

conscience, blending earnest calls to repentance and obedience with wonderful predictions of coming events that were to affect the destiny of nations." ¹ Why do we study their writings? Because they contain the great ethical and religious principles that are the foundations of faith and duty for all generations, and reveal Him before whose eye the future was an open book. The Christian Church, St. Paul declares, is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief corner-stone." Throughout the New Testament it is constantly assumed that the teaching of the prophets was supernaturally revealed and possessed divine authority.

MODERN CRITICAL STUDY OF THE PROPHETS.

A new and intense interest in these prophetic writings has been evoked in recent times, by the extent to which they have become subjects of close and learned critical study. If the large cairns of stones piled over the bones of those who fell on famous battle fields show where the fight raged most fiercely, and what points were deemed most important, the numerous volumes and articles in periodicals, discussing the prophets of Israel, bear testimony to the interest with which the learned world regards these ancient oracles. The indirect and incidental references to contemporary events, or the silence respecting such events—the style and mental idiosyncrasies of the writers—linguistic peculiarities which are thought to be characteristic of the language at some stage in its history—the way in which the ideas harmonize with the supposed condition of religious progress at certain times—the disinterred records of a forgotten civilization—all have been keenly questioned to give evidence respecting the dates, the authorship, and the purpose of these records of writers, who claim to speak as revealers of God's will to His ancient people.

It would be beyond the range of these introductory remarks to state what I deem the outcome of these microscopic, analytic criticisms of the Old Testament. But a brief reference to these results may be permitted.

It may be freely conceded that this critical study of the

¹ Jesus the Messiah.