

companion of Paul, v. 40, the Silvanus of the epistles, 2 Cor. 1 : 19. Silas was his Jewish name, Silvanus probably his Gentile or foreign name. *Chief men*; or leaders, called also "prophets," or inspired teachers, v. 32. Possibly the authority of Judas and Silas may have been derived from the fact that they had been personal followers of Jesus.

## II. A Letter, 23-29.

V. 23. *Wrote letters*; to be sent by them to the church at Antioch, and thence to other Gentile churches, 16 : 4. *The apostles and elders*. See above on v. 22. *And brethren*; the members of the church. *Unto the brethren*; fellow-believers. *Antioch* was the capital of *Syria*. It had an active missionary church, 13 : 1, 2; 14 : 26, 27. Tarsus, Paul's birth-place, was the capital of *Cilicia*. Paul may have planted the churches in these places during his stay at Tarsus, before his first missionary journey, ch. 9 : 30.

V. 24. *Certain which went out from us*; the false teachers referred to in v. 1. See also notes on v. 1. *Troubled you*; by filling their minds with doubts. *With words*; their false teaching. *Subverting*. "The word means primarily, to pack up, and so to carry away; or to dismantle a place: to destroy, overthrow." It describes the upsetting and unsettling of the minds and consciences of the disciples.

Vs. 25, 26. *It seemed good*. See on v. 22. *Having come to one accord* (Rev. Ver.); having reached a unanimous decision after Peter (v. 7), Paul (v. 12), and James (v. 12) had spoken. *Hazarded their lives*; on their first missionary journey (chs. 13, 14), when they were driven from place to place in peril of their lives, just as our missionaries were in 1900-1901 in China. *For the name*; for all that His name implies. As *Lord*, He is Sovereign, as *Jesus*, He is Saviour (Matt. 1 : 21), as *Christ*, He is the Anointed One, set apart as our Prophet, Priest, and King.

Vs. 27, 28. *Judas and Silas*. See on v. 22. *Who shall also tell you*; that is, explain, by word of mouth, the decision of the council, as set forth in the letter. *It seemed good to the Holy Ghost*. They were guided by divine authority. *No greater burden*. These empty Jewish ceremonies were no longer helpful,

but burdensome, to the Christian. *These necessary things*; the four things mentioned in the next verse. All these, except the last, were unimportant in themselves, but were imposed so as not to give offence to the Jews. They were necessary "for mutual intercourse, that Jewish and Gentile Christians might live as brethren in the one Lord" (Knowing); but not necessary to salvation.

V. 29. *Meats offered to idols*; food offered in sacrifice to idols, the remnants of which were often sold in the market. There was no harm in itself in eating this meat (1 Cor. 8 : 4, 8), but the Jews looked upon such food as unlawful. It was, therefore, better to be charitable, 1 Cor. 3 : 9-13. *From blood*; forbidden by Jewish law, Lev. 17 : 14. *Things strangled*; and, therefore, with the blood still in the flesh. *Fornication*; unchastity, a positive sin in itself, and not a concession to Jewish prejudices like the other three. It is here named because connected with idol worship, and frightfully common, even as it is still, amongst the heathen.

## III. A Visit, 30-33.

Vs. 30, 31. *When they were dismissed*; sent away on their journey. *Gathered the multitude*; held a meeting of all the believers. *They delivered the epistle*; handed the letter to the church officials, or elders. *When they had read*; that is, when the officials had read the letter in the hearing of the people. *They rejoiced for the consolation*. The Gentile believers were glad, for it was a comfort and encouragement to know that their faith in Christ, which had been disturbed by the false teachers (15 : 24), was not in vain, and that they need not go back to the empty forms of Judaism.

Vs. 32, 33. *Judas and Silas*. See on v. 22. *Being prophets*; inspired teachers. *Exhorted the brethren*; adding words of personal comfort and encouragement to those given in the letter. *And confirmed them*; strengthened their faith and Christian courage to withstand the false teachers. *Tarried there a space*. They remained at Antioch for some time. *Let go in peace*; with the best wishes of the Christians in Antioch, they were sent away to the apostles at Jerusalem. The phrase indicates a formal meeting at which they were commended to the grace of God.