The Messages of the Earlier Prophets, Arranged in the Order of Time, Analyzed, and Freely Rendered in Paraphrase

Kent Charles Foster
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The Messages of the Bible

BY

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PREFACE

The statement has become almost proverbial that the Bible is the "plain man's book," a book that can be understood and used by those who lay no claim to scholarship. True as this may be of the Gospels and the historical books of the Bible, its application is not universal. There are not a few passages, and even whole sections, of the Bible, which, because of obscurities of style and arrangement, convey no intelligible idea to many readers.

For these reasons, no part of the Scriptures suffers more neglect and misapprehension than the prophetic writings. Their choicest thought lies deep, and rewards none but the patient and careful student. One who merely reads in course a certain number of chapters each day is largely cut off from a true appreciation of the part that the prophet played in the progress of revelation. Even the eager student, if he lack the clue to the prophetic labyrinth, is forced to wander aimlessly and without result through its mazes.

To seek to introduce to this fair and fruitful domain of revelation the multitudes of zealous Bible students who lack the time or the opportunity for gaining entrance
Preface

for themselves, is the privilege and duty of the Christian scholar. His task is not a difficult one. By rearranging the prophetic writings in a truly chronological order, and by indicating their interpretation through a paraphrase, he can enable the general student to grasp their meaning and their force. He can at the same time clear up many incidental obscurities, can indicate the definite results of active and sober scholarship in the past, and can arouse a real enthusiasm for the detailed mastery of these sublime products of inspired religious thought.

The present volume is offered to the public as an attempt to meet these needs of the Bible reader. The limitations inherent in such work have not been overlooked. It is clearly impossible to reproduce the beauty and vigor of the language of the prophets, or to represent the wealth of poetic and oratorical embellishment which is so characteristic a feature of it. A paraphrase must chiefly aim at clearness. Whoever has once caught the real spirit of prophetic thought will not fail to study it in detail, and thus will acquire for himself an appreciation of its remarkable quality.

Brackets are used to indicate passages which are generally regarded as later additions to the original text.

Frank Knight Sanders.
Charles Foster Kent.

September, 1898.
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