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St. Paul and the Areopagus.

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ST. PAUL AND THE AREOPAGUS. BY REV. A. F. FINDLAY.*

PERHAPS no passage in the whole of the Acts has suffered more from hazy and ill-considered interpretation than that dealing with the visit of St. Paul to Athens (Acts xvii. 16-34). This was due partly to a certain carelessness in defining the exact meaning of individual words, partly to the want of accurate historical knowledge. To Prof. Ernst Curtius belongs the credit of preparing the way for a sounder interpretation, and of prescribing the limits within which the interpreter must move. While critics and expositors before him had generally assumed that the appearance of St. Paul on the Areopagus (for so they interpreted ἡγάγον ἐπὶ τὸν Ἀρειον Πάγον) implied also his presence before the Council of the Areopagus, Curtius challenged this assumption and concluded, as the result of investigations into the history and procedure of the Council, that if St. Paul was led before the Council he stood not on the Areopagus, but in the Stoa Basileios in the Agora. We say nothing, at present, as to the soundness of Curtius' conclusion. We simply avail ourselves of the warning which the possibility of its correctness affords us, and approach the interpretation of the passage with greater caution to see what assistance, if any, is given by the preliminary circumstances in determining the true view of the central incident.

As one day, according to his custom, St. Paul was engaged discussing with chance-comers in the Agora, some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers came up to him and listened to what he was saying. There is no reason to suppose that they met the apostle in a hostile spirit, although it would be equally groundless to assume any pre-disposition in his favour. Συνέβαλλον in itself is perfectly colourless; it implies neither hostility nor friendliness, and any such definite idea, if it exists, must be gathered from the context.† But as the

* Paper read at a meeting of the British School on Feb. 22nd, 1895.

† Συνέβαλλω is found only in Luke and Acts in the New Testament. Of the five instances of the verb in the active, three have the meaning, "to meet, to be thrown together," while the remaining two bear the sense "to throw together in thought, to consider, to deliberate." Of the former instances one is used in the hostile sense (Luke xiv. 31), while another is used of a friendly meeting (Acts xx. 14). But in both these cases the more definite idea is given by the context, and is not contained in the word itself.

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context does not warrant us in stating decisively whether the meeting was hostile or friendly, *συνέβαλλον* must be interpreted as referring to a meeting between people at first indifferent to one another. All that the philosophers wanted was to know what the apostle was talking about. When they had listened for a time, some getting impatient because they failed to understand the apostle's meaning, and disposed to be unsympathetic for that very reason, blurted out: "What would this babbling fellow wish to say? What is he driving at?—his words are meaningless, incoherent." Others, again, gave voice to their vague comprehension of the apostle's drift in the words: "Apparently he is a herald of foreign divinities." We shall understand these utterances only when we regard them as a more or less unconscious question and answer, coming from men who were listening to something strange which they did not rightly understand. Even in the first utterance there is no actual hostility; the term *σπερμολόγος** suggests contempt, but nothing more. Nor can any feeling of unfriendliness be inferred from the second remark: "He seems to be a herald of foreign gods." How little serious such a charge was likely to be accounted we may gather from a passage in Strabo, where the readiness with which foreign cults were welcomed in Athens is commented on: 'Αθηναῖοι δ' ὥσπερ περὶ τὰ ἄλλα φιλοξενοῦντες διατελοῦσιν οὕτω περὶ τοὺς θεοὺς · πολλὰ γὰρ τῶν ξενικῶν ἱερῶν παρεδέξαντο, ὥστε καὶ ἐκωμωδήθησαν · καὶ δὴ καὶ τὰ Θράκια καὶ τὰ Φρύγια (Strabo x. 3, 18).

