

2. In addressing unbelievers it is well to understand the measure of truth which they already possess, and give it fair recognition. Verses 22, 23.

3. We should not content ourselves with answering the objections of unbelievers, but give them positive truth, awakening thought on their part. Verses 24, 25.

4. We should present the Gospel to unbelievers as that which will lift them up from twilight to noon, and from groping after God to communion with him. Verse 27.

5. We should appeal to the inner consciousness of men as witnessed by themselves, and show how the Gospel meets their needs. Verses 27, 28.

6. We should show that unbelief and ignorance of God is not only an error, but a sin to be repented of. Verse 30.

7. We should not be discouraged if our efforts with unbelievers do not seem to have immediate success. Verse 32.

### Orientalisms of the Lesson.

There was a striking truth in Paul's allusion to the religious character of the Athenians. Porticos, cloisters, and statues were everywhere. The Agora was full of memorials of their ancient history, statues of great men, Solon, Demosthenes; among them her deified heroes, Hercules, Theseus, and older divinities like Mercurius; there were statues to Apollo, the patron god of the city, and in the center of all the "Altar of the Twelve Gods," which was to Athens what the Golden Milestone was to Rome. On the Areopagus was the temple of Mars, and the sanctuary of the Furies beyond the stone steps and seats of the judges. There were little shrines to Bacchus, Venus, and others in the direction of the Acropolis. Every public place was consecrated in some way to some religious character. The public buildings, court, council, hall, or theater, were all dedicated to some god. Fame, Modesty, Energy, and even Pity received homage. The Greek mind knew no limits in this matter, and when imagination could go no farther they dedicated an altar to "the Unknown God." A Roman writer declared that "in Athens it were easier to find a god than a man," and another writer, possibly with accuracy, affirms that "they were more gods in Athens than in all Greece besides."

### By Way of Illustration.

*Paul preaching at Athens.* Paul aimed at the great centers. He almost invariably struck the cities. The Salvation Army is doing this to-day. When it has tried in the country districts it has failed to accomplish much; but in the cities, where it has gone down to the submerged, the Salvation Army to-day is doing just what the Christian Church did in the first age. It believes in the redemption of the city life.—*R. E. Speer.*

*Verse 22. "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye carry your religious reverence very far."* This was complimentary and true, and therefore an example of tact and Christian courtesy. The missionaries abroad who have been successful have not launched a tirade against idolatry, but have been kind and sympathetic. "Courtesy opens all doors and all hearts," says a world-wide traveler. Jesus in his approach to the Samaritan woman courteously asked a favor of her which was really a great compliment. A Christian worker who had tried to gain influence over a factory girl obtained it by asking a favor, thus placing himself under obligation to the girl. This won her.

*The heathen altar.* We must meet those we would help on a common ground. Jesus set us an example when, at the miracle of the loaves and fishes, he took the little food they had and multiplied it to feed the multitude. Dr. Ellinwood told us of a missionary in India who found the people awaiting a new incarnation of the great God of whom they knew little except that he would come to earth in a new form. This missionary told them that the new incarnation for which they were waiting had come already—that he was the Christ who became flesh and dwelt among us. The Gospel story presented in this way found ready acceptance.

*Verses 28, 29.* A missionary in India said that he was greatly touched by hearing two, poor, low-down Hindu women sing the familiar chorus, as they ground their grain with the handmill,

"I'm the child of a king."

A city worker in the slums says that it gives him unspeakable comfort to say to the lowest-down, most degraded of his people, "God is your Father. You belong to him. You are his child, his wandering, disobedient child, but his child still, and he wants you to come back to him."

### Heart Talks on the Lesson.

Paul was waiting at Athens for Timothy and Silas to join him on his journey. But his soul was too full of his Master's business to allow him to wait idly. His spirit was stirred in him by the idolatry he saw. Beautiful Athens! The home of culture and art, which even in ruin we admire to-day. But culture of the mind cannot regenerate the soul. If attractive environment, elegance in material things, or intellectual greatness had inherent power to lift up the moral nature, Athens would be strong and flourishing now. You must accept it as forever settled that only the spiritual is permanent, and the knowledge of God comes only through an obedient heart. "The world by wisdom knew not God," and never will so know him.

It is well to cultivate the mind; art, music, and all things beautiful should be studied; but to be absorbed in these, to the neglect of the spiritual