

slave in a Greek city did not acquire the citizenship, even though his master were a citizen.<sup>1</sup> He and his children and descendants remained always outside the citizenship, as one of a special class of resident non-citizens.

Probably we shall after a short time find that those who at present attempt to prove Paul's poverty by the supposition that his father was only a freedman will soon turn round and begin to argue that Paul was poor because he belonged to one of those impoverished old Roman families, whom the satirists of that period contrast with the rich freedmen's children!

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## CYRUS, THE LORD'S ANOINTED.

### I.

#### HIS WIDER MISSION.

FEW things are more impressive, even in sacred literature, than the gradual unfolding in prophecy both of the wrath and of the lovingkindness of Jehovah. At first the doom or the salvation of Israel is described with vague grandeur in imagery borrowed from the phenomena of nature. The day of the Lord is "a day of clouds and thick darkness, as the dawn spread upon the mountains" (Joel ii. 2; comp. Zeph. i. 15, Amos v. 20). The restoration is prefigured by the similitude of the desert rejoicing and blossoming as the rose (Isa. xxxv. 1), or as light shining in darkness (Isa. ix. 2; comp. Zech. xiv. 6). Gradually the picture grows clearer and the prophet's eye discovers the wrath and forgiveness of God taking definite effect in the conquest and captivity

<sup>1</sup> An expression in footnote 4, pp. 82, 83, of Prof. Mommsen's paper above quoted might easily be misunderstood as implying the contrary. But in writing to him I mentioned this point, and am able to state on his authority that it would be a misunderstanding of his intention. It is only by accident that a sentence intended as a disclaimer is capable of being misunderstood in that way.

and the ultimate return of a people. (Comp. Zeph. i. 7 ff. with iii. 14 ff., Amos ii. 6 ff. with ix. 11 ff., Micah iii. 12 with iv. 1.) At length the nation's sins have come to a head, or the days of purification are accomplished. The time is at hand, and the prophet no longer speaks in ambiguous terms. The very instrument of vengeance or of salvation is named, and the advance of a Nebuchadrezzar or of a Cyrus is described in unmistakable language.

Very remarkable too is the distinct teaching of the prophets in regard to the meaning of history and the instrumental use of great conquerors: "I will raise up against you a nation, O house of Israel, saith the Lord the God of hosts; and they shall afflict you from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of the wilderness" (Amos vi. 2). In this light Nebuchadrezzar is "the servant" of the Lord (Jer. xxv. 11). Even though the cruelty and oppression of the Chaldean monarch passed all bounds of humanity, "making men as the fishes of the sea and as the creeping things that have no ruler over them," still the prophet concludes, "O Lord, Thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, Thou hast established them for correction" (Hab. i. 12, 14).

But the time came at length when Israel had "received double for all her sins" (Isa, xl. 2) and retribution reached the proud city which had misused its power, and, "as Babylon hath caused the slain of Israel to fall, so at Babylon shall fall the slain of all the land"<sup>1</sup> (Jer. li. 49).

It was this crisis of national history which called forth the most exultant notes of Hebrew prophecy. The deliverance from a long and cruel oppression was at hand, and no word of psalmist or prophet could adequately express the joy of the ransomed people: "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion we were like unto them that dream.

<sup>1</sup> For an eloquent exposition of this principle in the case of the Assyrian oppression see Isaiah x. 5-19.

Then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with singing" (Ps. cxxvi. 1, 2).

There was, however, even then one element of bitterness to some of the proud captive race in the thought that the instrument of Jehovah in this deliverance should be the prince of an alien people. It was to these critics of the Divine righteousness that the Prophet of the Exile administers the rebuke, which in its deep and eternal significance far transcends its immediate use: "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! a potsherd among the potsherds of the earth! Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?" (Isa. xlvii. 9). See the application of this great principle in Romans ix. 20 foll. For the rest, the later prophecies in the book of Isaiah (and to these should be added the earlier chapters xiii. and xiv.) glow with the picture of the deliverance under Cyrus. To no hero of Israel even had a more glorious task been assigned; no one was so conspicuously to carry out the work of Jehovah, "though he knew it not," as Cyrus or Koresh, the Aryan king of Anzan. The armies of Cyrus are "the consecrated ones" of Jehovah, who Himself "mustereth the host for the battle from a far country." They are "the weapons of Divine indignation," and that the prophesied horrors of the siege of Babylon did not actually take effect was alone due to the humane character of the conqueror (Isa. xiii. 3-5, 15-18; comp. with citations from Chaldean tablets *infra*).