The state of mind, therefore, which the partial recognition of the tenor of the apostle's teaching aroused among the philosophers must be further determined by subsequent events. But it is just here that the greatest difficulty arises. The action taken by the philosophers is the chief point in dispute in the whole passage. "Ἦγαγον ἐπὶ τὸν Ἄρειον Πάγον—does this mean, "they led him on to the hill of the

* *Σπερμολόγος*: (1) a bird that picked up seed; (2) a street-loafer who picked up whatever fell from loads of goods; (3) applied to speakers, one who picked up words at random without knowing very well what they meant. This last is the meaning here. The same meaning seems to be required in Plut. *Alcib.* 36, Philost. 203, Dio Chrysos. xxxii., p. 363 C. An Onomasticon gives *Loquax. λάλος, σπερμολόγος*. Hesychius and A. Gellius i., 15, interpret *σπερμολόγος* in the same way. Professor W. M. Ramsay considers (*Expositor*, September, 1895) this interpretation quite inadmissible here, and argues for the sense of "plagiarist." But the words *τί ἂν θεῖοι ὁ σπερμολόγος οὗτος λέγειν*; plainly indicate that the philosophers did not catch the apostle's drift; in such a case a charge of babbling, of picking up words at random, of speaking incoherently, was more natural than one of plagiarism.

Areopagus"?—or, "they led him before the Court of the Areopagus"? Both these interpretations, as will be shown below, are perfectly admissible so far as the mere language is concerned. We must, therefore, seek to determine from the motives which prompted the action of the philosophers which interpretation is the more probable.

From the first expression with which the philosophers hailed the apostle's teaching we have seen that we could gather nothing more definite than the presence, in at least a certain section of them, of undisguised contempt. Had such been the prevailing temper of the listeners, they would undoubtedly have turned aside without more ado from the apostle as from one whom it was not worth while troubling about. Therefore, that some other feeling swayed the gathering we are forced to conclude. What this feeling was we have material for judging in vv. 19, 20, 21. In vv. 19, 20 we find expressed the motive which induced the philosophers to remove the apostle to another scene; while, in v. 21, we have a reflection of the writer's which explains the action of the philosophers according to a well-known trait of the Athenian character. The latter half of v. 19 is plainly ironical. The apostle is asked: "Can we know—are we competent to understand what this new teaching is which is spoken by you?" Here we find again the same spirit which prompted the cry, "What is the babbling fellow driving at?" But, that this feeling of sneering scorn was not uppermost in the minds of the philosophers, we see from v. 20. "For certain astonishing things you bring to our hearing; we, therefore, wish to know what these things may be." It is quite possible that in the first half of the verse we have evidence of the same sarcastic tone; but this did not preclude the feeling of curiosity which we find expressed in the latter half. In short, it seems clear either that the philosophers were divided in their attitude to St. Paul, some being scornful, others curious, or (as is more probable) that the feelings of the whole party were mixed, the earlier feeling of scorn alternating with the feeling of curiosity which eventually gained the mastery. That we are right in supposing curiosity to have been the prevailing temper of the philosophers we see from v. 21, where the writer characterises their action as an instance of the Athenian mania for novelty. "Now all Athenians

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and the resident strangers had time* for nothing else than to tell or hear something new."

It is thus clear that the motive which prompted the philosophers to remove St. Paul to a different scene was more or less idle curiosity. We cannot well credit them with any very serious interest in the apostle's teaching, for this would be irreconcilable with their sarcastic manner. But still there was enough in St. Paul to arouse their curiosity. They may not have been disposed to take him very seriously, but they would at least recognise his sincerity in proclaiming his message. This, combined with the novelty of the teaching, may well have excited curiosity in men whose lives moved languidly in the ruts of their own dreary time-worn discussions. Whatever the teaching of the apostle might be it was something which would break the dull monotony and afford at least some entertainment.

Having thus determined the motives of the philosophers in changing the scene of their meeting with St. Paul, we now approach the question of the meaning of ἐπὶ τὸν Ἄρειον Πάγον ἡγάγον (v. 19). Formerly, it was usual to translate this "they led him on to Mars' Hill." Curtius was the first to condemn this interpretation and to maintain that the words refer to an appearance of the apostle before the Court of the Areopagus sitting in the Agora. It may easily be shown that the language admits of the rendering "they led him before the Council of the Areopagus." First of all, Curtius states that "from ancient times people were accustomed to use instead of the full title ἡ βουλὴ ἡ ἐξ Ἀρείου Πάγου the name of the place for the assembly which met there." This is the more to be emphasised, because it is a fact which has not been sufficiently recognised by expositors of the Acts. Even Professor Blass, in his recent philological edition, goes astray on this point; he makes the astonishing statement "non dicitur Ἄρειος Πάγος nisi de

