

have so little of his presence and influence during the week as a pastor. However, this is unavoidable, as our good brother, with his *own hands* and at such a distance, labours on his farm to maintain himself and family. Most of the church reside in the village, (the coming city of Emerson; and, headed by deacon Jasper, they are doing a noble work for the future, in the Sabbath school there. *Quietly, constantly, patiently*, they are bearing witness to the truth, and setting forth the law and testimony as delivered.

The second tour was made towards the western portion of the Province, reaching High Bluff, Totogan, Lakeside, (Lake Manitoba) Burnside, and Portage. Since I last visited these settlements, which was in the month of February, several families have taken up their abode in them, among whom are some adhering to the "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" sentiment; which makes it highly important that a missionary should be immediately placed by us in that western portion of the Province. I fear, brother, that while others are taking time by the forelock, and rushing in on the fields opened up, we Baptists are found napping and uttering strange, incoherent mutterings, as to the "power of truth," the "excellency of our principles," etc., etc. And all this time truth is being sacrificed and covered up, and error stalking rampart abroad through the land. Surely if our principles are *noble and true and scriptural* they are worth propagating with energy and zeal. I fear it would become us as a denomination to have less wind and more work—less of blowing about the excellency of our principles.

Another field is opening up, and the nucleus for a third church is forming about two hundred miles west of this, calling for another missionary pastor. Quite a group of Baptists, chiefly from Tiverton church, are taking up their abode in a fine tract of country near the little Saskatchewan. Brethren of Ontario and Quebec, let us erect and trim another lamp of Truth in that dark distant region.

Yours in solicitude for the cause in the west.

A. D. McD.

Winnipeg, Oct., 13th, 1877.

Sunday School Department.

International Bible Lessons, 1877.

STUDIES IN THE ACTS.

NOTE.—The Lessons last month were prepared by the Editor; and he was just about setting to work on those for this month's paper, when a very sudden and sore bereavement entirely unfitted him for the thought and study necessary. He therefore trusts that, under such circumstances, the fact of the following Notes being cheerfully selected from the sources credited, will be overlooked by those who have kindly expressed their appreciation of his Notes in the *HELPER* for October.

NOV. 18.—**Almost Persuaded.**—Acts xxvi, 21-29. A. D. 60.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Then Agrippa said unto Paul: 'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.'"—Acts xxvi, 28.

INTRODUCTORY.

"The Herodian Family."—It is well to know who the Herod Agrippa II. we are studying about in this lesson was. This will bring us back to the Herodian family—a family that presents

one side of the last developments of the Jewish nation. The evils which had existed in the Jewish priesthood after the return from captivity found an unexpected embodiment in the tyranny of a foreign king. Religion was adopted as a policy. A temporal dynasty was established right by the side of the spirituality of Judaism. This dynasty was founded by a descendant of Esau. The Herods were Idumeans in ancestry; but though aliens in race, they had been brought over to Judaism by John Hyrcanus (B. C. 130). The general policy of the Herodian family was to found a great and independent kingdom, in which the power of Judaism should subserve to the consolidation of a state. It sought the protection of Rome, but aimed at independent empire in the East. The members of the Herodian family who are mentioned in the Gospels and in the Acts are: I. *Herod the Great*, son of Antipater, appointed procurator of Judea by Julius Caesar (B.C. 47). His reign was marked by terrible bloodshed on his own family. He caused the slaughter of the infants at Bethlehem—Matt. ii, 16-18. II. *Herod Antipas*, son of Herod the Great. He beheaded John the Baptist—Matt. xiv, 4, etc. To him, when celebrating the passover at Jerusalem, Pilate sent Jesus for examination—Luke xiv, 6, etc. He was capricious, despotic, sensual, superstitious. III. *Archelaus*, like Antipas, a son of Herod the Great. The kingdom designed for Antipas was left to him. Hence, Joseph's retreat from Egypt to Galilee—Matt. ii, 22. IV. *Herod Agrippa I.*, a grandson of Herod the Great. He was brought up at Rome. He put to death James and imprisoned Peter—Acts xii, 1, etc. In A.D. 44, after being saluted as a god, he was carried from the theatre in Caesarea to his palace, and, after five days of suffering, in great agony. V. *Herod Agrippa II.*, a son of Herod Agrippa I. About A.D. 50 the Emperor Claudius gave him the kingdom of Chalcis, in Northern Palestine. He built costly buildings at Beirut and Jerusalem. His relation to Berenice, his sister, was the cause of grave suspicion. After the fall of Jerusalem he retired with Berenice to Rome, where he died in the third year of Trajan (A.D. 100), being the last prince of the house of Herod. This was the man who was permitted to hear the impassioned words of the apostle and who was cold enough in temper to take part afterward in the destruction of his nation. —See 'Herod,' Smith's Dict.'—Baptist Question Book.

