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As one grows older Assemblies seem to grow younger. It takes one who has passed the meridian of life some time to adjust himself to the thought, expressed by Wordsworth, "The young are old, the old are in their graves."

It has been pithily observed that "fifty is old age to youth and youth to old age." The first impression received from looking on the Newport News Assembly was the youthfulness of the commissioners as compared with those sent to the Assemblies of earlier years. It is true that one saw here and there, and with rather startling frequency, the "good gray head" of a contemporary, but the shock was mitigated by the counter-suggestion that this canescence was premature. The cumulative effect, however, of looking out on so many hoary heads day after day for a week, made it next to impossible to regard them as just so many precocious crowns of glory, or as a select gathering of old heads on young shoulders. Precocity ceases to be precocity when it becomes the general rule. The apparent youthfulness was evidently a sort of optical illusion—the eyes that looked were not quite as young as they used to be.

The Assembly of 1915 was not absolutely younger in its make-up than the Assemblies of one or two decades ago, but only younger relatively to the age of the generation that attended its first Assemblies in those days. "Why not confess yourself an old man?" asks the Latin poet, Martial, "be content to seem

THE MESSAGE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT FOR THE MODERN MAN.*

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The most fundamental and comprehensive message of the Old Testament is best expressed in the words of our Saviour when He said to His disciples, "*Have faith in God.*"

Faith in God is what the modern man most needs to have. Hear this striking testimony from a very unique source, *The Wall Street Journal*: "The supreme need of the hour is not elastic currency, nor sounder banking, nor better protection against panics, nor bigger navies, nor more equitable tariffs—but men who are sure of God." When recently asked by President Woodrow Wilson how we in America could safely pass through the present world crisis, John R. Mott replied: "As our faith is, so will it be done unto us. There is nothing we can not do now and after the war if we have the requisite faith." One of the leaders among the spiritual forces of Germany has just said: "Through love of pleasure and luxury and service of mammon our nation began to degenerate. A new kind of God was invented, an impersonal God, who hears no prayers and does not guide the world according to His will with an almighty hand. Then suddenly the lightning fell. The war came. The hour of decision for our people was at hand. Now it was either into perdition or back to the Living God." Another of the leaders of Christendom has recently said: "The greatest need to-day is the re-discovery of God."

There are two chief reasons for this lack of faith on the part of the modern man. First, the tendency of Science in recent years has been to push God into the back-ground by mag-

* This article is an abridged form of Dr. Caldwell's unusually strong inaugural address.

nifying second causes and minimizing the Great First Cause. The doctrine of creation as held by many men of science today excludes any doctrine of Special Providence. The modern scientist conceives of the world as a machine so perfect, working with such precision according to certain fixed, unchangeable laws, that even God who made it can not break in and interfere with its running. What has been the result? The result has been that the Living, Personal God has grown dim in men's consciousness and His place has been taken by an impersonal, impassive force. Second, the break-down of our so-called Christian civilization in the present war in Europe has made some men less sure of God. Men overlook the fact that our civilization has been largely directed and moulded by godless principles and godless men. So when men look out upon the Christian nations and see them practising the very opposite of the teachings of Christ, they ask these questions: Is there a righteous and Almighty God over all? Is there any supreme, all-controlling Will? Is there any holy purpose?

These puzzling questions are answered with an emphatic "There is" by the man who knows his Old Testament. The Old Testament is saturated with God. The most massive impression it makes is that God is real. "There is in the Old Testament such a singular graphicness, such a variety of human situation and experience, such a powerful sense of God, such a practical assurance of His presence and power and sympathy, and such a broad hope in Him as having a gracious purpose towards the world and men, and such a spiritual reality touching the life and mind of men on all sides, that men have at all times found in it great quickening to their faith and sustenance to their religious life." We are not surprised that a great Old Testament scholar said he could sum up the whole Old Testament in the statement, "God partaker in the life of men"; and that Oliver Cromwell called the Old Testament "the recapitulation of Providence." This conviction of the reality of God, of His presence and power and interest in men and control of their lives is expressed in hundreds of passages of striking beauty. We have time to quote only one or two of

them. "Whither shall I go from thy spirit or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into Heaven, thou art there. If I descend into Hades, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand shall hold me." . . . For thou hast possessed my reins." The word "reins" means consciousness. "For thou hast possessed my consciousness." Commenting on this, A. B. Davidson says: "God had settled down in his consciousness, until his consciousness of God had become the other half of his consciousness of himself." When he awakes in the morning God is still with him and fills his mind. "When I awake I am still with thee." When for a time he is separated from God, he cries out, "My soul thirsteth for God, the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, 'Where is thy God?'" Everything is bearable but one thing—to be separated from God.

