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## Founding of the Christian Church, 30-100 A. D.

IN FIFTY STUDIES.

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### STUDY XVI.

## SEC. 15. CONCURRENCE OF THE JERUSALEM (JEWISH-CHRISTIAN) CHURCH IN PETER'S RECEPTION OF THE GENTILES, AND IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GENTILE-CHRISTIAN CHURCH AT ANTIOCH.

### Acts II : 1-30.

41-43 A. D.

JERUSALEM, ANTIOCH.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.—(1) Cambridge Bible on Acts, pp. 139-146. (2) Gloag's Comty. on Acts, I: 386-409. (3) Meyer's Comty. on Acts, pp. 219-227. [(4) Neander's Planting and Training of the Christian Church, I: 99-101.] (5) Bible Dictionary, arts. Agabus, Antioch, Barnabas, Christians, Claudius, Cyprus, Cyrene, Elders, Phoenicia, Prophets. (6) Conybeare and Howson's Life of Paul, pp. 97-105. (7) Farrar's Life of Paul, pp. 160-171. [(8) Vaughan's Church of the First Days, pp. 244-253.] [(9) Peloubet's Notes, 1892, in loc.] [(10) S. S. Times, Apr. 28, 1883.]

#### FIRST STEP: FACTS.

PARAGRAPH I. *v.* 1, news of the Gentile Pentecost reaches the Jerusalem Church. *vv.* 2f, Peter condemned for affiliating with the Gentiles. *v.* 4, he makes a formal defense of his conduct. *vv.* 5-16, the facts recited (a) his vision at Joppa, (b) the Cæsarean messengers, (c) the visit to Cornelius, (d) the Spirit baptism of the Gentiles. *v.* 17, similarity of divine gifts argues similarity of divine favor toward the recipients. *v.* 18, the new Gospel truth accredited. *Vv.* 1-18, PETER'S DEFENSE BEFORE THE JERUSALEM CHURCH.

PAR. 2. *v.* 19a, extent of the Christian Dispersion. *v.* 19b, the Gospel preached to the Jews. *v.* 20, but also to Gentiles as such, in Antioch. *v.* 21, which work was providentially successful. *v.* 22a, the Jerusalem Church learns of this, *v.* 22b, and Barnabas is sent to investigate the matter. *vv.* 23f, he commends the grand Gospel work. *vv.* 25f, Saul is summoned to Antioch and works a year there, establishing the Church, the disciples receiving the name of Christians. *Vv.* 19-26, GOSPEL WORK IN ANTIOCH, BARNABAS AND SAUL LEADING.

PAR. 3. *v.* 27, Jerusalem prophets visit Antioch. *v.* 28, Agabus predicts a severe general famine. *v.* 29, a relief fund is raised by the Antioch Church for Judean Christians. *v.* 30, Barnabas and Saul deliver it. *Vv.* 27-30, ASSISTANCE FROM THE ANTIOCH CHRISTIANS TO THE CHRISTIANS OF JUDEA.

(Study XVI.)

## SECOND STEP: EXPLANATIONS.

PARAGRAPH 1. *v.* 1, (a) "apostles . . brethren"—not only the Jerusalem Church, but neighboring Judean Churches. (b) "heard"—by what means? (c) why was the news startling? *v.* 2, (a) when did Peter return to Jerusalem? (b) "they . . of the circumcision"—does this term embrace all of the Jewish Christians, or only the Pharisaic faction? [(c) the phrase came into use later than this, but is here used prophetically by Luke.] (d) force and character of the term? *v.* 3, (a) cf. Acts 10:28; Mk. 2:16; Lk. 15:2. [(b) was such intercourse forbidden by Moses; if so, in what passage; if not, whence arose the restriction?] *v.* 4, "expounded . . in order"—recounting and explaining in detail the event. *vv.* 5-14, (a) compare with Acts 10:9-33, observing the condensed presentation of the main facts. (b) note the variations, for instance *v.* 14 with 10:32f. *v.* 15, (a) comp. 10:44ff. [(b) "began"—indication that his address to Cornelius was interrupted?] [(c) in what respects was this Gentile Pentecost like the Jewish one of Acts 2?] *v.* 16, (a) "remembered"—when was this said by Jesus, cf. Acts 1:5? (b) cf. Matt. 26:75. [(c) explain the difference between the Forerunner's baptism and the Christian baptism.] *v.* 17, (a) comp. AV. (b) "the like gift"—what was this gift? *v.* 18, [(a) "granted repentance"—explain clearly the meaning of this expression.] [(b) is it equivalent to saying that the Gospel was for the Gentiles as such, equally with the Jews?]

