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THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE MODERN WORLD.

THE interest of the Old Testament is very many-sided: it is interesting to the student of history, of literature, of ethics, of ritual, of theology, of comparative religion. But what we are now primarily concerned with is its relevance to the life of to-day. The Old Testament can hold its place in the modern world, only if it has something vital to say to that world. There can be no doubt that it once spoke home to the hearts of men; the fact that it was so carefully and lovingly preserved by the later Jewish Church is proof enough of that. The books lived because they had helped men to live. Nothing can be more certain than that God spoke to *the fathers* by the prophets; the question is, Does He still speak through them to *us*? The world in which we live and move, with its steam and electricity, its telegraph and telephone, its mammoth cities with their mansions and their slums, is as different as could be from the simple world of the Hebrew fathers; and the word spoken to them, however relevant to their life, might conceivably have little relation to us. Yet it remains true that in all the deeper things life has changed but little. "Mankind advances," as Goethe has said, "but man remains ever the same." The ancient Hebrews, like us, had their life to live, their doubts to face, their sorrows to bear, their death to die; and over the ages we can clasp their hands and call them our brethren.

We do not forget, of course, that there is a great gulf fixed between them and us—a gulf of time and circumstance;

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but this gulf can be passed by serious and sympathetic study, by an intimate and accurate knowledge of the historical situation in which they were placed, and by native sympathy with them in their struggle for righteousness and their yearning after God. We have heard much of the timelessness of the Old Testament ; but its words are timeless, just because they were at first so timely. They live for ever, just because they come from the heart of living men and were addressed to a situation that was palpitating with reality. They are not, so to speak, in the air, but on the ground ; and one of the supreme tasks of the teacher or interpreter of the Old Testament is to requicken this ancient life, to reclothe the dry bones with flesh and sinew, to re-live the ancient experience which he is seeking to interpret, so that it may come home with freshness and power to the men of to-day. Being dead, those ancient men still speak to those who will take the trouble to understand their language ; and their message—not perhaps in its original form, but at any rate in its substance—is still a word of life to the very different world of to-day. Still the light that streams from the pages of Hebrew history and prophecy and poetry gives light to all that are in the house, and kindly rays fall beyond it upon those who are wandering without.

The religion of the Old Testament is, for the most part, a religion of this world. Its eyes are strained with hope and expectation towards the future, but seldom to a future beyond the grave. It is in this world that the purpose of God has to be wrought out and consummated, it is amid the historical forces of this world that the redemption of humanity is to be achieved, it is in the cities of this world that the redeemed will have their home. Here we cannot but feel a singular correspondence between the Old Testament and much that is characteristic of modern thought.

Both care supremely for the world that now is ; wherever else God may be, they both demand loudly that He be here—and the Old Testament finds Him here. The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein, and the whole earth is full of His glory. Hebrew thinkers had little or no gift for speculation, there was no danger of their losing themselves in the mazes of metaphysical discussion. The God in whom they believed was a God who moved among the facts—in the phenomena of nature, in the course of individual life, in the movements of national and international history. He was a living God. Just as men lived and moved and had their being in Him, so, in a sense, He lived and moved and had his being in them. He spoke in the noise of the thunder, in the words of the prophets, in the clash of nations. Job finds relief for his torn and desperate heart in the contemplation of the wonders of the material world—in the earth and sky and sea with all the strange and happy creatures that are therein. Robbed as he is of everything else, the world at least is left Him, and in the world is God. The Old Testament looks out upon the multitudinous facts of this world with glad and open eyes, and finds God there—in the treasures of field and vineyard, in the joys of home and country, in the march of the divine purpose across the years. We cannot be too grateful to the Old Testament for its emphasis upon the concrete realities of the world. It has something of the passion of modern science for facts. There clings to it from first to last a certain healthy materialism, the odour of this common earth ; and though this, in a sense, was the weakness of Old Testament religion, it was also its strength. So long as it cared so deeply for the things of this world, so long as it looked for and found God among the common things of daily experience, it could never sink to the level of an unreality.

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There are three directions in which the Old Testament speaks with an accent that is peculiarly modern—in its treatment of the problems of the individual, of society, and of the larger world.

