

as torches to illuminate the darkness of the night." And yet the doctrine of Jesus spread; the Christian Church continued to grow in spite of this awful persecution. Receive My Spirit: Stephen was a firm believer in the life to come. The body might sleep, but not the spirit. That, his better part, he committed to Christ—his body to his friends.

Ver. 60.—Lay not this sin to their charge: we often read of warriors expiring in the very rage of slaying some one else, but the Christian would rather die at peace with all men—even his murderers. Fell asleep: "asleep," because he shall wake again, and because of its calmness, and rest from toil and woe.

III. PERSECUTION BY SAUL.—Chap. 8: 1.—Saul was consenting: he afterward blames himself with being active in this murder, and the persecution that followed. Too dignified to lift a stone himself, he kept the outer garments of the actual murderers; and acted as a volunteer director of the proceedings. At that time (*Revision*, "on that day." And so Tregelles): a shout would go up, to "punish more of them!" and the mob would rush away to further violence. It is always so with mobs. A hundred instances could be brought from history. A great persecution: this is now very generally supposed to have been A.D. 37, when there was no Roman Governor in Judea. Pilate had been deposed, news had just arrived of Tiberius' death; and things were in confusion. The Sanhedrim would take advantage of this, and use as much authority as they dared. Except the apostles: Stephen and the other foreign Jews had taught that the temple and the ceremonies would pass away. "The apostles had not, as yet, proclaimed that truth; had perhaps not as yet been led to it."—*Plumtree*. This persecution would be aimed particularly at the foreign-born Jews.

Ver. 2.—Devout men: here and elsewhere, this term seems to mean good men among the Jews—not necessarily acknowledged Christians. And as referring to men *who were not of Stephen's sect or party*, it gives evidence to his holy life, and the great estimation in which he was held.

Ver. 3.—Made havoc: took every measure to ruin this "cause," and exterminate its adherents, even to confiscation of goods, imprisonment, banishment and death. Men and women . . . to prison: haling (modern "hauling") refers to the inquisitorial and rude way in which they were sought for and arrested. Tregelles has "dragging." Too many to be put on trial at once, they were thrust in prison. These violent and cruel proceedings were known even in distant cities.—Acts 9: 13.

Ver. 4.—Went everywhere preaching: God overrules even man's wickedness. If all had remained quiet at Jerusalem, it might have been many years before the Gospel had reached Gentile peoples. "Preaching" does not necessarily mean proclamation to public assemblies. Missionaries now, in heathen lands, "preach" at first to *ones*, and *twos*, and *threes*, just as they get opportunity. I once saw the then Chairman of the Congregational Union preaching a sermon to a single pagan Indian.

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

1. Stephen was the first Christian martyr. No one can take that distinction from him. But the LAST Christian martyr stands before God in as distinguished a place as the first did! And every poor servant now, who gives his life for Christ, or wears himself out in His service, is, *in his turn*, the LAST MARTYR!

2. Persecution always fails. The more you mow your lawn, the more the grass grows. *Because you do not touch its roots*. The roots of Christianity are in renewed human hearts. The love of Christ, in the heart, is beyond the reach of the persecutor.

3. The greatest good may come out of the greatest mis-

fortunes. The Church was scattered; but the world was enlightened!

4. Jesus, from on high, watches His followers (ver. 55). "Stephen," a "crown." He soon obtained his crown. (See golden text.)

5. The Christian "falls asleep" to wake in Heaven.

6. The Christian has the privilege of preaching, everywhere.

FROM JESUS to STEPHEN. FIRST GREAT HIGH PRIEST to FIRST MARTYR.

March }
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REVIEW.

{ 1883.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."—Isa. 60: 1.

NOTES FOR REVIEW.—We have had the events immediately following the death and resurrection of Christ: the beginning of the Christian Church. The history for six or seven years. Without it, how much should we *luch!*

Lesson 1. The Lord's Ascension from Olivet. The promise of His coming again. Acts 1: 1-14. Golden Text, *And when he had spoken*. . . .

Lesson 2. The Spirit at Pentecost. The gift of tongues. Peter's sermon. 2: 1-16. *And they were all filled*. . . .

Lesson 3. Results of Peter's sermon. Three thousand converts. Having things "in common." 2: 37-47. *Then they that gladly*. . . .

Lesson 4. Peter and John in the Temple. Lame man healed. Crowds drawn to hear. 3: 1-11 *Then shall the lame man*. . . .

Lesson 5. Peter preaching again. The lame man for a text. *Jesu*, the Prince of Life. Repentance urged. 3: 12-21. *In Him was life*. . . .

Lesson 6. Apostles Arrested. But many converts. Testimony before the council. 4: 1-14 *Neither is there salvation*. . . .

Lesson 7. The apostles' firmness. Prayer of the Church. The prayer heard. 4: 18-31. *If God be for us*. . . .

Lesson 8. Deceit and punishment of Ananias and Sapphira. 5: 1-11. *Lying lips are*. . . .

Lesson 9. Apostles arrested. Delivered by an angel. Before the Council again. 5: 17-32. *We ought to obey*. . . .

Lesson 10. The "Grecian" widows. The seven. Stephen's gifts. His trial before the council. 6: 1-15. *Seven men of honest*. . . .

Lesson 11. Stephen Stoned. Saul's rage. The Gospel carried abroad. 7: 54-60; 8: 1-4. *Be thou faithful*. . . .

OR

A LESSON ON TEMPERANCE.

Proverbs 23: 29-35.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."—Prov. 20: 1.

I. What six woes of wine-drinking are named in ver. 29? What is meant by babblings? By contentions? Who hath woe? Are these characteristics of the wine-bibber alone? What is mixed wine? The evils of wine-drinking?

II. What warning is given? What will it do at the last? Is the warning against wine only? What are people called who let all kinds of liquor alone? Which are the safest—wine-drinkers or total abstainers? What is Paul's advice? (1 Thess. 5: 22.)