

THE
BIBLICAL REPERTORY
AND
THEOLOGICAL REVIEW.

APRIL, 1831.

ART. I.—REVIEW OF DR. MATTHEWS' LETTERS.

The Divine Purpose displayed in the works of Providence and Grace; in a series of Twenty Letters, addressed to an Inquiring Mind. By Rev. John Matthews, D. D., [late of] Shepherdstown, Virginia. Lexington, Ky. Printed and published by Thomas T. Skillman, 1828. pp. 221.

WE are so much accustomed to receive our literature from Great Britain, that we are prone to overlook valuable compositions produced in our own country; especially, if they proceed from a section of the United States not famous for book making; or from the pen of an author but little known. Notwithstanding the national pride, in relation to American literature, so disgustingly displayed in some of our popular journals, it is a fact, that our booksellers are in the habit of reprinting British works, on particular subjects, much inferior to writings of home-production, which lie in utter neglect. Perhaps the Eastern States ought to be considered as an exception from this remark; where, from the first settlement of the country, authorship has not been uncommon; and where almost every preacher, at some time in his life, has the pleasure of seeing something of his own composition, in print. Still it may be observed, that

not perfectly willing they should take with us. It is for "the faith once delivered to the saints" that we feel bound to contend. It is for the eternal well-being of immortal souls, that we consider it our duty to plead and provide, as far as in us lies; to keep back no known truth; and to conceal no known danger. In regard to such great and vital interests, we cannot, knowingly, admit of either compromise or accommodation.

ART. VII.—THE ANNUNCIATION OF MESSIAH TO OUR FIRST PARENTS.

*From the German of Hengstenberg.**

IF we take up the predictions of Messiah, as they lie before us in the book of Genesis, and attend to those revelations of the future which, during the period of the history here comprised, were granted in moments of high inspiration to certain individuals, *for themselves*; (John 8: 56.) we shall observe in them a remarkable gradation towards greater definiteness and clearness.

The first promise of Messiah which occurs after the fall, is also the most indefinite. Over against the dreadful threatening, stands the rich and consolatory promise, that the dominion of sin, and the evils consequent upon it, should not be everlasting, but that the posterity of the woman should one day conquer the fearful conqueror. All except the *event* itself is here left undetermined; the kind or manner of the victory is not revealed—whether it is to be gained by means of an entire and highly gifted race of the woman's posterity, or by a single individual.

When Noah and his three sons are left after the destruction of the whole sinful world, the general promise is again more

* *Christologie des Alten Testaments und Commentar ueber die Messianischen Weissagungen der Propheten.* "The doctrine of the Old Testament concerning Christ, including a Commentary upon those passages of the Prophets, which refer to the Messiah. By E. W. Hengstenberg D. D. Ordinary Professor of Theology in the University of Berlin." 8vo. 1829, 1830. Berlin.—Without intending to subscribe to every sentiment of this work, or even of this extract, we are desirous to afford a specimen of interpretation and theology, which may attract attention to this learned and valuable production. It may be doubted whether any man in Germany approaches more nearly to the orthodoxy of the Reformation, than Professor Hengstenberg. We have, for the sake of compression, omitted a few paragraphs of the original.

closely defined, by the declaration that redemption is to come through the offspring of one of them, namely Shem.

Prophecy becomes more definite when the Lord begins to prepare for the appearance of the redemption, by separating from the corrupt mass, first a single man, Abraham, that he may be the depository of his revelations; and then by separating those individuals, whom, of his own free purpose, he would not make partakers of this honour, he defines to which of his descendants this, with all accompanying blessings, shall pass. From the posterity of Shem, God selects, first the family of Abraham, then the family of Isaac, lastly the family of Jacob, and from him causes the redemption to proceed. Yet even these intimations, determinate as they are when compared with those of an earlier date, are very indefinite, if viewed in connexion with those which followed, and with the accomplishment. They declare the benefit, indeed, but not its author: and it remained still uncertain whether salvation should be diffused over all people, by means of a single individual descended from the patriarch, or by an entire nation of the same descent. The precise manner in which this blessing should be communicated, was likewise left in obscurity.