EXPLANATORY.

V. 21. For these causes—see vs. 19, 20; not for any violation of civil or religious Jewish law; the Jews went about. See xxi, 30, 31.

V. 22. Witnessing—see xxi, 20-27. V. 23. That Christ should suffer—see Luke xvi, 25, 27, 46.

V. 24. Thou art beside thyself, either—"as thou art mad." The defence made to Agrippa as a Jew, the strangeness of its topics, and the warmth of the speaker easily made Festus think that Paul was insane, and his appeals to the ancient Scriptures suggested a cause for this insanity. "It is reasonable," says Hownson, "to believe that in his imprisonment such 'books and parchments' as he afterwards wrote for in his second letter to Timothy were brought to him by his friends."—2 Tim. iv, 12. Paul was judged to be a mad enthusiast, whose head had been turned by poring over strange learning. Paul's reply was courteous and self-possessed, but distinctly earnest.—See next verse.

V. 26. For the king knoweth, with great tact and courtesy Paul reminds Festus that his royal guest firmly believed what he (Festus) thought irrational, who was also cognizant of all the facts alleged; in a corner, not in an obscure place, but in the metropolis of Judea and at a great public festival.

V. 28. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost, literally, "in a little"—i. e., at this

rate; not "almost," as in our version, and as in the theme of the lesson to-day. The current interpretation of this passage is hardly allowable. Still, Agrippa may not have been altogether easy at heart while speaking in jest. He does not, however, say that he is almost persuaded, but, lightly, that at this rate, he should like.

V. 29. I would to God, rather, "I could pray to God." It is the impulse of my heart that you might become a Christian in a short time, as you say; but if not in a short time, in a long time, I could rejoice in such an event, whether it were sooner or later.—Hackett; except these bonds—i. e., chains hanging still upon his arms as he made his defence. This concluded the interview. Paul's last words were "a noble peroration of this great discourse, and an appropriate winding up of the whole series of apologies which occupies the history of his last visit to the Holy Land."—Alexander.—Baptist Question Book.

EXPOSITORY.

"In this lesson we have a very striking specimen of Christian preaching, one that will give as a model of the subject, the tone, and the personal character of such preaching."

I. THE SUBJECT OF PAUL'S PREACHING. Illustrate three points: 1. Paul declares Bible truth, making his appeal to 'what is written.' 2. Paul announced new Divine revelations, made to himself concerning Jesus. 3. Paul testified to personal experiences, confirming his own faith, and fixing and explaining his own conduct.

Gospel preaching still has these three subjects, a written Word, a living Saviour, a personal experience.

II. THE TONE OF PAUL'S PREACHING. In this address may be noticed and illustrated his decided conviction—he speaks as a man firmly assured; his intense earnestness—he speaks as a man whose heart was in his words, and this was mistaken for madness; his Christian courtesy—he speaks as a man of refined feeling,—and truly always seeks to make men gentle and gentlemanly.

These features should mark all our Christian work.

III. THE PERSONAL CHARACTER OF PAUL'S PREACHING. He aimed not only at preaching the truth, but also at saving men; so he tries to get very close to them with personal persuasions, illustrate from Agrippa.

Point out and illustrate the various ways in which persons are now hindered from full decision.—Sunday School Union Notes on the Lessons.

"Almost persuaded"—Come, come to-day; "almost persuaded"—turn not away. Jesus invites you here, Angels are lingering near, Prayers rise from hearts so dear; O wanderer, come!"

NOV. 25.—**Paul in the Storm.**—Acts xxvii, 14-26. A. D. 60.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"What time I am afraid I will trust in Thee."—Psalm lvi, 3.

INTRODUCTORY.

Having appealed to Caesar, Paul is sent to Rome. It was an answer to his long and earnestly-cherished wishes (Rom. xvi, 23), and emphatically foretold by divine revelation—Acts xxi, 24; xxiii, 11; xxvii, 24. In so doing, as Milman says, Paul "left, probably for ever, the land of his forefathers—that land beyond all others inhospitable to the religion of Christ." He had escaped the hostility of the Sanhedrin and was now entrusted to the care of Julius, a noble centurion of the Augustine cohort. His ship belonged to *Adramyttium*, a city on the north-western coast of Asia Minor. His companions were other state prisoners and his friends Luke and Aristarchus, from Thessalonica, mentioned before.—See xix, 29;