
A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

With one exception the names of the persons in our Lord's parables are unknown. The exception is the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. The names are not given in the other parables because they are parables. But why is this exception? Lazarus means 'whom God helps,' and it has been suggested that the name is but symbolical. It is a delicate suggestion that the 'helpless' among men is the 'helped' of God.

The rich man has no name. It is true that in the West the parable is usually known as the Parable of Dives and Lazarus, but Dives we know is merely the Latin word—the word used in the Vulgate—for a rich man. Is there no record then of the rich man's name? If the parable is as the rest, and the name Lazarus merely symbolical, there can be no reliable record. But Tertullian holds that this is more than a parable, that it is a narrative of actual history. If that be so, the rich man's name might have been known as well as the name of the beggar.

In the *Expositor* for March, Professor Rendel Harris sets out to discover the rich man's name. There is a tradition that the name was Nineues. On this name Harnack has written a learned note in his *Texte und Untersuchungen* (XIII. i. 75). Harnack believes that Nineues is a corruption of Phinees, which actually survives (in the form Finaeus) in the pseudo-Cyprian tract on the Passover. Now Finaeus in Latin or Phinees in Greek is of course Phinehas in Hebrew. Again, Lazarus in Greek is Eleazar in Hebrew. And in Nu 25^{7} Phinehas is said to be the son of Eleazar. Whereupon Harnack comes to the conclusion that the name Phinehas was given to the rich man to suggest that the beggar named Eleazar who lay at his gate was none other than his own father.

Professor Rendel Harris does not altogether agree. He suggests a corruption of *Dives* itself instead. But he says that Harnack's suggestion is ingenious and 'almost convincing.'

In a recent issue of *The Sunday School Times* of America there is an article on 'Needless worry about being *born again*.' *The Sunday School Times* has been described as the best edited paper in America. The Editor is Dr. Clay Trumbull. This article is from the hand of the Editor.

'It is because the Editor himself groped and agonized for long years in the Christian life, through being mistaught by those who knew no better, that he sounds a note of warning.' He was mistaught that it is the duty of every person

to be born again. 'Ye must be born again.' He heard it as a command. The emphasis usually laid on the *must* made it a commandment with threatening. So he groped and agonized. Then came the revelation that he was commanded to do no such thing. He was commanded to turn unto God. He could not 'born himself,' as he puts it, and could not be commanded to do that. He was taught at last that Conversion is one thing and Regeneration another.

Dr. Trumbull does not put it that way, but that is clearly what he means. Dr. John Robson puts it that way in his suggestive little book with the title of *The Holy Spirit, the Paraclete*. There are two facts, says Dr. Robson, of which the one is God's and the other man's. We may dispute which fact comes first. Dr. Robson believes it is God's that comes first. He says quite plainly that Conversion is the result of Regeneration. The order is a matter of speculation rather than of practice. The important matter is that Regeneration and Conversion are distinct.

We cannot 'born ourselves,' but we can turn. Our forefathers used to say we can convert. For they could use that verb intransitively as we cannot. So, as we cannot use convert intransitively, and as it is misleading to speak of 'being converted,' the Revisers have used the verb to turn. 'Except ye turn and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.' And when the verb to turn is used consistently, then it is seen that the Bible makes Regeneration the act of God, Conversion the act of man.

Now this distinction between Regeneration and Conversion has consequences. In the first place, it saves us from thinking that everyone must be converted. Born again everyone must certainly be, but not converted. Jesus took a little child, and set him in the midst of the disciples, and said, 'Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.' So the disciples had to turn, but not the little child. The disciples had to turn because they had gone wrong. But the little child had not had time to go wrong. Born again, the children all must be. But being born again in infancy or in very tender years, as surely some of them may be, it is possible that they will never go wrong and never need to turn. And it is matter of every-day experience with us to find this saint of God and that who 'never knew the time when they did not love the Lord Jesus Christ.'

And another consequence is that a man may turn more than once, though it is impossible that he can be twice born again. The classical case is St. Peter: 'Simon, Simon, behold Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat; but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not: and do thou, when once thou hast turned again, stablish thy brethren.' The rendering of the Revised Version lightens the pressure a little. But how often have men puzzled themselves and mistaught others respecting Simon Peter's second conversion, taking that to mean his second regeneration! No doubt St. Peter was born again at this time; and no doubt he had turned to serve the living and true God. But he was about to go wrong, and he must be turned back again. 'When thou hast turned again, stablish thy brethren,' that neither thou nor they may see the humiliation of again going astray and again needing to return.

'To the Angel of the Church in Ephesus.' Such was the direction on the letter which left 'the isle that is called Patmos' some time in the end of the first century. In the end of the nineteenth we are proud of our postal service. We may address our letters almost as we please, and they reach their destination. But who would receive a letter addressed to the Angel of the Church in London?