This obscurity is in a manner cleared away by means of the last prediction of the Messiah in the book of Genesis, chap. 49, v. 20. From what had preceded, it was natural to expect that it should be defined which of Jacob's twelve sons should enjoy the felicity of being a source of blessedness to the whole earth. It was not to be supposed that Jacob, who had just before his death transferred to his sons by prophetic inspiration the promises made to his fathers and himself, should pass over the most important portion of these promises. But here the expectation of the Messiah receives from the transfer of the promise to Judah, not only the limit which was looked for, but an unexpected clearness and definiteness. Here, for the first time, the *person* of the Messiah is presented to our view. Here the nature of his kingdom is so far defined, that he is represented as the author of quiet and peace, who shall unite all the nations of the earth under his gentle sceptre. After these preliminary remarks, we proceed to the exposition of particular passages.

The first Promise, or PROTEVANGELIUM. As it was the fall of man which rendered a Messiah necessary, so it was immediately after that event, that the first obscure intimation of the blessing was given. It is contained in the sentence pro-

nounced upon the tempter, Gen. iii. 14, 15. We can have no just insight into the sense of this, until we have inquired who the tempter was.

It is, in the first place, undoubtedly true, that a real serpent was an actor in the temptation, and consequently the opinion must be rejected, that the serpent is introduced, merely as a symbolical representation of the evil principle.* If we adopt this opinion, we must, in order to be consistent, yield to the allegorical interpretation of the whole passage. For unity of interpretation should prevail in a closely connected discourse, and we must not in such a case pursue, first the allegorical or symbolical, and then the strict or literal method of exposition. Against the allegorical interpretation of the whole, many arguments may be urged; as the close connexion with what follows, where we have the history of the same pair who are actors here;—the geographical description of Paradise, which is quite minute;—the fact, that the condition of mankind which in this place is represented as a punishment, is their *actual* condition now;—the absence of any token, whence it might appear that the author was about to give an allegory, and not a history;—the passages of the New Testament in which the account of the fall is treated as properly historical, see 2 Cor. xi. 3. 1 Tim. ii. 13. Rom. v. 12. ;—the perplexity, uncertainty and arbitrariness of the allegorical expositors, when they undertake to represent the *truth* thus adumbrated; which, however, in case the author intended an allegory, should be so plain that it could not be misinterpreted. †

The actual presence of a real serpent further appears, not only from the remark chap. iii. 1. *Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field*,—but likewise from the threatening of punishment, which must necessarily have proximate reference to the animal. And these reasons also go to oppose the supposition of others, that Satan had taken only the outward appearance of a serpent.

While however it is certain that the object which met the eye of Eve was a serpent, it is no less certain that this was not the independent tempter, but rather the mere tool of the evil spirit

* This is defended with much ingenuity by *Cramer*. Nebenarbeiten zur theologischen Literatur St. 2.

† See *Zacharia* bibl. Theol. II. p. 229. *Linderwald*, die Allegorische Erklärung der 3 ersten cap. Mosis, insonderheit des Sündenfalls in ihrem Grunde vorgestellt. 1781.

whom Eve did not know.* For this, the following reasons may be given.

