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McLEOD, Editor.

That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ—PETER.

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TERMS:
ONE DOLLAR A YEAR IN ADVANCE.

The Persians.—ISAIAH XLVI.

In this chapter begins a series of most interesting and remarkable prophecies respecting the Persians, and Cyrus, their great king. To those we mean to give special attention, not only on account of their intrinsic importance, and their special adaptation to our mode of illustration, but because their prominent reference to an eminent character in history, imparts to them a sort of biographical interest, well suited to engage the attention of our readers.

The fact that the great Cyrus, his name, his history, his exploits, and his character, are set forth by the prophet long before he was born, has often engaged admiring observation and comment. But it has been less noticed that the very nation to which, under him, was given the commission to avenge the Lord's controversy with Babylon, and to inherit for its reward, the spoils of many realms, had scarcely any existence, and certainly no prominent existence as a nation, at the time the prophecy was delivered. To show this, and at the same time to furnish a suitable introduction to our further statements, it is desirable to give this evening to the consideration of the origin of this people, and of their condition at the time that Isaiah wrote, and at the time when Cyrus appeared.

From the best account to which we have now access, it would appear that the Persians belonged originally to that widely dispersed people who occupied the countries between the Tigris and the Indus in one direction, and between the Oxus and the shores of the Indian Ocean on the other.

Their aspect as represented in the fine old sculptures at Persepolis, distinguishes them from their Mongol neighbors in the North; and their complexion, as shown at this day in their descendants, from the Hindoos to the south east, in a manner too decided to suffer any idea of their consanguinity to either, to be entertained. At the same time, their language proves them to have been equally independent of the Semitic or Syro-Arabian tribes on the west; for the languages spoken in the region of the Persian empire, and in the countries to the east of the river, are different in character and construction from those used to the east of the river.

It thus appears that the various races that necessarily had dominion in those parts, all belonged to the same original stock. The most ancient of these ruling nations were the Medes, Bactrians, and Persians. That the Medes were not of a distinct stock from the Persians, is evidenced not only by their history, but by the similarity of their language.

The ancient traditions of the race refer their origin to a region called *Eriene-Vedj*, which we can discover to have been the mountainous tracts on the borders of Bactria, as far as the confines of Hindostan, and northward to the neighborhood of the Altai mountains. Hence by successive migrations they made their way, until they eventually established themselves permanently within the precincts of that territory, which has preserved to the present day the name of Iran—the nation, carrying with them in their migrations, the name of *Eriene*, which is obviously the same as Iran.

When this people quitted their original abodes, it appears that they were, like the Israelites of old, a nation of herdsmen and shepherds, acquainted with no other species of property than their herds of camels, horses, oxen and sheep. A change of residence, however, was necessarily, as also in the case of Hebrews, attended with a change of habits. The earliest of their kings or chiefs, named Jemsheed, is celebrated in their legends as the first who introduced into the land of Iran a knowledge of agriculture, tillage, and cattle breeding. He was also the legislator of the race, and instructed them in the policies of civil life; having been, as they believed, appointed to Ormuzd, whom they worshipped as the source of all good; and he, therefore, in their view, bore nearly the same relation to themselves as Moses did to the Israelites. The country to which they gave the name of Iran was, previously to their arrival, unoccupied, save by wild animals. The nature of the country did not, however, admit of all the new settlers devoting themselves to the same pursuits. It was but a comparatively small number who gave themselves to agriculture and occupied settled habitations; by far the greater part continuing of necessity to follow their old occupations as shepherds and herdsmen. In this manner, rather by the variety of their pursuits than by any diversity in their origin, the nation was necessarily split into a number of distinct tribes, of which some, like the Medes, acquired by agriculture and the improvement of commerce, wealth and power; while others, shut up in steppes, and mountains, continued true to their original habits, which their situation may be said to have preserved.

To this latter class belonged the Persians—the portion of the race to which our present attention is to be confined. Their original abode in Iran can be determined with certainty; for the general voice of all antiquity proves them to have been a race of mountaineers, inhabiting the wild and hilly region which is still known by the name of Fars, or Faristan, whence Paras, which is the Hebrew name of the country; and whence also the Persia of the Greeks and Romans, from which comes our Persia. The names "Persia" and "Persians" are names applied by foreigners, and are, and probably were, wholly unknown to the natives as designations for their country and for

themselves. With them Fars is but the name of a province of their empire; and they call their country Iran, and themselves Iranians.

