At the end of his critical note on Acts xxvi 28, after suggesting that possibly πεποίηθεν should be read for μετέπειθεν, Dr Hort adds 'but it is no less possible that the error lies elsewhere'. These words invite suggestions.

Now any one who reads through the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth books of the Antiquities of Josephus can hardly fail to be struck by the recurrence of the phrases ἐν ὀλίγῳ ποιεῖσθαι and ἐν ὀλίγῳ τίθεσθαι in the sense 'to make light of'. Thus for ἐν ὀλίγῳ ποιεῖσθαι:—

οὐ μὴν οἱ φύλακες ἐν ὀλίγῳ τὰς Ἀρχελάου ἐπιστολὰς ἐποιήσων. (Ant. xvii 223.)

τὰ φρονήματα ἄνδρων ἐν ὀλίγῳ τὸ θανάτῳ ποιοῦμένων. (xvii 256.)

πλήθος ἄπορον ἄνδρῶν πανηγυρῶν ἐν ὀλίγῳ τὴν σωτηρίαν ποιοῦμένων ἰσοτάπης χάριτι τῆς εἰς τὸ παρὸν. (xviii 367.)

Still more common in these same books is ἐν ὀλίγῳ τίθεσθαι. Thus

θανάτων τε ἦδας ὑπομένειν παραλλαγμένας ἐν ὀλίγῳ τίθενται καὶ συγγενῶν τιμωρίας καὶ φίλων ὑπὲρ τοῦ μηδένα ἄνθρωπον προσαγορεύειν δεσπότην. (xviii 23.)

ὅπως . . . ἐν ὀλίγῳ τῆς ἀχθοδόνα τοῦ παρόντος τιθοῦσθαι. (xviii 20.)

ἀνὴρ ἐν ὀλίγῳ τὸ ψεύδος τιθέμενος. (xviii 85.)

καλὸς ἤχειν ἠγοίμενον πάντων ἀσφάλειαν καὶ ἔλευθερίαν ἄνοιμον ἐν ὀλίγῳ τίθεσθαι τὰ κατὰ τοὺς ἀπολυμένους. (xix 10.)

τοὺς ἐν ὀλίγῳ τιθεμένοις ὑπόστα παπώθουσιν. (xix 177.)

τὴν μὲν Παῦλου τιμωρίαν ἐν ὀλίγῳ τιθέμενοι. (xix 214.)

In Ant. xvii 278 we find οὔκ ἐν μεγάλῳ τίθεσθαι τῆς ψυχῆς τὸ ἐπί τοιοῦτος ἀνάλωμα γενησόμενον. In Ant. ii 128 κέρδους ἄδικον τὴν πρὸς Ἰωσήφων φιλιάν ἐν διενεργῷ θέμενοι. This phrase is frequent in the 'Jewish War', e.g. i 100, 150; ii 233, 466; iv 115. Cp. iii 480 (ἐν ἀντιπάλῳ), ii 123 and 146 (ἐν καλῷ).

Polybius writes ἐν μεγάλῳ τιθέσθαι. Thus

ὁ Φάβιος ἐν μεγάλῳ τιθέμενοι τὴν ἐπιβολήν, τάλλα παρείσ πρὸς ταῖς εἰς τοῦτο τὸ μέρος ἡν ἐπινοεῖ. (x i.)

ἐν μεγάλῳ τιθέμενοι τὸ τῆς ἱστοριας καὶ παραρρήσιας. (vi 9.)

ἐν μεγάλῳ τιθέμενοι καὶ τούτον τὸν πλήμενον. (iii 97.)

Cp. πάντες ἐν ἐλάσσονι θέμενοι. (xxxviii 2, iv 6.)
One other passage of Polybius may be quoted to shew how in such phrases τίθεσθαι and ποιεῖται are interchanged:

καθ' ἄσειν γὰρ ἐν καλῷ τίθενται τὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ κρατίστου χρηματισμόν ('good honest money-making'), κατὰ τοσοῦτο τάλιν ἐν ὀνείδει ποιεῖται τὴν ἐκ τῶν ἀπερημένων πλεονεξίαν. (vi 56.)

If now we turn to Agrippa’s words, the suspicion is irresistible that ἐν ὀλίγῳ belongs to ποίησαι taken as the imperative middle, and that St Luke wrote πείθειν. Agrippa has come in great state to enjoy an ἐπίθεθα from this gifted prisoner, who is in such deadly earnest that he is spoiling it all. Festus has burst out with ‘You are mad’. Agrippa suggests that St Paul should not trouble himself about winning him as a convert to Christianity. Let that be quite a subordinate consideration, he urges. They are there to be entertained, and possibly to get material for a favourable report to the Emperor. ‘Pray regard winning me for a Christian as a matter of little moment.’

I have not found πείθειν with a proleptic accusative to express its result. But such an accusative after διδάσκειν is fairly familiar, and πείθειν καὶ διδάσκειν is a frequent collocation in Plutarch (e.g. i 161 B, 206 A, 323 E). Pindar writes νν φιλον ἔσανεν (Pyth. i 51) ‘he wheedled him into friendship’. And Josephus has

θεραπεύειν πραότερον (B. J. i 507) and παρασκευάζοντι . . . τὰς ψυχὰς ἀλκίμον (B. J. iii 102).

St Paul’s reply is to the effect that the conversion of Agrippa and all his hearers is to him a wholly adequate object. Whether God be using him that day only to effect that conversion or be pleased to make it subordinate to some yet higher purpose, His servant will be equally satisfied. It is not for him to say what is primary and what is secondary with God.

G. H. Whitaker.