

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_churchman\\_os.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php)

And then, having lived so much and seen so much and done so much together, the time comes for us each to go our different ways. We make the partings short, because of the unspoken sadness which we are all conscious of, but which we carry off with a jaunty little air, as our hands, English fashion, do duty for our hearts, and betray us at each clasp. You cannot live for three weeks with people and not catch something of themselves, while a part of yourself too seems to remain with them. We all wonder a little what they have said and thought of us, and hope against hope that they think half as much good of us as we do of them.

Well, of course we know that we shall never all meet again in the happy freedom of these three weeks. It is not easy to go back to our "daily round," but we resolutely set our faces towards our work, take our courage in both hands, and the thing is done.

Then, later on, when things go wrong, as they will do now and then, when household cares lie heavy on us, when business makes too urgent claims on a wearied mind, when the weight of the London whirl oppresses, when life seems hard, and perhaps just a trifle dreary, as it does to most of us at times, we look back rather wistfully to those days of comradeship, when we took things simply, and when the clouds on our horizon for the time were no bigger than a man's hand. We do not forget, though we bury our memories deep, and seldom bring them to the light, for fear of tarnishing their lustre. And after all they are the great measure in the lives of most of us: "*Le temps n'est que l'espace entre nos souvenirs.*"

ALBINA BRODRICK.



#### ART. V.—SOME OF THE MESSIANIC PROPHECIES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

I HAVE in a former paper (CHURCHMAN, vol. xiv., p. 270) considered a few of the more important of the Messianic passages of the Old Testament, with reference to the changes which have been introduced into them by the recent revision. I propose in this paper to resume the subject, and I shall begin with that passage which has always been regarded as the earliest of the Messianic prophecies, the Protevangelium, the promise given to Adam and Eve in Paradise of man's final victory over the Tempter. It is not a passage, indeed, where any change has been made by the Revisers in the text, but it is one to which a marginal note has been added which may require some explanation. The verse (Gen. iii. 15) reads in the

R.V. as in the A.V., "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." But in the R.V. there is a marginal note on the word "bruise:" or, *lie in wait for*: and to this an objection has been taken, as tending to obliterate or at least to lower the Messianic sense. I believe this to be an entirely groundless objection. Let us look at the facts.

In the first place, considerable uncertainty attaches to the meaning of the Hebrew verb *shūph*, rendered "bruise" in the text. The verb occurs only twice besides in the Bible, in Job ix. 17, where both the A.V. and the R.V. have "he *breaketh* me with a tempest;" and in Psalm cxxxix. 11, where the A.V. has, "If I say, Surely the darkness shall *cover* me," for which the R.V. substitutes, "shall *overwhelm* me." Now if in the former passage God may be said to "break" Job with a tempest in the same sense that a man crushes the head of a serpent with his heel, it is quite clear that in the latter the Psalmist did not intend to describe the darkness as "bruising" or "crushing" him, although strangely enough the LXX. have rendered the verb by *καταπατήσει* ("shall trample upon"), in the Psalm, and by *ἐκτριψη* ("shall crush"), in Job, while in Genesis they have *τηρεῖν* ("watch for"), in both clauses of the verse. But it is obvious that some ambiguity must attach to the use of a word which can be used indifferently of the "crushing" of a serpent's head, of the serpent's "lying in wait for" or "biting" the heel of man, of God's "breaking" a man with a tempest, and of the darkness "overwhelming" him. At the most it can only be said that some idea of hostility or violence is common to the verb in all the instances in which it is employed.

This indeed has been felt so strongly in the passage under consideration (Gen. iii. 16), that a large number of interpreters, both ancient and modern, have given a different rendering to the verbs in the two members of the verse. Thus, for instance, the Syriac has in the first clause, "it shall trample on," and in the second, "thou shalt strike;" Saadyah in the first, "it shall break," and in the second, "thou shalt bite;" Jerome has, "Ipse *conteret* caput tuum, et tu *insidiaberis* calcaneo ejus;" and Luther has in the first place, "Zertreten," and in the second, "in die Ferse stechen." It is evident that our own Version in endeavouring to find a word which should suit both clauses, has not been quite successful. The verb "bruise" cannot be used in exactly the same sense in both. He who tramples on the serpent's head may certainly be said to "bruise" it, but the serpent does not in strict propriety of language "bruise," it "wounds" the heel in which it fastens its fangs.

