

day been found erroneous, and the system universally adopted by these commentators, and as universally followed by our ministers, of spiritualizing everything which did not (from their defective knowledge of God's word as compared with His works of providence as seen in his history) appear plain to them, has likewise tended to darken the understanding of not a few, who, unable, or unwilling, or both, to search and prove all things for themselves, are content blindly to follow whithersoever these good men may lead, caring nothing that "doctors differ" in theology as well as medicine, and that the earth for a time covers both their mistakes.

That the lost ten tribes of Israel have not long ago been found, may largely be due to the fact that our commentators, past and present, have failed to notice the broad distinction which the Scriptures make between the two "Houses" of Israel and Judah. From their point of view all Israelites are Jews—even Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are no exceptions to this rule—and accordingly they have jumbled up the promises and threatenings, the blessings and the curses, until perfect chaos has become the result.

Following such leading, Voltaire, it is said, came to the conclusion that the Bible was false and untrustworthy, because the prophecies regarding the Jews were so full of contradictions, blessings and curses and curses and blessings, alternating with such wonderful rapidity that he failed to see how the same people could be under the blessings and under the curses at the same time, and to-day, many like him failing to see the distinction, and to interpret the Scriptures according to the dictates of common sense, have, if not daring to accept his rash conclusions, acknowledged their total inability to penetrate their meaning and therefore consider it wisest totally to ignore them.

It is worthy of note that the Biblical Revision Committee have drawn attention to the fact, that in the headings of the prophetic chapters, great liberties have been taken with the text, the "Church" being credited with nearly all the blessings which were to be the portion of Israel in the latter days. J. Turvey in commenting upon this very question says, "It is a prevalent practice when reading of Israel and their future, as indicated in the prophetic writings, to assume that the Jews are the people referred to, and this view is frequently propounded in our schools and churches. There is, however, anything but consistency in this matter, for many there are among our learned authorities and among Bible students generally, who will tell us that the curses rightfully belong to the Jews but that the blessings, although promised to the Israelites, belong to the Christian Church; thus totally ignoring the people to whom the promises were

made, and placing the "Church" in its stead. What grounds are there, we may ask, for applying to the Gentiles the promises given to Israel? No such course is adopted with reference to the curses pronounced on the Jews, but they (the Jews) are allowed to have full and undisputed possession of them. If then Judah's curses are to be taken in their literal signification, of which by the way, there is no disputing, for we had the very people before our eyes a living fulfilment of them, we must with every sense of right and justice, claim the same interpretations for the great and glorious promises given to Israel.

Further on he says: "At this period (the captivity to Assyria) they suddenly and permanently drop out of the historical portion of the Bible, but prophecy supplies the sequel. No more of their doings are chronicled, but their whole future is foretold with great minuteness of detail and in all its fullness of character.

Many tender and forgiving messages were sent after them with assurances of mercy and forgiveness and repeated promises of a restoration. There are also numerous predictions as to their becoming, (during their absence from their own land,) scattered and lost. They were to be divorced from the law and to be redeemed. They are frequently addressed in the Isles of the Sea, and the Isles of the West, where they should become multitudinous, great and powerful and God's witnesses for the truth. They were to find the islands too small for them in their rapid development, when they should break forth on the right hand and on the left inhabiting the desolate heritages, and filling the face of the world with fruit. They were to become the cord, or measuring-line of God's inheritance and "all that see them shall acknowledge them that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed." On the other hand, predictions concerning the House of Judah or the Jews, are, that they should be few in number, bereft of children, a bye-word, a proverb, an astonishment, a reproach, and a shame. These two sets of predictions cannot possibly refer to one and the same people; besides the context shows that in the one case they refer to Israel and in the other to Judah. How those relating to Judah have been fulfilled is well known; but that those relating to Israel have also been, or will be likewise literally fulfilled we may be equally assured."

The following comparative view presents a number of points on which the distinction is clearly and visibly manifest.

1. The Kingdom of Israel consisted of ten tribes, 1 Kings xi. 31; xii. 1-19; Josephus, book 8, chap. viii.

The Kingdom of Judah consisted of two tribes, 1 Kings xii. 20-21; Josephus, book 8, chap. viii.