PAR. 2. *v.* 19, (a) ["therefore"—does this connect immediately with the action of the Jerusalem Church just recorded, or does it go back to Acts 8:4, taking up the history in another district?] (b) recall the facts of that Dispersion. (c) "Phoenicia"—locate on the map, and name its principal cities. (d) "Cyprus . . Antioch"—locate on map and describe. (e) "Jews"—Hellenistic Jews, outside of Palestine. *v.* 20, (a) "Cyrene"—locate on map. [(b) why did they come to Antioch, and from where?] (c) "Greeks"—actual pagans, not Grecian Jews, or the matter would have no significance. (d) "also"—together with Jews. *v.* 21, [(a) "hand of the Lord"—very common O. T. phrase; refer to them, and state meaning.] (b) "with them"—how did that fact appear? *v.* 22, [(a) "report came"—in what way?] (b) "ears of the church"—notice the figure. (c) "as far as"—what is the force of the expression? *v.* 23, (a) "grace"—what evidences of it? (b) "exhorted"—Barnabas's forte, cf. Acts 4:36 RV. *v.* 24, observe this characterization of Barnabas, cf. Acts 6:5. *v.* 25, (a) "Tarsus"—which way from Antioch, and how far? [(b) where in the Acts account was Saul last seen?] *v.* 26, (a) "taught"—instruction was emphasized. [(b) notice the imperfection of the verse-divisions of the AV.—this verse contains points enough for three; when and under what circumstances were the AV. verse-divisions made?]

PAR. 3. *v.* 27, "in these days"—when? *v.* 28, [(a) "famine . . Claudius"—the reign of Claudius Cæsar (41-54 A. D.) was marked by several severe famines, cf. Josephus's Ant. 20:2:5, and other histories referred to by Camb. Bible *in loc.*] (b) "all the world"—cf. marg. rdg., Lk. 2:1, i. e., the Roman Empire. (c) was the famine itself so extensive, or only its effects? *v.* 29, (a) "disciples"—the Antioch Church. (b) "every man . . ability"—cf. Ezra 2:69; Rom. 15:26f; 1 Cor. 16:2. (c) "determined . . relief"—observe the fine spirit of helpfulness among the Christians. [(d) were there other causes besides the famine which produced or perhaps aggravated the distress in

(Study XVI.)

Judea? *v.* 30, [(a) was the contribution sent prior or subsequent to the events recorded in Acts 12:1-24, in view of 12:25?] (b) in what year were the famine and this visit of Saul to Jerusalem? (c) how long since Saul's last visit there? [(d) why were Barnabas and Saul chosen for this mission?]

THIRD STEP: TOPICS.

**1. The Self-Justification of Peter.** (1) was Peter summoned to Jerusalem, or or was his return simply awaited, and why? (2) in view of his formal, thoughtful, painstaking presentation of the matter, what importance did he consider it to have? (3) was his simple narration of his divine experience the best calculated to carry conviction and acceptance of the newly developed truth? (4) how was he supported by the six Joppa witnesses who had been at Caesarea, and were now present at Jerusalem? [(5) consider Peter's argument in *v.* 16—a syllogism: (a) the disciples of Jesus were to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit; (b) the Gentiles had received that baptism; (c) the Gentiles were therefore disciples.] (6) how did Peter regard this event as compared with the Jewish Pentecost of Acts 2? (7) what was Peter's conclusion from the experience, and how did it differ from his previous conceptions?