The Archbishop of Canterbury, some would say. But there were no archbishops in Ephesus

when that letter reached its destination. There were no archbishops in any of the other six Churches of Asia to which it was to be successively sent. Perhaps the Bishop of London would receive it, and with that most persons would perhaps be content. For the generally accepted theory is that the Angel of the Church in Ephesus was its Overseer, its Bishop, or, as we now say, its Minister.

But some would certainly not approve. For in the New Testament the word 'angel' is only twice used of any man, and then (Lk 9^{52}, Ja 2^{25}) it is used in the primary etymological sense of 'messenger.' So they would say that the letter had not reached its destination until it had found the throne of God and one of the angels that serve Him day and night—the angel whose special care was that little community of Christians in Ephesus.

It would then be easy for the Angel of the Church in Ephesus to pass the letter to the Angel of the Church in Smyrna. But how would the Churches profit? For clearly the letter is ultimately meant for them. So others hold that it is the Church itself that is to receive the letter, the 'angel' being only its ideal representative. And Professor Gwatkin, our greatest authority, who writes on the subject in the *Dictionary of the Bible*, believes that beyond that we cannot safely go.

But others are not satisfied. If a letter is addressed, it must be addressed to someone, and someone must receive it. The ideal of the Church is a fine idea, but it cannot take in a letter. The latest writer on this matter, Mr. Vernon Bartlet, of Oxford, whose *Apostolic Age*, in that useful series the 'Eras of the Christian Church,' has just been published, feels that he must find someone to take the letter in, and he finds the angel in the 'Reader.' The Reader has already been mentioned. His office is an honourable one. He has been chosen by the Church to fill it. He stands out from the rest of the congregation. He is their representative, perhaps, to other Churches also — their *messenger*, their 'church-deputy.' His office is an honourable one, even if he is no interpreter. For the reader has it in his power to make a letter impudent or impressive. So the sender of this letter recognizes the Reader, blesses him in his opening sentence (Rev 1^{3}), and sends the letter direct to him.

Where is the Reader now? Is he covered by the occasional and indescribable 'Reader of the Lessons' in our Churches? The Reader of the Lessons is no representative. He does not carry the instructions of Bishop or Prophet from one Church to another. He is not the Messenger or Angel of any Church, and cannot receive its letters. If the Angel was the Reader, we have no Angels in our Churches now.

And he is not the only officer we have lost. In the *Biblical World* for March there is an editorial lament for the loss of the Teacher also. Some of the officers we have. The Apostle is with us still, though we call him Missionary now; so is the Prophet, though we call him Preacher; and the Pastor and the Evangelist. No doubt there are marvellous men who unite the most of these offices in themselves—Apostle (at home, at least), Prophet, Pastor, Teacher, Evangelist, all in one—and some marvellous Churches that are content with that. But when the offices are separated it is nearly always seen that the Teacher drops out of existence.

The editors of the *Biblical World* lament that. No doubt there are Teachers in our Sunday schools, and a Superintendent over them. But it is a Teacher of these Teachers that is wanted—a Teacher who is trained for his work, as the Apostle and the Prophet (and even the Evangelist now) is trained. There is room for the Teacher; there is the greatest need for him. His work would be to teach the adults of the Church in a

service specially devoted to this, to teach 'the young people in connexion with the Society of Christian Endeavour or other like organization,' and to teach the teachers of the Sunday school, giving them instruction both in the Bible itself and in the principles and methods of teaching.

And then his work would scarcely be begun. He must 'aim at the conversion of the Sunday school into a genuine educational institution, organized and conducted on sound educational principles.' To that end he must first construct a course of study, based upon intelligent conceptions of the Bible, and broad knowledge of it, as well as upon sound pedagogical principles. He must select his teachers, giving them one, two, three years' work on this curriculum, as they need it. Then when they are fit for it he must find them their work to do, and they will do it.

He must find them their work, and they will do it. We know they will. But he must find his teachers first. And the editors in the *Biblical World* have not been able to tell us how he is to do that.

Long ago Englishmen (and especially Scotsmen) called the poet a *maker*. Longer ago the Greeks called him the same. Whether it was 'by lucke or wisedome' that the two nations struck out the same expression we know as little yet as Sir Philip Sidney knew. It is one of the things we shall know when the proper volume of Dr. Murray's Dictionary has been published.

In the Greek tongue, then, the *poētēs* is one that makes anything, and then one that makes poetry, a poet; and *poiēma* is first anything made and then specifically a poem. We have taken these words over into English; but we have taken them only in the special sense of poet and poem. So when we come upon the word *poiēma* in Greek we have to consider whether it means simply something made, or that particular kind of 'something accomplished, something done,' which our fathers called a *making* and we call a *poem*.

