manner. Meantime, in this Gospel age, he is seeking for the Bride amongst those who are already broken, and already to some extent meek and teachable. We should not waste our time in futile efforts, contrary to this Scriptural rule. Let those who have not the Gospel, but who have merely a message of reformation, preach political reforms, social reforms, moral reforms. The Lord's Word to his consecrated servants, the Royal Priesthood, is, "Preach the good tidings to the meek, bind up the broken hearted!"

It was evidently not of chance, but of providence that the eunuch had under consideration the particular part of Isaiah's prophecy which refers to our Lord as the Lamb before his shearers opening not his mouth in protest; telling about his humiliation, and how his life would be taken from the earth; and instituting a query respecting his posterity. No wonder the poor eunuch was mystified; no wonder the Jews were all mystified. Unquestionably this prophecy, like the majority of prophecies, could be but imperfectly comprehended until fulfilled--could be understood only in the light of its fulfilment, and then only by those in a proper attitude of heart and under the instruction, the guidance, of the holy spirit.

We should notice in this connection, (1) that while the Scriptures are "the sword of the spirit, the Word of God," able to make wise, they cannot be understood until the Lord's due time. (2) They can only be understood under the leading and instruction of the holy spirit, and yet (3) the holy spirit was not exercised upon the truth-seeker either through the Scriptures nor through any mental process, but through the living representative of the spirit,-- through the Gospel message, delivered by a fellow-servant. The true child of God, the real truth-seeker, following the proper lines, and properly trust-

ing to the Lord, according to his Word, will neither ignore nor reject the assistance which God has been pleased to render through teachers in the Church. He will merely seek to find such teachers as God shall raise up, and the distinction between these and sectarian teachers; and one of his best, safest and surest methods of knowing the teachers whom the Lord will raise up, will be by their ability to make simple, clear, plain, the Word of God,--"written aforetime for our admonition." This was the only credential offered by Philip in his ministry of the truth. He had been taught of God through the apostles, and was now able, in turn, to communicate to the hearing ear of the eunuch the simple story of how Christ had come into the world to redeem the world, had died for man's sins, had arisen, and ascended up to glory; that now, meantime, before blessing the world through Christ according to promise, God was calling out an elect "little flock" to be joint-heirs with Jesus in the Kingdom; and that as soon as this election should be completed the Messiah (Jesus, the Head, and the Church, his body) would be manifested in glory and in ruling and blessing power to the world of mankind, --the long looked-for Messiah, whose work had been foretold by all the holy prophets since the world began.

Philip undoubtedly further explained to the eunuch, that those who accepted Christ as their Savior, and who desired to become his disciples, taking up their cross to follow him, should give their assent to this matter by baptism. Apparently it did not take the eunuch long to decide what his course should be, and his readiness of heart to follow the Lamb, whithersoever he would lead, is indicated by his promptness to be baptized.

Philip was ready to receive him as a fellow-member of the Church of Christ, and ready to give him the symbol of introduction into the body of Christ--baptism --as soon as he gave evidence of having accepted the Lord, and having made consecration to him. He made no request that the eunuch learn the catechism, nor that he confess something else such as well-meaning but mistaken men in the dark ages promulgated as necessary, and as explanatory of the Bible. Neither did he say, "Now I will write your name, and you will be considered a member of the Church on that account, and I will procure for you some authority to preach the Gospel in Ethiopia." No; at that time the subject had not been confused and befogged as now. Philip preached the Gospel in its simplicity, and the eunuch received it in like manner; and with the Gospel itself went the right and authority to declare it. "He that hath my word let him speak my word." (Jer. 23:28.) All who have received the anointing of the spirit, the unction from the holy one, are thus recognized as members of the "royal priesthood," and fully commissioned to tell forth the good tidings.

This is in full accord with our Golden Text which does not say, "With the mouth a creed is confessed," which is neither understood by the head nor believed in the heart, and thus a membership is gained in a nominal church of human establishment, and without divine sanction or authority as to name or methods. It does state, on the contrary, most simply and beautifully, that whatever is believed that has any force or weight in the Lord's estimation is that which is believed by the individual himself, in his own heart, and he can believe nothing in his heart that he does not to some extent comprehend. It is not a belief of mysteries, but a belief of facts, and subsequently coming to a comprehension of things which are still mysteries to "those that are without," --outside the true Church.

The second part of the text is evidently as important as the first part: "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation." This implies that a dumb believer will never make his calling and his election sure. We do not refer to those who are naturally dumb; but understand the word "mouth" in the same sense that we speak of the "ears" of our heart, and the "eyes of our understanding." A heart that sees and hears the grace of God, and that truly accepts the same, must in due time become so enthused with the things heard and seen, that it cannot refrain from some outward manifestation of its joy and peace and hope and trust and thankfulness. As the apostles declared, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." All Christians who, having received the light of truth, having seen the grace of God in the divine plan, having tasted that the Lord is gracious, having heard the wonders of "so great salvation, which began to be spoken by our Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him"--these must not, cannot, keep silence nor put their light under a bushel. If they do, it means the extinguishment of their light, the stoppage of their growth; and persevered in this would ultimately mean to them destruction in the Second Death;--for those who are ashamed of the Lord and of his Word, after they have discerned clearly, not only are not fit for the Kingdom, but of such the Lord would be ashamed under any and all conditions. --Luke 9:26.