We are, then, to regard the Persians as having been originally a nation of shepherds and herdsmen inhabiting the rude country of Fars, or Persis proper, such as naturally fosters a hardy race of people, capable of supporting both cold and watching, and of enduring, when called upon, the severest toils of war. It appears, however, that although this region formed the central seat of the race, that race was by no means confined to it; for the names borne by some of the tribes, into which the nation was divided, bear evidence that their occupation extended over the steppes of Carmania (Kerman) southward, and northward to the shores of the Caspian Sea.

Agreeably to what has always been the case among the great nomadic races, the Persians were divided into several herds or tribes. Such, as we all know, was likewise the case among the Israelites, whose analogous division into tribes arose while they were under a similar condition of life. Among the Persians, the number of these tribes was ten; and they were no less distinguished from each other by their differences of rank, than by their modes of life. Three of these were accounted noble, the Pasargades, the Maraphians, and the Maspians; and of these, the first was the noblest of all, as it included the family of the Achemenides, to which the reigning dynasty belonged. Three of the other tribes were agricultural; and the remaining four retained the nomadic habits of their ancestors; but they are occasionally mentioned as contributing hardy bands of cavalry to the Persian armies. The extensive salt deserts which divide Persia from Media, as well as the plains of southern Persia, afforded inexhaustible pastures for the cattle of these tribes, whenever they thought proper to descend from their mountains. This division of the nation into tribes, a large portion of whom are tent-dwelling shepherds, still prevails in the same country.

Such being the case, we must discard the idea that the Persian nation, even at the most brilliant period of its history, was universally and equally civilized. A part of the nation ruled the remainder; and this portion alone had attained a certain degree of civilization by its acquaintance with the arts of peace and luxury. The other tribes continued in their original habits, and were not civilized. The Persian history, as it has come down to us, is therefore not so much the history of the whole nation as that of certain tribes, and possibly one of the most noble tribes—that of the Pasargades. These composed the court, and it appears that, almost without exception, all that was distinguished among the Persians proceeded from them.

From the above particulars, we shall also be led to conclude, that in a country so constituted, everything would depend upon descent and upon tribal distinctions. As the tribes were distinguished by a greater or lesser degree of nobleness, so there was also a gradation in the different families of which each tribe was composed. As already intimated, the most noble family of the most noble race was that of the Achemenides, from which exclusively the kings of Persia were always taken.

The authentic history of the Persians commences, both in sacred and profane history, with Cyrus, whom the Scripture honors with many honors, such as are in no instance bestowed upon a foreign prince. At the commencement of his career, the Persians were under tribute to the kindred nation of the Medes, whose king was the grandfather of Cyrus by the mother's side. But Cyrus not only delivered his nation from that yoke, but reduced all the known kingdoms of Asia under his sway.

God's Heroes, and the World's Heroes.

Substance of a Lecture delivered in London before the Young Men's Christian Association by the Rev. J. H. Gurney, A. M.

The Lecturer commenced by observing, that the objects which he had in view was neither to exalt feats of arms, nor to disparage the profession of arms. The doctrine, that war in all cases and under all circumstances is wrong, he did not hold; and, if he did, he supposed that it would not be safe or politic to advocate such views until the achievements of Alma, Inkermann, and Balaklava, should have been, in some measure, forgotten. He designed to show, however, that mankind generally have made too much of military powers and success. The great vice and cheat of war had been to exalt men who were the worst enemies of the human race. No one could read the history of human conflicts on the battle-field without observing, that the first principles of morality seemed to be wholly denied by the historian. One generation after another had risen up to repeat the glories of men who caused rivers of blood to be shed, not for the accomplishment of some grand object for the world's benefit, but for the gratification of their own sinful ambition and personal aggrandisement. Now, against this tampering with the moral sense of mankind he desired to utter his most solemn protest, on the present occasion; and to furnish, as far as possible, a corrective to a false sentiment, by bringing forward some few instances, out of many which existed, demonstrative of the fact, that heroism of the best kind is often found far away from the battle-field, among men and women who are, emphatically, the sons and daughters of peace. Time would not allow of his referring to the men who were regarded as the military heroes of the ancient world; but he

must not pass by unnoticed one who stands forth to view as in some sort the type of them all—Alexander. This man was one of the greatest of conquerors the world had ever beheld, but he accomplished nothing whatever for the good of the world; and his whole career furnished a striking illustration of the truth of those words of Inspiration which might have served as a most appropriate epitaph for his tomb—"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." The hero's vice of self-idolatry and appetite for conquest quenched the nobler aspirations with which he may have started in his marvellous career. In any estimate of his character, however, it should not be forgotten, that he must be judged as one who had only the light of nature to guide him. He had temptations beyond all the sons of men; but none of the lights and safeguards vouchsafed even to the meanest Christian. (Cheers.)