(i.) The individual. For centuries the religious unit was practically the nation, and consequently the problem raised for the individual by the occasional disharmony between his character and his fortunes was not keenly felt. His own life was merged, as it were, in the larger life of his tribe or nation, so that, as an individual, he hardly counted. But once those problems are raised, as they begin to be shortly before the exile, they are discussed with a fearlessness and a candour which are frequently nothing less than astonishing. Sometimes in the honest and burning words we recognise the voice of men who had temporarily drifted into scepticism and pessimism, of men who knew what it was to feel the ground rock beneath their feet ; and step by step we can sometimes trace the struggle from doubt to faith and from perplexity to peace. The views of life reflected from the pages of the Old Testament are as various as the men who hold them. Of course it is also true that the Old Testament is inspired by a splendid sense of unity. To all its writers the fear of the Lord was the beginning of all true wisdom ; one and all, they were men who looked to God and were lightened. And yet with the heavenly light in their faces and with hope in God in their hearts, they looked out upon the facts of life in very various ways. At the same time as the Chronicler was seeking to illustrate from history the truth that in this world the wicked fare badly and the righteous well, the writer of the book of Job was, in one of his moods, vehemently challenging the moral order of the world, maintaining that God destroyed the innocent and the guilty alike, that the earth was given into the hands of the wicked, and that it was the tents of

the wicked that prospered. About the same time as the pessimistic preacher was asserting that man had no pre-eminence above a beast, and throwing out the half-sceptical, half-scornful question, "Who knoweth whether the spirit of man goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast downward?" there was at least one psalmist who believed that God not only guided him in this world, but would afterwards receive him to glory; and one prophet who maintained that many who slept in the dust of the earth would awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. There is a most refreshing and thoroughly modern variety of outlook in the Old Testament. Its writers face the facts each in his own way, and they express themselves without hesitation or disguise; they "would not make their judgment blind." The faith which they reach and hold is held in the face of all that can be said against it. They were for the most part men of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and it was out of the depths of bitter and perplexing experiences that they rose to the faith which made them steady and strong.

Most of all was their faith staggered by the misfortunes of good men and by the success of the unscrupulous. It was the very strength of their belief in God, in His power and His justice, that created for them the problem. If the earth was indeed the Lord's and the fulness thereof, to dispose of as He would, and if His will was indeed a righteous will, how came it that the good things of the world so often went to bad men and the bad things to good men? "Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: how much more the wicked and the sinner." That was the creed, but it did not always correspond to the facts; and if God were really Sovereign, why did He not render in this world to each man according to his work?—in this world, for if not here, then not at all. There was to most of the Old Testament thinkers no outlook upon immortality, no

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certainty of a judgment and a retribution beyond. If God did not justify, His ways to men in this world, they could be justified nowhere. To the saints of the Old Testament seeing was believing; and, if men saw no trace of Him, they found it hard to believe in Him. The sceptics are not convinced, and the pious are not content, until they *see* something. "Let Him make speed, let Him hasten His work, that we may see it." "Let Him shew Himself." "Doubtless Thou art righteous, Jehovah," says Jeremiah, "yet there are cases that I would discuss with Thee: why does the way of the wicked prosper, and why are all those at ease that deal very treacherously?" The prophet has a deep-seated faith in the justice of God, but he is sorely perplexed by the way in which He disposes His world. So with Jeremiah's contemporary Habakkuk, and again for the reason that right seems to be trampled beneath the heels of might. "Why, O my God, dost Thou hold Thy peace, when the wicked swallows up one that is more righteous than he?" Cries such as these, wrung from bleeding hearts, shew to what a fearful strain faith was sometimes put by the facts which it had to encounter.

Two facts, in particular, contributed to render the strain upon faith all the more tense and terrible: one was the common belief that goodness must be rewarded with things material, the other was the limitation of the outlook to this life. The fundamental faith of Israel was that the man who does well must fare well, and in the deepest sense this is everlastingly true; but it was long before Israel learned to put the deepest interpretation upon it. For centuries she understood welfare to mean largely material welfare; and, as many a good man fared badly enough, nay all the worse by reason of his very fidelity to his God, faith had a sore struggle to maintain itself, and agonised cries were often lifted up to heaven. "Why standest Thou afar off, O

Lord ? ” “ Where,” they asked, “ is the God of justice ? ” Belief in a future life in which the wrongs of this world might be rectified, might have soothed and quieted the heart ; but, as this belief did not dawn upon the mind of Israel till comparatively late in her development, the faithful were thrown back upon this world for the solution of the problems that vexed them, and, with so grave a limitation it can be no surprise that in all but the very greatest souls there is a sense of yearning and incompleteness.

