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COMPILED FROM DR. HACKETT'S COMMENTARY, EDITED BY DR. HOVEY.

Second Quarter.

Lesson 4.—April 22. Acts 9: 19-31.

SAUL PREACHING CHRIST.

GOLDEN TEXT.

He who persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.—Gal. 1: 23.

19. *With the disciples*, in private intercourse with them. — *Certain days* denotes too brief a period to apply to the entire residence at Damascus.

20. *And immediately*, after the days spent in the society of the christians there.—*Preached Jesus that he is*, etc.—*i. e.* preached that Jesus is, etc. *Jesus* is the individual or personal name of the Saviour; and it was the apostle's object to establish the identity of Jesus with the Son of God or the promised Messiah. (Comp. v. 22.)

21. *Who destroyed*, put to death. (See 22: 3.)—*This name*—viz. that of Jesus (v. 20). The form of the remark adapts itself to the narrative. —*Hither*, after a verb of motion; *here* in v. 14.—*For that intent* anticipates the next clause. The astonishment expressed here proceeded from the Jews, whom Paul addressed in the synagogues. Most of the christians at Damascus must have been apprised of the change in his character before he appeared in public.

22. *But Saul was more strengthened—i. e.* in his faith. (See 16: 5; Rom. 4: 20.) This remark describes his state after the lapse of some time subsequent to his conversion. It is made, apparently, not merely to indicate his christian progress, but to suggust why he preached with such convincing power.—*Proving that this one is the Christ.*

23. *Now when many days were accomplished.* At this place, probably, we are to insert the journey into Arabia, which the apostle mentions in Gal. 1: 17. So Neander, Hemsen, Meyer, and others. That Luke makes no allusion to this journey agrees with the summary character of his history generally, in relation to the early portion of Paul's life. The time that Paul was absent in Arabia belongs, probably, to the earlier part of the *many days*, rather than the latter.

24. *Became known by Saul*, to him. The discovery enabled the apostles to escape the danger. —*Were watching the gates—i. e.* with the aid of soldiers whom the governor placed at their disposal, so that the act of guarding the city could be ascribed to the Jews, as in this passage, or to the ethnarch, as in 2 Cor. 11: 32. *Through the wall*, and at the same time "through a window through the wall," as is stated in 2 Cor. 11:33—*i. e.* as commonly understood through the window of a house overhanging the wall. (Comp. Josh. 2: 15; 1 Sam. 19: 12.) *In a basket.* That those who aided Paul's escape should use a basket for the purpose was entirely natural, according to the present customs of the country. It is the sort of vehicle which people employ there now if they would lower a man into a well or raise him into the upper story of a house.

26. This is Paul's first journey to Jerusalem since his conversion, and took place in A. D. 39. His motive for this step, as he states in Gal. 1:18, was that he might make the acquaintance of Peter.—*To join himself*, etc., *to associate* with them as one of their own faith.—*Were all afraid*, etc. The language does not affirm that they had never heard of his conversion, but they could not readily persuade themselves that it was sincere. The sudden appearance of Voltaire in a circle of Christians, claiming to be one of them, would have been something like this return of Saul to Jerusalem as a professed disciple.

27. *Barnabas* stood high among the disciples at Jerusalem (4: 36; 11: 22). No one out of the circle of the apostles could have interposed a more powerful word in behalf of Saul.—*Unto the apostles*—viz. Peter and James (Gal. 1: 19). The other apostles were probably absent from Jerusalem at this time.—*Related fully*, since they may have heard a report of the occurrence, but had received no definite information concerning it. He could add, also, his own personal testimony to the truth of what had come to their ears.—*How he had preached boldly.* He had been himself, probably, a witness of Paul's zeal at Damascus; and for that reason, and because his labors there were more recent, he says nothing of the residence in Arabia.—*In the name of Jesus*, as the sphere of his preaching; not in virtue of authority from him.

28. *Was with them*, during fifteen days, as we learn from Gal. 1: 18.—*Going in and going out—i. e.* in the exercise of his ministry, as results from the next clause.

29. *To the Hellenists.* He addressed himself to them because he himself was a foreign Jew and was familiar with the Greek, which they also spoke. (Comp. John 12: 20.)—*Went about, attempted.* Imperfect, because they were seeking the opportunity to kill him. We are not to suppose that they had ventured as yet on any open act.

30. *But the brethren having ascertained*—viz. their hostile design. Paul departed, in conformity with their advice. We learn from 22: 17 that another motive concurred with this: he was informed in a vision that God would have him occupy a different field of labor. Without that revelation he might have thought it best to remain, in defiance of the present danger, and notwithstanding the importunity of his friends. (Comp. 21: 13.) It is a mark of truth that we find Luke stating the outward impulse; the apostle, the inner ground. *And they sent him forth to Tarsus.* This city was the capital of Cilicia, on the river Cydnus.

31. *The churches now . . . had peace—i. e.* rest from the persecution which they had suffered since the death of Stephen. It had continued for three years (see v. 26), if the subject of this paragraph be next in order after the preceding one. *Galilee.* This is our only notice of the existence of churches in that native land of the apostles.—*Being built up—i.e.* in faith and piety. (See 1 Cor. 8: 1; 14: 4; 1 Thess. 5: 11, etc.) *Walking.* A common Hebraism to denote a course of conduct.—*In the fear of the Lord*, in conformity with that state of mind. *And in the comfort*, etc. (E. V.), belongs, not to *walking*, but to *were* (or *was*) multiplied. (Comp. 4: 36.)

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