

Lesson VIII.

THE ARREST OF STEPHEN

February 23, 1902

Acts 6 : 7-15. Study Acts 6 : 1-15—Memory Verses, 7, 8.

Golden Text—Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul.—
Matt. 10 : 28.



Je'sus of Naz'a-reth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Mo'ses delivered us.

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

7 And the word of God increased ; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jeru'salem greatly ; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

8 And Ste'phen, 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 Liber'-salem, and Cyre'nians, and Alexan'drians, and of them of Cilci'a and of A'sia, disputing with Ste'phen.

10 And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.

11 Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Mo'ses, and against God.

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 we have heard him say, that this

THE LESSON RETOLD

The Church at Jerusalem had now grown so large that it took almost the whole time of the apostles to look after the sick people and the poor. A part of the Church began to complain, too, that their poor were neglected. So the apostles called a meeting of the believers and said, "It is not right for us to spend all our time in this way. Our real work is to preach the Gospel as Jesus commanded. So we are going to ask you to choose from among yourselves seven of your wisest and holiest men to attend to the poor and needy, so that we can give our whole time to preaching and teaching and prayer."

The believers were much pleased with this plan, and at once began to ask one another whom they should choose.

Now, among those who had come to believe through the teachings of the apostles that Jesus was the Saviour, was a man called Stephen. He was so much in earnest that he had become a great favorite among the

believers, and everybody trusted and loved him and so it happened that this man was the very first of the seven to be chosen by the Church for this new work. And he with the six others were brought to the apostles, who, when they had prayed, laid their hands upon them as a sign that God Himself had chosen them to serve Him in this way, and that God's Holy Spirit would be upon them to help them in their duties.

After this the Church grew stronger and stronger, and even some of the Jewish priests who had hated Jesus so bitterly became believers in Him.

In time this man Stephen became almost as great a preacher as the apostles, for he was full of the Spirit of God, so that he could do great wonders and miracles. But although Stephen was so brave and good, he had enemies among the Jews, who hated him and stirred up the people, so that one day he was arrested and brought before the High Council. When the Jews found they