

One hundred and forty years later than Stephen's death, the churches of Vienne and Lyons endured terrible sufferings from a like outbreak of Celtic hatred against Christians. In this persecution the aged Pothinus suffered violence very similar to that inflicted on Stephen. The historian says: "Those at a distance, whatsoever they had at hand, everyone hurled at him, thinking it would be a great sin if they fell short in wanton abuse against him." These sufferers manifested wonderful humility. They would not allow anyone to call them martyrs. That name was reserved for Jesus

Christ, "the true and faithful Martyr," and for those who had been made perfect through death. It is told also how they prayed like "Stephen that perfect martyr", "Lord lay not this sin to their charge."

The Lord who gave Stephen strength for this great trial will give us strength for the lesser trials that come to us in the path of duty. It is idle for us to wonder whether we should be able to endure such sufferings for Christ as he did. It is sufficient for us to accept the grace for daily need and leave the future with the Lord. The extraordinary strength will come at the extraordinary time.

## LIGHT FROM THE EAST

By Rev. Professor Ross, D.D., Montreal

**STONING**—When an ancient mob wished to avenge itself on an official who had incurred its ill-will, it stoned him on the spot. In time this expression of popular anger became a recognized mode of execution. In Israel it was prescribed for idolatrous practices, blasphemy of the Divine name, Sabbath-breaking, fortune-telling, incorrigible disobedience to parents, and flagrant immorality. It permitted all the people to take part in the execution and to realize their responsibility for the death. The provision which compelled the witnesses to strike the first blow was well fitted to bring

home to them their share in the dread result, and to make them exceedingly careful to speak only the truth. For ceremonial reasons the stoning must be outside the city, and in this case Stephen was hurried through the Eastern gate, which still bears his name, and perished just outside where there is now a Mohammedan cemetery. Ordinarily the first blow, when well directed, produced death, or at least unconsciousness, but here mob violence vented itself at random, so that the victim seems to have lived and prayed for some little time after the stoning began.

## TEACHING HINTS AND HELPS

This section contains teaching material for the various grades in the school and from different points of view.

### For Bible Class Teachers

AN ANALYSIS

By Rev. Principal MacVicar, D.D., LL.D.

It is probable from the abrupt way in which Stephen closed his address that he was interrupted by the offensive and violent conduct of members of the Sanhedrim. We note:

1. *The spirit and conduct of the council and the people.* (a) It was a spirit of malignant hostility to the gospel. They heard the truth plainly declared by Stephen, and they were enraged—"cut to the heart." "Their hearts burst for anger" (Geneva Bible). The preacher and the sermon were not to

blame for this tempest of wrath. It issued from depraved hypocritical hearts, which always dread the light and are intensely sensitive to exposure. But the truth is not to be toned down or withheld because wicked men will vent their hatred against it and against its teachers. Christ should be preached, as in this instance, although men may "fall on this stone and be broken," Matt. 21:44; Isa. 8:14, 15. (b) The spirit of enmity manifested itself in brutal acts. They behaved like infuriated animals—"gnashed on him with their teeth"—an expression descriptive of maddened dogs or wild beasts. "They cried out"—made a clamorous noise to drown his voice and end his speech, conduct similar to that of the people before the same court in the case of Jesus, Luke 23:13-23. "They stopped their