Again, the sublime message of the herald on the mountains of Sion, which we have almost ceased to associate with any other than the Lord Christ Himself, was in the first instance the gospel or *evangelium* of the deliverance by Cyrus: ἐπ' ὄρος ὑψηλὸν ἀνάβηθι ὁ εὐαγγελιζόμενος Σίῳν κ.τ.λ. (Isa. xl. 9 f.).

The mission of Cyrus is twofold, and the typical character of each mission is infinitely deepened and enriched by the

titles bestowed upon him and the consecration of his work by Jehovah Himself. The first and immediate mission was the restoration of the Jews from Babylon. "I am the Lord . . . that saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying of Jerusalem, She shall be built, and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid" (Isa. xlv. 28).

But while we recognize the fact that the chief motive which inspires the great prophet of the Return in these sublime chapters is to celebrate the work of "the shepherd of the Lord" in the restoration of the exiled Jews to the land of their fathers, and to point out the momentous character of that outwardly insignificant event in the Divine ordering of history, this ought not to blind us to that other fact, that a wider mission and a loftier title are assigned to Cyrus by the inspired writer. The mission of "the Lord's anointed," the Christ or Messiah of Jehovah, for widespread dominion had a far more extended effect on the civilization and the religion of the future than the return of the Jews from Babylon.

The foundation of the first Aryan Empire by Cyrus was one of the few great determining events in the history of the world, and one which in its remoter effects proved to be a necessary condition for the growth of the kingdom of Christ.

Speaking of this wider mission (Isa. xlv. 1-7), the prophet describes the advance of the great conqueror in words of inspired enthusiasm. Cyrus is the Christ or Messiah, whose right hand Jehovah holds, to subdue nations before him, to go before him and make the rugged places plain, to break in pieces the doors of brass and cut in sunder the bars of iron; to give him the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places. So that where Cyrus is most closely typical of the greater Christ to come he is represented as the irresistible conqueror and the founder of an empire

which should, in some mysterious and unrevealed sense extending far beyond the deliverance of Judah, be for the sake of "Jacob the servant of Jehovah and Israel his chosen." What is most interesting for us to note here is not only the remarkable accuracy of the description in the swiftness of the advance of Cyrus and the ease with which his conquests were achieved, but also the recognition of a Divine guidance and ministry, so to speak, in his career, which are also traceable in the conception of Cyrus formed by the Greek and Chaldean historians. For the character, acts, and conquests of this great man form in a remarkable way the meeting point and common ground of three literatures.

The object of this paper, then, is to illustrate from Greek and Chaldean sources the larger mission of the Gentile king, whom the Hebrew prophet does not hesitate to designate as the Christ of Jehovah, to note the consensus with which, from different points of view, his mission is recognized as divinely inspired, and to point out how profoundly the singular beauty of his character and the gentleness of his policy impressed every nationality with which he came in contact.

The acts and events by which the first mission of Cyrus was accomplished are narrated at length in the later historical books of the Bible. For the details of the fulfilment of the larger mission we must have recourse to external records.

To these sources also we must go for a true conception of the character and disposition of Cyrus. For so entirely is the prophetic view concentrated on his work as the agent and instrument of Jehovah, that we are unable to gather from the Book of Isaiah or elsewhere in the Bible any direct evidence as to his individual character. One expression, indeed, has been thought to ascribe righteousness to Cyrus. In Isaiah xli. 2 the phrase occurs, "whom he calleth in righteousness to his foot." But righteousness must here

be regarded as the righteous purpose of Jehovah, and the expression would signify the appointment of Cyrus to carry out that Divine purpose by his achievements. And even if the reading in the margin of R.V., "whom righteousness calleth to its foot," and Cheyne's rendering, "whom righteousness calleth to follow him," be accepted, it is best both here and in the parallel passages (xlii. 6 and xlv. 13) to regard righteousness as equivalent to the purpose of Jehovah, and not as a quality attributed to Cyrus.

On the other hand, knowing as we do from other sources what the character of Cyrus really was, and how widely it was recognized, we find it difficult to believe that the Hebrew prophet was ignorant of a disposition which made this great conqueror worthy to bear the lofty titles bestowed upon him by Jehovah. If this view be correct, the titles and attributes by which Cyrus is addressed as "the shepherd of the Lord," "the servant of the Lord," "one raised up in righteousness," or "called in righteousness," "the man of Jehovah's counsel," and, above all, "the anointed of the Lord," must connote far more than agency or instrumentality. They are ascribed to one, the nobility and excellency of whose character are known to the inspired writer.