We come upon the word *poiēma* in Eph 2^{10}. Wyclif translated it 'making,' and in Wyclif's day 'making' might have meant poem. It did not mean poem, however, to him, for he followed the Vulgate Latin *factura*, which never means poem. Tindale translated it 'workmanship,' and Tindale has been followed by all the English Versions (except the Roman Catholic, which has 'work') down even to the Revised of 1881. There is nowhere even a marginal reading to say that 'poem' is possible.

And yet the latest commentator on Ephesians says that 'poem' is not only possible but preferable. The latest commentator on Ephesians is the Rev. Herbert G. Miller, M.A. His Commentary has been published by Messrs. Skeffington. It works on a critical text,—apparently the text of the Revisers,—but it is not a critical commentary. Rather it ought to be described as an exegetical and poetical commentary. For Mr. Miller remembers that the words of the Epistle to the Ephesians are stones in a building. He recognizes the building as well as the stones. He examines the details and finds them finished, as the details of an English church. He also finds the effect as pleasing as the general effect of a church in France. And withal, he is a scholar. Mr. Miller believes that we should translate Eph 2^{10}, not 'we are His workmanship,' but 'we are His poem.'

He does not deny that 'workmanship' expresses with admirable force and precision the primary literal meaning of *poiēma*. But to the ear of a Greek *poiēma* sounded poem as well as workmanship. It is probable that he could not use the word without thinking of the work or workmanship as 'fitly framed together'—in some sense, if not the narrowest, a *poem*. Mr. Miller therefore believes that at the very least 'poem' should have been placed in the margin of our Versions, in order that the whole range of the word might be suggested to the English reader. He believes that if he had been the company of Revisers he would have put 'poem' into the text.

For a poem is something made by words, and we are made by the Word of the living God. 'Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth,' says James. Moreover, it is a work of words that has a rhythmical flow, and follows the laws of harmony. So should the life of God's redeemed be. So it is His purpose that it shall be. They sing, as it were, a new song before the throne. They do not sing what they are not. They are, as it were, a new song. And even in this life they stand by God's grace in sharp antithesis to those who are drunk with wine wherein is excess; they are filled with the Spirit, and speak to themselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their heart to the Lord.

There is another place in the New Testament in which *poiēma* is used. It is Ro 1^{20}. And there, it is true, *poiēma* means God's work in nature. Our Versions render 'the things that are made.' But the same writer may use the same word now with the primary and with the secondary meaning predominant in his mind. And besides, God's work in nature was made by Him harmonious as a poem. To His eye it is a poem still; and, in spite of man's marring, He can still say 'very good.' Especially so was man himself. As St. Chrysostom finely says, 'When man was made out of the dust of the earth, in his bodily form he was like a beautiful musical instrument, as yet silent; but the breath of God came forth, and stirred the strings, and all was harmony and gladness.' Man marred that harmony.

> Disproportioned sin
> Jarred against Nature's chime, and with harsh din
> Brake the fair music that all creatures made
> To their great Lord, whose love their motion swayed.

And now it is the very purpose of the new making to restore the ancient harmony. Once again man is a poem, God's poem, created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works.

In an earlier letter (2 Co 3^3) St. Paul called the redeemed an epistle—'an epistle of Christ.' It is a searching epithet. To be known and read of all men! He calls them now a poem. The word of warning is gone. They may still be known and read, but now in the reading men will find beauty, sweetness, grace. 'In your concord and harmonious love,' writes Ignatius to these same Ephesians, 'Jesus Christ is sung.'

Thomas Boston of Ettrick.

By the Rev. George Mackenzie, M.A., B.D., Minister of the Parish of Ettrick.

The well-informed and sympathetic sketch of Thomas Boston in a recent issue of The Expository Times is one more proof that the greater Ettrick Shepherd is coming to his rights again. Only it is with a difference. Our grandfathers were concerned to know his works: we are more concerned to know the man. No trumpet will ever call his treatises and sermons to resurrection. But the marvel of his life grips a larger audience every day. Indeed, it is no unlikely thing that some of the laurels surrendered by the *Fourfold State* may be won again by the *Memoirs*. And it is the greater book of the two.

It is no part of my purpose to say a second time what Mr. Low has said already. Two biographies or appreciations of even such a man as Boston would be more, perhaps, than the hungriest reader of this magazine could have any appetite for, at least with only one month's fast coming in between. My humbler aim is merely to fill up a few chinks in the Ettrick period of Boston's ministry. Not that these additions matter very much in themselves. Still they are *new*, and not without interest to those who like to loiter in the byways of a strenuous career.

But a 'foreword' about Boston's name. Mr. Low quotes from certain Edinburgh University Registers two instances in which it appears as