

some men who were locked up in prison for preaching about Jesus. Who were these men? How did they get out of prison?

Stephen the Deacon—The apostles chose seven men to be deacons. They were to see that all the poor followers of Jesus had food and all they needed, to provide for them in every way. One of these deacons was Stephen (tell ch. 6 : 8). Soon he, too, got into trouble for preaching about Jesus, and now we see him standing before the Council. He is telling them all that God had done for the Jews, and warning them that God would punish them for not loving the Saviour Jesus whom He had sent to them.

A Vision of Heaven—Tell of the vision which Stephen had. It made him very sure of heaven and of Jesus' being there, and that God would take him there.

Stephen Stoned—See, the people stop their ears like this (hands over ears), so that they cannot hear Stephen's words. Hear them shouting! See them running at Stephen to kill him, roughly pushing and hurrying him outside the walls of Jerusalem, away down and across the brook Kidron, and away out this road that leads to the Mount of Olives. Ah, now they have stopped! They begin to

throw great stones at him.

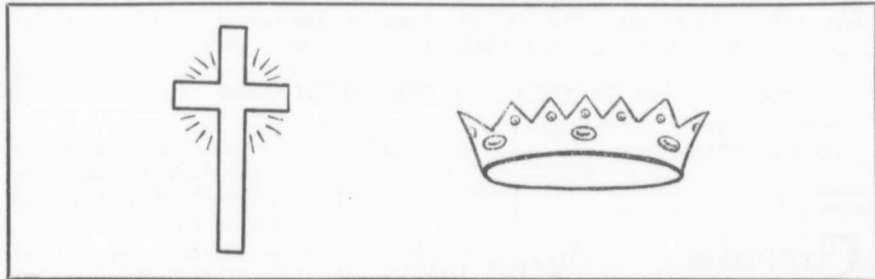
Golden Text—As' one stone and another struck Stephen, he prayed to God to receive him into heaven (repeat Golden Text); and then, kneeling, prayed that God would forgive those who were killing him. Stephen died—the first Christian martyr (explain). The disciples buried Stephen and grieved much for him.

The Young Man Saul—Let us look at the young man who is keeping the clothes for those who stoned Stephen. Was he as bad as those who threw the stones? Jack held Tom's school bag, while Tom fought Pedro the little Italian boy and took some of his fruit. Molly ate some of the grapes that Tom took from Pedro. What do you think about this? Saul did not continue "to stand by and look on". He became a great persecutor of the followers of Jesus. He was a proud young Pharisee, and hated all who did not believe as he did. He got leave from the Council to scatter all the followers of Jesus; and he did so indeed.

No One to Make us Afraid—Are people put to death in our country for loving Jesus and telling others about Him? Need we fear to die?

Something to Think About—Jesus will take me to heaven.

FROM THE PLATFORM



Sketch on the blackboard a cross. Recall the sufferings and death of Jesus, and especially His prayer for the forgiveness of His foes (Luke 23 : 34), and that in which He gave His spirit into the Father's keeping, v. 46. Turn to the martyrdom of Stephen, bringing out his faithfulness and his sufferings and the similarity of his dying prayers to those of Jesus on the cross. Now sketch a crown, and have the School sing v. 1 of Hymn 64, Book of Praise. "The Head that once was crowned with thorns". Repeat the last clause of Rev. 2 : 10, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give unto thee a crown of life", explaining that these are the words of Jesus to each of His followers. Recall the vision which Stephen saw, of Jesus standing at God's right hand, ready to give him his crown. Ask for the title of the Lesson, and explain that "martyr" just means "witness". Impress the thought that Jesus wants each of us to witness for Him and that to all who are faithful He will at last give a crown.