

arraigned and sentenced before the bar of God. To all outward appearance it was an uneven match, one man standing alone before many; but one man with the eternal Truth and the Almighty God upon his side is a majority, and the enduring victory was won by the apostle Paul. He stood surrounded by the outward symbols of a religion the most fascinating ever devised by man, the worship of beauty in its noblest forms; surrounded, too, by the learned men of his age, in the capital which was the centre of the world's intelligence. Wisely did the apostle address that assembly, beginning with a courteous recognition of their zeal for worship, and their longing after God, and showing that their craving was met in the Gospel alone. Yet with all boldness he attacked their errors. With statues of the gods on every hand he declared that the Godhead is not like unto images made by man; before a people proud of their origin he asserted the unity and brotherhood of all races; in presence of men who held to the eternity of matter he proclaimed God as the creator of all things; in the face of scornful glances he preached the resurrection of the dead and the judgment to come. The sermon ended, the audience separated, some with contemptuous unbelief, some with slight interest, a few with quickened consciences. A small band of believers was gathered in the city of the violet crown, but Paul went on his way to more promising fields of labor. Yet in that hour the sentence of idolatry and false philosophy had been spoken, and in due time its doom came. When the glory of Athens had passed away, the Gospel which Paul preached was standing in triumph over all the lands.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

Verse 22. Mars' Hill. The Areopagus, or Hill of Mars, was an eminence in Athens, north-west of the Acropolis, and rising sixty feet above the valley. It was an open amphitheatre, with stone seats arranged in tiers, where sat the council of the Areopagites, composed of the most distinguished citizens of Athens. In a hollow place below and in front of them was an elevated stone, from which Paul probably spoke. The apostle was not on trial, but was giving a statement of Christianity to a company of Athenian inquirers. **And said.** The report of Paul's address is very meagre, though precise, and gives only the line of thought in what was without doubt an extended discourse. **Men of Athens.** Paul showed knowledge, as well as tact by commencing his speech in the form of address employed by Athenian orators. **Too Superstitious.** Rev. Ver., "somewhat superstitious;" but the translation recommended by the American revisers seems better, "very religious;" that is, very careful in religious worship and reverent toward divine beings. It was not an accusation, not yet a compliment, but a recognition of the fact that the Athenians were a worshipping people. There were at least thirty thousand statues in Athens, all objects of worship. 1. Notice that the disciple of Christ can see

that there is a germ of truth in the heathen forms of religion.

23. As I passed by. In walking from the sea-port to the city he would pass several altars with the inscription referred to. **Betheld your devotions.** Rather, as in Rev. Ver., "the objects of your worship;" not the worship itself, but the things worshipped. **An altar.** The Greek altars were very numerous, and generally small, built of marble, and highly ornamented; while in the whole Jewish world there was but one altar, that in the temple, of rough stone, and severe in its plainness. **TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.** Rather, as in Rev. Ver., "To an unknown god." Several ancient writers say that such altars were to be seen in Athens. They arose from the feeling of uncertainty, desiring to omit no divinity from their devotions. **Whom therefore,** etc. The Rev. Ver. is far more accurate, "What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this set I forth unto you." In all their ignorance they were groping after God, and now the apostle was about to proclaim him, the very being whom they sought. Paul's opening words showed great skill in attracting attention, employing an illustration, avoiding the charge of introducing a new object of worship, recognizing the element of truth in their religion, and yet not lowering the standard of the Gospel.

24. God that made the world. Paul begins his argument with the declaration that there is a personal God, not a personification of nature, but its power which created nature. 2. We must see God if we would worship him aright. **Lord of heaven.** Paul presents no picture of Olympus with its feasting deities, but one God over all. **Dwelleth not in temples.** The most splendid temples ever wrought by human hands rose on every side, the Parthenon and the Propylaea, yet Paul declares that they do not enshrine God. **Made with hands.** 3. The only fit temple for God's indwelling presence is that of the heart which God has created.

25. Neither is worshipped. Rev. Ver., "neither is served." **By men's hands.** The heathen conception of sacrifice was that the gods needed food and drink, and were dependent upon men for such services; the Bible doctrine was that the sacrifice represented man's consecration to a higher power, and the coming of the Redeemer. **Seeing he giveth.** Since our all comes from God, and we are absolutely dependent upon him, it follows that while he cannot need us, we need him. 4. We worship God, not for his benefit, but for our own.

26. Hath made of one blood. Here Paul attacks another of the ideas rooted in the Greek mind, that they were a people of nobler origin than other races. 5. The unity of man is the natural inference from the unity of God. 6. Since all are children of one Father all are brothers. **Determined the time.** "Their appointed seasons." God has given to each