Surely all this is very modern. The thought of to-day, like that of the Old Testament, is centring very largely round this present world. The future life does not hold the place which it once held and which it ought to hold in the minds of men. There is the feeling that the world in which we live is the only world we can be sure of ; and here, if anywhere, must the justice of God be displayed, and the good man find his satisfaction and reward. These feelings are shallow enough, no doubt ; but they are widely shared, and it is here that the Old Testament can render us a very valuable service. It starts with things material, but it does not rest there ; it moves, slowly indeed, but surely, towards a faith in the world to come. The emphasis placed upon material things by the Old Testament and by the modern world is not wrong in itself—“ the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof ” ; and if men were good in the Old Testament sense—just, merciful and kind—there would assuredly be a far more large and happy participation in the material blessings of this life. If the kingdom of God were sought by all first and foremost, the other things would undoubtedly be added. But the Old Testament does not rest in the material. Its greatest souls know of a satisfaction in God which nothing can shake or destroy, but which remains even when all the customary supports of faith and symbols of His presence are withdrawn. For

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Though the fig-tree shall not flourish
Neither shall fruit be in the vines ;
Though the labour of the olive fail,
And the fields yield no food ;
Though the flock be cut off from the fold,
And there be no herd in the stalls ;
Yet I will rejoice in Jehovah,
I will joy in the God of my salvation.

And again, just as the Old Testament learns to sit more loosely to material things, so it learns to look upon the life of the individual as not limited by this world. Both these moods are very clearly reflected in the seventy-third Psalm. Here is a man whose feet had almost slipped upon the weary way. He himself, for his fidelity to conscience, had been hurled to the wall, and he had been goaded by the prosperity of the unscrupulous into bitterness and scepticism: till one day it came upon him like a flash from heaven that, whatever he might lose and however he might suffer, he could not be robbed of God. He was continually with God and God with him ; and the God who was with him here—he realised with a sudden throb of joy—would take him in the end to Himself and be with him for ever. In his own sublime words : “ My heart and flesh fail, but God is my portion for ever.” Here the writer has soared completely above the materialism which haunts most of the Old Testament into the regions of the upper air where God is all in all ; and he also feels, as the Old Testament seldom does, that the fellowship begun in this world between the believer and his God will endure as long as God Himself. It is refreshing to go back behind the language of dogmatic theology to the simple and artless language of men who counted God their refuge and who could speak to Him as a man speaks to his friend.

(ii.) We have just seen how deeply and in how modern a spirit the Old Testament sympathises with the perplexities of the individual, and how these are solved by a larger

thought of God. We shall now consider briefly the message of the Old Testament to modern society. The aim of the Hebrew prophets may be described as the transformation of society, and no thinkers have ever seen more clearly or proclaimed more loudly than they that the only secure basis of society is morality and religion. The progress of the people from the simple days of the Judges to the more elaborate life of the times of the prophets had created a type of society and of social problem that in many important respects was strangely like our own. Partly through wars, whose ravages would tell more heavily upon the poor man than upon the rich, partly through the growth of cities and the rise of trade and commerce, society in the time of the prophets came to be cleft sharply into two divisions—the rich and the poor ; and already the problems had appeared which still trouble the civilisations of to-day. There was the land problem, for example, and the drink problem. There were those who joined house to house and field to field, till the poor man was crowded out, and the wealthy were left alone, as Isaiah bitterly complains, in possession of the land. There were those who crushed the people to pieces, who ground the honest faces of the poor as between the upper and the nether millstone. There were those who drank wine by the bowlful and who found the money to pay for it by defrauding the smaller man of his rights. There were those who built their palatial houses by labour for which they had not paid—houses whose stones were, so to speak, cemented with the blood of the builders, houses whose every brick and beam cried out to heaven against the luxurious despots who lived in them. There were those who took by force or by cunning the fields and houses which they coveted,—those who stripped the people to the bone ; who ate their flesh, in the fierce words of Micah, and broke their bones and chopped them in pieces as for the pot.

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Such was the society which the prophets sought to reform. Yet they were in no sense social reformers, except perhaps in the very deepest sense of all, that they set themselves the task of transforming, not the institutions but the men: the transformed men could be trusted to transform the institutions for themselves. In particular they sought to create among these widely divergent classes a sense of brotherhood. The word may seldom be upon their lips, but it is the underlying thought of all their preaching. High and low, rich and poor, the people stood to their God in a common relation of worshippers and sons, and therefore they were brethren one of another. "Have we not all one father?" one of the later prophets asks, "hath not one God created us? Why then do we play one another false by profaning the covenant of our fathers?" Now there was no lack of enthusiasm for religion on the part of those who trampled upon the poor. They rendered to their God a most scrupulous service, they trod His courts with joy, they offered their burnt offerings and fat beasts, and they lifted up their hands in prayer. But the uplifted hands were red with blood, and the spoil of the poor was in the gorgeous houses from which they went to the worship of the sanctuary.

