

as the rough stones cast by cruel hands came thick and fast against his devoted person, he flinches not but is full of faith and courage. After the manner of his master, he commended his spirit to its proper keeper, saying "Lord Jesus receive my spirit," he kneels down bruised and bleeding, and with expiring breath prays that this sin may not be charged against his murderers, and when he had said this the end came. He fell asleep in Jesus. Such is a brief sketch of the life of the first martyr, who sealed his faith and testimony with his life blood.

II. SOME LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM THIS LIFE AS AN OBJECT LESSON.

Of the many teachings suggested by this narrative four simple ones are chosen for brief presentation.

1. *The wonderful power of the Gospel as illustrated in the case of Stephen.*

He is described as a man full of faith and the Holy Ghost. He was under the renewing and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, and he was an earnest believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus in his case the two great pillars of a genuine Christian experience were present. His nature was renewed, and he was in living union by faith with the Saviour. He had a new heart and a right spirit, and he truly believed on Christ. Note, now, three particulars in which the wonderful power of these elements of the Gospel working in the experience of Stephen is exhibited.

a. *It purified his nature and made him holy in character and life.*

The faith which worketh by love was his, and that faith purified the heart, another Holy Ghost as the agent of renewal and sanctification was present to do His work. Hence his character was holy, and life was elevated and pure. Behold him in the Council as he sits calmly there in the midst of his foes! What means that change upon his countenance? Is it the pallor of fear and dismay? Is that the blanched face of a craven or a coward? Ah! No. It is a man's face, but it shines like the face of some angelic visitor. What meaneth this radiance? Here is a gleam of glory from heaven, and here too appears the character of this holy man writing himself unconsciously as the very features of his angelic face. The sun of righteousness has risen upon his soul, and "he was being changed from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of God." This was the purifying effect of the Gospel; and what it did for Stephen it can do for you and me. There is no remedy for sin in us but the healing balm of the Gospel. There is no source of holiness save the work of the Holy Spirit. There is no power which can write the record of coming glory