(1) Though the writer intentionally relates the history, just as it was handed down by the first pair, who could judge only by what was visible, and though he intimates by no word the unseen cause of the temptation; yet the whole character of the narrative evinces an intention to conduct the reflecting reader to this very end. For there were solid reasons for restricting the great multitude to the outward appearance, and for explaining nothing of its cause, as the knowledge of this readily admitted of becoming a source of corrupting superstition, such as was widely diffused among other Eastern nations. It is here to be specially remarked, that the serpent speaks, and exhibits in general all the marks of a reasonable creature. Nor need we suppose that this was a matter of any astonishment to Eve. So limited was her knowledge of the nature of animals, the characteristic differences between them and mankind, and the faculties confined on them by God, that the serpent's speaking produced, at most, only a dark impression concerning the co-operation of some higher and invisible power, the existence of which she did not as yet distinctly recognise. But what reflecting reader of later times can avoid the perception of this invisible power, when he is not only convinced that the things spoken cannot be attributed to an ordinary serpent, but sees it to be probable that the author of all evil, of whom he learns something elsewhere, was not inactive in the first introduction of evil upon earth? The attempt has been made by *Le Clerc*, *Eichhorn*, *Doderlein*, *Dathe* and *Less*, after the example of *Abarbanel*, and especially by *Gabler*,† to show that the narrative of Eve's discourse with the serpent, must be explained by means of a well known Orientalism; agreeably to which, external objects and even inanimate things which occasion reflections in us, are personified and represented as speaking. The serpent, say they, by the harmless use of the fruit, had occasioned in the mind of Eve, various thoughts and doubts respecting the prohibition, and the rising doubt and desire, agreeably to the genius of the East, are here clothed in the garb of a conversation with Eve. Even *Hahn* has strangely

* Among recent scholars, this has been admitted by *Rosenmüller* *Comm.* I. p. 109. *Schott*, *Theol. dogm*; p. 128. ed. 2. *Hahn*, *Dogmatik*, p. 345.

† *Eichhorn's Urgeschichte* II. 1. p. 154 ff.

declared himself, of late, favourable to this supposition, and has endeavoured to establish it as the result of a grammatical and historical exegesis. The hypothesis, however, labours under this difficulty, that it transfers to a historical narrative that which is proper to poetry only. It rests on grounds entirely arbitrary; for, in opposition to all rules of sound interpretation, it takes one part of the account literally, and the other figuratively. It is supported by no analogous case in the writings of the Old Testament; for even in the history of Balaam, there is nothing opposed to the literal exposition, which is advocated even by *Herder*.^{*} Its sole foundation is this, that it is unreasonable to understand literally the dialogue between Eve and the Serpent; a ground which vanishes of itself upon the admitted co-operation of the evil spirit. Against this hypothesis, it has been justly remarked by *Storr*: “Haec opinio a natura rerum priscaequae vetustatis simplicitate sic abhorret, ut tam artificiose affectatum tumorem narrationi vetustæ tribuere nequeamus, nisi indubiis auctoritatibus coacti, quas vero penitus desideramus.”† In addition to this, there is much which points to an invisible seducer, concealed behind that which was visible; as, for instance, the words chap. iii. 1. premised in a remarkable manner to excite attention—*now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field*; also the peculiar character of the curse, in which a higher reference to an unseen tempter, glimmers through the notice of what was visible.

(2) The tradition concerning the fall, as contained in the religious books of Persia, favours the same conclusion. According to the *Zendavesta*, P. I. pp. 84, 85. the first men, *Mesha* and *Meshianeh*, were by God created pure and good, and destined to happiness, under the condition of humility, obedience to the law, and purity of thought, speech and behaviour; but were betrayed, caused to fall from God and made wretched, through the use of fruit, by *Ahriman* “that cruel one, who from the beginning meditated only treachery.” In the *Zendavesta* III. p. 62. *Ahriman* springs from heaven to earth, in the form of a serpent; and another noted evil spirit is called the *Serpent Dew*. P. II. p. 217.‡

(3) Among the Jews also, there is a tradition that *Satan* was actively concerned in the seduction of our first parents.

* Briefe das Studium der Theologie betreffend. Th. 1. p. 26. ff.

† De Protevangelio opuscul. t. II. p. 422.

‡ See *Rhode*, die heilige Sage d. Zendvolkes. p. 392.