Now it is the imperishable service of the Hebrew prophets that they bound together by an indissoluble link the service of God and the service of man. This is the great truth which each proclaims in his own way, that the service for which God supremely cares is the service of the needy: inasmuch as His would-be worshippers did it not unto them, they did it not unto Him. From most of the prophets golden sayings could be quoted which shew how little they care for ritual and how much for social righteousness. They cared nothing for the fast which merely bowed a man's head like a bulrush and clothed him in sackcloth and ashes, but they did care supremely for the spirit which prompted him to loose the

heavy burden and let the oppressed go free, to deal his bread to the hungry and bring the outcasts home. To us who are so prone to put a rather remote and mystical meaning upon such a phrase as the "knowledge of God," it comes with a shock of surprise to hear Jeremiah define this knowledge as social service—in the passage where, speaking of Josiah, he says, "He judged the cause of the poor and the needy : was not this to know me, saith Jehovah ?"

In this direction we have still an immense deal to learn from the Old Testament, which is a perpetual reminder that all true religion must express itself in a larger and tenderer humanity. "Seek justice, make the violent keep straight, secure the right of the orphan, undertake the cause of the widow." "Seek good," says Amos, "and ye shall live"; and the good he defines as the setting up of justice in the gate. His watchword is justice and fair play in the law courts, fair play between class and class, between man and man ; his demand is that justice in this sense shall roll on and on, free and unimpeded, like the waves of the sea ; and that, whatever be the political weather, righteousness, social righteousness, should roll on unintermittently like a perennial stream, which even in the fiercest heat of summer never dries up. As Amos pled in the name of his God for justice, so Hosea pleads for mercy : "I desire not sacrifice, but mercy"—that tender love to God which sweetens and hallows the relationships of men to one another, and expresses itself inevitably in love to man. The answer to that greatest of all questions, "What doth the Lord require of thee ?" is expressed by the prophets in terms of social duty—to do justly and to love mercy : and the prophets see what many a modern reformer fails to see, that while every society worthy of the name must rest upon a moral basis, that basis itself is secure only if it, in its turn, rests upon the everlasting rock of religion. He alone is certain to do

justly and to love mercy continually, who is conscious, in his individual and social life, of the God above him, and who walks humbly with Him. The prophets believed in the "fundamentals," and their fundamentals were justice, mercy and God.

Quite in the spirit of the prophets do the legislators too draw up their laws for the regulation of civic life. The interests of the poor, the weak, the helpless are continually in the mind of the Hebrew legislator: over and over again the widow, the orphan, and the "stranger" are commended to the liberality of the people. The fruit of the vine and the fields and the trees was not to be too carefully gathered in, and whatever was left over was to go to the poor and the needy. The profoundly humane and sympathetic temper of the legislation comes out strikingly in the words which reinforce the command to love the stranger: "for ye also were strangers in the land of Egypt." The dignity of human nature is everywhere respected. The feelings of a female prisoner of war, to whom most nations of the ancient world would have shewn scant courtesy, are most tenderly considered; and the dignity of the poor man who has been obliged to borrow is safeguarded by the provision that his creditor shall not go into his house to fetch his pledge: he must wait outside till the pledge be brought to him. What fine and delicate feeling breathes through regulations such as these! And how considerately the need, as well as the dignity, of the working-man is respected! He is not, for example, to be kept waiting for his wage; it is to be paid him the day he earns it, before the sun goes down. The society lady who kept her dressmaker waiting twelve months for the money which is rightly hers and which should be paid as soon as the work is done, would have received short shrift from the Hebrew legislators, if their authority had been as great as their devotion to the public

