

loyalty and devotion to the imperial policy in those cities, which boasted of their importance in the "Galatic Province."<sup>1</sup>

But the history of those cities, and the letters of Paul, show that a very high degree of order, peace and prosperity may result in a thoroughly unhealthy life and a steady moral deterioration, unless the condition of the public mind is kept sound by some salutary idea. The salutary idea which was needed to keep the Empire sound and the cities healthy was what Paul preached; and that idea was the raising of the Gentiles to equality with the Jews in religion and morality.

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## CYRUS, THE LORD'S ANOINTED.

### II.

#### THE TESTIMONY OF THE GREEK HISTORIANS.

THE first notice of Cyrus in extant Greek literature is to be found in the *Persæ* of Æschylus, "the earliest specimen of Greek history which we possess, though written in verse."<sup>2</sup> The date of the play is B.C. 473, seven years after the great defeat of the Persians at Salamis, and about sixty years after the death of Cyrus.

In the drama the shade of Darius appears on the stage and narrates the history of the Persian monarchy. After speaking of his Median predecessors he continues: "Third after him Cyrus, a man favoured by fortune (*εὐδαίμων ἀνὴρ*). By his rule he made peace for all his friends, and won for himself the people of the Lydians and of the Phrygians, and harried (*ἤλασεν*) all Ionia by force, for seeing he was kindly" God envied him not (764-768).

Considering the temper of the Athenian people, the

<sup>1</sup> τῆς Γαλατικῆς ἐπαρχίας, C. I. G. 3886.

<sup>2</sup> Paley's *Introduction to the Persæ*.

generous way in which Cyrus is spoken of in this passage, and the epithets applied to him, are striking indeed. There was no temptation for an Athenian poet to place the character and achievements of Cyrus in a favourable light. The subjugation of Ionia was in a special degree a dangerous topic, Phrynichus, a contemporary of Æschylus, having been fined 1,000 drachmæ for his tragedy on the "taking of Miletus" a few years previously,<sup>1</sup> this makes the tribute paid to Cyrus the more remarkable. In these few lines the same notes of character are discernible which we have observed in Isaiah and in the Chaldean records. He is *εὐδαίμων*, which we may interpret to mean more than "fortunate," it is the counterpart of "the man of my counsel," or "the Lord's anointed" of Isaiah, it means favoured by heaven as the man "by whose side," according to the Babylonian scribe, "Merodach marched like a comrade and helper" (*Light from the East*, p. 224).

Then he is the peacemaker for all his friends, just as "he is sent to the Gentiles with gracious promises,"<sup>2</sup> or, to cite again from the monuments, "his great hosts went about harmlessly; the whole land of Shinar and Accad he suffered to have no terrifiers. Within Babylon and all its cities in peace I looked after the sons of Tin-Tir."

The swiftness of conquest so graphically described in Isaiah is signified in two short Iambic lines :

Λυδῶν δὲ λαὸν καὶ Φρυγῶν ἐκθήσατο,  
Ἰωνίαν τε πᾶσαν ἤλασεν βία.

Note here the skill with which the poet (with a view to the susceptibilities of his Athenian audience) indicates that the conquest of Ionia was no easy victory, it was not an acquisition (*ἐκθήσατο*) like Lydia, but a beating down of resistance (*ἤλασεν βία*).

Then that kindness of disposition which certainly

<sup>1</sup> Probably in 492 B.C. See Grote, *History of Greece*, iv. 415 foll.

<sup>2</sup> See heading of Isaiah xlix. v. 5, A.V.

underlies the description of the anointed prince in Isaiah, and is brought out in the monuments in such phrases as: "the nobles rejoiced at his accession . . . their faces brightened . . . they gladly did him homage," is denoted by the Æschylean expression, *ὡς εὐφρων ἔφν*, an attribute which combines the ideas of joyousness and clemency, two qualities which disarmed the envy of the gods and tended to create that attractiveness of disposition, which made even his former foes rejoice at the coming of the Gentile king.

In turning to the account of Cyrus in Herodotus it is impossible to feel that we are reading genuine history. But the aim of this paper is not to investigate the accuracy of the Greek historians, but to show the impression which the character and career of Cyrus made upon the Greek mind. That this impression was at least based upon fact, appears partly from the way in which the character of Cyrus is distinguished from that of his successors, and partly from the consistency of the portrait as depicted by the different Greek writers, and its agreement with the notices in Isaiah and in the Babylonian tablets.