**2. Concurrence of the Judean Christians.** (1) exactly what was the ground of the objections raised against Peter? (2) what proportion of the Judean Christians joined in this condemnation? (3) had the Gospel as yet been preached to the Gentiles? (4) what previous experiences should have prepared them, and in some measure did prepare them, for this admission to Christianity of Cornelius and his friends (cf. Acts 6 and 7, 8, 9)? (5) what was the effect upon the Church of Peter's argument in defense of his conduct at Caesarea? (6) what would be the influence of Peter as the leader of the Jewish-Christian Church? (7) just what was included in the concurrence of the Judean Church at this time? (8) was the admission of Cornelius to Christianity regarded as an exceptional incident, or was it accepted as a precedent? [(9) in what respects did the point at issue differ from that which came up at the later Conference in A. D. 52 (Acts 15)?] [(10) consider the relation of this meeting and action of the Jerusalem Church to that later and all-important one.]

**3. Establishment of the Antioch Church.** [(1) describe the city of Antioch at this time, as to points of interest in view of the introduction of Christianity there.] (2) who began the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles in that city? (3) what influence had Cyprus and Cyrene had upon them? (4) what results attended their work, and with what significance? (5) who came from Jerusalem to the Antioch Church, for what purpose, and with what outcome? (6) describe the work of Barnabas in connection with this Church. (7) whom did he bring to assist in the work, and from where? (8) in what year did Saul come to Antioch? [(9) where had he been, and what had he been doing, during the years since he left Jerusalem (cf. Acts 9:30)?] [(10) describe the ways in which the time was now fulfilled for the entrance of the Apostle to the Gentiles upon his special work.] (11) how long did his work at Antioch continue? (12) did this Church become the center of his religious activity? (13) by what designation had the followers of Jesus been known, up to this time, cf. Acts 9:1, 2, 32; 11:1; 24:5? (14) was there need of a new, distinctive name? (15) what was the name given them, cf. Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet.

(Study XVI.)

4:16? [(16) is there any ground for saying it was a term of reproach?] [(17) was it formed according to the familiar Roman method of naming a man's followers after his own name, e. g. Herodians, Epicureans, et al?]

**4. Confirmation of the Newly-Admitted Doctrine.** (1) how many years intervened between the reception of Cornelius into the Christian Church and the establishment of the Church at Antioch? (2) was the Gospel preached to the Gentiles in Antioch on the basis of Peter's experience at Caesarea, and the subsequent recognition of the new doctrine by the Judean Christians? (3) or was it entirely independent of that, so that the Gentile doctrine came into the Church along two avenues—that of revelation at Caesarea, that of practical trial and success at Antioch? (4) what attitude did the Jerusalem Church take toward the Gentile-Christian organization at Antioch? (5) compare Acts 8:14-17. [(6) why was Barnabas sent to investigate the matter, rather than one of the Apostles?] [(7) what does his appointment indicate as to the confidence of the Church in its Hellenistic members, and in the validity of the Antioch movement?] (8) what was the outcome of Barnabas's investigation? (9) how was it received by the Jerusalem Church?

**5. Prophets in the Primitive Church.** [(1) is the position of Prophet in the apostolic time to be understood as an order or as an office?] (2) compare with it the order of Evangelist. (3) is this (*v.* 27) the first mention of Prophets in the Primitive Church? (4) do there seem to have been such previous to this time (A. D. 43)? (5) if they were a natural outgrowth of circumstances, as was the case with all offices and orders in the Church, when did the Prophets arise? (6) consider the rank and the functions of the Prophet as seen in the following passages: Acts 2:17; 13:1; 15:32; 19:6; 21:10f; Lk. 11:49; Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:28f, 13:2, 8; 14:22-40; Eph. 2:20; 3:5; 4:11. [(7) compare the New Testament Prophets with the Old Testament Prophets, considering similarities and differences.] [(8) did their order pass away after the Apostolic Age; if so, why?] (9) what was the purpose of the Prophets who came to Antioch in A. D. 43? [(10) were they appointed to this duty by the Jerusalem Church, or was their mission voluntary?] (11) what was the substance of Agabus's prophecy at this time? (12) what were the intent and practical use of it? [(13) consider his later prophecy in Acts 21:9ff, with a similar inquiry.]