Passing to more modern times he might refer to the unparalleled scenes of excitement occasioned by the first Crusades, when old feuds were forgotten, and men of all parties united heart and hand for the attainment of what was believed to be a great and worthy object. Mr. Gurney gave an animated recital of the rise and progress of the war in the Holy Land, by the nations of Europe; and dwelt upon the fact of the earnestness and single-heartedness of the first Crusaders, and the feats of valor which they accomplished. Wondrous things had been told of Richard Cœur de Lion; and certainly, cruel and barbarous as he was, he displayed great military prowess, and was worthy, perhaps, to have headed the charge of the Light Cavalry Division at Balaklava. (Laughter and cheers.) Passing over five hundred years, the Lecturer reached the period of Gustavus Adolphus, and Charles XII. of Sweden; and proceeded to descant upon their history, with special reference to the character of the latter, who was first animated by high principles and purposes; but his rapid successes in his wars against Russia, at an early age, seemed to have turned his head, and proved the cause of his ruin. To have sustained his reputation, Charles should have died at an early period of his career. It might, indeed, be laid down as a general truth, that this world's heroes live too long, while God's heroes die too soon. A brilliant youth, wasted manhood, the camp his home, passion his guide, an iron will, and a confidence in himself which amounted to presumption,—these were the characteristics of the latter.

The character of Napoleon was next discussed, and a general review taken of his military career; and the Lecturer summed up by describing him as false and hollow-hearted, without a single trait of magnanimity,—the smallest hero that ever cheated mankind into admiration. It might be said, generally, of all the world's heroes, that they are a sorry set; and, turning from them to the true heroes of our race, was like listening to harmony after discord, or like inhaling the healthful breeze after being shut up in an atmosphere tainted with disease. (Cheers.) There were, of course, some features of resemblance between both classes of heroes. The world's heroes seek the world's praises, while the nobler race strove to prove themselves to God. God's heroes walk by faith, the others seek some present reward. The one class are naturally selfish in their aims and purposes, while it was an essential feature of the other that they live to bless their fellows. The true hero is always in advance of his age, while the world's greatest heroes do but reflect the age in which they live. Heroes and battle-fields, in the world's account, go together; but heroes and prisons had often been associated in the sight of Heaven. (Hear, hear.)

It was a singular fact, that the old goal of Bedford stood connected with two of the noblest names in the history of this country—there John Bunyan was confined, and there commenced the labours of John Howard, which won for him an immortal name. (Cheers.) This led to a somewhat extended sketch of the circumstances which led "the Squire of Cardington" to devote himself to prison reform, and of the manner in which it was prosecuted during the rest of his life. The first step of John Howard, in the path of heroism, was the beginning of a grand epic; and as he went on, his duty became as plain as if a Heavenly messenger had been despatched to earth to give him special instructions. He looked not for earthly reward, and shrunk from all worldly display; yet if this had been his object he could not have been more abundantly satisfied than when the thanks of the House of Commons were presented to him for his "noble and useful enterprise." His labours having been extended far beyond England, men of all nations were blessed by his efforts; and when he died, no less than three thousand weeping men of all ranks and of all countries followed him to the tomb. The heroes of the world are wholly taken up with their great selves, but the heroes stamped with God's image had for their motto, "We are members one of another; your pain is my pain, and your joy is my joy. If I have no part in the meanest Christian brother I have no part in Christ my Lord." (Cheers.)

Heroes, moreover, it might be observed, are of no sex, as witness Mrs. Fry. (Cheers.) The mission which that devoted lady commenced and prosecuted to such wonderful results, was even more blessed than that of Howard, the noble purpose of it being to bring sinners to repentance. The labours of Mrs. Fry and her noble-minded sisters of charity in Newgate, could not be understood or appreciated except by taking into the account that she had to seek to convince the prison authorities of the very first principles on which they acted—that the bad were not hopelessly bad, and that as God reclaims the world by an exhibition of his

