

Lesson VIII. STEPHEN THE FIRST CHRISTIAN MARTYR February, 21, 1909

Acts 6 : 8-15; 7 : 54 to 8 : 3. Study Acts 6 : 1 to 8 : 3—Memory Verses, 7 : 55, 56.

Golden Text—And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.—Acts 7 : 59.



man's feet, whose name was Saul.

59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Ch. 8 : 1 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jeru'salem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Jude'a and Samar'ia, except the apostles.

2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.

3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

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 Liber'tines, and Cyre'nians, and Alexan'drians, and of them of Cilic'ia and of A'sia, disputing with Stephen.

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 Je'sus of Naz'areth 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.

Ch. 7 : 54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.

55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Je'sus standing on the right hand of God.

56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,

58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him : and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young

and saying, Lord Je'sus, receive my spirit.

voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And

THE LESSON RETOLD

As the apostles went on preaching and teaching and the number of disciples was greatly increased, they set apart seven deacons, to help them in taking care of the poor. One of these deacons, named Stephen, seemed to have special power given him from God, for he not only preached to the people, but did great miracles among them. This made some of the Jews very angry and jealous, and they stirred up the people against Stephen by telling them falsely that he had spoken evil words against Moses, their great leader, and against God. At last Stephen was made prisoner and was brought before the rulers. There, false witnesses said that they had heard him speaking against the temple, and against God's law, which He had given them by Moses.

Now Stephen was not afraid, when he

heard himself accused of doing these wicked things. He felt that God was with him to take care of him ; and this made him feel so happy, that his face shone like the face of an angel. And he began to speak fearlessly to the rulers, saying, that, so far from speaking against the law of God, he knew and loved it, even as they did ; and he told them plainly that they had killed those who were sent to tell them that Jesus was coming, and, at last, they had killed the Saviour Himself.

When the rulers heard these words, they were filled with rage against Stephen, and gnashed on him with their teeth like wild beasts. But he, looking up towards heaven, saw a glorious light there, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And he cried, " I see the heavens opened, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God". Then the