**6. The Office of Elder (=Presbyter=Bishop).** (1) does *v.* 30 contain the first reference to this order? (2) judging from this reference, what was the function of the Elder in the Primitive Church? (3) were Elders also teachers, cf. Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17? (4) was there one over each Church, or a larger number? (5) is the probable time of its introduction the year A. D. 34-35, when the Dispersion of the Christians took place, and the number of individual Churches increased rapidly everywhere? (6) what was the relation of this office to the office of Elder in the Jewish Synagogue? [(7) consider the terms Elder, Presbyter, Bishop, as to whether in the Primitive Church they were co-ordinate and synonymous (cf. Acts 20:17, 28; also Tit. 1:5, 7); if so, explain the origin and usage of the several terms.] (8) what was the method of electing the Elders (compare critically Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5)? (9) were there at this time more than two formal offices in the Church—the Diaconate and the Eldership? [(10) consider the subsequent developments of the primitive office of Elder.]

(Study XVI.)

FOURTH STEP: OBSERVATIONS.

1. Up to this point in the history, the Gospel had been preached only among the Jews.
2. Peter was called to account by the Pharisaic Christians for his association with Gentiles at Caesarea ; presumably also for receiving Gentiles as such into the Church.
3. The deliberative action of the Judean Christians over this matter was the forerunner of the great Conference at Jerusalem twelve years later.
4. Peter's simple presentation of the facts, supported by the testimony of his six Jewish-Christian companions from Joppa, persuades the Church to an acceptance of the new principle as divinely established.
5. Hellenistic Christians, perhaps on the basis of this decision, perhaps independently of it, offer the Gospel to Gentiles in Antioch, and their work is crowned with large and significant success.
6. The Jerusalem Church, through the liberal Barnabas, inspects the new work, and extends fellowship to the Antioch Christians.
7. The time for the coming in of the Gentiles now being full, Saul enters upon his great mission at Antioch in A. D. 43.
8. The title of Christians was about this time given the disciples of Christ, a simple distinguishing term constructed after the Roman manner of forming appellations.
9. The Prophets in the Primitive Church were an order of inspired teachers, somewhat after the manner of the Old Testament Prophets.
10. The office of Elder, the introduction of which has not been recorded, was adapted from the synagogue ; the Elder had charge over a single Church, with a subordinate duty of teaching ; and the Elder was also variously but synonymously called Presbyter and Bishop.

FIFTH STEP: SUMMARY.

1. Make a statement as to the Pharisaic party in the Christian Church at this time—their numbers, influence, doctrinal position, activity, and achievements.
2. Describe the argument of Peter in self-defense of his conduct, as to its content, method, logical deductions from the experience, application, and results.
3. State what it was that the Judean Christians at this point admitted.
4. Describe the establishment of the Christian Church in Antioch, as to its environment, its founders, the elements that composed it, its doctrinal position, etc.
5. Make a statement concerning the introduction and the practical working of the Gentile principle of the Gospel at Antioch, its relation to the establishment of the principle at Caesarea, and its reception by and influence upon the Jerusalem Church.
6. Discuss the order of Prophets in the Primitive Church, as to their origin, functions, rank, numbers and work.
7. Discuss the office of Elder in the organization of the Church, as to its adaption from the synagogue, the time of its introduction into the Church, the occasion of its introduction, the principal and the subordinate functions of the  
(Study XVI.)

Elder, the several synonymous name for the same office, and the later developments of the Eldership.

SIXTH STEP: TEACHINGS.

1. The argument from experience is the great argument for any truth.
2. It is the nature of some to cling too tenaciously to the forms and ceremonies of religion, while others err as badly in the other direction by estimating too slightly the value of religious institutions.
3. One must often await the time for the fullest opportunity and exertion of his powers ; it is the office of Providence to open the doors before one, the duty of man to prepare for entrance.
4. Liberal relief to those in need is an essential principle of Christianity.
5. The best form of Church organization is the one which carries out the principle of the Primitive Church by adapting itself completely to the character of the work it is engaged in, disregarding historical forms which can be superseded by better ones because of a change of the environment.