This assurance of the reality and nearness of God explains many interesting features of the Old Testament.

1. It explains what is known as anthropomorphisms, that is, the ascribing to God the possession of a human form and human organs. God has a hand, arms, mouth and eyes. He speaks, laughs and writes. He walks in the garden in the cool of the day. He comes down to inspect the tower of Babel. He appears before Abraham's tent, and eats and talks with the patriarch. All this is the vivid realization of God, His personality and presence, and how He enters into the most real and intimate fellowship with men.

2. It also accounts for what in the Old Testament has been called anthropopathisms, that is, ascribing to God the possession of human feelings, impulses and emotions. God repents. He is grieved. He is afflicted. He is provoked. He is moved with indignation. What is all this but the expression by the "vivid, powerful, poetical fantasy of the Hebrew people" of the glorious truth that God is not an impersonal force but a moral personality, who must hate sin and love righteousness.

Who has a heart that beats in love and pity with the sorrows of His people? "In all their affliction He was afflicted and the angel of His presence saved them. In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them and carried them all the days of old." Man's cries "do not fall upon the dead walls of a prison in which he is confined"; they touch the heart of the Eternal.

3. This realization of God's continual presence explains the comparative silence of the Old Testament concerning Heaven and the future life. What makes Heaven is the presence of God, and that presence the Old Testament man believed he had here and now. It never occurred to him that a change of time or place could bring him closer to God. "Whom have I in Heaven but Thee? and on earth there is none that I desire besides Thee." The statement of the authors of the book called *The Unseen Universe* is true; "Not from want of religion but from its excess is due this silence of the Old Testament about immortality and the future life."

4. In the same way we can account for the absence from the Old Testament of the idea of "second causes." When Moses fell sick at the inn, the Old Testament says simply "Jehovah fell upon him." So vivid is their conception of God's presence that what He does through "second causes" the men of the Old Testament represent Him as doing directly and immediately. And they are right. For ultimately all things are due to Him. All events in history, all movements in the lives of individuals and nations, all changes in the physical earth are to be traced to Him as the ultimate cause. "I form light and create darkness. I make peace and create evil. I am Jehovah that doeth all these things."

5. This overpowering feeling of God's presence explains the intense passion for holiness and the equally intense hatred of sin which pervade the Old Testament. The Old Testament blazes like Sinai with God's wrath against sin. This hatred of sin flamed out of the hearts of men who lived with God, who meditated in His law day and night, who put their hands upon their mouths and their mouths in the dust and cried,

“Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts; woe is us, for we are undone, for our eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.” Men to whom God is real always hate sin. Everywhere we hear the cry: “Men today have lost the sense of sin.” But there is a deeper, more pathetic thing we must say: “Men have lost the sense of God.” We know that the Puritans of England made a large use of the Old Testament. What was the result? Hear the testimony of a great English historian: “The passion for moral beauty, the thirst for righteousness which fired the Puritans was to a great extent nourished by a zealous study of the Old Testament.” And this from James Anthony Froude: “Whatever exists at the present moment in England and Scotland of the conscientious fear of doing evil is the remnant of the convictions which were branded by the Puritans into the people’s hearts.”

II.

There is a second element in the message of the Old Testament for the Modern Man. *There is to be only one world-power, and that is the Kingdom of Jehovah and His Anointed.*

