**which is called great.** Neander and  
Meyer think that they must have referred  
to the **Word**, the creating and governing  
manifestation of God, so much spoken of in  
the Alexandrine philosophy, and must have  
regarded Simon as an incarnation of the  
*Word*; so that their erroneous belief  
would form some preparation for the great  
truth of an incarnate Messiah, preached by  
Philip. But to this De Wette well replies,  
that we can hardly suppose the Alexandrine philosophy to have been so familiar  
to the mass of the people; and refers the  
expression to their popular belief of a *great  
angel*, who might, as the angels were  
called by the Samaritans the *powers of  
God*, be designated by these remarkable  
words.

**11.**] The rendering *“he had  
bewitched them”* is grammatically wrong.  
The word rendered *“bewitched”* (which  
is perhaps the best translation here) is  
*“amazed”* in Matt. xii. 23,—*“ astonished”*  
in Mark v. 42, Luke xxiv. 22 &c.

**13.**] “Simon saw his followers dropping  
off, and was himself astounded at the  
miracles wrought by Philip: he therefore  
thought it best himself also to acknowledge this superior power. He attached  
himself to Philip, and was baptized like  
the rest: but we are not, as the sequel  
shews, to understand that the preaching of  
the Gospel had made any impression on  
his heart, but that he accounted for what  
he saw in his own fashion. He was convinced, from the works which Philip did,  
that he was *in league with some powerful  
spirit:* he viewed baptism as the initiation  
into communion with that spirit, and expected that he should be able to make use  
of the higher power thus gained for his own  
purposes, and unite this new magical power  
to his own. All were baptized who professed belief in Jesus as the Messiah: there  
was therefore no reason for rejecting Simon, considering besides, that from the nature of  
the case he would for the time have given  
up his magical practices.” Neander. “It  
is plain,” says Calvin, “from this example  
of Simon, that the grace which is figured  
in Baptism is not conferred on all indifferently. It is a dogma of the Papists,  
that unless a man place the bar of mortal  
sin in the way, all receive, with the out-  
ward sign, the verity and effect of the  
Sacraments. Thus they attribute a magical  
force to the Sacraments, making them  
profitable without faith. But it is for us  
to know, that we are offered by God in the  
Sacraments whatever the promises annexed  
to them contain, and this in no empty  
words merely, provided we are led by  
faith to Christ, and seek from Him what  
the Sacraments promise. For though the  
reception of Baptism was of no profit to  
him, as the matter stood, yet if his conversion had followed afterwards, as some  
think it did, in that case its profit was not  
extinguished nor abolished. For it often  
happens that it is a long time before the  
Spirit of God works, and causes the Sacraments to begin to prove their efficacy.”

**14–25.**] MISSION OF PETER AND JOHN TO SAMARIA. A question arises  
on this procedure of the Apostles:—whether it was as a matter of course, that the  
newly baptized should, by the laying on  
of hands subsequently, receive the Holy  
Ghost,—or whether there was in the case  
of these Samaritans any thing peculiar,  
which caused the Apostles to go down to  
them and perform this act. (1) The only  
analogous case is ch. xix. 5, 6: in using  
which we must observe that there it is  
distinctly asserted that the *miraculous* gifts  
of the Spirit followed the laying on of Paul’s  
hands; and that by the expression *“when  
Simon* **saw***”* in ver. 18, which must be taken  
literally, the same is implied here. And