Another question of great interest has been raised in regard to an expression in those chapters. In Isaiah xli. 25 we read, "I have raised up one from the north, and he is come; from the rising of the sun one that calleth on my name."<sup>1</sup> Compare with this 2 Chronicles xxxvi. 25 and the parallel Ezra i. 2. Dr. Cheyne says: "It is evidently a prediction of a spiritual change to be wrought in Cyrus in consequence of his wonderful career—his conversion to the belief that Jehovah was the author of his success, the only true God." Dr. Skinner (*Cambridge Bible for Schools*) also says: "The expression can hardly mean less than that

<sup>1</sup> Cyrus is raised from the north as king of Media, which he had conquered; from the east as king of Anzan, a district of Elam, his original kingdom.

Cyrus shall acknowledge Jehovah as God. . . . It is true that in Ch. xlv. 4f. it is said that Cyrus had not known Jehovah, but it is also said (v. 3) that the effect of his remarkable successes will be 'that thou mayest know that I am Jehovah that calleth thee by thy name, even the God of Israel.' There is, therefore, no difficulty in the idea that Cyrus, who was at first the unconscious instrument of Jehovah's purpose, shall at length recognize that Jehovah was the true author of his success." On the other hand, Prof. G. A. Smith writes (vol. ii. p. 131): "Taken in apposition with the phrase, *he is come*, '*calleth on my name*' may mean no more than that, answering to the instigation of Jehovah, and owning his impulse, Cyrus by his career proclaimed or celebrated Jehovah's name." The interpretation favoured by Cheyne and Skinner, which rests on the supposition that Cyrus was a monotheist, has, says Prof. Smith, "received a shock from the discovery of a proclamation of Cyrus after his entry into Babylon in which he invokes the names of Babylonian deities and calls himself 'their servant.'"

We shall refer to this proclamation again. Here it will suffice to say that the proclamations of Cyrus both at Babylon and in regard to Jerusalem are those of a wise and lenient conqueror who made it part of his policy to recognize the gods of a conquered country and to place himself under their protection. To imply a conversion of Cyrus either to Chaldean polytheism or to the Jehovah worship of the Jews would be to press unduly the words of either proclamation. At the same time to Cyrus, as a Persian and a monotheist, the religion of the Jews would have an attraction which the Babylonian cult could not possibly possess. And if the story be accepted, and there is no reason to doubt its truth, that this very prophecy which we are considering was shown to Cyrus,<sup>1</sup> the effect of it would certainly be great,

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Ant.* xi. 1, 2.

and sufficient to induce a very genuine acknowledgement of the power of Jehovah, which might seem not altogether irreconcilable with his former religious belief.

But what was that belief? According to Herodotus the religion of the Persians consisted in a worship of the elements, "the sun and moon, the earth, fire, water, and the winds" (i. 131). "There is no trace of dualism, not even any mention of Ormuzd. Conversely, in the inscriptions there is nothing elemental; but the worship of one supreme God under the name of Ormuzd, with perhaps an occasional mention of an evil principle" (*Rawlinson's Herodotus*, vol. i., Essay v.). These two systems of religion are quite distinct. The elemental worship described by Herodotus is not Persian or Aryan at all, but Magian, the religion of the Scythian tribes widely scattered over western Asia. This system was adopted by the Medes and became a source of corruption to the purer Zoroastrian dualism, the religion of Cyrus, and of the Persians from a remote antiquity.

There is, as we have seen, no detailed sketch of the career or of the character of Cyrus to be found in the Bible, though there is good reason for the belief that both were perfectly well known to the Hebrew prophets as they were to the Chaldean priests and to the Greek historians.

There are still several points of obscurity in his history to be cleared up, but the following brief outline of events will help to explain the hopes expressed for the future of Israel through the instrumentality of Cyrus.

In the year 555 B.C. the peace of the world appeared to be secured by the strong triple alliance of Crœsus, Nabonidus (Nabû-nâ-id) and Amasis, ruling over the three powerful empires of Lydia, Chaldea and Egypt. This alliance was strengthened by the ties of relationship between Crœsus and Astyages,<sup>1</sup> king, not of the Medes, as the Greek historians

<sup>1</sup> The historian Ctesias, however, denies the relationship. See Grote's *History of Greece*, iv. 248.



assert, but of the Manda or nomad Scythian tribes, whose capital was Ecbatana.<sup>1</sup>