**(Study XVI.)**

*STUDY XVII.*

SEC. 16. PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH BY  
HEROD. MARTYRDOM OF THE APOSTLE JAMES  
AND DELIVERANCE OF PETER.

Acts 12 : 1-25.

44 A. D.

JERUSALEM.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY.**—(1) Cambridge Bible on Acts, pp. 146-155. (2) Gloag's Comty. on Acts, I: 410-439. (3) Meyer's Comty. on Acts, pp. 228-241. (4) Neander's Planting and Training of the Christian Church, I: 101-105; II: 105. (5) Bible Dictionary, arts. Angel, Herod, James, Mark, Prison, Sidon, Tyre. (6) Conybeare and Howson's Life of Paul, pp. 105-107. (7) Farrar's Life of Paul, pp. 171-181. [(8) Iverach's Life of Paul, pp. 36-46.] [(9) Vaughan's Church of the First Days, pp. 254-264.] [(10) Peloubet's Notes, 1892, in loc.] [(11) S. S. Times, May 5, 1883.]

FIRST STEP: FACTS.

PARAGRAPH I. *v.* 1, persecution of the Church by Herod. *v.* 2, execution of the Apostle James. *Vv.* 1-2, MARTYRDOM OF JAMES THE APOSTLE.

PAR. 2. *v.* 3, Herod would kill Peter also, to please the people. *v.* 4, imprisons him till a favorable time. *v.* 5, earnest Christian prayer for him. *v.* 6-10, miraculous deliverance of Peter. *Vv.* 3-10, FRUSTRATED ATTEMPT TO KILL PETER.

PAR. 3. *v.* 11, Peter recognizes his providential deliverance. *v.* 12, goes to the assembled Christians. *v.* 13-16, with difficulty gains admission to their midst. *v.* 17, tells of his release, and then prudently leaves the city. *Vv.* 11-17, PETER REASSURES HIS FRIENDS, AND LEAVES JERUSALEM.

PAR. 4. *v.* 18, alarm among the guards at Peter's escape. *v.* 19a, the responsible ones executed. *v.* 19b, Herod goes to Caesarea. *v.* 20, Syrians send a deputation to arrange a peace. *v.* 21, Herod in royal pomp addresses them. *v.* 22, he receives the religious homage of the people. *v.* 23, he dies speedily and horribly, as a divine judgment. *Vv.* 18-23, HEROD'S SELF-GLORIFICATION AND DEATH.

PAR. 5. *v.* 24, the Church continues to grow in numbers and strength. *v.* 25a, Barnabas and Saul, having performed their mission, return to Antioch. *v.* 25b, John and Mark accompanies them. *Vv.* 24-25, CONDITION OF THE CHURCH, AND MOVEMENTS OF BARNABAS AND SAUL.

SECOND STEP: EXPLANATIONS.

PARAGRAPH I. *v.* 1, (a) "about that time"—when? [(b) which Herod was this, what relation to Herod the Great, and to the Herod of Acts 25?] *v.* 2, (a) "James"—cf. Matt. 4:21. (b) "sword"—decapitation, one of the four Jewish modes of execution.

PAR. 2. *v.* 3, (a) "pleased the Jews"—why were not *they* persecuting the (Study XVII.)

