

Jews in their synagogue, and on the other days in the "market," the general gathering-place of the people.

No man who has zeal for Christ ever lacks a place. He will labor with one man as earnestly as with a thousand; in a chamber as cheerfully as in a cathedral. He that is faithful in the smallest place will be duly transferred to a larger. The apostle could not be concealed in the one little obscure synagogue of his compatriots, hid away in some corner of the splendid metropolis, but was soon drawn into the *agora*, a place where not only merchants of all kinds met, but statesmen, orators, poets and philosophers—the fashionable assembly in which it was requisite for a man to appear often if he desired to be counted as in Athenian "society."

Stirred from without by the sight of the prevailing idolatry, and impelled from within by his constant zeal for his Master and the New Faith, Paul everywhere set forth Jesus and the Resurrection. However he varied his method of treatment, his fundamental theme was the Risen Jesus. There seemed to be perpetually present to his mind the thought that every human being had an immeasurable personal interest in Him who had been delivered for man's offences and raised again for his justification. In the market-place, or, as we perhaps should call it, the Assembly Rooms, he was encountered by men who represented two of the leading schools of philosophy at that time in Athens—schools that were then more than two centuries old.

The Stoics represented pantheism, believing that "the all," the universe, is God; God is the universe. Believing the universe itself was a rational soul; that it was impossible to separate God from matter; that the soul was matter, and death was a return of this finer matter into the all-matter—that is, into God; when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, the announcement seemed so palpably absurd in the presence of what they considered settled and unquestionable philosophical doctrine, that it was regarded an impossi-

bility. The Epicureans were downright materialists. There was matter, and nothing else. Whatever seems orderly and the product of design, is merely the result of a fortuitous concurrence of the uncreated atoms which had eternally existed. This doctrine necessarily excluded God, the soul, morality, and responsibility. It involved the dissipation into the elements at death of all that we call matter and spirit, a distinction denied by them except as a distinction of different kinds of matter. Of course that school could have no data of ethics beyond utility; nothing that involved future reward or retribution. To them, also, the resurrection was an absurdity.

There was a third school, not mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, called the Academicians, who, at the time of Paul, taught that there was nothing which could be known of God, if there was a God. The apostle met in his day the variations of erroneous philosophy which confront Christianity in ours. Through eighteen centuries the gifted and laborious errorists have not been able to invent one new error. Toward the close of the nineteenth century they are just what they were in the first: pantheists, materialists, and agnostics. Such we find them in Berlin, London, and New York to-day; such Paul found them in Athens eighteen centuries ago. But Christianity was fresh then, and the people he met had curiosity to know if it were possible to have a new school of thought. They induced Paul to go with them from the crowded *agora* to the quiet Areopagus, where, lifted above the multitude, secured from interruptions in the lofty place of their Supreme Court, they might ascertain the nature of this new philosophy.

The mingling of politeness and irony in their invitation to Paul is just the same in its tones and cadences as those which mark the intercourse of the pantheists, the materialists, and the agnostics of the present day in their intercourse with the Christian thinkers. "We wish to be enabled to know what