

dealing harshly with them was a far more serious matter than they had thought.

25. Then came one and told them, saying, Behold the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people—They were doing as they had been told, calmly and fearlessly preaching the gospel as if nothing had happened. This "standing" implies the prominent and undaunted position which the apostles had taken up. They were not like prisoners who had escaped, and so were seeking a place to hide themselves; but like men whose work had been interfered with, and who, as soon as they were able, had come back to it again. (Lambly).

26. Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned—There was no resistance on the part of the apostles, so any violence would have been unprovoked. The Jews were very apt to resort to mob violence (John 7: 45; Luke 20: 19; Acts 21: 27-31, 34-36).

27, 28. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us—"Straitly" means "strictly." The high priest seems afraid to inquire about the way of their escape, and avoids mentioning the name of Jesus. It is a marvellous spectacle to see the judges take the place of culprits, and deprecate accusation where they would naturally be dealing out penalties. They fear that the horrid invocation in Matt. 27: 25 has come upon them.

29. Then Peter and the other apos-

ties answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men—He had already given this answer (ch. 4: 18). The command of the angel gave new emphasis to his words and sense of obligation.

30. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree—Christ came in accordance with God's promises to the fathers (Deut. 18: 15). Peter claims to be a true Israelite in disobeying the high priest. The word "tree" is here used in the sense of "a beam of wood," as in "cross-tree," "axle-tree" &c. (Acts 10: 39; 13: 29; Gal. 3: 13; 1 Pet. 2: 24).

31. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness (R. V. "remission") of sins—The "right hand" stands for the mighty power of God, as the instrument of Christ's exaltation. It was God's doing altogether. This is the meaning of Peter's repeated charges of blood guiltiness; to bring conviction of sin, and that sorrow for it which would lead to pardon (3: 19). Salvation in Jesus is only to be obtained through repentance, this and the pardon of sins which accompanies it are both the free gift of God. (Lindsay). (John 1: 16; 16: 7, 8; Acts 3: 16; Rom. 2: 4; Eph. 2: 8).

32. And we are his witness of these things, and so is the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him—(John 15: 26). There were two witnesses to the truth of the facts regarding Christ—the apostles and the Holy Spirit. The former told what they saw and knew, the latter wrought miracles as a sign that God was with them. There is also an internal witness of the Spirit (Rom. 8: 16; Gal. 4: 6; 1 John 3: 24). Obedience to God, which they pleaded in justification of their disobedience of man, is the condition of receiving spiritual gifts.

BIBLE SEARCH LIGHTS.

17. What sect were our Lord's most bitter enemies? Why do the Sadducees now come forward? What doctrine of the apostles united both parties against them? (Acts 6: 13, 14).

19. How often are angels employed in connection with the early church? (5: 19; 8: 26; 10: 3; 12: 7, 23; 27: 23).

20. What does Christ say of himself in John 14: 6? Where are these names applied to the gospel? (Acts 19: 9, 23; John 8: 32; Acts 5: 20).

21. Give other instances of prisoners supernaturally released? (Acts 12: 7-10; 16: 26).

26. What indications in the New Testament of the turbulent character of the Jews?

28. Why should the rulers object to being held responsible for Christ's death? (Matt. 23: 35; 27: 25).

31. Both repentance and faith are gifts of God (John 1: 16; 16: 7, 8; Acts 3: 16; Rom. 2: 4; Eph. 2: 8).