Christians? (b) "Peter"—why was he selected? [(c) "days . . . bread"—to what is the reference, and what is the reason for introducing it?] *v.* 4, (a) "put in prison"—for punishment or for detention? [(b) "four quaternions" how many soldiers, and what were their methods of keeping guard?] (c) "Passover"—cf. AV and explain. (d) "bring . . . people"—cf. Lk. 22:66, and state the meaning of the phrase. *v.* 5, (a) "kept"—for how long? [(b) "prayer . . . unto God"—why not to Christ?] [(c) "earnestly"—comp. AV, same word as used of Jesus's prayer in Lk, 22:44.] *v.* 6, (a) the night just before the proposed execution. (b) consider the complete, graphic description. (c) "chains"—how was he fastened with them? [(d) "guards . . . door"—two of the four on watch at Peter's side, and two patrolling the corridor outside?] *v.* 7, (a) "angel . . . Lord"—comp. Lk. 2:9. (b) "stood by"—cf. AV. (c) "light"—shekinah of divine presence? (d) "smote"—for what purpose? (e) "awoke"—not raised him, as AV. [(f) consider Peter's sleeping on the eve of execution.] [(g) why were not the guards aroused?] *v.* 8, (a) "gird . . . sandals"—deliberate preparation. (b) "garment"—outer cloak, laid off for the night. *v.* 9, (a) "wist not"—confused by the strange happenings. (b) "vision"—to what effect, cf. Acts 16:9? *v.* 10, (a) how could they pass along the prison corridors without encountering the guards? (b) note the various points at which the miraculous comes into the event. [(c) is the location of this prison known?] (d) "angel . . . departed"—as soon as the supernatural assistance was no longer necessary.

PAR. 3. *v.* 11, (a) "was come to himself"—cf. Lk. 15:17; Psa. 126:1. (b) what set him right? (c) "expectation . . . Jews"—in what were they disappointed? *v.* 12, (a) "considered"—or better, having become aware (of his situation). [(b) what part did this house of Mary play in the experiences of these years?] (c) why did Peter go thither now? [(d) "John . . . Mark"—give an account of him, cf. Mk. 14:51f; Acts 12:25; 13:13; 15:36-40; Col. 4:10; 1 Pet. 5:13.] (e) "gathered . . . praying"—as was their custom, and especially now in the days of Peter's imprisonment. *v.* 13, (a) "door . . . gate"—explain the Oriental construction of house entrances. (b) were they on their guard against enemies? (c) note the extended, graphic narrative. (d) "Rhoda"—the porter was commonly a woman, cf. Jno. 18:16. [(e) is anything more known about Rhoda?] *v.* 14, (a) "knew . . . voice"—she was acquainted with Peter. (b) "opened not"—true to life, cf. Lk. 24:41. *v.* 15, (a) "mad"—why did they think so? [(b) "confidently affirmed"—cf. AV, on what ground was her assertion?] (c) in search of some explanation, what did they then conjecture? [(d) what was the Jewish idea of guardian angels, cf. Matt. 18:10?] *v.* 16, "continued knocking"—Peter was anxious to see the Christians, to reassure them, and to withdraw from the city. *v.* 17, (a) "beckoning . . . hand"—common Jewish mode of gaining attention. (b) "declared"—the experience had a former parallel, and would be understood. [(c) "James"—who, cf. Acts 15:13; Gal. 1:19; 2:9?] [(d) why was a special message left for him?] (e) "brethren"—all the Church, gathered in praying groups at different places in the city. (f) "departed"—at once to a distant place of safety.

PAR. 4. *v.* 18, (a) when was search instituted? (b) what reason had the soldiers for finding Peter if possible? *v.* 19, (a) Herod takes hold of the matter. (b) what is done with them, and on what grounds? (c) "Judea to Cæsarea"—was this a transfer of residence? (d) what business had he at Cæsarea?

(Study XVII.)

v. 20, (a) "displeased"—not to the extent of making war. (b) "Tyre . . . Sidon"—locate on map. (c) "with one accord"—the two cities joining in the embassy. [(d) notice here, as elsewhere, the faulty verse-divisions of the A.V.] [(e) how was the assistance of Blastus secured?] (f) "peace"—what kind—commercial? v. 21 [(a) "set day"—fixed by Herod, according to Josephus it was Aug. 1, A. D. 44]. (b) why all this formal, grand display? v. 22, (a) "the people"—Gentiles or Jews, or both? (b) what was the meaning of their laudation? v. 23, (a) "immediately"—with reference to the smiting, but not to the death. (b) "angel . . . Lord"—comp. v. 7, the divine activity in both cases. (a) "gave up the Ghost"—cf. Acts 5:5, 10; Herod was 54 years old.