Of the ancient interpreters, two have kept the same rendering in the two clauses, but with a difference of meaning. The Samaritan has in both "strike through;" the LXX. (as I have already said) in both, "watch," or "lie in wait for," *αὐτός σου τηρήσει κεφαλὴν καὶ σὺ τηρήσεις αὐτοῦ πτέρναν.*

Between these two senses, to "crush," or "bruise," on the one hand, and to "watch," or "lie in wait for," on the other, it is not easy to decide. For the derivation from the Aramaic root *shāph* or *shōph*, to "bruise," there is much to be said, though it obviously applies in all strictness only to the trampling on the serpent's head in the first member of the verse, and is not applicable to the act of the serpent in attacking the heel of its antagonist. On the other hand, the derivation from another root, signifying "to long after," "strive at," "to watch with hostile intent," is applicable to both, but denotes rather the struggle itself than the result of the struggle. But the point on which I wish to insist, is, that if following the most ancient authorities, the LXX., the old Latin, and Onkelos, we adopt the rendering "lie in wait for," which is given in the Revisers' margin, we do not destroy the Messianic character of the passage. Even if there were any peril of this, it must be bravely met. Honesty is the first consideration, and simple fidelity to the text; weighed in the balance with these, traditional interpretations are altogether lighter than vanity itself. But here the Messianic interpretation, rightly understood, is not endangered. The proof on this point, as it happens, is peculiarly clear and decisive. The earliest interpretation of the passage in any ancient writer is to be found in Irenæus, and Irenæus knew nothing of Hebrew, and his comment consequently turns wholly on the Greek version of the LXX. That version, as we have seen, gives the rendering, "lie in wait for." But how does Irenæus explain it? In his great work, 'Against Heresies' (lib. iv., cap. xi., § 3, *ad fin.*), after quoting the verse as it stands in the LXX., he writes, "And this enmity did the Lord sum up in Himself, having been made man of a woman, and having trampled upon his (the serpent's) head." So also in a previous place where we have only the Latin translation (lib. iii., cap. xxiii., § 7), he says:

Wherefore he put enmity between the serpent and the woman and her seed, as watching one another (*observantes invicem*): the one who had his heel bitten having nevertheless power to trample on the head of his enemy; and the other biting, and injuring and obstructing the steps of man, until He, predestined to trample upon his head, should come, which was the son of Mary, of whom the Prophet says, "Thou shalt walk upon the asp and the basilisk; and the lion and the dragon shalt thou tread under foot."

Once more Irenæus expounds this verse, and once more he expounds it in the same sense :

Summing up, therefore, all things He summed them up (in Himself) both waging war against our enemy, and crushing him who in the beginning had led us captive in Adam, and trampling upon his head, as you find in Genesis that God said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; he shall watch for (*observabit*) thy head, and thou shalt watch for his heel." For thus, He who was born of a woman that was a Virgin, after the likeness of Adam, was prophesied of as watching (*observans*) the serpent's head.

Such, then, is the earliest interpretation of the passage ; not the less clearly and emphatically Messianic that it rests upon the rendering "lie in wait for." And it requires, indeed, only a little reflection, a little pondering of context and of history to see how this is. First of all, we note the significant fact that the enmity of which the text speaks is one of Divine appointment. The serpent had approached the woman under the specious guise of friendship ; had instilled into her heart the thought that God was her enemy. God will not suffer the unnatural alliance. He says, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman." But an enmity that is of God's appointment can have but one issue. Man, having God for his ally in the contest, must in the end come off victor. And then, yet further, there was the solemn curse pronounced upon the serpent, "Cursed shalt thou be above all cattle, and above every beast of the field : upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." The creature on which God's curse rests is a degraded thing ; it carries in its grovelling form the sentence of its degradation ; and man watches for it that he may crush it beneath his heel. It is easy, then, I think, to see how even a writer who, like Irenæus, had only the reading of the LXX. before him, nevertheless was led inevitably to give a Messianic interpretation to the passage. Yet it is, also, not a little remarkable how many centuries passed before this interpretation became current in the Church.

