this kind. But here no sentence is recorded: and perhaps the very violence and  
fanatical character of the execution might  
constitute it, not an encroachment on the  
power of the Procurator, as it would have  
been if strictly in form of law, but a mere  
outbreak, and as such it might be allowed  
to pass unnoticed. That they observed the  
forms of *their own law*, in the place and  
manner of the stoning, is no objection to  
this view.

**the witnesses**] See Deut.  
xvii. 7, where it is enacted that the hands  
of the witnesses were to be first on the  
criminal to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people.

**they laid down their clothes**] They disencumbered themselves of their loose outer  
garments, that they might be light and  
unimpeded in the throwing of the stones.  
They laid them at Saul’s feet that he might  
keep them in safety. Such notices are  
deeply interesting, when we recollect by  
*whom* they were in all probability carefully  
inserted. See ch. xxii. 19, 20, and note on  
ch. xxvi. 10:—from which it appears that  
Saul can certainly not have been less than  
*thirty* at this time. He was a member of  
the Sanhedrim, and soon after was despatched on an important mission with  
their authority.

**59.**] All attempts to  
escape from this being a direct prayer to  
the Saviour are vain, as I have shewn in  
my Greek Testament.

**receive my spirit**] The same prayer in substance had  
been made by our Lord on the Cross (Luke  
xxiii. 46) to His Father. To *Him* was now  
committed the key of David. Similarly,  
the young man Saul, in after years: “*I  
am persuaded that he is able to keep that  
which I have committed to him against  
that day*.” 2 Tim. i. 12.

**60.** **lay not this sin to their charge**] This again was  
somewhat similar (though not exactly, see  
note there) to our Lord’s prayer, Luke xxiii. 34.

**he fell asleep**] Not a Christian expression only: there are Jewish examples: and we have some even in Greek  
heathen poetry. But it became *the usual*Christian *term* for death. Its use here,  
when the circumstances, and the actors in  
them, are remembered, is singularly touching, from the contrast.

**CHAP. VIII. 1—4.**] PERSECUTION OF  
THE CHURCH BY SAUL, CONSEQUENT ON   
THE DEATH OF STEPHEN.

**1. consenting**] The same Greek word is rendered *“allow”* in Luke xi. 48: “*have  
pleasure*” in Rom. i. 32. Compare St.  
Paul’s own confession, ch. xxvi. 9—11.  
From this time, the narrative takes up  
Saul, and, at with considerable interruptions (ch. viii. x. xi. xii.), but after ch.  
xiii. 1 entirely, follows his history.

**in that day**, can hardly mean, as some would  
render it, on *that very day*, viz. when  
Stephen was stoned. For what follows,  
*“they were all scattered abroad”* ... cannot have happened on the same day, but  
would take some little time. We have the  
same expression used indefinitely, Luke vi. 23;  
John xiv. 20; xvi. 23, 26. In Luke  
xvii. 31, it has direct reference to a *day*  
just mentioned.

**all**] Not perhaps  
*literally*,—or some of them soon returned:  
see ch. ix. 26–30. It may describe the  
*general* dispersion, without meaning that  
every individual fled. **Samaria**] Connected with ver. 4: this word is not without importance, as introducing the *next  
step in the dissemination of the Gospel*,  
according to our Lord’s command in ch. i.

**except the apostles**] Perhaps,