PAR. 5. v. 24, [(a) a summary, descriptive statement of the condition of the church, as often in the Acts.] (b) "but"—mark the striking contrast—Herod dead, the Gospel full of life. (c) "grew"—in strength and diffusion. (d) "multiplied"—numerically. v. 25, [(a) the connection here is with Acts 11:30, the account of Herod being interjected.] [(b) this verse is introductory to the chapter which directly follows it.] (c) "returned"—whither? [(d) reason for Barnabas being named first?] (e) why had they been at Jerusalem? (f) on John Mark, see v. 12 above. (g) why did he go with them to Antioch? [(h) where does the visit of Barnabas and Saul come in, relative to the history of the twelfth chapter?]

### THIRD STEP: TOPICS.

1. **The Martyrdom of James.** [(1) why is the account of the first apostolic martyrdom so briefly recorded; (a) because, though sad, it had no altering influence upon the Church; (b) because of the historian's rigid purpose to exclude all which did not show the development of Christianity; (c) because Luke planned another book of church history, which should record the less important activities of other Christian workers; (d) because the material for a fuller account was not at Luke's hand in preparing the Acts.] (2) what had been James's career up to this time? (3) what had been his relation to Jesus? (4) consider the fact that the persecution now comes from the Jewish civil side instead of from the ecclesiastical side, as formerly. [(what was Herod's attitude toward Judaism, cf. Josephus's *Antiquities* 19:7:3?) (6) what was his attitude toward the Christians? (7) why had he shown no violence against them previous to this time?] (8) why was James selected by him as the first victim? (9) compare carefully Matt. 20:20-23. (10) compare also Matt. 14:1-12. (11) what was the effect of James's death on the Church?

2. **Imprisonment and Deliverance of Peter.** (1) what was Herod's motive in seizing Peter? (2) why was the execution delayed? (3) what year was this? (4) what experience had they had with Peter which would make them guard him securely? [(5) compare carefully Acts 5:17-23.] (6) consider the prayer of the church at this time, and its relation to the divine intervention. (7) why were they meeting in small, private companies, and at night? (8) was a natural escape of Peter possible, considering the guard placed over him? (9) describe the part performed by the angel, noting the detail of it. [(10) consider the nature and the amount of the miraculous involved in this release.] [(11) what was the historian's purpose in recording minutely and at such length this event?] (12) what was the feeling of the Primitive Christians with reference to God's care and provision for them?

(Study XVII.)

**3. Peter's Withdrawal from the City.** (1) when did he leave Jerusalem? (2) for what purpose? (3) compare this with his previous action, Acts 5: 17-21. (4) what made the difference in this case? (5) did Jesus or the Apostles needlessly endanger themselves, cf. Acts 9: 23ff? (6) how long was he absent from the city, and what was he doing? [(7) consider the Roman Catholic teaching that he at this time went to Rome and established the church there, fixing the foundation for the papacy.] (8) why were not others than Peter seized and executed by Herod? (9) explain and justify the Roman custom with respect to guards who allowed their prisoners to escape. [(10) what as to the ethics of allowing these four soldiers to be put to death in their innocence, because of what God had himself directly done?]

**4. The Phœnician Commercial Embassy.** [(1) describe the Phœnicians—their country, nationality, business, characteristics, etc.] (2) what was the occasion of Herod's displeasure against them? (3) had he manifested this by restrictions upon their commerce? (4) what was the mission of this embassy? [(5) what was the commercial relation of Phœnicia to Palestine, cf. *v.* 20e; 1 Kings 5: 11; Ezek. 27: 16f; was the latter the source of the former's agricultural supplies?] (6) what was the public occasion upon which audience was given this embassy? (7) was the deliverance of Herod in the case favorable to the Phœnicians, judging from the approval of the people, who would be desirous of good commercial relations with Tyre and Sidon? [(8) compare the account of this event given by Josephus (Ant. 19: 8: 2; also see 18: 6, 7, 8), which supplements Luke's account (cf. Gloag's Comty and Camb. Bible, *in loc.*)]

