

fluence on the wane. He could not but recognize the superiority of Philip. But instead of opening his heart to the Gospel message, he seems to have looked upon it, marvel, and to have considered how he could best draw from it some advantage for himself.

It seemed best to attach himself to this new wonder-worker, and gain by alliance what he would never get by rivalry. So, on profession of belief, he was baptized, and continued with Philip.

But when Peter and John came to Samaria another thought presented itself to him. In the signs which followed their prayer and laying of hands on the converts he utterly failed to see the true meaning. To him it was not the Spirit of God coming down, full of grace, into the heart of a believer, and manifesting his presence in the outward signs of wonder and ecstasy. All he saw was a mere marvel, performed by the power of these strangers from Jerusalem. Surely they might share their power with him if he made it worth their while, and then what gain it might bring him!

What made him thus utterly misapprehend the whole matter? Not a defect of sight, but of heart. "Thy heart is not right before God." He had heard the blessed message of salvation; he had heard of the love of God, but he had not surrendered to it. Self kept its central place in his heart, and the great question with him was: how might he win influence, honour, and riches. No wonder his vision was darkened when this great shadow of self intervened between him and every thing.

And so he lost a great benefit. The blessings of forgiveness and cleansing, of peace and joy in God, of present power for service and a bright hope for the future, which had come to the Samaritan believers were not his. "He had neither part nor lot in the matter."

And he ran into fearful danger. To have professedly accepted the Gospel, yet to have merely accepted it for his own ends, was worse than if he had held aloof altogether. To be a witness of the wonders of grace and look upon them as a means of gain was a fearful trifling with the things of God. Thus he was in danger of perishing, along with the perishable riches which he so highly prized.

The warning is not unneeded now. A Christian profession and Christian work are in many places received with respect and with favour. Young people need to beware of the temptation to employ these for worldly and selfish ends, "supposing that godliness is a way of gain." 1 Tim. 6. 5. A lady once

confessed to an old school-fellow that all the profession she had made, and all the good she had tried to do at school, had been simply to please the schoolmistress! No wonder that her heart grew utterly dead and unmoved by the word of God, and unresponsive to the Gospel invitation. The heart must be given up, and then all the beauty and gladness contained in the Gospel will be fully seen and enjoyed and that "good part," once chosen, shall never be taken away. Luke 10. 42.

BEREAN METHODS.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Draw a map of Palestine, showing the three provinces of Judea, Samaria, Galilee, and indicating Jerusalem, Samaria, and Shechem.... The Samaritans, their origin, relation to the Jews, religion, etc.... How the Gospel was planted in Samaria.... Simon the sorcerer, who he was.... Sorcery and magic in ancient times.... Is there anything like it at the present time?... Simon as an instance of the false disciple. (See Additional Practical Lessons).... Peter and John as illustrating true apostleship.... Traits of the early Christian Church as here shown: 1. Varied elements; 2. Aggressive; 3. Organized under authority; 4. Divinely endowed; 5. Having some unworthy members; 6. With high standards of character, etc.... The practical duties of the lesson; 1. Work for Christ; 2. Pray for the Spirit; 3. Be sincere in serving Christ; 4. Be faithful to convictions; 5. Have a well-founded Christian experience.... ILLUSTRATIONS. The strongest iron is that welded out of composite ores; so the Church of Christ is stronger for its varied elements if they are thoroughly united.... The church in Jerusalem was like an electric light shining on high above the city, but not giving light abroad. By the persecution it was divided and scattered, becoming like many electric points, each in a separate place, giving light to all the land.... "The gift of God," ver. 20. A child tried to buy some flowers of a boy at a royal garden. He was answered, "My father is a king; he gives; he does not sell.".... False disciples are no more an evidence of religion being false than counterfeit bills are an evidence that all money is worthless. On the contrary, if there were no good bills, no one would care to make counterfeits.

References. FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA OF ILLUSTRATIONS: Ver. 18: Prose, 4945. Ver. 19: Prose, 11046. Ver. 20: Prose, 10622. Ver. 21: Prose, 9386, 9404. Ver. 22: Prose, 4975. Ver. 23: Prose, 2842; Poetical, 1697. Ver. 24: Prose, 2549.