

III. What six elements of wretchedness in ver. 29? What two in ver. 31? What two characteristics of the drunkard in ver. 33? To what are drunkards compared? How are they like those who lie down in the midst of the sea? How like those on the mast-head? Is it an easy thing for drunkards to stop drinking?

<h1>LOOK NOT</h1> <h1>WHY? IT</h1>	THOU UPON HE WINE THAT IS RED IN HE CUP.
	S ICKENS. T ROUBLES. I NFLAMES. N ETTLES. G RIEVES. S LAYS.

April 1, } **SIMON THE SORCERER.** { Acts 8:
 1883. } 14-25.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Thy heart is not right in the sight of God.”—Acts 8: 21

CONNECTION.—Philip, driven from Jerusalem, went to a city of Samaria (probably Sychem or Sychar) and preached there. Our Lord's visit (John 4) had been like good seed sown; and Philip had many converts. Simon had made himself a great name, as possessing supernatural and magical powers. Philip did great miracles of healing, and Simon *believed*. We need not wonder at the statement, when we find thousands now, who receive, as facts, all the facts of Christianity—dispute none of them—and yet are not saved! They live all their lives in this state: *he* came suddenly into it. Simon was baptized; and remained with Philip, wondering.

NOTES.—Simon, called “Simon Magus”—that is, Simon the magician or sorcerer. He is said to have been of Gitton, a town of Samaria; probably educated at Alexandria; practised magic in Samaria; professed to believe at Philip's preaching; rebuked by Peter. Some say he again opposed Peter at Rome, and was defiled there; others that he killed himself. Samaria, a noted city of Palestine, about thirty-five miles north of Jerusalem, and about midway between the Mediterranean Sea and the River Jordan. It was founded by Omri about 925 B.C.; twice besieged in vain by the Syrians (1 Kings 20: 1; 2 Kings 6: 24; 7: 20); captured by the king of Assyria (2 Kings 18: 9, 10); again taken by Hyrcanus 109 B.C.; improved by Herod; Josephus says the capital or chief city of Samaria was called Sebaste, at this time; it soon began to decay on the rise of Neapolis or Nablus, and is now only a mass of ruins. Jerusalem, the capital of the Hebrew nation, and known as the sacred city of the world. It is mentioned in Scripture as “Salem” (Gen. 14: 18); “Jehovah-jireth” (Gen. 22: 14); “Jebusi” (Josh. 18: 28); “Jebus” (Judges 19: 10); “Zion” (1 Kings 8: 1); “City of David” (1 Kings 8: 1); “Ariel” (Isa. 29: 1); “City of God” (Ps. 46: 4); “City of the Great King” (Matt. 5: 35); “City of Judah” (2 Chron. 25: 28); “Holy City” (Neh. 11: 18); “City of Solemnities” (Isa. 33: 20); “Castle Zion” (1 Chron. 11: 5); symbolically Jerusalem is called the “City of Righteousness,” “New Jerusalem,” etc. It is situated eighteen miles west of the north end of the Dead Sea, and about thirty miles east of the Mediterranean Sea.

I. THE APOSTLES SENT DOWN.—Ver. 14.—The apostles heard: the people of God always hear of conversions; the converts cannot keep it to themselves. They are like the prophet; Jer. 20: 9. Sent . . . Peter and John: how often these two acted together! Yet each had a brother in the twelve.

Ver. 15.—That they might receive the Holy Ghost: they had been renewed in their hearts: but per-

haps the special gifts of the Spirit were not bestowed under Philip's hands, to show that the work could not be perfectly carried on independently of the apostles.

Ver. 16.—Fallen upon none of them: they had His renewing power, but not the gifts as bestowed on Pentecost.

Ver. 17.—Laid their hands on them: after the first pouring out of His power, the Holy Spirit chose to give His great gifts in connection with the laying on of the hands of the apostles. All men would understand that these gifts came from no other source than God, and they were in direct answer to prayer.

II. THE FALSE DISCIPLE.—Ver. 18.—When Simon saw: he would “wonder” at this, even more than at Philip's miracles. Greater than working miracles, was the bestowment of power by which miracles could be wrought. Offered them money: thought they were possessed of greater magical secrets than his own; and he would *buy* these, as perhaps he had bought secrets before. Shows he knew nothing of a proper change of heart. Origin of the term “simony”; *i. e.* buying positions in the Church.

Ver. 19.—Give me this power: no desire of glorifying God: but all self-glory.

Ver. 20.—Thy money perish with thee: not so much a curse, or a prophecy, as a solemn declaration of his state. As if to say, “thy soul is in a perishing condition: and thy money (*Revision*, ‘silver,’) shall perish along with thyself.” That the gift of God may be purchased: the gifts of the Spirit—the new birth, holiness, acceptance with God, meetness for heaven—can no more be purchased now, with money, influence, or human merit, than his special gifts and powers could be purchased than by Simon's ill-gotten money.

Ver. 21.—Neither part nor lot: thou art not God's child, and hast neither part nor lot [two words to emphasize the same thought], in their blessings. In this matter [it. “this word”]: not merely meaning “in this matter of special gifts;” but in this salvation—in this family connection with God and Christ.”

Ver. 22.—Repent therefore: this shows that Peter had not judicially pronounced on his case in verse 20. If, however, we identify this man (and no doubt correctly) with the wicked Simon mentioned by Josephus, he never repented, but lived and died a great opposer of Christianity. The thought of thine heart; to be “right before God” (ver. 21, *Revision*), therefore, the heart must first be cleansed and purified.

Ver. 23.—Gall of bitterness: referring to his enmity of heart toward holiness and the Spirit of God. Bond of iniquity: refers to the fetters and chains with which sin had bound him. How many are like him!

Ver. 24.—Pray ye . . . for me: we see no anxiety for cleansing from sin, but only to escape punishment; and I he vainly turned to Peter (as many now do to Peter's pretended successor), for a mediator, instead of Christ. See I. Tim. 2: 5.

Ver. 25.—When they had testified and preached: it would seem that Peter and John stayed some time there. How long, we know not. Preached in many villages: John once wished to call down fire from heaven on one of these villages (Luke 9: 54), and now he goes there, the apostle of love, with offers of salvation from his Lord! The Samaritans: though of mixed stock (11. Kings 17: 24), they claimed the God of the patriarchs (John 4: 12), and probably had fewer superstitions than the Jews proper. They did not admire Judaism, but they welcomed Christianity.

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

1. To hear that a work of grace is going on excites the liveliest interest of believers. A believing army officer in