**5. The Divine Judgment upon Herod.** (1) consider the character and career of this Herod Agrippa I. (2) what was his dominion at the time of his death? (3) what was his attitude toward the Romans and the Jews? (4) did he plan this spectacle for the purpose of self-glorification? (5) was it the shout of applause and divine attribution by the people (*v.* 22) that he coveted? (6) consider the cause and nature of the disease with which he was smitten. (7) his death occurred six days afterward, Aug. 7, A. D. 44, according to Josephus. [(8) consider the death from a similar cause of Antiochus Epiphanes. (2 Macc. 9: 9); also of Herod the Great (Jos. Ant. 17: 6: 5); also of Philip II. of Spain; and see further historical references in Camb. Bible, *in loc.*] (9) was the divine judgment in view of Herod's self-glorification, or because of his persecution of the church? (10) justify so severe a punishment.

**6. Condition of the Church in A. D. 44.** (1) what was the territorial extent of the Church at this time? (2) what were the great centers of Christian activity? (3) who were the chief workers? (4) what was the environment of the Church at this time, as regards: (a) Sadducees, (b) Pharisees, (c) common people, (d) civil power? (5) what were the motive and occasion of Herod's persecution, and how did it differ from former ones? (6) what was the attitude and practice of the Church at this time as regarded the admission of the Gentiles to Christianity? (7) what was the condition of the Church as regarded, (a) geographical expansion, (b) religious influence, (c) numerical increase? (8) consider the division in the book marked by the close of the 12th chapter of Acts. (9) henceforth who, instead of Peter, is to be the prominent leader in the Church?

#### FOURTH STEP: OBSERVATIONS.

1. James, the brother of John, was the first of the original Apostles to die as a martyr.

(Study XVII.)

2. The brevity of the account is perhaps due to the fact that it had no essential effect upon the development of Christianity.

3. Herod conducted this persecution partly for his own enjoyment, and partly to ingratiate himself with the Jews.

4. Peter was miraculously delivered from a fate similar to that which had befallen James.

5. The whole matter is completely and vividly described, as a testimony to God's care and guidance of his Church.

6. The account may have come from Mark.

7. Meetings of Christians by night for worship and prayer were the prevailing custom, at first for safety, afterwards for solemnity.

8. The Jewish belief was that every individual had a guardian angel, who might assume his appearance; an idea which probably came from Babylon, and which Christ himself shared (cf. Matt. 18:10).

9. Peter reassured his fellow Christians, whose prayers for him had been availing, and then withdrew from Jerusalem to an unknown place of safety for an indefinite time.

10. An embassy from Phœnicia sought to restore favorable commercial relations with Palestine by appeal to Herod.

11. The embassy got what they wished; and Herod also got what he wished—the adulation of his subjects.

12. But for his pride, and for his persecution of Christianity, the divine judgment was visited upon him in a dire disease which caused his sudden death.

13. In spite of persecution, the Church was growing mightily in extension, influence and numbers.

#### FIFTH STEP: SUMMARY.

1. Gather such information from the material of this section as concerns:

- (1) prayer in the Primitive Church.
- (2) religious meetings of the Christians.
- (3) their spirit and action under persecution.
- (4) the attitude of the Jewish king toward the Gospel.
- (5) God's care and guidance of his Church.
- (6) the life and work of James the Apostle.
- (7) the influence of his martyrdom.
- (8) the movements of Peter.
- (9) the business relations of Palestine.
- (10) the activity of Barnabas and Saul.

2. Make a statement as to the occasions of, and reasons of justification for, the divine judgment upon Herod Agrippa I.

3. Describe the general condition of the Church at this period of its career.

#### SIXTH STEP: TEACHINGS.

1. It is a principle of God's dealings with men that the doors do not open for them until the fullness of the time.

2. The faithful, united prayer of God's Church prepares the way for marked manifestations of God's presence and blessing.

3. Christian wisdom enjoins prudence, not rashness; no unnecessary exposure to danger in the pursuit of one's work.

4. Self-glorification is in God's sight a grievous and despicable sin.

5. The Church surmounts all opposition in its growth toward the great consummation of the Kingdom of God.

(Study XVII.)