* *ἡνκαίρουν* expresses the habitual practice of the populace at the time when the incident being described happened. The tense, however, does not necessarily imply that the habit has, at the time of writing, been abandoned. A somewhat similar use of the imperfect is found in John xi. 18, *ἦν δὲ Βηθανία ἐγγὺς τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων*, where a fact, true at the time of writing, is woven into the history of past time. That the tense does not here describe an act in progress at the time of the main incident is plain from the comprehensive nature of the statement. The action is predicated of all Athenians (*Ἀθηναῖοι δὲ πάντες*) and resident strangers; this is fatal to the idea of interpreting the passage as referring to a *corona adstantium*, who are supposed to have gathered to hear the apostle when they saw him being led along by the philosophers.

loco." But, in this, Blass is certainly wrong, for it is an easy matter to verify Curtius' assertion. In Aristotle *Ἀρειος Πάγος* is not uncommonly used instead of the more cumbrous title; it seems to have been the name given to the Council in ordinary talk among the people. And in Roman times, as we might expect, the usage is the same. In Cicero's Letters to Atticus, i. 14, 5, we find "*senatus Ἀρειος Πάγος nihil constantius, nihil severius, nihil fortius*"; in an inscription belonging to the second half of the 1st cent. A.D. found at Epidaurus, the words occur "*Ἀρειος Πάγος ἐν Ἐλευσείνι λόγους ἐποίησατο*" (Fouilles d'Epidaurus, vol. i. p. 68): and in Pollux viii. 117 and elsewhere we have instances of this usage.

But, secondly, Curtius draws attention to the fact that the preposition "*ἐπί*" with the accusative is the proper expression to denote a going or bringing before a public authority." In favour of this he adduces three passages from Herodotus (iii. 46; iii. 156; viii. 79). One might be disposed to question the satisfactoriness of this proof, but on examination one finds that the point is made good by evidence within the New Testament itself. In the Gospel of Luke and the Acts there are seven instances (beyond the one in dispute) of the use of *ἐπί* with the accusative to denote an appearance before persons in authority. (Luke xii. 58; xxi. 12; xxiii. 1; Acts ix. 21; xvi. 19; xvii. 6; xxv. 12.) This is a usage which, with one exception (Matt. x. 18), is confined in the New Testament to the writer of the Acts.

This being so, how are we to decide between the two possible interpretations? We get no help from v. 22, in which *Ἀρειος Πάγος* again occurs. It must, indeed, be admitted that the phrase *ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ Ἀρείου Πάγου* is free from all difficulty if we understand the words to refer to the Council, while it may be urged that "the middle of a hill" is not a very intelligible expression. Besides, the former interpretation is slightly favoured by the words in v. 33, *ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν*, in which it is possible to see a direct reference back to v. 22. But, in spite of this, the difficulties which arise if we suppose the passage to refer to the Council point to the opposing interpretation. It may readily be allowed that in general "the middle of a hill" is not a particularly appropriate expression, but in the case of the Areopagus there seems ground for holding that it is not inapplicable. From the old level of the Agora the hill rises scarcely more than 100 feet, and from the

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western side it slopes so gradually upwards until it becomes level at the top, that one would not be astonished to find that instead of ἡ κορυφή it was customary to speak of τὸ μέσον, the middle point of the hill.* But, if the possibility of this were denied we are, it seems to me, still in a position to interpret the passage in reference to the hill. There is ground for believing that Ἄρειος Πάγος from meaning the whole eminence came in general usage to be applied to the judgment-place on the summit of the hill. In this sense Ἄρειος Πάγος is to be translated in the phrases εἰς Ἄρειον Πάγον ἀναβῆναι, ἢ βουλὴν ἢ ἐν Ἀρείῳ Πάγῳ, where ἐπὶ would, in both cases, be used if the hill itself were meant. This being so, there can be no question as to the perfect appropriateness of the phrase ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ Ἀρείου Πάγου as denoting a position on the hill.