Luther, who notices this fact, attributes it to the obscurity of the passage, especially in what it tells us of the serpent and its punishment. This, he says, is perhaps the reason why a passage which ought to have been one of the best known had never been carefully and accurately explained. "I often wonder," he says, "what Fathers and Bishops were about, who, whilst they were engaged in governing Churches and driving away heretics, did not bestow more pains on the explanation of passages of this kind."<sup>1</sup> And he then observes

<sup>1</sup> *Enarr. in Gen.* (Ed. Elspeger, tom. i., p. 233). He adds characteristically : "I don't mean *our* Bishops ; they have nothing but the name,

that this neglect of the passage, and its inadequate explanation by those who did touch upon it, was due, as in the case of Augustine, to the misrendering of the Latin version. The old Latin had indeed the correct rendering, *Ipsæ*, as we see in the Latin translator of Irenæus, but this had been superseded by *Ipsa*,<sup>1</sup> which was the reading that Augustine had, and which led him to refer the promise to *the Church*, of which he held Eve to be the figure. Luther, as might be expected, indignantly denounces the misapplication of the passage by the Church of Rome to the Virgin Mary, and does not spare even Lyra, who, he says, although not ignorant of Hebrew, suffered himself to follow the current, and to explain the text "of the Blessed Virgin, by means of whom, through the mediation of her Son, the power of Satan was broken." He thanks God that the passage has now been set in its true light, and its true meaning vindicated; and he proceeds to expound it thus: "Thou, O Satan, by means of the woman hast assailed and seduced the man, that thou mightest be, as it were, head and lord of both, because of sin. And I, on the other hand, will lie in wait for thee" (*tibi insidiabor*) "by means of the same person. I will tear the woman from thy clutches, and I will give her a seed, and that seed shall crush thy head. Thou didst corrupt flesh, and make it liable to death by reason of sin; but I from that very flesh will bring forth a Man who shall trample on thee and all thy powers, and put thee to flight." Thus, he says, the promise and the threat are at once most clear, and yet most obscure; for the devil must henceforth look upon every woman who becomes a mother with suspicion, lest she should become the mother of the promised seed. And, in the same way, men would look forward with hope to the fulfilment of the promise, whilst they, too, would be in uncertainty as Eve herself was, who supposed that her first-born son was the promised seed.

It is noticeable here that Luther, although in his Latin version he has *conterere* in both clauses, in his<sup>2</sup> paraphrase uses

---

and may more truly be called devastators of Churches than watchmen or overseers. I am speaking of those of old time who were strong in holiness of life and doctrine: there is not one of these [he must have forgotten Irenæus] who has explained this passage as it deserves. Perhaps they were too deeply involved in affairs which are very often a serious hindrance to rulers."

<sup>1</sup>This is not a deliberate falsification by the Church of Rome. It is due to the habit, common to the early copyists, of writing pronouns and adverbs ending in *e* with a diphthong *æ*: e.g., "*Ipsæ* dixit, et facta sunt;" "*Superbæ* loqueris;" "*Stultæ* egisti," and the like. But *ipsa*, which Augustine referred to the Church, Romish expositors interpreted of the Virgin.

<sup>2</sup>In his German Version as we have seen, he has a different verb in the two clauses.

indifferently the verbs *insidiari*, "to lie in wait for," and *conterere*, "to crush." And in point of fact, both lend themselves, as we have seen, to the Messianic interpretation, though the one does so more directly and more obviously than the other.

