

International S. S. Lessons.

THE PRISON OPENED.

14th February.

Les. Acts, 5: 17-32. Gol. Text. Acts, 5: 29.
Mem. vs. 29-32. Catechism Q. 88.

Time.—Uncertain; probably not long after last lesson.

Place.—Jerusalem.

HOME READINGS.

M. Acts 5: 12-32. The Prison Opened.
T. Acts 12: 1-19. Peter Delivered.
W. Acts 16: 16-30. Paul and Silas set free.
Th. 2 Tim. 2: 1-13. "The Word not Bound."
F. Luke 21: 5-19. "Not an Hair Shall Perish."
S. Psa. 91: 1-16. The Safety of the Godly."
S. Acts 5: 33-42. Gamaliel's Wise Counsel.

1. Brought out of Prison. vs. 17-21.
2. Preaching in the Temple. vs. 22-26.
3. Obeying God rather than men. vs. 27-32.

Many converts resulted from the continued preaching and miracle working of the apostles. The growing popularity of their doctrine and works again aroused the jealous opposition of the Jewish ecclesiastics. The apostles were arrested and imprisoned. But, being delivered the same night by the angel of the Lord, they promptly resumed their teaching in the temple early next morning. Their strange deliverance and renewed preaching were reported to the Sanhedrin. The apostles were arraigned before them. The high priest accused them of filling Jerusalem with their doctrine, in defiance of the Sanhedrin. Peter, replying that they must obey God rather than men, fearlessly reiterated the truth concerning Jesus and his salvation.

LESSONS.

1. God's angels can open prisons.
2. God's ministers should preach wherever they go.
3. The world blames its troubles upon Christians.
4. No human command should close a Christian's mouth.
5. The Christ men despise we should ever exalt.

THE FIRST CHRISTIAN MARTYR.

21st February.

Les. Acts 6: 8-15; 7: 54-60. Gol. Text, Rev. 2: 10.
Mem. vs. 57-60. Catechism Q. 89.

Time.—Probably A.D. 36.

Place.—Jerusalem.

HOME READINGS.

M. Acts 6: 1-15. Stephen Arraigned.
T. Acts 7: 1-21. His Defense before Council.
W. Acts 7: 22-36. His Argument Continued.

Th. Acts 7: 37-53. His Argument Concluded.
F. Acts 7: 54-60. The First Christian Martyr.
S. Rev. 2: 8-17. "Fear None of Those Things."
S. Rev. 7: 7-17. "Out of Great Tribulation."

1. Stephen's Life and Work. vs. 8-11.
2. Stephen before the Council. vs. 12-15.
3. Stephen's Death. vs. 54-60.

Peter's bold reply (last lesson) greatly angered the Sanhedrin. They determined to kill the apostles. But the wise counsel of Gamaliel, a learned Pharisee, prevailed, and they let them go after beating them and warning them to speak no more in Jesus' name. Nothing daunted, however, the apostles unceasingly preached Jesus.

Seven deacons were now ordained from among the disciples to look after the relief of the poor and needy. One of the seven was Stephen. Certain Jews disputed with Stephen and being unable to meet his arguments brought him before the council on false accusations. Stephen then made the noble defence given in Tuesday's-Thursday's readings. Enraged by his words the Jews hurried him from the city and stoned him to death.

LESSONS.

1. Faith gives power for Christian work, and for defence of the truth.
2. Faith transforms a believer's life and very face.
3. Faith looks up in the hour of danger.
4. Faith looks within heaven and sees Jesus Christ.
5. Faith makes a Christian's death glorious.

THE DISCIPLES DISPERSED.

28th February.

Les. Acts, 8: 1-17. Gol. Text. Acts, 8: 4.
Mem. vs. 5-8. Catechism Q. 90.

Time.—Probably A.D. 36.

Places.—Jerusalem, Samaria.

HOME READINGS.

M. Matt. 10: 16-32. Persecution Foretold.
T. Acts 9: 1-22. Saul the Persecutor.
W. Acts 8: 1-17. Disciples Dispersed.
Th. Acts 11: 10-40. Whether They Went.
F. Mark 16: 14-20. Power Promised.
S. Acts 8: 18-25. The Sorcerer Reproved.
S. Psa. 118: 1-29. "The Lord is on my side."

1. A Fierce Persecution. vs. 1-3.
2. Scattering of the Disciples. vs. 4-11.
3. The Power of the Gospel. vs. 12-17.

After the killing of Stephen, the Jewish persecution of the followers of Christ increased. Large numbers were driven into the provinces of Judea and Samaria. As they went they preached the gospel. The apostles however remained at Jerusalem in spite of the persecution.