

Lesson XI.

THE ETHIOPIAN CONVERTED

March 16, 1902

Acts 8: 29-39. Study Acts 8: 26-40. Commit to memory vs. 34, 35. Read Isa. 53.

29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esai's, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip, that he would come up and sit with him.

32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter: and like a lamb dumb before his shearers, so he opened not his mouth:

33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

34 And the eunuch answered Philip and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of

Revised Version—1 And: 2 Omit thither: 3 Reading Isaiah the prophet: 4 One shall: 5 Besought: 6 To come up: 7 Now: 8 Was reading: 9 As: 10 Before his shearers is dumb: 11 He openeth: 12 His generation who shall declare? 13 Omit man: 14 Beginning from the scripture, preached: 15 The; 16 Saith, Behold, 17 Verse 37 omitted; 18 Went down both; 19 Came: 20 And; 21 For.

himself, or of some other man?

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water, and the eunuch said, See, here is water: what doth hinder me to be baptized?

37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch: and he baptized him.

39 And when they were come up, out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip: so that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

EXPLANATION

Connection—Simon the sorcerer, who was no true convert, offered to buy from the apostles the power to bestow the Holy Spirit, that he might make gain by it, but was severely rebuked. Peter and John, who had come down to visit the converts at Samaria, returned to Jerusalem, but Philip continued his work (vs. 18-25).

Philip, while preaching in Samaria, was divinely called to go in the direction of Gaza, a city of the Philistines, 50 miles southwest of Jerusalem. He obeyed and on the way overtook an influential official—"an eunuch of great authority"—from the court of the Queen of Ethiopia in Africa. He was a convert to the Jewish faith, and had been worshipping at Jerusalem, and returning home he was reading aloud the prophet Isaiah, as he sat in his chariot.

29, 30. The Spirit said. Through some unerring inward impulse. Philip was thus divinely guided (John 14: 26). Join thyself to this chariot; that is to the company of travellers, for the great man would have attendants (v. 38). They would be travelling slowly, as the eunuch was reading. Philip ran; in his earnestness to obey. Heard him read, etc. As he went beside the chariot. He would be reading from the Greek version of the Old Testament, which was translated from the Hebrew for the Greek-speaking Jews in Africa. Understandest thou? The interruption would not offend, for Orientals are freer in their manner than we are.

31, 32. Except some man should guide me.

He was eager to learn, but the passage was a difficult one without a know-



Parchment Case and Rolls (Peloubet's Notes)

ledge of Christ. The place of the Scripture . . . was this. See Isaiah 53: 7, 8. The difficulty, lay in reconciling the idea of Christ as suffering, despised and slain, with Christ as a glorious and triumphant king. He was led, etc.; showing Christ's patience and gentleness under suffering. He opened not his mouth; but quietly submitted to suffering and shame.

33. His judgment was taken away. He did not receive a fair trial, and though innocent was condemned. Who shall declare his generation? who can tell the wickedness of the age that put Him to death. His life is taken; by a violent death.

34, 35. The eunuch; the officer of the Queen's court referred to in v. 27. Of whom speaketh the prophet. He had doubtless heard the question discussed at Jerusalem (v. 27); the believers would argue that Christ fulfilled the prophecy, the Jews would strenuously deny it. Philip opened his mouth; a phrase always used to introduce some weighty utterance (ch. 10; 34; Matt 5: 2). Began at the same scripture; as a starting point of his discourse. Preached . . . Jesus; how that He fulfilled the prophecy, and made it possible for all to be saved who repent and believe and obey.

36, 37. A certain water. The exact locality is not known. What doth hinder? Philip had evidently told him the meaning of baptism, or he had heard of and seen it at Jerusalem. Verse 37 is omitted from the Rev. Ver., but its doctrine of faith is the teaching of the Acts (10; 43).

38, 39. Commanded the chariot; showing that servants attended him. Went down into the water. The phrase "into the water" does not refer to the baptism, but to the movement preceding the rite. And he baptised him. A separate act from going into and coming out of the water. Up out of the water; referring to the movement from the water after the rite. The mode cannot be determined from this passage. The Spirit caught away Philip; in a miraculous manner. Went on his way; The Abyssinians of to-day claim that this Ethiopian introduced Christianity among them.