

great object of all this divine dealing with the world is to bring men to a knowledge of God. **If haply.** The word "haply" indicates a contingency not likely to happen. Notwithstanding all God's dealings with the world few people out of the heathen races, without revelation, have ever obtained a true knowledge of God. **Might feel after him.** As a blind man gropes after an object, so, unaided by revelation, the best minds, like a Socrates and a Seneca, seem to be reaching out ignorantly toward God. **Though he be not far.** Rather, "and yet he is not far." He is near us, seeking us, yet we fail to find him because by our iniquities we separate ourselves from him. **From every one of us.** Even those who are living godless lives are yet followed by the influences of God's Spirit.

**28. In him we live.** Our natural life is dependent upon God, and still more does our spiritual life come from him. **Your own poets.** In addressing a people who knew nothing of the Hebrew Scriptures, Paul appealed to the Greek poets, thus at once showing his knowledge and gaining favorable attention from his hearers. **We are also his offspring.** A sentence from the writings of Aratus, a Cilician poet, who lived 272 B. C. (8) *Even those without the light of revelation can perceive that man has some relation to God.*

**29. Forasmuch then.** If we are like God, then the Godhead which is above us cannot be like that which is below us. **The Godhead.** Around Paul were standing many statues of the Grecian divinities—some of them of marble, covered with gold. But Paul boldly declares that to consider those as images of God degrades both God and man, God's offspring.

**30. The times of this ignorance.** The ignorance of men in supposing that God could be likened to images. **God winked at.** God permitted to pass, and admitted it so far as it was sincere seeking after himself, until a clearer revelation should be made. **But now.** Now that Christ has come, and the Gospel is preached to Gentiles as well as Jews. **Commandeth all men.** Not only those who have worshiped God, as the Jews, but those who have sought God through visible forms, as the Greeks. (9) *Increased knowledge brings higher obligations.* **To repent.** Not merely to regret the past, but especially to renounce it and seek God. (10) *God's call to the*

*world to repent is a command to the Church to send the Gospel to the world.*

**31. Because he hath appointed.** The reason why men should make haste to obey the command. **A day.** God's judgment, then, is not a continually recurring fact, but an event to take place upon a fixed day. **He will judge.** Most aptly spoken on the place of judgment, the Areopagus. **In righteousness.** This will constitute its greatest terror, the fact that every sin will then receive its just penalty. **By that man.** Paul emphasizes the humanity of Christ rather than his divinity, because his heathen auditors were likely to misapprehend any declaration of God's appearance upon the earth. (11) *Let us not forget that our judgment is in the hands of One who is still our brother.* **Given assurance.** God marked out Jesus Christ as his chosen one among men by the fact of his resurrection. **Raised him from the dead.** The resurrection showed that Jesus was the Son of God, that his teachings were divine and authoritative, and that there is life beyond the grave.

**32. When they heard.** Doubtless Paul spoke at length on this subject of the resurrection and showed its relation to the scheme of Christian truth. **Some mocked.** Showed by look and gesture that they did not believe Paul's teaching. The schools of philosophy at Athens either denied all future life or believed only in a dim and doubtful existence. The conception of a resurrection never entered their views. (12) *How often has human learning put aside the revelation of God as a thing of naught.* **Hear thee again.** A polite dismissal of the subject, yet showing that the truth had made some impression upon their minds.

**33, 34. Paul departed.** His labors at Athens, though not interrupted by persecution, were far less successful than at most places, and he never referred to the city in his letters. **Certain men clave.** Evidently a small number, perhaps not enough to constitute a church. **Dionysius.** An early writer reports that he was afterward bishop at Athens and died a martyr. **Areopagite.** A member of the high court of the Areopagus. **Damaris.** Nothing is known of her history. **Others with them.** If a church was founded it was too small to attract notice; yet in four centuries the idol temples of Athens were closed, and the Parthenon became a Christian church.

### CRITICAL AND HOMILETICAL NOTES.

In order to appreciate this masterful discourse of the great apostle, delivered in the famous Areopagus of Athens, the center of the world's intellectual life, it will be necessary for us to make a few verbal corrections in the text of the Authorized Version. Instead of Ye **Men of Athens** (verse 22), omit the pronoun, and we have the classic mode of

address used by all the Athenian orators, the one which Paul must have known and heard in the *agora* or market place, and which he here used—"Men of Athens." Instead of **I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious**, an utterance which is as false as it is insulting, read, "I perceive that you carry your religious reverence