But keeping to the rendering "bruise," only so far modifying the verb as to give it in the second clause the general sense of "attacking" or "injuring," let us try to ascertain the exact scope of the promise.

First of all there is the lower and primary reference. There is to be a perpetual hostility between men and serpents. There is a natural antipathy between the two. Man shudders and recoils from the serpent, and crushes it; the serpent lies in wait for man. But this war in the world of nature is the speaking sign and symbol of a deeper spiritual conflict. The serpent is the representation in the natural world, the hieroglyph, as it were, of the power of evil, and man is here encouraged to believe that, though he has been the victim of that power, he is not left hopelessly its slave. As there is undying enmity in the natural world between men and serpents, so there is undying enmity in the spiritual world, by God's own appointment, between man and the power of evil. As the serpent, notwithstanding all his wiles and all his fascination, lies in the dust a grovelling thing, carrying upon his prostrate form the sentence of degradation, so the power of evil is a degraded thing. It may lift itself up to assail man, but its doom is upon it, and man shall triumph over it. This is the primary sense of the words. The much-vexed question whether any change passed on the serpent in consequence of the Divine malediction need not trouble us. The words, taken in their obvious and natural sense, imply a change. On the other hand, the palæontologists assure us that the pre-Adamite serpent did not differ in form or physical structure from the serpent which is coëval with man. It has always been the same—the only vertebrate animal without feet. But we are not dealing with a problem in natural history, we are looking on a picture full of moral and spiritual meaning. The picture is a hieroglyph, and the hieroglyph is to be interpreted as "the degradation of the power of evil." So far we have no *direct* Messianic promise. Ought we to stop here? Ought we not to interpret "the seed of the woman" as the future Deliverer? Does not the phrase "seed of *the woman*," suggest and even demand this? I answer with that great master of interpretation, Calvin: "I would willingly adopt this view did I not feel that this is to strain the meaning of the word 'seed;' for how can the collective noun be understood of one man? As the enmity is to be perpetual, so through a long series of ages victory is promised

to the human race. I therefore understand by the seed of the woman her posterity generally. But, as experience shows that all the children of Adam are very far indeed from winning this victory, we must remember that the victory can only be won in and through Him Who is the true Head of humanity.<sup>1</sup> In this sense the promise is Messianic, for man cannot prevail except through Him Who, in the highest and most emphatic sense, is the true seed of the woman, Who alone has in His one person crushed the power of evil, and Who, having taken upon Him our nature, makes us partakers of His triumph. The seed is many, but the seed is also One, because the many are summed up in the One.

In further confirmation of the correctness of this mode of interpretation, it should be observed that the promise runs not, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between her seed and thee," but "between her seed and thy seed." Now, the seed of the serpent cannot be an individual: it must mean the whole serpent brood, the whole power of evil as manifesting itself in various forms throughout human history. By analogy, therefore, the seed of the woman must mean all who are born of woman. And although it is true in the next clause we have the individual serpent, "It (the seed) shall bruise thy head, and *thou* shalt bruise his heel," yet this only confirms the interpretation I have given. There is in each case the race. There is in each, too, the summing-up of the race, the collective many in the individual One. <sup>1</sup> *Ἀνακεφαλαιώσατο*, as Irenæus says, Christ summed up, gathered into Himself the whole conflict, and, as the Head of human nature, for ever crushed the serpent—man's deadliest and most determined foe. The promise therefore pertains to the race, but only because the race is summed up in Him Who is the Head of the race. Man triumphs, but only in Christ.<sup>2</sup> Thus, as it has been well said, "General, indefinite, obscure, like the primitive time to which it belongs, an awe-inspiring Sphinx before the ruins of a mysterious temple, this promise lies wonderful and holy at the threshold of a lost Paradise; whence proceeds the great historical march and development wherein the promise of the grace of God, ever becoming more definite and more special, is first limited in Shem to a particular race,

<sup>1</sup> I have merely given the substance of Calvin's remarks on the passage; I may add, however, that Calvin also, like Luther, supposes Satan to have made use of the serpent as his instrument in beguiling our first parents.

