

E. S. LESSONS.

Notes on International Sabbath School Lessons, by Rev. F. N. and M. A. Paloubet.

LESSON VI. OCTOBER 22, 1876.

SIMON THE SORCERER. ACTS 8 : 9-25.

(A. D. 33.)

9. But there was a certain man called Simon, etc. This brings us to a new feature in the history,—the first conflict of Christianity with paganism. The narrative brings to view the fact that the kingdom of darkness is always rallying in opposition to the kingdom of light.

10. To whom they all gave heed. . . . This man is the great power of God. Not only clothed with delegated power of God, but himself a divine person, or at least an emanation from the Godhead.

11. And to him they had regard, etc. This is not a mere repetition of the statement in verse 10, but assigns a reason for the fact there stated. The reason that they paid him such attention is here said to be that he had long bewitched, as in verse 9, *i. e.* astonished and confounded them by sorceries or magical allusions, perhaps the fruit of his superior scientific knowledge, by which these Samaritans could neither call in question nor account for, and were therefore, so to speak, obliged to submit to his pretensions as incapable of reputation.

12. But when they believed Philip. . . . were baptized. This spell, however, was broken by the arrival of Philip. This heathenish delusion under which they lay was dissipated now by their belief in Philip and his works and doctrines.

Then Simon . . . believed also. That is, he believed that Jesus had wrought miracles, and was raised from the dead, etc. All this he could believe in entire consistency with his own notions of the power of magic, and all that the connection requires us to suppose is that he believed this,—that Jesus had power of working miracles, etc.; and as he purposed to turn this to his own account, he was willing to profess himself to be his follower.

14, 15. When the intelligence of this success of Philip in Samaria reached Jerusalem Peter and John went thither to promote and establish this great work. It is to be borne in mind that though the ordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit were shed abroad in the heart of every true convert, the extraordinary gifts, as those of speaking languages not learned, of discerning of spirits, etc., could only be imparted by the apostles, when not spontane-

ously effused as on the day of Pentecost in the house of Cornelius.

16. For as yet he was fallen upon none of them. This verse is a parenthesis in the sense. "For as yet." The Holy Ghost had not yet fallen upon them in any visible manifestations, such as were at Pentecost, and were soon after this apparent.

17. Then laid they. This was done after prayer, as in ch. 13 : 3 ; and the inference is plain, that of itself it conveyed no grace, but was symbolic of a divine impartation which which would be expected in answer to prayer.

18, 19. When Simon saw. . . . the Holy Ghost was given. . . . offered them money. He does not desire them to lay their hands on him, that he might receive the holy Ghost himself, but that they would convey to him a power to bestow the gift on others.

10.—Thy money perish with thee. This is an expression of horror and indignation of Peter at the base offer of Simon. It is not to be understood as an imprecation on Simon. The main idea is the apostle's contempt for the money, as if he regarded it as of not any value.

21. Part nor Lot. Thou hast neither part (possession) by purchase nor by lot, by inheritance or free gift.

Repent therefore. Even for Simon, with all his profane and blasphemous suggestion, there was room for repentance.

23. As Simon had already been baptized, the exhortation to repent might have seemed to have respect to this particular transgression, as a single act of disobedience ; but the words of the apostle show that the whole work of repentance and conversion was yet to be performed.

24. Pray ye, etc. Here remark, (1) that Simon was directed to pray for himself (verse 22,) but he had no disposition to do that. (2) The main thing that Peter wished to impress on him was a sense of his sin.

25. And they, that is, Peter and John without Philip.

LESSON V. OCT. 29, 1876.

PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN. ACTS 8 : 36-40

(A. D. 34.)

26. And the angel of the Lord. The word "angel" is used in the Scriptures in a great variety of significations. Here it has been supposed by some to mean literally celestial messenger sent from God.

27. He arose and went. The object of this mission does not seem to have been disclosed to Philip, but he immediately departed, knowing that further light would be given him when it should be needed.