Suddenly danger arose from an unexpected quarter. Cyrus, or Koresh, a young prince of Persian descent belonging to the royal tribe of the Achæmenidæ, ruler of Anzan, a province of Elam—probably the level plain as opposed to the more mountainous district—gathered round him a body of Persian soldiers, whom he trained to a perfect state of discipline, and inspired with the ambition of conquest. The first blow was struck at Ecbatana and the Manda, whose king Astyages (Astuvigu of the monuments) had made himself unpopular by the severity of his rule. A disaffected party within the kingdom invited the assistance of Cyrus, which seems to be the substratum of truth in the romantic legend of Herodotus, and Cyrus laid the foundation of his power by the defeat of Astyages. The next step in the progress of the youthful conqueror was the accession of Media to his rule. The circumstances in which this conquest or acquisition was achieved are unknown. But it is clear that the peace or alliance was concluded on terms honourable to the Medes, as the latter take precedence of the Persians in historical narrative, and the Meder rather than the Persian was the name by which this formidable power became known to the Greek.<sup>2</sup>

The conquest of Lydia<sup>3</sup> (554 B.C.) which followed was achieved by one of those swift strokes of generalship which characterize great military genius. The Lydian and Persian armies fought a bloody and indecisive battle on the plains of Pteria. Cræsus retired to Sardis intending to summon his allies and renew the contest in the spring, when Cyrus unexpectedly pursued, crossed the Halys and

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Sayce, art. "Cyrus" in Hastings' *Dict. of the Bible*. A different view is taken by Profs. C. P. Tiele and W. H. Kusters in their art. on Cyrus in the *Encycl. Biblica*.

<sup>2</sup> In the LXX. of 2 Chron. xxxvi. 20 the "kingdom of the Persians" appears as βασιλείας Μήδων.

<sup>3</sup> Rawlinson's *Herodotus*, i. 77, note 2.

invaded Lydia. Sardis was captured by a stratagem, and its immense wealth, "the treasures of darkness and the hidden riches of secret places," fell into the hands of the conqueror.

In 538 B.C. Babylon shared the fate of Sardis. Nabonidus, claiming descent from an ancient Babylonian dynasty, usurped the throne vacant by the death of Nebuchadrezzar (c. 555 B.C.). The defeat of the Manda by Cyrus is mentioned in the monuments as averting an invasion of Babylon.<sup>1</sup> But the youthful Persian monarch who had repelled this danger proved in turn a more formidable foe. His first invasion was unsuccessful in 545 B.C., but seven years afterwards Gobryas, the general of Cyrus, a Median, appeared before Sippara, fifty miles to the north-west of Babylon. Here Belshazzar (*Bêlû-sâr-ra-usur*) was stationed with the troops. But after a single battle the people of Accad rose in revolt against Nabonidus. On the fourteenth day Sippara fell without a blow. Babylon itself made no resistance. On the eleventh day Gobryas and the troops of Cyrus occupied the city. On the third day after Cyrus himself entered Babylon: "the walls fell down before him. Peace for the city he established; Cyrus to Babylon peace, to the whole of it spake."

This description illustrates the ease of conquest and good fortune—that *felicitas* which Cicero says always accompanies a great general—and also the clemency with which Cyrus used his conquests, and his characteristic love of peace.

In Babylon, as at Ecbatana and probably in Media, Cyrus found a considerable element of disaffection which smoothed his way to conquest. Nabonidus had provoked the anger of his people partly by the neglect of the great

<sup>1</sup> "Cyrus, his (Merodach's) young servant, with his few troops routed the numerous Umman-Manda folk." (Clay cylinder in the British Museum, No. 122.)

annual festival of the new year, and partly by his policy of concentrating the worship of the gods in Babylon and abolishing the local sanctuaries. Consequently Cyrus appeared as a deliverer and a champion of the outraged gods and their offended priesthood. In his proclamation he places himself under the protection of Merodach and other divinities and ascribes his victories to their power. In the clay cylinder containing the history of this conquest the success of Cyrus is attributed to the favour of Merodach: "He sought out an upright prince after his own heart, whom he took by his hand, Cyrus, king of the city of Anzan; he named his name . . . he joyfully beheld his good deeds and his upright heart"—language which possibly reminds us of Isaiah xlv. 1-4. In all this however we trace the action of a politic conqueror and not any serious recognition of the polytheism of Babylon.

At the same time it is interesting to note that the impression made upon the priests and scribes of Babylon resembles that which *mutatis mutandis* appears in the Hebrew prophetic literature. In each there is a sense of a divine mission and behind the incidents narrated there are traces of a personality marked by a wonderful attractiveness and power of conciliation, characteristics which it is not impossible to discern in the portrait sculpture of Cyrus found at Meshed-Murghab, the ancient Pasargadâ. The same recognition of a definite mission and of a gracious personality appears also in the literature of Greece, as we shall proceed to show. It is this triple acknowledgement of an inspired career and of a character pre-eminent at once for force of will and gentleness of disposition that gives a peculiar distinction to Cyrus among great conquerors and founders of empire, and is of special interest and importance in view of the position assigned to him in the furtherance of the Messianic hope.

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