

**THE MESSAGE OF  
THE  
TWELVE PROPHETS**

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The message of the twelve prophets by William D. Murray

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And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place.—2 PETER 1:19.

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## Introduction

Several reasons have influenced the author in preparing this book. The first is that those who have spent their lives studying the prophetic books of the Bible, as well as those who have studied these books even in a cursory fashion, are agreed that "they form the key to all the chief problems of Old Testament study, and without them no one can hope to make any real progress in the knowledge of the Old Testament as a whole."

Another reason is well expressed by Cornill in his *Prophets of Israel*: "The whole history of humanity has produced nothing which can be compared in the remotest degree with the prophecy of Israel. Through prophecy Israel became the prophet of mankind. Let this never be overlooked or forgotten—the costliest and noblest treasure that man possesses he owes to Israel and to Israelitic prophecy."

These studies are an attempt to make the Minor Prophets a subject for devotional study. They have therefore been arranged in brief daily portions and are printed so that questions can be answered in writing. It is of the first importance that this should be done.

The text used in preparing this volume is that of the American Standard Edition of the Revised Version which should be used by students. The questions, oftentimes, will be unintelligible in connection with other texts of the Bible.

The studies are arranged so that each of the prophets forms a book study by itself, covering one or more complete weeks. Students are urged, while studying a particular book, to read it through occasionally. In no other way can the message in its entirety be grasped. For this purpose the volumes on the Minor Prophets in the Modern Reader's Bible and in the Temple Bible are recommended. The former is, perhaps, the best book for the purpose, as it uses the Revised Version and shows the



literary characteristics of the book; the latter is in the authorized text and has brief, helpful introductions. In this connection the chart at the end of the book ought to be carefully filled in as the studies proceed.

A chronological chart is printed giving the place of the prophets in the history of the Hebrew people, together with the names and dates of a few of the more important kings. In many cases the date of the prophet can be fixed only approximately, but some order had to be adopted, and the one here followed is that which commends itself to the author. The map of the country is of great importance and should be frequently consulted.

From time to time, throughout the studies, references to other books of the Old Testament and to various historical events will be found, which it is thought will give a fairly complete, though brief, outline of the history of the Old Testament, at least an outline upon which future studies may be based.

Many books might be recommended, besides those above mentioned, but only two or three need be referred to here. George Adam Smith's *Book of the Twelve Prophets* in the Expositors' Bible Series is almost indispensable, if one wishes to hear the message for to-day which these old prophets spoke. Sander's and Kent's *Messages of the Prophets*, a paraphrase of the text, throws a flood of light upon the meaning of the books. Farrar's *Minor Prophets* in Men of the Bible Series and *The Minor Prophets* by Rev. John Adams, in Bible Class Primers, are small but helpful books. The thanks of the author are heartily given to all those from whose works he has quoted.

The words of a recent writer might well be repeated here: "It is hardly necessary," he says, "to bespeak attention for the Scriptures included in this volume. They are 'minor' only in length; for the rest, it is doubtful if any collection of miscellaneous literature has ever brought together so many writers of such surpassing interest. They stretch over a period of time which, on one theory of dates, is as great as that which in English literature separates Wycliffe from Browning. Of the individual prophets, Amos was a herdsman and dresser of sycamore trees; Daniel a mage, and one of a triumvirate administering a world empire; Jonah was a missionary; Micah a plain countryman; Zephaniah of royal descent; the rest have

died away from human record leaving only their works to speak for them." And another has said: "The period between Amos and the return is the golden age of Old Testament literature."

These studies were prepared originally for use in the author's Bible class of business men, and have been taught by him at various times. Out of each class which has studied them, one or more of the members has gone into Christian work; they have heard the call of God through the prophets of old. It is the earnest desire of the author that through this book the same call shall come to many more men, and that yet others, in larger numbers, shall listen to the message to live a fuller and a richer Christian life.

WILLIAM D. MURRAY.

PLAINFIELD, N. J.

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