At the birth of Christ the Roman Empire was the greatest single power that had yet appeared in human history. In the eighth century Charlemagne tried to bring all Europe under one central authority, but his kingdom fell under the weight of its own unhomogeneous mass. Later, Spain made stupendous efforts to conquer all Europe, and she seemed on the point of succeeding, when her proud ships were broken in pieces upon the coasts of England and Scotland. A hundred years ago visions of world-dominion stirred the imagination of the great Napoleon. At one time in his wonderful career Napoleon said, “I see the world beneath my feet.” Lord Roseberry says: “Napoleon carried human faculty to the farthest point of which we have accurate knowledge.” And then he gives this explanation of Napoleon’s failure: “The mind of man has not in it sufficient ballast to enable it to exercise, or endure for long, supreme, uncontrolled power. The human frame is un-

equal to anything approaching omnipotence. All history, from the Caesars onward, teaches this." In recent times the idea of world-dominion has powerfully revived. As Great Britain has pushed her empire round the earth, Englishmen have spoken of the time when the English language and laws and customs would be imposed upon all nations, and the world would be one Anglo-Saxon Kingdom. The German Emperor declares: 'Henceforth nothing must be settled in this world without the intervention of Germany and the German Emperor.' A German historian has announced: "The sceptre of the universe will belong to the Germans, who will impose their will upon the decadent and enfeebled people round about. True history will begin from the moment that the Germans, with a mighty hand, seize the inheritance of antiquity."

Against this dark and bloody back-ground of the struggles of men and nations for world-dominion let us place this message of God's old book: There is to be only one world-power, and that is the Kingdom of Jehovah and His Anointed. "I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: Thou art my son Ask of me and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." (Psalm 2.) "He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. All kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him." (Psalm 72.) "For that nation and that kingdom that shall not serve thee shall perish." (Isaiah 60:12.) After passing in review the kings and empires that have ruled and will rule the world, the prophet Daniel declares: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed It shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. (Dan. 2:44).

The Old Testament has one great advantage. It covers many centuries of time. It gives a long view of history. We see how God is free to step into human events where and when and how He pleases. We see His purposes moving across the centuries, traveling through the deeps of time, passing from

one victory to another, and crushing down the opposition of the world's greatest empires. At the beginning God's Kingdom on earth is represented by the Hebrew slaves in Egypt. God said to Pharaoh: "Israel is my son, my first-born. Let my son go, and if thou wilt refuse to let him go, behold I will slay thy son, thy first born." And Egypt with her culture, her science, her architecture and long maintained empire had to yield before the onward sweep of God's Kingdom. In 701 B. C. Assyria knocked at the gate of Jerusalem and demanded immediate and unconditional surrender. Under able generals she had built up the most perfect military machine of ancient times. Isaiah has given a vivid picture of the swiftness and precision of movement of her well-disciplined army. "They shall come with speed swiftly. None shall be weary nor slumber among them; none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken; whose arrows are sharp and all their bows bent; their horses' hoofs shall be accounted as flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind." (Isaiah 5:26-29.) When this mighty army appeared before the walls of Jerusalem, the city seemed doomed. It was a dark hour for God's Kingdom. But that very night the angel of God spread his wings on the blast and breathed in the face of the foe. "And there lay the steed with his nostrils all wide And there lay the rider distorted and pale." Assyria fell before the rising power of the new Kingdom of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and carried the Jewish people into captivity. The exile was the darkest hour in the history of God's Kingdom. But God used a heathen king to break Babylon's power and set His people free. "Thus saith Jehovah to Cyrus, His Anointed: 'For Jacob, my servant's sake, and Israel, my chosen, I have called thee. Thou shalt build my city, and thou shalt let my exiles go free.'" Thus we see in the Old Testament the Kingdom of God coming into contact with the four greatest world-powers of ancient times—Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and the Medo-Persian—and they are all made to serve God and to help forward His purpose to set His King upon His holy hill of Zion.

III.

There is a third element in the message of the Old Testament. *The golden age for mankind will come only when the golden heart has come to the individual man.*

Historians inform us that some fourteen hundred years before Christ there reigned a wonderful king in Egypt, said to be "the first individual in human history" who predicted the coming of an ideal social state under the sway of one God and embracing all men irrespective of race or nationality. In Greece Plato in his "Republic" gave forth his conception of man's golden age. Sir Thomas More attempted the same in his Utopia. Since the outbreak of the present world war a more wistful longing for this ideal state has seized men's hearts. They are asking: "Will the time ever come when wars shall cease, and men the world over will love one another, and justice and righteousness prevail? When will the golden age dawn?"

