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As to the address, note:

1. It was largely the relation of Paul's "personal experience." He tells of his conversion. Thus he carries his doctrine from out of the domain of dogmatic discussion and makes it a question not of metaphysics but of fact. The purport of testimony is not that the thing is rational but that it is so. The story of Paul's conversion has commanded the study of modern critics, and with the result that it cannot be disproved nor can it be explained away. Criticism is silenced with the frank confession, "If not an absolute miracle, it is at least a psychological problem insoluble to this present hour."—*Reuss*. Preaching is effective by the measure of its approach to the high rank of testimony.

Paul tells of his call to the Gentiles. This call was so closely related to his conversion that to decline one was to decline both. Hence the "woe" to him if he preached not the Gospel. Neither his conversion nor his call to the apostleship was compulsory. "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." Whatever may be the meaning of "election," as taught by our apostle in Ephesians and Romans and elsewhere, it certainly does not exclude the element of free will. Paul could have declined, but in doing so he would have suffered a moral obliquity which even the conscience of Agrippa must have scorned.

2. A second feature of this address is, "it is based on the Scriptures." Verse 22. "The traditions of the elders" in our Lord's time, and the elaborate doctrinal systems of later times, were a departure from the divine original. Great spiritual reformers have found it needful to get back to the simple statements of the old book. Ezra restated the law. Jesus appealed to the Scriptures where was the testimony concerning himself. The Reformation was a return to the Bible. Paul preached "none else than the prophets and Moses did say." He proved himself to be a better Jew than his accusers. They dishonored the law by obscuring it with their new traditions, while he exalted it by disclosing its innermost life. Christ and the Gospel were the message of the sacred Scriptures. Modern teachers who would give the freshest and most satisfactory thought to their scholars need not turn aside from the contents of the book.

3. He preached Jesus—crucified and risen from the dead. Verse 23. Jesus himself is the one essential item of the believer's faith. When so great a personality and work as his enters into human thinking, great and conflicting systems of doctrine will arise. But it is not faith in our systems that is essential to the soul's life. We need not know Augustinianism or Arminian-

ism or Socinianism, but we must know Jesus. Jesus revealed to our faith by the Holy Ghost is the essential and saving orthodoxy. But it is the Christ who "should suffer." That was the fact which proved to the Jews a "stumbling-block." Their Messiah was to be a conquering hero. They did not seem to have the intuition of the atonement. He was "The first that should rise from the dead." Verse 23. The Revised Version is better, "That he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim," etc.

The effect of this address was:

1. On the mind of Festus, that the speaker was beside himself. Skepticism will explain the sublime transformation of the soul by enthusiasm or fanaticism. When it is exalted above his comprehension it is madness.

2. On the mind of Agrippa the effect was, first, uneasiness. This is seen in the haste with which he brings the interview to a conclusion. His conscience was astir. Secondly, "contemptuous resistance." "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." This is plainly a wrong translation and utterly misleading. The Revised Version rendering is perhaps as good as any that has been suggested. "With but little persuasion, thou wouldest fain make me a Christian." The sneer that appears in the Greek is not so apparent here. Agrippa was not "half convinced," or, if so, his words do not indicate it. Whatever personal impression Paul's words may have made they were stifled with a jest.

3. It is not stated what impression was made on Bernice. That fact alone indicates that she remained unchanged. Prosperous pleasure rarely yields to conscience.

4. As to the Jews they were as unalterable as bigotry itself.

Thoughts for Young People.

The Example of Paul.

In this lesson notice Paul as an example—

1. *In prompt obedience to God's call.* Verse 19. He had been a persecutor because he knew no better. His response to God's call when he heard it was as prompt as that of Samuel.

2. *In earnest, persevering work for God's cause.* Verse 20. In dangers oft, in season and out of season, Paul labored. No discouragement could crowd him out of the path of duty. He always tried to "win one more soul." He proclaimed Christ to all men.

3. *In full reliance on God's help.* Verse 22. In Paul's creed there was no room for accident. All things are under divine control. The helps and hindrances that seem to be exalted are really divine. God is our ally.