compassion, so kindness might find its way to hearts long dead both to fear and shame. (Cheers.) The early labours of that excellent lady were regarded as an amiable piece of female quixotism, from which good could hardly be expected; but now she could not fail to be regarded as one of the genuine heroes of the world. (Cheers.) But even more remarkable still were the achievements of the humble dressmaker of Norfolk, Sarah Martin, in the religious and general education of the prisoners of the county gaol. A recital of the simple narrative written by this Christian female herself, of her thoughts, hopes, and successes, melted the audience to tears. The history of Martin Luther was next brought forward in illustration of the subject; and subsequently the unostentatious career of Pastor Oberlin and Felix Neff. Had time permitted he had intended to speak of some of the Puritan heroes, of the Moravian Missionaries, of Carey, Judson, and the martyred Williams; the noble army who effected the liberation of the slave, Clarkson, Wilberforce, Buxton, Macaulay, Stephen, and others. It might have been shown, also, that times of public disaster make heroes, but many of them were heroes in a private rather than a public walk of life. Such, for instance, was Sidney Bernard, the young surgeon, who voluntarily sailed from the coast of Africa on board a ship infected with the yellow fever, and sacrificed his life in ministering to the diseased crew. And yet, such is the thoughtlessness of even English society, that they did nothing to relieve and comfort his poor widow; while, at that very moment, a public subscription of 50,000*l.* was being got up for a man who had no other claim upon the consideration of the country than that he had somehow managed to get rich very fast. But it must not be supposed that heroes lived only in other days. We had them now; and we had lived to see a sight even stranger than that to which he had referred. The Lecturer proceeded to speak in the most exalted terms of Miss Nightingale, and the blessedness of her mission of mercy; and yet narrow-minded lovers of creed—self-styled religious men—had dared to speak ill of her, as not perfect in her theology, forsooth; and were thus bringing a scandal upon religion itself; doing what they could to make wit merry and infidels more bold. While he deplored the bigotry, he marvelled at the hardness of the attack which had been made upon her. What may all this young men and women do for him, in their several walks of life, might prove true heroes, by following the dictates of their consciences and the teachings of Inspiration, closing with an eloquent and earnest appeal to one and all to gird up the loins of their minds, and prepare manfully and as Christians, to meet every conflict in which they might be called to engage in their journey through life.

The proceedings closed with the Doxology.

"OH, OUR CHURCH IS SO COLD!"

No doubt that is true, Mr. Lamenting-church-member. But why do you say so? Are you really one of those who "sigh and cry" because of the desolations of Zion, or are you one of those fashionable complainers who think that they must say something about an oft-repeated and too-evident fact? If you really feel concerned about the matter, we will try to ascertain the cause.

It cannot be God's fault. True, he evidently withholds his Spirit, but that is synonymous with the fact of coldness itself. The question is, Why does he do so? Does he love to restrain his Spirit's working? Does he delight in a benumbed and frozen church? Was it his fault that Israel was afflicted and the temple destroyed?—Is that the interpretation of his words, "Bring ye all the tithes, &c., and see if I will not pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room to receive it?" Is that the meaning of the rebukes, and counsels, and threats, and promises, addressed to the seven churches of Asia? No; you know better. You know God loves the gates of Zion. Christ is made "Head over all things to his church." His throne is in the midst of her. He is glorified in her prosperity. His fulness and faithfulness are ever ready and pledged to build up and beautify all her interests. And if that church is cold, and dark, and sorrowful, never let it be thought that the fault lies in her glorified Head, who still bears to her the same relations, and feels for her the same love, as when he bought her on the cross, and crowned her with the pentecostal spirit.

Nor are we disposed to believe that the fault lies in your minister. Sometimes, indeed, the minister may do much to chill a church's fervour; but such are comparatively rare instances. We know many cold churches which have warm and faithful ministers.

You surely cannot charge the fault of your coldness on the unconverted portion of your congregation? Who ever dreamed of asking corpses to warm living bodies?

There is then only one party left to bear the blame, and they are the church members themselves. And as you are one of that number, we are disposed to see if you are not one of the "troublers" of Israel. What is the range of your own temperature? How far above zero is your piety? How do you enjoy your closet devotions? How often do you retire to make special request for your church? Do you go regularly and warmly to the prayer-meeting? Do you speak to the negligent members of your church, and try to induce them to faithfulness in their Sabbath and weekly obligations? Do you do much for the salvation of souls around you? Do you do much

for the spread of the Saviour's cause? Do you do much to aid your pastor in his labours and influence?