This thought of a future golden age runs through the whole Old Testament. Abraham had it. "He looked for a city, which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10). But there are two great prophets who have it as the main theme of their books—Isaiah and Ezekiel. These two are the prophets of God's Golden Age, of the Divine Ideal for humanity. "In that day" is the formula with which they introduced their fascinating theme. Not only do they describe this ideal social state in great fulness of detail and striking beauty of language; what is more important they tell us how this state is to be ushered in. At the close of one of his greatest pictures of the golden age Isaiah says, "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (Isaiah 11:9). In another passage he says, "Until the Spirit be poured out upon us from on high" (32:15). Again, he says, "My words have I put in thy mouth that I may plant the heavens and lay the foundations of the earth." (51:16). And says Ezekiel, when speaking of this age, "A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you." (Ezek. 36:26.) Combining these four passages we may say

the Old Testament message is that the golden age for society will come only when the golden heart has come to the individual man. And man's heart can be made golden only through the power of God's Spirit, Who uses the word or message of God as it is preached by divinely called men in the regeneration of the human heart. This, then, is the message of these old Hebrew prophets to the modern social reformer: "You may make a community rich and comfortable and clean and intelligent and aesthetic and sanitary and still not touch its moral life. What you need to save society is not some decoration on the outside, but some power that can get into men's hearts and make them clean. And the only power that can do that is the preaching of the Word under the blessing of the life-giving Spirit." "My words have I put in thy mouth that I may plant the heavens and lay the foundations of the earth." Not by force of arms, not by "culture" nor sanitation, nor social reforms, but only by the regeneration of the heart of man by the Holy Spirit who uses the Word as His instrument will be ushered in the Golden Age, the New Heaven and the New Earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

IV.

I must content myself with mentioning one other element in the message of the Old Testament. *In Christ and only in Him can the hunger of the human soul be satisfied.*

Speaking to the men and women who had seen and known Him, Christ said: "Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear. For verily I say unto you that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear and have not heard them!" (Matt. 13:10.) Christ congratulates those who had seen and heard Him and expresses great compassion for those in the Old Testament who had longed for such happiness and had been denied it. These words are of great interest, for they give us Christ's conception of what the Old Testament really is. To Him this old book is not the

record of races and generations that are dead, nor is it the history of the Jewish people and their religion; but it is the record of the experiences of souls thirsting for Him. "Abraham rejoiced to see my day, he saw it and was glad." (John 8:56.) The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews thought of the Old Testament in the same way. Speaking of these Old Testament believers, he says: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them afar off." (Heb. 11:13 A. R. V.) They looked down the vista of the future centuries, saw the Christ that was to come, and with wistful eyes saluted Him in the distance.

In the forty-ninth chapter of Genesis we have the death-bed scene of the patriarch Jacob. To his bedside he calls his twelve sons, types of the twelve apostles. "And the walls of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb" (Rev. 21:14). He blesses them one by one. Then the deepest longing of his heart goes out in his dying cry: "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord." That cry was answered centuries after when the aged Simeon came into the temple and, taking the infant Jesus up in his arms, blessed God and said: "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace for mine eyes have seen thy salvation and the glory of thy people Israel." On Mount Sinai Moses prayed, "Show me thy glory." His prayer was answered when he stood on the Mount of Transfiguration and beheld the Christ radiant with the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. Job cried: "Oh! that I knew where I might find Him." The answer comes from Christ Himself: "I am the way and the truth and the life. He that hath seen me hath seen the Father also." In Psalm 130 we have a pathetic, yet fascinating, picture of the attitude of soul of the Old Testament saint. He is represented as a night watcher standing upon some high promontory. He has watched through the long, dark night, counting the weary hours, intently scanning the eastern horizon, looking eagerly for the first ray of coming day. "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning, I say, more than they that

watch for the morning." That pathetic cry gathers up the deepest heart-hunger of the entire Old Testament. At last the answers comes: "God hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. 4:6.) It was His blessed face that these Old Testament men wanted to see; His voice they wanted to hear.

"Far and wide, though all unknowing,
Pants for thee each mortal breast;
Human tears for thee are flowing,
Human hearts in thee would rest."

To the modern man, and to men of all ages, the Old Testament lifts up its voice and cries: "If any man thirst, let him come unto Christ and drink. He is the true food of the soul. He is the true God of men. He is the centre of everything and the object of everything. In Him is all thy strength and all thy happiness. Apart from Him there remains nothing but misery, errors, darkness and despair."

Of the Old Testament not less than of the New it may be said:

"It is the chart and compass
That o'er life's surging sea,
'Mid mists and rocks and quicksands,
Still guides, O Christ, to thee."