From the first the sense of a mission was present with Cyrus. "For myself," he says to the Persians who were rising against Astyages, "I feel I am destined by providence to undertake your liberation." *αὐτός τε γὰρ δοκέω θείῃ τύχῃ γεγονὸς τάδε ἐς χεῖρας ἄγεσθαι* (Herod. i. 126). And his conquest of Cræsus was in the Greek conception the accomplishment of a Divine purpose in bringing a long delayed penalty on the house of Gyges, of which Cræsus was the latest representative. The recognition of this by the Greek oracles bears some resemblance to the recognition of his mission by the Hebrew prophets and the Chaldean scribes. The shrewd answers of the Apollo of Delphi or Branchidæ, so far as they were predictive, were undoubtedly based on a very wide and accurate knowledge of events; and the conquests of the youthful Persian monarch and his rapidly

increasing strength were certainly not unknown at these centres of political intelligence. There, at any rate, there was no ambiguity in the meaning of the oracles which foretold the fall of an empire when the Halys was crossed or when a "mule" should reign over <sup>1</sup> Media.

But besides being the centre of political intelligence and the source of prediction, the Greek oracle was also the conscience of the Hellenic world,<sup>2</sup> and it was when prediction, coincided with the moral sense of the race, as in the case of Crœsus, that its results were most impressive. It is indeed this religious element which gives the form to history as treated by Herodotus. And on the same lines, but with clearer insight, the Hebrew prophet foretells the doom of Israel or Judah when he sees the approach of the instrument of Divine vengeance coinciding with his sense of the need of punishment.<sup>3</sup> The moral cause is at the root; the political condition coincides with it.

Without some recognition of a religious sense or conscience in the nations outside Israel the prophetic appeals to them would have had nothing to start from or to rest upon. The summons to the Gentiles to submit to Jehovah could meet with no response unless the message satisfied the mind and touched an answering chord.

Cyrus then came to fulfil a mission, which approved itself to the religious instinct of the Hellenic race, and at the same time, though he knew it not, to carry out the purpose of Jehovah in bringing many nations under his rule.

The clemency which we have noticed as characteristic of

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, i. 53, 55. (a) Crœsus having crossed the Halys shall destroy a mighty empire. (b) When a mule is monarch of Media . . . haste away nor blush to behave like a coward. The "mule" is explained to refer to the mixed Median and Persian descent of Cyrus.

<sup>2</sup> See for instance the answers to Glaucus in regard to money entrusted to his care, and to the people of Cymé respecting the betrayal of Paktyas. Herodotus, vi. 86 ; i. 158 foll.

<sup>3</sup> See G. A. Smith, *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, i. 152.

Cyrus appears in his magnanimity and consideration in dealing with Croesus,<sup>1</sup> and in his treatment of the Ionian Greeks. Conqueror though he was, and enslaver of many of their cities, he was remembered by the Greeks as a "father" (ὁ πατήρ) in contrast to the sterner régime of his successor, Cambyses "the master" (ὁ δεσπότης).

Another grand element in the character of Cyrus is implied in the description which Herodotus gives of the race from which he sprang. "The Persians," he says, "think the most disgraceful thing in the world is to tell a lie"<sup>2</sup>

Although the *Cyropædia* of Xenophon is a romance and not history, and its subject an ideal prince and ruler, it is inspired by a real personage. The name and reputation of Cyrus suggested to Xenophon the story of a beautiful boyhood marked by unselfishness and a hearty desire to please others, and an after career of wonderful brilliance in peace and war. He is represented as handsome in appearance, quick in learning, educated in a public school (διδασκαλείον) in the principles of justice (δικαιοσύνη), self-control and temperance, winning influence and love at every stage of his career, and, when the time came for him to administer affairs and to lead armies, he is represented as the righteous ruler and the humane and generous conqueror.

Ideal though this portrait may be, and unreal many of the scenes and colloquies in the *Cyropædia*, and even the *dramatis personæ*, still the main features of Xenophon's description are entirely consistent with what we know of Cyrus from the Chaldean monuments and the words of the prophet of the exile.<sup>3</sup>

No doubt legends and imaginary attributes gathered round the name of Cyrus as they gathered round the names of a

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, i. 90 foll.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, i. 139, where see Rawlinson's interesting note. In the inscriptions of Darius *lying* is taken as the representative of all evil.

<sup>3</sup> Whiston, Joseph. *Ant.* xi. 1, notes that Cyrus is called "God's Shepherd" by Xenophon as well as by Isaiah.

Charlemagne or a Barbarossa. "Most of the stories about King Alfred," said Sir F. Pollock in a recent address, "are without foundation. Why, then," he adds, "did the popular imagination attribute a series of acts all praiseworthy to Alfred rather than to any other king?"

