

Author's Preface

During my first year of teaching, I decided to read through the books of the Old Testament Prophets. I read a few chapters each evening, starting with the first chapter of Isaiah and continuing to the end of Malachi. Then I found, to my dismay, that I did not remember anything I had read. All the beautiful phrases of the King James translation of this portion of the Bible had passed through my mind, but only a blurred impression of the beautiful phrases remained.

During the next six years, most of my time was spent studying and teaching other portions of the Old Testament. Then after the resignation of a colleague, I was asked to give a course in the Prophetic Books of the Old Testament and I spent a summer preparing for this task. I prayed that the Lord would illumine my mind and enable me to discover the truths He desired me to teach. I began to ask such questions as: where are the natural divisions of each passage? what do we know about the situation the prophet was addressing when he wrote these words? which Hebrew or Aramaic words contained in the passage need to be examined with particular care? what other Scriptural passages might throw light on this one?

As I asked these questions and prayerfully looked for answers to them, the inspired words began to illuminate one another, and what had been only beautiful words began to shine with previously unexpected meaning. I began the study in Jeremiah, where the problems are much simpler than in the book of Isaiah. Students were enthusiastic about this approach. One summer, my good friend, Dr. J. Oliver Buswell, who was then president of the National Bible Institute, asked me to give a lecture on the interpretation of Isaiah, and then asked me to write it up for publication in *The Bible Today*, a monthly magazine of which he was editor. I described the method I had been using and applied it to the beginning of Isaiah. He asked for a second article, etc., and this continued for several years.

Recently, I learned that many Bible teachers had kept the issues of the little magazine and others were asking where they could get copies. The library of Biblical Theological Seminary, which had a complete file of the articles, began to receive inquiries about copies, and several inquirers paid for