In seeking to arrive at the true solution of the difficulty, it may be well, first of all, to examine the case presented by Curtius on behalf of the appearance of the apostle before the Council of the Areopagus in the Agora. This view we find advanced first in the *Stadtgeschichte von Athen* (pp. 262, 263). Here Curtius regards the apostle as being led before the Council and charged with the introduction of new gods. But since the preliminary investigations (the προδικασία) in all cases falling under the jurisdiction of the Areopagus were carried out in the Stoa Basileios† in the Agora, it was plain that the scene of the apostle's speech was not Mars' Hill, but the King's Hall in the market-place. Curtius' words are the following: "Paul was led by those whom he had most exasperated towards the King's Hall, where the cases which fell to be decided by the Areopagus were commenced: it was the same place where, according to Plato, Socrates and Euthyphron met. Here,

* Standing on the spot I had it from the lips of a young Athenian philologist that this would be a perfectly possible expression.

† On this point Curtius differs from other authorities on the subject. He himself remarks: "the locality of the Προδικασία is nowhere stated. According to Schömann *Alterth.* I³ S. 496, and Philippi, *Areopag.* S. 85f, it took place on the Areopagus. In my opinion the sacred place of assembly was not suited for such judicial preliminary investigations" (Gesamm. Abhandl. II., 529, n). So far as I am aware, there is only one passage which lends support to Curtius' view. In Demosthenes in Aristog. 776, we are told that when the Areopagus sat in the King's Hall it was surrounded by a rope to keep off all intruders (τὴν ἐξ Ἀρείου Πάγου βουλὴν ὅταν ἐν τῇ βασιλείῳ στοᾷ καθιζομένη περιστοιχίζηται . . .). If we bear this fact in mind, and consider the tediousness of the preliminary investigations in the higher Athenian law-courts, it may be regarded as not improbable that the προδικασία, in cases falling to the Areopagus, was carried out in the King's Hall.

first of all, the question had to be decided whether there were grounds for a charge of introducing new gods, and here before the King's Hall, in the midst of the representatives of the Areopagus, within hearing of a great assembly of people, the apostle could deliver the speech, in which he repudiated the charge, because he was introducing no new god, but sought only to make known to them the 'Unknown God,' whose altar he had seen as he passed along among the monuments. . . . The Council did not sustain the charge, and Dionysius was undoubtedly the spokesman of those who brought about this decision."

There is one fatal objection to this interpretation. It is an altogether groundless assumption to suppose that judicial proceedings of any kind were instituted against the apostle.* There is no suggestion of this in the passage, the tone of which indeed directly contradicts it. Of any embittered feeling among the philosophers there is no trace; the new doctrine did not provoke to anger, but stimulated the natural passion to hear something strange and new. The philosophers' one desire, accordingly, was, not to have St. Paul's teaching put to the test before a judicial assembly, but to gratify the curiosity which had been excited in them. And in the speech which followed there is no apologetic note. It is not the utterance of a man placed on his defence, but of one whose single purpose was to persuade the people of the truth of his message. And the result was, not any formal acquittal, but scoffs and shallow professions of interest, in the midst of which the apostle was allowed to go his way unchecked.†

Curtius was not long in admitting the justice of this objection. In a special essay, which now appears in his "Gesammelte Abhandlungen," Bd. II., he rejects the idea of judicial proceedings. But his main result is the same; St. Paul delivered his speech not on Mars' Hill, but before the Areopagus in the Agora. The rejection of any definite charge brought against the apostle removes the one serious flaw of the

* This is an error which we find in Chrysostom and other Fathers. Chrysostom writes: "*ἦγον αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὸν Ἄρειον Πάγον, οὐχ ὥστε μαθεῖν, ἀλλ' ὥστε κολάσαι, ἐνθα αἱ φονικαὶ δίκαι.*"

† Οὕτως ὁ Παῦλος ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν. "So," *i.e.*, after having provoked mockery in some and a cold interest in others (*τοὺς μὲν πείσας, ὑπὸ δὲ τῶν γελῶμενος*, says Chrysostom), "Paul went out from their midst." There is no suggestion in these words of the apostle's being in any danger, and the idea of judicial proceedings, which must have ended either in a definite acceptance or rejection of the charge, is likewise excluded.

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earlier interpretation. The true tone of the passage is now caught, and justice done to the simple curiosity of the crowd as the key to the interpretation of the whole incident. In this new view of the case the whole question of the locality of the *προδικασία* in cases falling under the jurisdiction of the Areopagus becomes indifferent. All that Curtius had to do was to provide for the presence of the Areopagus in the public market; hence we have his statement, "It is certain that in Roman times the Areopagus had a business place in the Agora." Curtius gives no authority for this statement; still, as the administrative duties of the Council in Roman times were very varied, it must be allowed that he has not gone beyond what he is entitled to assume. An administrative body without offices would of course be an absurdity. We may take it, therefore, as tolerably certain, that if the apostle was brought before the Areopagus, he was led towards the King's Hall.