“Through the envy of Satan,” we read in Wisd. ii. 24, “came death into the world.” In later Jewish writings, Sammaël, the leader of the fallen spirits, is called נחש הקדמני, *the old serpent*, and sometimes simply נחש; because he tempted Eve under the form of a serpent. See the passages cited by *Eisenmenger*, *Entdeck*, *Judenth.* I. p. 822.

(4) It is from the testimony of the New Testament, however, that we arrive at absolute certainty, as to the participation of Satan in the seduction of our first parents. In Rev. xii. 9. the leader of evil spirits is called ὁ δρακῶν ὁ μέγας, ὁ ὄφεις ὁ ἀρχαῖος, (נחש קדמני) ὁ καλουμένος διαβόλος. So likewise chap. xx. 2. It is true that in 2 Cor. xi. 3, Paul omits the invisible cause of the temptation, as is done in the narrative itself, and speaks only of the visible: ὡς ὁ ὄφεις ἔβη ἐξήπατησεν ἐν τῇ πανουργίᾳ. But that he was not ignorant of the former, appears from Rom. xvi. 20, ὁ δε Θεὸς τῆς εἰρηνῆς συντριβεί τον σαταναν ὑπο τοὺς ποδας ὑμῶν ἐν ταχεί, where no one can mistake the allusion to Gen. iii. 15. Finally, Christ himself, John viii. 44, calls Satan ἀνδρωποκτονον ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, with reference to his having by sin brought death into the world. That this is truly the reference, we must conclude with most of the ancient interpreters, namely *Origen*, *Chrysostom*, *Augustine* and *Theophylact*, as well as most of the moderns, as for instance *Kuinoel* and *Tholuck*; although the opinion, first advanced by *Cyril* of Alexandria, that the allusion is rather to the murder of Cain, has been acutely maintained by *Nitzsch*,* and has been preferred by *Lücke*. Our reasons are the following. The parallel passages already cited from the Apocalypse and from Jewish writings, show that ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς must be taken in the strictest sense; this reference of ἀνδρωποκτονος is also justified by the passage Wisd. ii. 24, above cited, and by the quotations of *Tholuck* from the book *Sohar Chadash*, where the ungodly are called “the children of the old serpent, who slew Adam and all his posterity.” But above all, Jesus could not expect his words to be referred by his hearers to any thing else than the moral—and indirectly physical—murder, which Satan committed upon the first man; for the participation of Satan in this event was the prevalent belief of the people, while his influence on Cain, of which there is no intimation in the Mosaic account, cannot be considered so universally received, as that Christ

* *Abhand. über den Menschenmörder von Anfang in der theol. Zeitsch. v. de Wette, Schleiermacher u. Lücke III. p. 52. ff.*

should in such general and indefinite terms refer to it. The appeal is indeed made to 1 John iii. 12, to show that Cain's crime is attributed to Satan; but even if this should be the case, not only is the reference to this event explicit in the text, but its derivation is founded in the preceding part of the passage. And lastly, this is to be referred to the fall of man, because the murder committed by Satan is placed in the closest connexion with his falsehood; and it is the latter, which was influential in the fall.

Before proceeding further to avail ourselves of these results, we must revert to the arguments which have been opposed to the co-operation of Satan in the defection of man. These have been most fully advanced by *Eichhorn* and *Gabler*; whose labours have been used by *Dathe*, *Kuinoel*, *Jahn*, and more recently *Baumgarten-Crusius*.*

Their chief arguments are those which follow; and their want of cogency may at once be seen from the positive proofs already advanced.

(1) "The author calls the serpent, even in reference to the account of the fall, the most subtle of beasts; had he thought of a supernatural cause, he would not have added this particular, as the devil might have used the most stupid animal just as well." We reply, that the writer describes the event, as it appeared to our first parents; since they were ignorant of the invisible cause, they must have formed a high estimate of the serpent's subtlety. This is here designedly expressed by Moses, to lead the penetrating reader to the correct solution of the problem.