welfare. Provision is made to regulate the hours of labour. "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God : in it thy manservant and thy maidservant shall not do any work, but they shall rest as well as thou." If the master is entitled to his rest, no less is the man. Here again, in the phrase *they as well as thou*, so simple yet so far-reaching and profound, lies a suggestion of the fraternity which ought to subsist between members of the same social system, and which, if it did subsist, would go a long way towards solving the problems of modern society. This thought receives astonishing expression in the great speech in which Job vindicates his character against the aspersions of his friends, and which more clearly and fully than any other part of the Old Testament exhibits the Hebrew ideal of a good man. He claims, in language that would have made the heart of the prophets leap for joy, that he had delivered the poor when he cried, the fatherless also that had none to help him, and that he had caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. But he touches the loftiest height in the words, "Never did I despise the cause of my manservant or my maidservant when they contended with me. *Did not He that made me in the womb make him, and did not One fashion us in the womb ?*" No Greek could have said that ; one of the very greatest of them argued that the slave was but the tool of his master. But this sublime Hebrew thinker saw that the beggar sustained the same relations to God and to mother earth as did the prince—one God had made them both—so that in very truth the little man is the brother of the great man, and supercilious treatment of the poor is nothing less than blasphemy against his Maker. Enough has been said to shew how carefully the interests of the poor were considered and safeguarded ; but it was clearly recognised by some at least that the ideal society was one in which there would be no poor, a society in which all the

people would eat bread without scarceness and not lack any good thing.

It is worth noting, too, how often by the prophets the blame is laid for the corruption of society at the door of the leaders of her civil, political, and religious life—the princes, the judges, the priests, the prophets. Each man, they well knew, has his own share of responsibility, but the leaders have a very special share. Leaders must have both the ability and the courage to lead: too often they were deflected from the honest pursuit of their duty by greed of gain. “The leaders judge for reward, and the priests teach for hire, and the prophets divine for money.” Hebrew thinkers were peculiarly conscious of the power of money to pervert the soul; and when men in positions of power were false to their high trust, they dragged down the people with them—like priest, like people.

But the love of gain was a temptation to which not only the leaders, but the common people as well, were exposed—its roots were deep in the human heart; and very earnest are the warnings against the insidious rise of the materialistic temper. “Beware lest, when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses and dwelt therein, and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, then thy heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord; and beware lest thou say in thine heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth.’ But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for He it is that giveth thee power to get wealth.” When a nation begins to care more for the things she can count and weigh than for truth and goodness, she must cease to play any vital part in the progress of the world. This is a lesson peculiarly needed by the younger lands across the seas, where there is the standing temptation to measure national progress by material standards. Yet the older nations too

must keep the warning continually before them, if they would continue to contribute to the world's higher life.

There breathes through the Old Testament a great sense of the glory and obligations of nationality. The society which the prophets strove to win for God was a national society ; and here again we have much to learn from Israel. No nation ever had a higher sense of mission and destiny : no nation ever had a keener appreciation of the continuity of national life, and of the reality of national responsibility. Even when Jehovah was felt to be the God of the whole world, He still remained in a peculiar sense—what He had been from the exodus to the exile—the national God of Israel. To us a national God may seem a poor and limited God, but the very limitation was a source of strength. It is a great thing for a nation to have a God in whom, as a nation, it believes ; a God with a purpose to which, as a nation, it strives deliberately to contribute. Despised and rejected as she was, Israel knew herself to be the servant of the Lord with a great world-mission to fulfil. And if the nations of the modern world had the same appreciation as Israel had of the great purpose that is being wrought out in history, and if each could regard herself, like Israel, as in some sense the servant of that purpose and were willing to bend her energies to the fulfilling of the same, the animosities of rival nations would for ever vanish and each would vie with the other only in rendering the noblest service to humanity.

(iii.) Now that we have considered the Old Testament treatment of the individual and of society, especially in its national form, let us consider briefly its attitude to international relations and to the larger world. It must be frankly confessed that the interest of the average Jew was restricted to his own people, and that he frequently thought of other nations with hostility, regarding them as enemies

of the Kingdom of God. His brethren were the Jews, not the men of other lands. The context of the great command "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" puts it beyond all doubt that the neighbour is a fellow-Jew. Even when thought takes a nobler flight forward to the days when all the world shall be bound together by the common worship of the great God, Jerusalem is still thought of as the great religious metropolis, the centre and capital of the world. The Old Testament never quite reaches the point at which it could say, "Neither in this mountain nor yet in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father." A tinge of national particularism colours its most catholic and comprehensive dreams.

