

tion by the Jews might be expected from the sons of those whose fathers had always resisted the Holy Spirit.

I. What Stephen Saw in His Last Hour, 54-56.

V. 54. *These things*; the whole speech, but especially the last charge, vs. 52, 53. *Cut to the heart*; exasperated. *Gnashed on him with their teeth*; the outcome of their exasperation.

V. 55. *Full of the Holy Ghost*. Compare ch. 6: 3. Only to such an one would it be granted to see the divine vision. *The glory of God*. God covers Himself with light as with a garment (Ps. 104: 2), and only this is seen by mortal eyes. (Ex. 16: 10.) *Jesus*; the historical Person, the very man of Nazareth. *Standing*. "Why standing, not sitting? That by His attitude He may show Himself ready to aid His martyr." (Chrysostom.) *On the right hand*; the place of power. This position of honor was a visible proof that God had acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah and His Son. (See Rom. 1: 4.)

V. 56. *The heavens opened*. (John 1: 51; Heb. 9: 24.) The new and living way into the very presence of God has been opened for us by Jesus, the crucified and risen Son of man (Heb. 10: 19, 20). *Son of man*; the favorite title of Himself used by Jesus and never, except here, by anyone else. It was a Messianic title, drawn perhaps from Daniel 7: 13, to denote that the Messiah was the head of the kingdom of humanity. It is from this right hand of power that He will come to judge the world.

II. What He Suffered, 57, 58.

V. 57. *Cried out with a loud voice*; in their rage and so as to silence him. *Stopped their ears*; to shut out such blasphemous words.

V. 58. *Cast him out of the city*; in accordance with the law, Lev. 24: 14. *Stoned him*; the punishment for blasphemy. Whether this was legal or not we cannot say, for the Romans usually kept the execution of a capital sentence in their own control. *The witnesses laid down their clothes*. According to Deut. 17: 7, the

witnesses against the condemned person had to throw the first stone. They laid aside their flowing outer robes, to free their arms for throwing. *Whose name was Saul*; now mentioned very dramatically for the first time. The future apostle to the Gentiles consents to the death of him who was stoned because he first suggested that the law and the temple had served their day. Paul, the apostle, was the spiritual successor of Stephen the martyr. *Saul*. See Dictionary, page 86.

III. What He Said, 59, 60.

V. 59. *Calling upon the Lord* (Rev. Ver.); the Lord Christ. *Lord Jesus*. Stephen had no doubt as to the divinity of his Lord and Master. He prays to Him and commits his spirit to him without reserve.

V. 60. *Cried with a loud voice*. See Luke 23: 46. He died fully conscious of what he was saying. *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge*. Do not count this a sin that cannot be forgiven them. (See Luke 23: 34.) Luke evidently is struck by the resemblance of Stephen to his Master in spirit and in his death. The traits of Stephen are peculiarly close to those recorded of Christ in the gospel of Luke. *He fell asleep*. See 1 Cor. 15: 18 and 1 Thess. 4: 14 for this figure, which is a fine picture of the rest into which the martyr entered after the fierce onslaught of the Jews. *And Saul was consenting unto his death*. These words should go, as in the Rev. Ver., with the narrative of Stephen's death, to which they form a good conclusion. They also lead us to expect that we shall hear more of this man Saul. *Was consenting*. The tense denotes that this was



Place of the Stoning of Stephen (Paloubet)