

3. *The message which he delivered.* (a) He intreated all, "both small and great," Jews and Gentiles, to repent, "to turn . . . from the power of Satan unto God," (v. 18), and to give evidences by good works of the genuineness of their repentance. Thus, also, John the Baptist, an acknowledged prophet among the Jews, Matt. 3: 8. It was the doctrine of Jesus, Luke 13: 3, 5. (b) He claimed to teach nothing but what had been enunciated by Moses and the prophets, v. 22. Respecting their message, he specifically emphasized three great doctrines—First: That the Christ must suffer. This was generally disbelieved by the Jews. It was their stumbling block. They rejected Jesus as the Messiah because he suffered and died, 1 Cor. 1: 23. Second: "That he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light. Third: That light should be proclaimed 'both unto the people, and to the Gentiles.'" Thus prophecy should be fulfilled, Isa. 9: 2; 49: 6; 60: 3. That the Gentiles should "come to His light", the Jews obstinately denied. Hence, their persistent opposition to Paul as the apostle of the Gentiles.

4. *The treatment he experienced in carrying out his commission.* (a) The Jews in the temple went about to kill him, v. 21. (b) God delivered him out of their hand and gave him strength to continue testifying to small and great, v. 22. It was Lysias who rescued him on the occasion referred to, but Paul saw the hand of God in history, and believed in His direct interposition in behalf of His children, making all things work together for their good, making the wrath of man to praise Him, Rom. 8: 28; Ps. 76: 10. (c) He is now interrupted in his defence by the boisterous shout of Festus, v. 24. The answer is calm, firm and dignified. We do well to imitate the example here given, and not to be ashamed of Christ and His truth, when we are frowned upon by persons in high places. (d) He appeals to the king with equal confidence and directness. As the ambassador of the King of kings he had a right to speak to him. Besides, the facts of the death and resurrection of Jesus must have been known to the king. They had occurred not in obscurity, not in a corner, but publicly in Jerusalem, during the pascal

week. "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest." Agrippa's answer has been variously interpreted: Probably the correct view is given in the Revised Version, "With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian." Then came the noble, magnanimous, loving, Christian utterance which closes our lesson, v. 29.

For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

Paul speaks of himself in 2 Cor. 5: 20 as an "ambassador for Christ." In Eph. 6: 20 he calls himself "an ambassador in bonds." In the lesson for to-day we see this Christian ambassador appearing before two earthly rulers, and have an account of their treatment of his message. Direct attention in turn to each of these three persons.

1. *Paul, the ambassador for Christ.* He received his commission when he had that wonderful vision while on the Damascus way. Draw from the story the facts of that wonderful noonday vision. Note the three points in the message entrusted to him—"repent," "turn to God," "do works meet for repentance." After a keen thrust at his Jewish persecutors (v. 21), he claims support for his teaching from the Old Testament. Make distinct the three particulars mentioned in v. 23. Not even to please Agrippa, who was a Jew, did Paul keep back the two truths so offensive to the Jews, that the Messiah was to be a sufferer and that the Gentiles were to enjoy the blessings of His kingdom.

2. *Festus, the governor.* How rudely he interrupted the speaker! And how stupidly, too, for he ought at least to have given patient consideration to the things of which Paul spoke. What a contrast between the rough, boisterous governor and the quiet, courteous prisoner! How kingly is the man who is at all times master of his own spirit and speech! The gentleness of Paul's answer to Festus was itself a sufficient reply to the assertion that he was "mad."

3. *Agrippa, the king.* From the governor Paul turns to the king. There was more hope of Agrippa than of Festus. He probably knew more of the new faith than the governor. A Jew, he knew well and believed the