

the name, etc. (Rev. Ver.). Baptism was a tie by which the new converts were bound to Christ as His followers, servants and worshipers (compare Matt. 28 : 19). *Laid . . their hands upon them* ; as an outward sign of the bestowal of the Gift, to help the faith of the recipients (compare ch. 9 : 17). *They received* ; in some outward manifestation, as appears from the sequel. Perhaps the gift took the form of tongues (see ch. 2 : 4) or of miraculous power.

Vs. 18, 19. *Simon*. See vs. 9-13. Simon's was no saving faith ; perhaps he was merely convinced that Philip's power was greater than his own. *He offered . . money*. Simon, like all the magic workers of his time, imagined that the disciples had some secret by which their wonders were performed, and he supposed that they would share the gift if sufficient compensation were offered. The word simony is derived from Simon's name. It means the act of purchasing power or office in the church by means of money, instead of being fitted for it and seeking to use it for the glory of God and the good of men.

## II. Peter's Rebuke, 20-25.

Vs. 20, 21. *Peter said . . Thy silver* (Rev. Ver.) *perish* ; an expression of intense abhorrence of Simon's proposal. *With thee* ; a plain intimation of Simon's own doom, unless he repents of his sin. *Thought . . gift of God . . purchased with money*. The powers proceeding from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit are not to be bargained for, but received into empty hands from God, who bestows them freely. This Simon might have learned from the prayer of the apostles, v. 15. *Neither part nor lot in this matter* ; no real share in the ordinary blessings of the gospel, much less in the special gifts of the Spirit or the power to confer these upon others. *Heart is not right*. Simon's offer had behind it not a mere error of judgment, but a deliberate, sinful intention. *In the sight of God* ; before whose eyes every secret purpose is open and bare, Jer. 17 : 10.

Vs. 22-24. *Repent*. There is still hope for this deceiver, if he will turn from his sin. *Pray the Lord* (Rev. Ver.) ; that is, Jesus. *If perhaps . . forgiven*. Peter's "if" does not express doubt on his part that Simon would be freely forgiven should he truly

repent, but fear lest sin had so hardened his heart that he would not repent. *In the gall of bitterness*. The gall of venomous reptiles was supposed to be the source of their venom, and so gall is used to represent the poison of sin in the heart, which spreads throughout the whole life and also affects others. *In the bond of iniquity* ; the slave of his own covetousness. *Pray ye . . for me*. Simon is terrified, but not repentant. "He confesses his fear of punishment, not horror of guilt."

V. 25. Simon disappears from the pages of New Testament history. The Samaritans are scarcely mentioned again (see Acts 15 : 3), but Luke has accomplished his design in describing the expansion of the church. The apostles return to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel by the way in many villages of the Samaritans.

## Light from the East

SIMON MAGUS—Was a Samaritan from Gitta, near Nablûs, and had learned the art of magic in Alexandria. He aided Felix to obtain Drusilla, Queen of Emesa, and after his rejection and exposure by Peter went to Rome, where he created quite a sensation by teaching his mixture of magic and Oriental philosophy. He was the first of the Gnostics, a religious sect which flourished from the first to the sixth century A.D., and attempted to graft the Magian art of wonder-working and the Gnostic philosophy on Christianity. He has added to the language of the church the word "simony", which means the buying or selling of a spiritual office.

LAYING ON HANDS—When a Roman master wished to free a slave, he brought him before a magistrate, and the attendant called licitor laid his rods on his head, declaring that he was a free man. The master meanwhile held the slave, and after the licitor had finished, he said, "I wish this man to be free", turned him round, and let him go. This symbolic act was often used in Israel. The high priest laid his hands on the head of the scapegoat and confessed the sin of Israel, and thus transferred it. The offerer laid his hand on his thank-offerings and peace offerings to transfer them to Jehovah, and the representations of the other tribes thus designated the tribe of Levi to act for them