<sup>2</sup> So in the Jerusalem Talmud, the seed is interpreted generally, but the fulfilment of the promise is looked for in the days of the Messiah: "For **them** (the seed) there shall be healing, but for thee (the serpent) there shall be none: they shall hereafter accomplish the crushing (of the serpent) in the time of the end, in the days of King Messiah."



in Abraham to a particular nation, in Judah to a particular tribe, in David to a single family," till at last it finds its great consummation in Him, who is the Hope, the Crown, the Saviour, not of Israel only, but of all mankind.

II. The next passage on which I shall comment is also one in the Book of Genesis, and one which has provoked no little controversy: I refer to the celebrated text in the blessing of Jacob (Gen. xlix. 10). This stands in the A.V., "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come: and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." In the R.V. it runs: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh come: and unto Him shall the obedience of the peoples be."

It will be observed that so far as the rendering of the words "until Shiloh come" is concerned, no change has been made. The changes which have been made in the text are the substitution of "ruler's staff" for "lawgiver" (though the latter finds a place in the margin), and of "obedience" for "gathering," and "peoples" for "people" in the last clause. But that considerable doubt attaches to the words "until Shiloh come," which have been suffered to remain in the text, is shown by the different renderings in the margin,<sup>1</sup> and the importance of the margin here, as in so many other places, can hardly be exaggerated. For the rendering "until Shiloh come" is against the whole body of ancient tradition and interpretation, and is, moreover, philologically untenable.<sup>2</sup>

None of the Ancient Versions, as we shall see, takes Shiloh as a proper name, and not one of them reads it as the present Massoretic text does, with the *plena scriptio* (שִׁילוֹה). All of them regard it as an old form of the relative combined with the personal pronoun, and paraphrase accordingly. The first trace of any *apparent* recognition of Shiloh as a designation of the Messiah is to be found in a well-known passage of the Babylonian Talmud (*Synh.* 98*b*), and even this, it will be seen when the whole passage is cited, will not bear the stress which has sometimes been laid upon it. The passage runs thus:

Rab. said, The world was created only for the sake of David: Samuel said, It was for the sake of Moses: R. Yochanan said, It was only

<sup>1</sup> Or, *Till he come to Shiloh, having the obedience of the peoples*; or, as read by the Sept., *Until that which is his shall come*, etc. Another ancient rendering is, *Till he come whose it is*, etc.

<sup>2</sup> It has been abandoned by some of the most orthodox interpreters and Bishop Wordsworth admits that it has no ancient evidence in its favour.

for the sake of the Messiah. What is his name? Those of the school of R. Shila say, Shiloh is his name, as it is said, "Until Shiloh come." Those of the school of R. Yannai say, Yinnon is his name, as it is said (Ps. lxxii. 17), "Let his name be for ever, before the sun let his name be perpetuated" (Heb. *Yinnon*). Those of the school of R. Chaninah say, Chaninah is his name, as it is said (Jer. xvi. 13), "For I will give you no favour," (Heb. *Chaninah*). And some say, Menachem is his name, as it is said (Lam. i. 16), "For comforter (Heb. *Menachem*) and restorer of my soul is far from me." And our Rabbis say, The leprous one of the school of Rabbi is his name, as it is said (Isa. liii, 4), "Surely he hath borne all our sicknesses and carried our pains, though we did esteem him stricken (i.e. with leprosy), smitten of God and afflicted."

No inference can really be drawn from this passage beyond the fact that the verse in Genesis was regarded as having a Messianic sense. It is obvious that neither the verb *Yinnon* nor the noun *Chaninah* were names or titles of the Messiah, and they could hardly have been cited as such in the discussion. The pupils of different Rabbis intend merely to compliment their several masters by connecting their names with a title of the Messiah, extracted for the occasion from passages supposed to have a Messianic bearing. The reference to Jer. xvi. 13 shows how far-fetched this manner of quotation might be. "The exegetical value of such interpretations," says Dr. Driver<sup>1</sup> very truly, "is evidently *nil*: the authority of the admirers of Shila is of no greater weight in determining the true sense of Gen. xlix. 10 than that of the admirers of Yannai in determining the true sense of Ps. lxxii. 17. It is, however, in this doubtful company that 'Shiloh' is first cited as a name of the Messiah, though we do not know how the word was used, or what it was imagined to signify."