Curtius' new interpretation, though free from the serious objection that proved fatal to his first, cannot be regarded as satisfactory. He states his view in the following words: "To satisfy their curiosity the philosophers arranged for a longer statement on Paul's part, and sought to give the forthcoming speech a higher importance by getting the authorities of the city to take an interest in it." (Gesamm. Abhandl., II. 528.) This is a conception which, I venture to think, is well-nigh unintelligible. For, first of all, how are we to conceive of the part played by the Council? Had there been any suggestion of a hostile feeling among the philosophers towards St. Paul, or of any charge brought by them against him, the picture as drawn by Curtius would have been quite natural, and we could have frankly accepted the appearance of the apostle before the Areopagus; but in the absence of all evidence of any charge or even of any hostility, such an appearance seems perfectly unintelligible. Or are we to assume that the supreme court of Athens was willing to allow any gathering of citizens to bring before it any person they pleased, against whom they brought no charge, merely (as Curtius says) "to give especial emphasis to their curiosity," or "to secure thereby a higher importance for the forthcoming speech"? This is an assumption which is hardly consistent with the character of any court of justice, and still less so with the character of such a court as the Areopagus. In any case, in the absence of all positive evidence, we are not justified in assuming such a possi-

bility. But surely a liberty of this kind would have been an infringement of the dignity of an assembly such as the Areopagus was. For a court, with which lay, even in Roman times, as Cicero informs us, practically the administration of the whole city,* was not likely to suffer the intrusion of a crowd, whose only aim was the gratification of a more or less idle curiosity.

But again, if we consider Curtius' interpretation, having regard to the feelings of the philosophers, we fail to be satisfied with it. For the feeling, which was uppermost in the minds of the philosophers was, as Curtius admits, the desire to satisfy their curiosity. This being so, was it natural for them to hurry the object of their curiosity into the midst of a grave and dignified assembly? How could this possibly forward the aim which they had in view? Their one object in leading the apostle from their first place of meeting was to gratify their craving for something new, and what reason can be suggested to show that the Council of the Areopagus would be helpful in effecting this object? It would indeed have been strange had the philosophers ever thought of leading St. Paul before the Council. For they hardly took the apostle seriously; the whole business was too trivial to call for the participation of the Areopagus in it.

These grounds seem sufficient to warrant serious doubt as to the truth of Curtius' interpretation and to point favourably towards the opposing view, which represents the philosophers as leading the apostle on to Mars' Hill that they might the more peaceably listen to his teaching. Nor is the impression in favour of this view lessened by Curtius' criticism of it. His words are these, "*ἤγαγον ἐπὶ τὸν Ἄρειον Πάγον*—that cannot mean, they led him to a rocky hill lying at some distance from the market; for the market always remained the scene of the incident, and the market crowd remained always the same; up on the bare summit of the rock, too, no one was to be found"; and again "(the philosophers) had no reason for leading Paul from the market hall away to the windy rocky height, which was the most unsuitable place imaginable for assemblies and speeches. The Agora,

* "*Atheniensium rempublicam consilio regi Arcopagi*" (*De nat. deor.* 2, 29, 74). Philippi regards this as a highly exaggerated statement, but in any case there can be no doubt that the Areopagus was, in Roman times, the most powerful and dignified court in Athens. It retained its dignity even after the devastation of Athens by Sulla.

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on the other hand, where the philosophers, day after day, carried on their discussions, was well suited for speaking and hearing."

