

## Lesson Word-Pictures.

Night around the old prison! Dingy, dirty place, the moon is trying to drape its ugliness with its silver veil. There are keepers before the door. Now and then they listen. All quiet within! Then they sink back into their careless slumber. Are the moonbeams trying to enter the doorway and brighten the gloomy prison? There is certainly a Light at the door, and it mysteriously swings back. O Angel of the Lord, O Light for God's people in every dark place, awake the Lord's anointed in the prison-house! One is stirring. "Is it the moonlight I see streaming through that slit in the wall?" does he ask. "Is it this that awakens me?" He looks, and is startled to see that shining messenger from the distant vine presence! One by one they rise, and softly as shadows they steal out into liberty.

Morning around the old prison! It is the sharp, searching sunlight that falls and re-

veals the ugliness of the place. The keepers lounge before the gloomy door. "All quiet within!" still is the report. Officers now come from the Sanhedrin that has arranged an early reception for the prisoners. "We have bagged our game and now we will pluck it," is the Sanhedrin's complacent but the game has flown! The Sanhedrin is perplexed and alarmed. A messenger comes and hurriedly tells the council that the prisoners are "standing in the temple and teaching the people!" Plucky, loyal souls, out of prison but into their work again! They are hurried before the Sanhedrin. It is envy, hate, bigotry on one side; it is the courage of the Holy Ghost on the other. But will the apostles still disobey? We listen. And then we catch those memorable words giving a war-cry and a banner to every forlorn hope daring to open the attack on an entrenched wrong: "We ought to obey God rather than men."

A. D. 35.

## LESSON X.—THE SEVEN CHOSEN.

Acts 6. 1-15.

March 11.

1 And in those days, *a* when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the *b* Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected *c* in the daily ministrations.

*a* Psa. 72. 16; Mat. 13. 31; chap. 4. 4.—*b* Chap. 9. 29; 11. 30.—*c* Chap. 4. 35.

2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them and said, *d* It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

*d* Exod. 18. 17; 2 Tim. 2. 4.

3 Wherefore, brethren, *e* look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

*e* Deut. 1. 13; 1 Tim. 3. 7.

4 But we *f* will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

*f* Chap. 2. 42.

5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude; and they chose Stephen, *g* a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, *h* and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:

*g* Chap. 11. 24.—*h* Chap. 8. 5; 21. 5.

6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, *j* they laid their hands on them.

*i* Psa. 37. 5; Prov. 16. 3; chap. 1. 24; Phil. 4. 6; Jude 20.—*j* Chap. 8. 17; 9. 17; 13. 3; 1 Tim. 4. 14; 5. 22; 2 Tim. 1.

7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company *k* of the priests were obedient to the faith.

*k* Col. 1. 6; 2 Tim. 3. 1.—*l* John 12. 42.

8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

9 Then there arose certain of the synagogue,

which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. 10 And *m* they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.

*m* Exod. 4. 12; Isa. 54. 17; Luke 21. 15.

11 Then *n* they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.

*n* Matt. 26. 59.

12 And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council,

13 And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law:

14 For *o* we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth *p* shall destroy this place, and shall change the *q* customs which Moses delivered us.

*o* Chap. 25. 3.—*p* Dan. 9. 26.—*q* Or, rites; Heb. 8. 13; 9. 10.

15 And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of *r* an angel.

*r* Matt. 23. 3.

## GENERAL STATEMENT.

A period of rest from persecution is given to the Church in Jerusalem, and its growth begins to develop within itself latent elements of danger, in the voluntary communism, the abundant provision for the poor, and the varied elements in of discontent in the rivalry of the Hebrews, or Palestinian Jews, and the Hellenists, or Jews of foreign ancestry, and there is danger that the Church may be rent into opposing sects instead of going forth to conquer the world. But the gathering storm is averted by the prudence and