

woman that is to bruise the serpent's head as an individual, but as a collection of individuals. The literal meaning of the verse is not that one man should bruise one serpent's head, or that a hundred men should bruise a hundred serpents' heads, but that the human race should bruise, or crush, or overcome the reptile race. Thus the verse literally teaches the natural enmity between mankind and serpents.

Inasmuch, however, as the serpent, at a very early period, was symbolical of an evil spirit, the passage, allegorically interpreted, refers to the natural conflict between good and evil, to the natural struggle between right and wrong, as well as to the spiritual victory of the former over the latter. In strictness, though, the verse contains a promise rather than a prophecy; and the promise, as Orelli observes, is not couched in the form of a blessing, but of a curse. As the passage is not strictly prophecy, so it is not strictly Messianic. It is simply suggestive in its allegorical teaching of a fact, which, by the help of the Divine Spirit, was just as true of a person under the Old Testament as under the New Testament dispensation. The passage, therefore, properly speaking, is not Messianic prophecy at all, and it is never applied to Christ in the New Testament. It is significant, moreover, as the "Speakers' Commentary" observes, that "the Jewish writers do not directly interpret the promise of the Messiah."

The second Messianic prophecy is supposed to be Gen. ix. 26, 27. Most interpreters profess to see a remarkable significance in the blessing pronounced upon the descendants of Shem, in contrast to the blessing pronounced upon the descendants of Japheth. But the contrast is more imaginary than real. Though it is stated that "he shall dwell in the tents of Shem," it is also stated that "God shall enlarge Japheth." In its original meaning the blessing appears quite as significant in the latter case as in the former. In verse 27, though, the words, "he shall dwell in the tents of Shem," are supposed to suggest the idea of the presence and indwelling of God. But it is a matter of great doubt, whether the pronoun "he" here refers to God or to Japheth. Granting that it may possibly refer to God as its subject, there is nothing whatever in the sentence to