

Calvin on Minor Prophets

The Jewish lists of books of the Old Testament, what we call the minor prophets, are lumped together as one book and entitled "The Twelve".

There is nothing minor about these books except their size. In them are found some of the very finest passages of the Old Testament. Many sections of them are easy to understand and extremely important in their teaching for Christians. Other sections are extremely difficult and involved. To Christians they are perhaps the least known section of the Bible. If one joins with them the book of Ezekiel, many sections of Job, ^{one} we will have the section of the Bible which is perhaps least known among Christian people, yet Calvin thought this section of sufficient importance to give to it four volumes of his commentary. He devoted as much space to the minor prophets as he did to the book of Isaiah and nearly as much as he did to the gospels, nearly twice as much as he did to the book of Genesis. To Calvin this was no unimportant section of the Bible.

The fact that Calvin devoted so much space to discoursing on the minor prophets is easily explained in view of his attitude toward the Scripture. It was his conviction that the only way in which true and complete knowledge of God can be secured is through the revelation that God has given us. He firmly believed the words of the apostle Paul that all Scripture is inspired of God and is also profitable for doctrine, for instruction, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ^{believing(?)} ~~Having~~ the source of knowledge of spiritual things was the Word of God. He never felt free to take a single section of the Word of God and then to make inferences from it, going beyond what was clearly taught there or elsewhere in the Scripture. He felt that it was the duty of every Christian to familiarize himself with the entire book. He prescribed that at Geneva there should be sermons every day in the week interpreting some portion of the Word of God. When John Knox introduced Calvinism into Scotland the fundamental part of his work was the establishment in the larger towns of the custom of having sermons