The same question *mutatis mutandis* might be asked in regard to Cyrus, and the answer is the same in each case. The details and stories may be false, but the description of the great king who made the epoch is substantially true. It was the astonishing success, the great renown, and the attractive character of Cyrus that stirred the imagination of east and west and gave rise to many legends. His rise and progress seemed to the Greek historian as well as to the Hebrew prophet to be divinely inspired and guided.

The characteristic of Cyrus which especially impressed Xenophon was his pre-eminence in the art of government. "He excelled all other kings," he says, "in his power of ruling diverse nations. Some there were who willingly obeyed Cyrus, though absent from him many days', even many months' journey; some too who had never seen him, and who knew very well that they never should see him, still readily submitted themselves to his government." Although the subject races "spoke neither the same language with himself nor with one another, yet he was able to extend the fear of himself over so great a part of the world that he astonished all, and no one attempted anything against him. He was able to inspire all with so great a desire of pleasing him that they ever desired to be governed by his counsel. He attached to himself (*ἀνηρτήσατο*) so many nations as it would be a labour to enumerate." (Xen. *Cyropædia*, i. 1, Eng. Trans.).

There is no reason to discount this estimate of what may truly be called the imperial gift in Cyrus. It was indeed this astonishing and patent success not only in conquest but in attractive influence and rule that induced Xenophon

to inquire into the antecedents and character of so great a genius. And it is this particular aspect of the work of Cyrus that makes the *Cyropædia* illustrative of Isaiah's picture of the Lord's Anointed. The Hebrew prophet describes the resistless progress of a great conqueror; Xenophon, from an independent point of view, indicates the singular fitness of the unconscious instrument of Jehovah to accomplish His purpose. To the Jew the personal character of the deliverer would be thought a matter of secondary importance. To the Greek historian, if by any possibility he could have known it, the return of the Jews, the scattered remnant of a captive tribe, to their native land would have appeared an incident of no significance for the future of the world. Each furnishes the complement to the other's narrative. In the Biblical account we have the underlying cause of the success which Xenophon records at length. And in the *Cyropædia* there is the sketch of a character which we have a right to assume was known to the sacred writer, and which justifies his enthusiasm.

The mission of Cyrus as liberator of the Jews requires no comment. It is a well understood step in the divine development of history which opened out for the Hebrew race a fresh beginning of national life. His wider mission of conquest and empire is less generally recognized as equally important for the religious future of the world and the spread of Christianity. Before the death of Cyrus his dominions extended from the river Indus to the western coast of Asia Minor, and from the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf. Egypt was ready to fall into his hands, when his career was cut short by a premature death. This vast extent of territory welded into an empire by that marvellous power of governing which, Xenophon notes, was the precursor of the great world powers which successively and in different ways promoted the advance of the kingdom of Christ. Cyrus was the imperial ancestor of Alexander,

Cæsar, and Charlemagne. Each of these great rulers in his own epoch contributed to the work of the larger mission foreshadowed in Isaiah xlv. 1-7. And what is most to be noted is that that larger mission was entrusted not only to Gentiles but to Gentiles of the Aryan or Indo-European race of which the British nation forms a part. The Jews—who belong to the Semitic stock—undoubtedly, and in the first place, were the chosen instruments for the salvation of the world, but the movements, which gave scope for their work, were directed by the great rulers of the Aryan Gentiles.

This fact gives a peculiar interest to the typical aspect of the work and career of Cyrus. Illustration of this kind is perhaps a less usual form of teaching now than formerly; but in the case of this great deliverer of Israel the type is so forcibly presented in the prophetic description that it is in places difficult to separate by a definite line the terms applied to Cyrus, and those primarily applicable to the Messianic King. Like his antitype, the Saviour of the world, Cyrus is the "servant of the Lord," "My chosen in whom My soul delighteth," he is the first "Consolation of Israel," "a preacher of peace," (compare with this the expressions cited from the Chaldean monuments, and the beautiful line in the *Persæ* already referred to: "He made peace for all his friends,") the founder of a kingdom, and above all the "Christ or Messiah of the Lord," the anointed deliverer, the saviour from Babylon, the symbol of iniquity, and the restorer to Sion, the type of righteousness. The typical parallel might be extended to points of character; for we read of a pure, loving, and obedient childhood, and afterwards of a humanity and graciousness quite unparalleled in the conquerors of those days, and of an equitable fairness in judgment, which corresponds with the *ἐπιείκεια* of the Lord Christ Himself.

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