Yet some of the nobler spirits come very near transcending these national limitations. Some, especially of the later books of the Old Testament, have little or nothing that is specifically Jewish about them at all: they breathe the spirit of the great world. The wisdom of the book of Proverbs is a large human wisdom: the problem faced by the book of Job is a great human problem, not Israel's any more than ours; the pessimism of the book of Ecclesiastes is the voice of the weary souls of a hundred lands. Despite their profound sense of separation, the Jews, or some of them at least, were coming to feel their kinship with the larger world. What is the book of Ruth, for example, but a noble plea for the alien? It was probably written at a time when stern measures were being taken for the dissolution of the marriages of Hebrews with foreign women, who were regarded as a menace to the purity of Hebrew religion; and here is a deep-hearted Hebrew, who is not afraid to look upon a Moabite woman as his sister, and as an Israelite indeed. What is the book of Jonah, but an eloquent protest against the narrow idea that God cared for Israel only—a plea for a love which stretches beyond the borders

of Israel and covers the whole world? It is still true that Israel holds a unique place: it is by her men and her message that the world is to be brought to the knowledge of Jehovah, it is to her God that the ends of the earth have to look in order to be saved. Still the middle wall of partition is beginning to be broken down, and there slowly dawns the vision of a day when nations that once hated and feared and fought each other shall lay aside their ancient rivalries and band themselves together gladly in the cause of peace and in the worship of the living God. "In that day there shall be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria; and the Egyptians shall worship with the Assyrians."

Most wonderful and modern of all is the great vision, repeated twice in prophecy, of the days when the nations that were wont to settle their quarrels by the sword, deliberately resolve to go to Zion as the world's great seat of justice, to submit their cases to arbitration. "Many nations shall go and say, Come and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, and He will teach us of His ways: for out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem; and He will judge between the nations and decide concerning the peoples": and so reasonable and satisfactory is the decision that the armed men go away content, with thoughts of war in their heart no more, but resolved to beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruninghooks, so that, in transforming their weapons, they transform themselves and the world. Here surely, in this dream of an ancient seer, lies the real solution of the war-problem which presses to-day so heavily upon the hearts of all true lovers of humanity—that the nations shall be willing to submit their disputes to a court which they can trust, because it is the embodiment of even-

handed justice, and that they shall be willing to abide by the decision which that court has pronounced. This prophecy is almost a description, in so many words, of what actually took place a little over three years ago at the Hague, where a century-old dispute between Great Britain and the United States was finally settled, and a great menace to the harmony, if not to the peace, of those nations was for ever removed. The President of the Tribunal used very striking words to characterise the epoch-making importance of the decision. "And now," he said, "these two nations, to which the world is indebted for so much of its progress in every sphere of human thought and action, have agreed to submit their long-standing conflict to the arbitration of this tribunal. . . . In so doing, these governments have set an example to the whole community of nations and have acquired a new merit in the sublime cause of international justice and peace." I simply quote these words to shew how modern the Old Testament is, how full of practical wisdom, how much it may still be our guide as well as our inspiration in the complex world of to-day.

Thus, whether in its treatment of the problems of the individual, of society, or of the great world, the Old Testament speaks to us words of deep wisdom and of broad humanity, which are as true and as potent to-day as when first they were spoken. And because it believes so profoundly in a God whose purpose in history must be ultimately triumphant—"for Jehovah of hosts hath purposed, and who shall annul it?"—its final word is a word of hope. It is always looking beyond the days that now are to the days that shall be: it is always holding before the disappointed eyes of men the fairer future that is to be the issue of the present: it is always saying, "It shall come to pass in the latter days." One prophet conceives the future in this way, and another in that; but all are agreed that there will come

a yet more glorious day. Beyond the social and political confusions of the present they see the new Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God.

JOHN E. MCFADYEN.

*THE WORDS "WITCH" AND "WITCHCRAFT":
THEIR PROPER AND IMPROPER USE IN
HISTORY AND LITERATURE.*¹

No one can have read with intelligence and care writings dealing with Magic and allied phenomena without being impressed with the loose and careless way in which the words "witch" and "witchcraft" have been employed. We have a capital instance of this in the A.V. and other older English versions of the Bible in which we read of "witches" and of "witchcraft," though the ideas which the majority of people connect with these terms were unknown to Bible writers and indeed wholly unknown in Bible times. Misled by our translators, commentators on the Bible and writers on theological and allied subjects have said much which we, with our fuller and more accurate information, know to be incorrect. It is the aim of this paper to show the origin of the confusion and to make suggestions with a view to greater accuracy in the employment of these and related terms.

The word "witch" seems to note etymologically one who knows. It is derived from the A.S. "wicca," which, though strictly masculine, came very early to be used of the male and female irrespective of sex. For a long time the English word "witch" stood for a male rather than a female. In Wycliff's (d. 1384) translation of Acts viii. 9 Simon Magus is called a "witch." In the "Vision of Piers

¹ Paper read at the International Congress of the Science of History, London, April 4, 1913.