

prophets", we propose, ⁱⁿ ~~this~~ this study, to limit ourselves to the so-called Minor Prophets. They speak clearly and particularly (what the Major Prophets also do) regarding these things. The events in the theocratic kingdoms of Israel and Judah had reached such a pass that the prophets of this class stand forth speaking with special directness on these points. The condition of the times and all their circumstances for the greater purposes of God's counsel are well stated by Edersheim, in his "History of Israel and Judah". We now give a rather lengthy quotation because it so admirably serves our purpose:

"Even a superficial study must convince that from a religious point of view, and particularly as regards Israel's future and the great hope of the world and entrusted to their keeping, we have now reached a new period. We are not now thinking of the general religious and moral decay, nor of the national judgment which was so soon to follow, but the other and wider aspect of it all. God's great judgments, when viewed from another point are always soon to be attended with wider manifestations of mercy. It is never judgment only, but judgment and mercy; and every movement is a movement forward, even though in making it there should be a crushing down and a breaking down. Even here, so early in the history of the kingdom of God the casting away of Israel was to be the life of the world. For with this period a new stage of prophecy begins. Hitherto the prophets had been chiefly God-sent teachers and messengers to their contemporaries, reproofing, warning, guiding, encouraging. Henceforth their contemporaries who were hardened beyond hope of recovery, their outlook is henceforth on the great hope of the Messianic kingdom. They have despaired of the present; but their thought is of the future. They have despaired of the kingdom of Israel and of Judah; but the divine thought of preparation that underlies it come