Let us examine these objections one by one. (1) Curtius objects that, considering the suitability of the Agora for speaking and hearing, there was no need to lead the apostle away to a hill which lay at some little distance. The question of distance is too trifling to be meant very seriously. Even supposing that the apostle had been standing in the part of the Agora most remote from the hill, the distance to be traversed would not be more than two hundred yards—an insignificant distance, surely, to deter any one whose ends would be better served by a change of scene. But the chief weight of Curtius' argument rather lies in the attempt to prove that no change of scene was necessary. Now whether the Agora was so perfectly suited, as Curtius asserts, for the apostle's exposition of his teaching may well be doubted. It is true that it was a common practice for the philosophers to ply their dialectic in argument in the busy market-place, but this in no way proves its suitability as a scene for such a speech as the philosophers desired of St. Paul. It is one thing for a knot of men to engage in a dialectic discussion, in which the excitement and the careful observance of the movements of one's opponent make one oblivious of all extraneous interruptions; but it is quite another thing to listen to an orderly speech when all around there is continual movement and the din of other voices. This being so, it was, to say the least of it, as natural that the philosophers should retire to some place where they would be able peaceably to enjoy their new discovery, as that they should remain in the Agora where they were liable to interruption from the continual coming and going of passers-by. In any case there is no justification whatever for the statement which Curtius makes, that "the market always remained the scene of incident." For what meaning can the words *ἡγορον ἐπὶ τὸν Ἀρειον Πάγον* have if they do not refer to some change of scene, the precise direction of which must be determined otherwise than by the bare assertion that it took place within the limits of the Agora? There is, therefore, no valid ground of objection here against interpreting the passage as denoting a change of scene from the Agora to Mars' Hill.

But (2) Curtius seeks to strengthen his case against laying the scene of the apostle's speech on the Areopagus by the observation:—

"Up on the bare rocky summit there was no one to be found." The force of this objection it is hard to see. If we consider that the very reason which would prompt the philosophers to lead St. Paul from the market-place was the presence of a disturbing crowd it is at once apparent that this objection of Curtius tells in favour of the interpretation which he is condemning. It was just because there was no one on the rocky hill that made it a place suitable to the requirements of the case; for there without any risk of interruption the philosophers could listen to the story of the new religion.

And (3) Curtius founds an objection on the natural features of the hill. "The windy, rocky height," he says, "was the most unsuitable place imaginable for assemblies and speeches." Against this it may be urged that it is inadmissible to support any theory by conjectural atmospheric conditions; for up on the rocky hill it is not always windy, as Curtius would seem to imply. But it may fairly be argued that if the hill could serve as a meeting place for the Council of the Areopagus it could equally well be used for the same purpose by the philosophers and St. Paul. For a large public assembly doubtless the top of the Areopagus was no fit place; but we are told nothing as to the size of the crowd, and, indeed, are entitled to assume that the number of listeners was not very great. For this meeting was more or less a kind of private reception given to the apostle by a few philosophers eager to enjoy the latest novelty.

From this review of Curtius' position and of the arguments by which it is supported, it will at once be apparent that there is ground for very serious doubt as to its claims for acceptance. The picture of the general situation which the theory presents is one which we can only with difficulty imagine; for whether we view the appearance of St. Paul before the Areopagus from the standpoint of the Council itself or from that of the philosophers we equally fail in conceiving its probability. But not only has Curtius given us a theory which is doubtful in itself, he has also failed in making good any objection against the theory which he opposes. It remains, therefore, to show in a word that the picture which results from the acceptance of the opposing interpretation is at once natural and consistent.

The teaching of St. Paul, as we have seen, awakened in the philosophers lively feelings of curiosity. Though they looked with

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supercilious pride on the man who, with little grace of person or of words, ventured to invade their popularly recognised rights as teachers of the people, they could not help feeling a certain amount of curious interest in one whose strange words were commended by the tone of conviction in which they were uttered. Altogether the apostle was a curious phenomenon in Athens. Here was a chance which the philosophers could not miss. They must get more out of the man. If they never dreamed of getting new light on the problems of philosophy they counted on an hour's relief from the daily monotony. But the market with its continual unrest was no place for such an entertainment as they had in prospect. They must seek out some quiet nook where they could enjoy themselves in peace. The Areopagus was near at hand with not a soul on it to disturb them. So "they took the apostle by the hand (ἐπιλαβόμενοι αὐτοῦ) and led him on to the Areopagus." Here on the level space that crowned the hill the apostle took his stand and sought, by appealing to the fundamental religious truths which lay latent in the hearts of his hearers, to win their sympathy and turn them to the living God.

In this, it appears to me, we have an interpretation which does justice to the language of the whole passage and is free from all serious difficulty. It is preferable to that adopted by Curtius because it gives us a picture more easily intelligible and more in accordance with the simple probabilities of the case.