We know not what answer you will give to these questions, but we will tell you what you do know. We know that much of the complaining of our church members about church coldness is sheer hypocrisy. If there were half the corresponding activity on their part, the church would not be so cold. The "burden" of Zion is that most of them are so covetous, and so "conformed to the world," that their influence is lost or becomes poisonous to the unconverted. Their prayers are so faint and few, that no response of blessing comes, or can be expected. Their prayer-meetings are so deserted and lifeless, that we often involuntarily exclaim, "Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." Growth in grace, and beautified temples of the Holy Ghost, are sought for by only here and there one, while the Ephesians' shout of "Great is Diana!" is modified into the Christian anthem, "Great is mammon! great is fashion! great is an easy religion!" Individual activity and brotherly co-operation are often unthought of, and the minister alone is left to do the whole work of religion; if it be not, as an elder once said, "to do the praying" for them too! The unvarnished truth is, that the tendency in many of our churches is to drive away the Spirit. The grace of God is undervalued and unsought. The ministry are baffled in their efforts by the petrified indifference and inconsistent conduct of church members. And shall any presume to look for God's blessing on such things? What could we expect but coldness and a curse? And it will remain cold until there is a united cry from our membership, "Come and let us return unto the Lord!" No church is cold and deserted where the membership do their duty.

Salvation.

Salvation! Blessed be God that our fallen earth has heard the joyful sound! It is unheard in hell. Reader, blessed be the grace which brought it to your ears. Multitudes of men's family are strangers to it. But thrice-blessed be the Spirit's love, if it is the sweetest melody which charms you by the loudest note, by day and by night, of your unwearied praise! To multitudes it is a tuneless blissful. It is the joy of the ever-joyful. It is the happiness of the ever-happy. It is the song of the ever-singing. It is the peace of the ever-peaceful. It is the rest of the ever-resting. It is the glory of the ever-glorified. O my soul! see to it that you are saved.

Salvation! It is a roll written by Jehovah's pen. It is the decree of Divine councils, the fruit of omniscient mind, the first-born of unmeasured love, the perfection of eternal thought, the strength of omnipotence. It is the fabric which every attribute of God erected with concurring hand; in which every stone is brought by mercy, and shaped by wisdom, and laid by grace; in which there is no defect—no blemish—no decay. It is the solid-built temple, which will rise and shine in growing splendour through all ages. O my soul! see to it that you are saved.

Salvation! It is the work for which Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and lived on earth, and died at Calvary, and descended into the grave, and burst the bonds of death, and mounted to heaven, and sits on the right hand of God. For this he trod the lowest vale of shame and grief. For this he drank the deepest cup of wrath and torment. For this he grappled with all the powers of darkness. For this he reigns and prays on high.

It is the work for which the Spirit seeks our earth, and knocks at the barred entrance of the sinner's heart. For this he assaults the fortress of self-love, and reveals the perils of sin, and wrestles with ignorance and vain excuses. For this he strives until the arms of rebellion fall, and the contrite soul flees to the Cross and embraces Jesus, and shelter in the sure refuge of his words. O my soul! see to it that you are saved.

Salvation! It is the first message which mercy uttered to a ruined world. It is the end of every prophecy—the purport of every precept—the beauty of every promise—the truth of every sacrifice—the substance of every rite—the song of every inspired lip—the longing desire of every renewed heart—the beacon which guides through the voyage of life—the heaven to which guides through the tide of grace convey—the end of faith—the full light of hope—the home of love. O my soul! see to it that you are saved.

Salvation! It is the absence of this blessing which builds the prison-house of hell—which kindles the never quenched fires—which forges the eternal chains—which wraps the dreary regions in one mantle of blackness—which gives keenness to the undying worm—which blows up the smoke of torment—which adds the bitterness of despair to the hopeless wail. O my soul! see to it that you are saved.—Henry Law, Archdeacon of Wells.

God Hears Prayer.

In 1805 there was a very distressing drought through most parts of New-England; and in none was it more sensibly felt than in the central part of Massachusetts. It threatened the almost entire failure of the potato crop, which at that day was the chief dependence of poor people for subsistence. Herds died upon the bushes, grass crumbled under the feet of travellers, fields of corn were shrivelled and dying, cattle loved in the fields for fodder, the dew no less than the rain was withheld, wells and streams were in a great measure dry, and those who had no heart to look to Heaven for relief, knew not where to look.

Under these circumstances the minister and people in a certain town, where the means of living were in less abundance than in many other places, set apart the 31st day of July for fasting and prayer. The day was, in appearance, like most others that had preceded it, clear and warm, till towards night, furnishing no indications of a change. The writer of this attended the religious service of the