Dr. Driver has given at length the history of Jewish interpretation, and has shown clearly that although Gen. xlix. 10 was interpreted generally both by Jews and Christians in a Messianic sense, yet that this sense was not "bound up with a personal name *Shiloh*, but with the context of the verse, legitimately interpreted, and with the promise of supremacy which it seemed to contain." Many of the Jewish expositors, indeed, understanding the phrase "from between his feet" as meaning descendants ("his sons' sons," as Onkelos expresses it), also explained Shiloh as "his youngest son," as the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan does. The first interpreter who actually substitutes *Messias* for Shiloh is, it would seem, Sanctes Pagninus, in his Latin Bible of 1528. Luther, who had previously expressed his preference for the Jewish rendering,

<sup>1</sup> In the *Journal of Philology*, vol. xiv. I gladly take the opportunity of admitting that I was wrong in supposing (*Contemporary Review*, May, 1886) that Dr. Driver had not fully considered the bearing of this passage when he mentioned that the now current interpretation of Shiloh as a name of the Messiah dates from the sixteenth century.

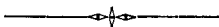
“his son,” in his German Bible of 1534, has “Der Helt,” with the note “d. i. der glücklich sein und frisch durchdringen sollte.” Seb. Münster (1535), by his rendering “quousque veniat Silo,” took Silo as a proper name, and probably as a name of the Messiah. The English Versions (except Coverdale, who has “the worthy one”) seem to have followed Münster, as they all of them—the Great Bible, the Genevan, the Bishops’, and the A.V.—have “Shiloh,” the Genevan adding a note of explanation, “the giver of al prosperitie.”

But, again, Shiloh, if it be intended as a title of the Messiah, must be a significant title; it must contain in it a meaning which shall answer to some office or characteristic sign of the Messiah; it must be a prophetic title. It would doubtless be this if it could be regarded, like the name Solomon (Heb. *Sh'lomoh*), for instance, as a derivation from a root signifying “peace” or “prosperity”—if it could mean “the Bringer of Peace,” or “the Giver of Prosperity,” as the Genevan Version expounds it. But this is philologically incorrect. In the first place, there is no analogy for the formation of such a word as Shiloh from a root *shâlâh*; and in the next place, the meaning of the root “to be at ease” is unsuitable, and would not justify the interpretation put upon it as “Giver of Peace.”<sup>1</sup>

The rendering, then, “until Shiloh come,” has neither tradition nor philology in its favour.

J. J. STEWART PEROWNE.

[*To be continued.*]



#### ART. VI.—THE PROSPECTS OF CHURCH REFORM.

IT is perhaps too soon to discern any special characteristics which the new House of Commons may possess. The ordinary work of an ordinary session is required to bring out its tendencies and to test its temper. I use the latter word in a wide sense; for so far as mere capacity for wrathfulness is concerned, the monotonous consideration of Irish affairs must be admitted to have given an abundant opportunity for the

<sup>1</sup> This is not the place to enter into the philological question at length. It will be found fully discussed in the commentaries of Tuch and Delitzsch. The Arabic-Samaritan Version makes *Shiloh* equivalent to *Sh'lomoh* (Solomon), seeing the fulfilment of the prophecy in Solomon, not in the Messiah. In 1 Chron. xxii. 9, Solomon's name is interpreted as meaning “a man of rest,” and the Messiah is called “Peace” (*Shâlom*) Mic. v. 4; and “Prince of Peace,” Isa. ix. 5. But the root is *Shalam*, not *Shalah*.