

**THE ORIGIN AND
PERMANENT VALUE OF
THE OLD TESTAMENT**

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The Origin and Permanent Value of the Old Testament by Charles Foster Kent

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*"He shall know the Truth and the Truth shall
make you free"*

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PREFACE

DURING the past generation the Old Testament has commanded equally with the New the enthusiastic and devoted study of the great body of biblical scholars throughout the world. Two out of every three graduate students in our universities who specialize in the general field of biblical literature choose the Old as the special centre of their work. At the same time the tendency of the rank and file of the Christian church within the past decade has undoubtedly been to neglect the older Testament. Preachers as a rule select less than a fourth of their texts from it; the prevailing courses of Bible study devote proportionately less time to it; and teachers and scholars in the great majority of cases turn to the Old Testament with much less enthusiasm than they do to the New. Why are these two great currents setting in opposite directions, and what are the causes of the present popular neglect of the Old Testament? If the Old Testament should be relegated to a second place in our working

canon of the Bible, let us frankly and carefully define our reasons. If, on the other hand, the prevailing apathy and neglect are due to ignorance of the real character and value of the Old Testament, let us lose no time in setting ourselves right.

The present volume has been suggested by repeated calls from ministerial bodies, popular assemblies, and groups of college students for addresses on the themes here treated. The aim has been to give in concise, popular form answers to some of the many questions thus raised, with the conviction that they are in the mind of every thoughtful man and woman to-day, and especially on the lips of earnest pastors, missionaries, and Sunday-school teachers. There are indications on every side of a deepening and far more intelligent interest in the needs and possibilities of religious education. Its vital importance to the life of the Church and the nation is being understood as never before. Earnest and fruitful efforts are being put forth to improve the methods and courses of instruction. The first essential, however, is a true understanding and appreciation of that Book of Books, which will forever continue to be the chief manual "for teaching, for reproof, for

correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, completely fitted for every good work." The supreme importance and practical value of the New Testament are recognized by all, but we usually forget when we quote the familiar words of Paul that he had in mind simply the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

In divine Providence mighty forces have been quietly at work during the past century removing false rabbinical traditions and misconceptions that had gathered about these ancient Scriptures, while from other sources has come new light to illumine their pages. The result is that in the Old Testament the Christian world is discerning a new heritage, the beauty and value of which is still only half suspected even by intelligent people. This fact is so significant and yet so little recognized that one feels impelled to go out and proclaim it on the housetops. The Old Testament can never be properly presented from the pulpit or in the class-room while the attitude of preacher and teacher is apathetic and the motive a sense of duty rather than an intelligent acquaintance with its real character and genuine admiration and enthusiasm for its vital truths. The irresistible fascination which has