

word implies an arrest with violence—"attempted to lay murderous hands upon me" (ch. 21: 30). They plotted to murder him, and were plotting then. They watched for opportunities to kill him. And why? Because he had spent his life in trying to persuade men to repent and live godly lives.

22. Having therefore obtained help of (R. V. the help that is from, God, I continue (R. V. stand) unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come. Only divine help could have delivered him from such implacable enemies. Yet by that help he stood firm (Eph. 6: 13, 14) and testified, both to Lydias and Agrippas, to sellers of purple fabrics and wearers of the royal color, that the ancient prophecies had been fulfilled. Paul suits his discourse to his hearer. Agrippa would understand references to the Scriptures, being a Jew by education. If Paul was a heretic, then Moses and the prophets were heretics, for he did but assert that their predictions had been fulfilled.

23. That Christ should (R. V. the Christ must) suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead (R. V. that He first by the resurrection of the dead), and should show (R. V. proclaim) light unto the people, and to the gentiles. On these three points Paul joined issue with the Jews, contending that the Scriptures foretold—(1) a suffering Messiah; (2) his resurrection, and (3) his mission to all men. Christ was the first to proclaim light to both Jew and Gentile (Isa. 42: 6; 49: 6; 60: 1); this light streams from the empty sepulchre (2 Tim. 1: 10); his resurrection is the evidence of his completed work (Rom. 1: 4; Acts 13: 32, 33); the guarantee of his Messiahship (John 2: 19, 21, 22; Acts 3: 15; 4: 10; 17: 31); and the pledge of our resurrection (1 Cor. 15: 13-22; 1 Thess. 4: 14). The resurrection of Jesus proved that He was the Saviour of the whole world.

24. And as he thus spake for himself (R. V. made his defence), Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself (R. V. mad); much learning doth make thee mad (R. V. turn thee to madness). Impatience, anger and contempt, are mingled in that word "mad." The preaching of the cross was foolishness to Festus. Paul,

doubtless, made numerous and varied quotations from the Old Testament in Greek or Hebrew, and this would lead Festus to observe his erudition. Compare John 10: 20, and read 1 Cor. 1: 23; 2: 13.

25. But he said, I am not mad, most noble (R. V. excellent) Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. "Most noble" is the same title as is given to Felix (23: 26; 24: 3). It is also given to Theophilus (Luke 1: 3). Paul "speaks forth" loud and clear, because he knows whereof he affirms. Paul's words are words of truth, as opposed to the hallucinations of a diseased mind. "Soberness" is "sobermindedness," the very opposite of "madness." His words were not the excited ravings of a diseased mind. Contrast Paul's courtesy and self-command with the bearing of Festus.

26. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. Agrippa, as a Jew, believed the prophets, and doubtless was aware of the facts regarding Jesus, since his ministry was public and Jerusalem itself was the scene of his crucifixion. (John 12: 19; Acts 17: 6)

27. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

28. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a christian (R. V. With but little persuasion thou wouldst fain make me a christian). The Greek is "in a little," or "with a little," but the word following is not expressed; some supply "persuasion," and others "time." We must first decide the spirit in which the words were spoken. If sarcastically, then Agrippa says, "you think to make short work of my conversion." This is the view taken by the Revised Version. If Agrippa speaks seriously, and the reply of Paul favors this view, then the rendering of the ordinary version is correct. He says, "you have almost convinced me that you are right." There is nothing in the Greek to suggest the word "fain" in the R. V., and this word gives the ironical tone to the whole sentence. The rendering of the authorized version is still defended by able advocates, and was the unanimous interpretation of ancient commentators.

29. And Paul said, I would to God,