

nature, greater than his own. His faith did not change his heart, for it was simply a belief in facts: Jas. ii. 19.

v. 14-25.—Here the *two* apostles and the magician are the central figures. *Two*; Mark vi. 7; Acts xiii. 2; xv. 39, 40, etc. It was necessary to prove to the Church that the believers in Samaria could receive the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit even as the Jews. Philip had not this Apostolic power; though Ananias had, ix. 17.

"Prayed for them."—Prayer as necessary in the ministry of the Gospel as preaching. Simon did not think of praying. He did not ask for the Holy Ghost for himself. He was ambitious to be great, and thought money could buy anything. Pride in the Church leads to all sin. Traffic in spiritual offices has ever since been called the sin of Simony. It means unbelief in the Holy Ghost.

v. 20.—Peter is in the front as usual. Thou and thy gold are bound together in the bond of iniquity, and shall perish together: 1 Pet. 1, 7, 18. *"Gift of God,"* Matt. x. 8.

v. 21.—See Deut. xviii. 1. He sought the Gospel with unworthy ends in view: Matt. vi. 22.

v. 22.—*"If perhaps."* The suggestion that his sin might be unpardonable, Matt. xii. 31, was to make him more earnest in repenting. Even Peter and John could not absolve. They referred him to God.

v. 24.—Peter had said *"Pray God,"* Simon, like Pharaoh, Ex. x. 17, who yet hardened his heart, says, *"Pray ye."* His words show fear of the punishment, not horror of his sin.

LESSONS.—1. Adults or infants may be baptized, yet remain unpardoned.

2. To seek to gain influence in the Church with our money, is a deadly sin.

3. We should rather pray God for ourselves than rely on the intercession of others.

OCTOBER 29th.—PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN.
—Acts viii. 26-40.

Golden Text: Mark xvi. 16.

Greatly honoured was Philip. He had received Samaritans into the Church, and was now to open the door to the eunuch and, probably the Gentile. Thus the partition walls were broken down: Gal. iii. 28. Here we have one of the few cases recorded in the Bible, of individual conversions.

v. 26.—See, for instances of ministrations of angels in the infant Church, v. 19; x. 3; xii. 7; xxvii. 23. A mysterious order Philip must have thought it. To leave crowds of

enquirers in the city to go to the Desert! He is not told why. One step at a time is God's way with us. He is not to take even the usual road, but the direct road by Hebron, which was the most desert. God's particular providence overlooks no individual and no detail. Philip's faith and obedience are noteworthy.

v. 27.—The treasurer was probably a proselyte: Candace, the name not of an individual, but of a dynasty, like Pharaoh.

v. 28.—Reading aloud; a good way for himself, and perhaps also for his charioteer. Do we study the Scriptures when travelling?

v. 29. The Holy Spirit is therefore a person: i. 16; x. 19, 20; xiii. 2; xxi. 11.

v. 29-39.—A striking scene. Philip alone in the desert; a chariot appearing in the distance; the voice within heard by the preacher; his running at full speed till he overtakes the chariot; the direct question that goes to the root of the matter without circumlocution about trifles; the modest answer; the courteous invitation of the great man to a travel-soiled pedestrian, Heb. xiii. 2; the preaching of Jesus from the Old Testament; faith coming by hearing; the believer's consistent desire to be at once a member of the Church; the readiness of Philip to receive him, though he had lately been deceived in Simon; the simple baptism in the first spring; the miraculous departure of Philip, 1 Kings xviii. 12; 2 Kings ii. 16; 2 Cor. xii. 2-4; 1 Thess. iv. 17, confirming the faith of the treasurer; his joy notwithstanding the removal of his teacher, for he had found Jesus, and in Him the key to the Scriptures. Every detail has its lesson for us.

v. 40.—He seems to have fixed his residence at Cesarea, xxi. 8-9, and to have had a family, like himself, perhaps superior to himself, in spiritual gifts: Eph. iv. 11.

HOW TO GET TO HEAVEN.

"If I'm a good girl, I shall go to heaven some day," said little Susie, talking to herself.

"But you are not good," said grand-ma, who had overheard the words of her little darling. "What shall you do about it?"

"What shall I?" cried the child; "what shall I? O, I mean to be good. I will be."

"But, my child, that will not do. You have sinned against God many times; you will sin many times more. We don't go to heaven because we are good, for then no one would get there. We go to heaven for Jesus' sake. If we are sorry for our sins, and ask God to forgive them for Christ's