

nature, is a fatal mistake. Art and intellect were at their best in Athens, but they had failed to reveal God.

Yet the people were very religious. They had many temples and innumerable gods, so many that it is said it was "easier to find a god than a man." The city was full of exquisite images of their deities. A few of them you may see in the museums of Europe now, so beautiful that one loves to study their graces of face and form. Yet the morals of these "very religious" Athenians were shameful. Is it possible to be very religious and not know God after all? Yes, it is. Modern Canadians may be in danger of it as well as ancient Athenians. It is religious to attend church, to believe in the Bible as the word of God, to observe a form of prayer, to talk piously of the ways of Providence, and to profess to be a Christian; but all that may be and one not really know God. I am afraid a great many people are worshipping an unknown God right here in this Christian country. How Paul longed to make him known to those intelligent yet ignorant people. It is so sad not to know God. It is like not knowing your father or mother, or somebody else who loves you dearly, and you are missing all the joy of it because you do not know them. To know God is to feel sure of his love, to trust him; to believe and feel that he forgives our sin, and is making us grow pure and good like himself by his Spirit within us. Do you know God that way? We can only know him so when we know Jesus. He takes the blindness from our eyes, the hindrances from our minds, and the sin out of our hearts so that we can see God. There was a little French girl who had been nearly all her life quite blind, and who, by the skill of a physician was made to see. When her eyes were strong enough to have the bandage taken off she looked up at her father who stood beside her and said, joyfully, "To think I have had my dear father all my life, but I never saw him before!" We have had One who loves us all our life. I wish he might not be to any of us an unknown God, but that we might see and know him as our Father and Friend.

### The Teachers' Meeting.

Draw a map of Athens, and show the location of the Areopagus.... Then a word picture of Paul and his surroundings.... Show the purpose and line of thought in his address to present to the Athenians the true conceptions of God as opposed to their idolatrous views.... The aspects of God as presented by Paul.... Our duties toward God: (1) To know God, verse 23; (2) To worship God aright, verses 24, 25; (3) To seek and find God, verse 27; (4) To turn from wrong ways to God, verse 30; (5) To live with the judgment in view, verse 31; (6) To believe in Christ, verse 34.... See in this lesson how to deal with unbelievers. See "Thoughts for Young People.".... Various ways

in which men treat the Gospel: (1) Scoffers; (2) Delayers; (3) Seekers.... Results of Paul's work at Athens.... Even the heathen heart is conscious of a need of God, for in every tribe of men, however low or inbruted, there is some religion and a conception of God; a fetic, a Great Spirit, Jupiter, or Mithras, etc., according to various nations.

### Before the Class.

Lead the pupils to analyze by natural lines of thought. Two great divisions will be noted: 1. The sermon, 22-31. 2. The effect of the sermon, 32-34.

Examine carefully the sermon for its main divisions: 1. Introduction, 22, 23. 2. Cumulative argument to prove that man is the child of God, 24-28. 3. Hence the foolishness of idolatry. Repent and return to primitive belief. 4. Call to repentance—in view of judgment by a risen Christ.

Call out, by questioning, the objective point of the sermon, namely, Christ and the resurrection. Note the skillful approach by Paul. He gains attention by his adroit introduction. Observe the cumulative force of the argument from accepted opinions of Greeks concerning God to the condemnation of existing idolatry and to a clear call and pointing of the way to something better.

#### 1. Introduction.

1. "Men of Athens"—a popular and polite manner of address. 2. "I perceive that you are very religious"—a noteworthy, commendable fact, calculated to hold the attention of the audience. 3. A reason for excessive zeal for religion. 4. The promised declaration of a religious mystery—an answer to the unsatisfied longings of the Athenian mind.

#### II. One God, man his offspring.

1. "In the beginning God." Paul's theism and that of his hearers is assumed, hence God's spirituality is emphasized and the need of spiritual worship, 24, 25. He is Creator of all, and especially of man. Hence the close relation between God and man. "We are his offspring." A popular poet is quoted to clinch the argument in the minds of the hearers. 2. Hence the unreasonableness of idolatry—a strong appeal to the intellectual and argumentative Athenian. It is now time in this enlightened age for something better. The argument is strengthened by an appeal to the intelligence of the hearers. 3. Hence we ought to repent, that is, change our minds regarding our worship of God and our relation to him. An added reason for repentance is found in the judgment to come—an appeal to an accepted belief. The climax of the sermon is the personality of the Judge—"the man Christ Jesus," who has been raised from the dead.

#### III. Effect. Sudden and marked at this point.

1. Open ridicule. 2. Thoughtful consideration. 3. Believers! Dionysius, a prominent man; Damaris, a woman.