

THE APOSTLES' CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

August 7.

Lesson, Acts 4 : 19-31. Golden Text, Acts 4 : 31.
Memory verses 29-31. Catechism, Q. 88.

Time—June, A.D., 30. The same day as last lesson.

Place—The hall of the Sanhedrim or Jewish Council in Jerusalem, and the meeting place of the disciples. This lesson is the last of the three founded on the miracle at the beautiful gate.

Last lesson Peter and John after healing the impotent man, were before the Council. The miracle was so well known that the rulers dare not punish them, so they threatened them and charged them not to speak nor teach in the name of Jesus, with what results this lesson shows.

I. Courage in danger, vs. 19-22.

II. Praise for deliverance, vs. 23-28.

III. Prayer for help, vs. 29-31.

I. *Answered*—Christ gives courage to His followers in all circumstances. *Whether it be right*—The care of these men was, not to please the rulers nor to save themselves, but to do RIGHT. *Sight of God*—Our care should be not what will our fellow men think of this, but how does God regard it. *Cannot but speak*—To do otherwise would be to give the lie to what they knew. *Further threatened*—All the argument the rulers could find was threatening. *Might punish them*—The number of believers was so great, and the apostles so much in favor that the rulers dared not do as they might wish. *Forty years*—The case had been of such long standing that it must be miraculous, and the man was so long at the temple gate as to make him very widely known.

II. *Went to their own*—Good or evil, when left to itself seeks its own kind. *With one accord*—The Christian gives the praise to but one source. *Of a truth*—These men realize that the things which had been done to Christ are a special fulfillment of the 22nd Psalm. *Determined before*—Here is the great truth of Divine Sovereignty, and yet these men were free in doing as they did and they were guilty because they did not do it to carry out God's purposes but to gratify their own hate. This great doctrine of God's Sovereignty and man's free agency is a mystery that no man can understand. Our part is to believe God's Sovereignty, to leave it with Himself and on our part to obey His commands and claim His promises.

III. *Bold*—These threatenings are against Thee, O Lord. *Signs and wonders*—These were the proofs that had been promised. *Shaken*—What awe would fill their minds? How near God would seem? God answers prayer, and gives His Spirit, and is near to all who call upon Him, now as well as then. *Boldness*—When men are led by the Spirit of God they are bold to speak, and to do the right. Men are cowards when they depend upon themselves. If we are true Christians we will aim to do right at whatever cost.

All who truthfully and prayerfully seek to do right will be strengthened to do it boldly and well. The strength of a cause and its prospects of success are not to be measured by the number or position of its advocates but by whether God is with it.

This is a good lesson to apply to the temptations of every day life.

The true Christian will do right at whatever cost.

A man's character is known by the place and company he likes to frequent.

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WIDOWS AND ORPHANS FUND.

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