(2) "The devil could not speak by means of a serpent, since the serpent is wholly destitute of vocal organs."—We answer with Calvin: "Si incredibile videtur locutas esse Deo jubente bestias, unde homini sermo, nisi quia ejus linguam Deus formavit? Editas sine lingua in aere fuisse voces ad illustrandam Christi gloriam, Evangelium prædicat; minus hoc rationi probabile, quam ex brutorum animalium ore elici sermonem. Quid igitur hic impiorum petulantia insectatione dignum inveniet?" The illusion of speech issuing from the mouth of a serpent, is quite as comprehensible as the operation of the soul on the body, and other things of the kind.

* *Eichhorn*, *Urgeschichte* Th. III. p. 114. ff. *Gabler*, *Urg. Th.* II. p. 137. ff. *Dathe* *On Pentateuch*. *Kuinoel* *Mess. Weiss.* p. 2. *Jahn* *Vaticinia Messiana* II. p. 216. 222. & *Supp. to Theol. works*. *Baumgarten-Crusius* *Grundzüge der bibl. Dogm.* p. 348.

(3) "How does it comport with the goodness and wisdom of God, to suffer a powerful spirit, to seduce our first parents to defection? Did God indeed foresee the fall, which was the inevitable consequence of this permission, and still permit the diabolical illusion? Who can here vindicate the ways of God?" The force of this argument would at once be removed, if we were to oppose to it no more than the words of *Calvin*: "Utinam se a Deo judicari potius homines, quam sibi in cum iudicium sacrilega temeritate sumerent! Verum hæc earnis arrogantia est, examini suo Deum subicere." For as soon as it appears, upon sufficient evidence, that God has done any certain act, this conclusion is not to be annulled by the consideration that we are unable to justify His mode of action, by our short-sighted reason.*

(4) "The curse falls upon the head of a mere animal."—In the first instance it must necessarily pass upon the serpent, for man as yet knew no other author of the seduction, and the consequence was, that it gave them a horror of sin, by the punishment of the known author of sin. We do not hereby exclude the double sense of the words; the admission of which is justified, as soon as we learn from other sources, that Satan had an agency in the temptation.

(5) "It could not have been the idea of the author, that an evil spirit had any agency in the temptation of our first parents; for no trace of an evil spirit is found in all the Old Testament, previously to the Babylonish captivity. The notion was then borrowed from the Chaldeans, and in imitation of them, he was then made to act the part of tempter to the first human pair."—That the doctrine concerning Satan prevailed *before* the captivity, is evinced, first, by the ancient book of Job, which very few at the present day venture to refer to any period later than the Exile. It is true, *Baumgarten-Crusius* (bibl. Theol. p. 295) following *Herder*, *Eichhorn*, *Ilgen* and *Jahn*, has very recently endeavoured to establish the position that the Satan of the book of Job, is not the Satan of the later Old Testament books; but rather a good and pure angel, who had the office of an accuser, prosecutor or informer. He appeals to the fact that the author even numbers him among the sons of God and the conside-

* The theological discussion of this intricate question, which may well be called the *cruce theologorum*, occupies several additional paragraphs of the original. These are omitted, as containing a hypothesis not relevant to the general subject, and much at variance with the views of most theologians in this country. [*Ed. Bib. Rep.*]

ration that it is unjust to transfer to the person the odiousness of the office. Not to say, however, that the new derivation of the word שטן, upon which it is attempted to rest this hypothesis, does not admit of grammatical justification, (See Gesenius' Lehrgeb. p. 495) the position is altogether untenable. Although the author makes Satan appear before the throne of God, it is by a poetical license. This was no more his serious belief, than it was his serious belief that Jehovah, whose omnipotence and omniscience he so gloriously celebrates, was under the necessity of subjecting a man to trial by means of Satan, in order to ascertain the disinterestedness of his virtue. When it is said that Satan appeared amongst the angels before God, we cannot thence infer, as has been done, that the writer himself numbered him amongst good angels. Moreover, even in this situation he does not deny his own nature, in any particular—jealousy, malice, or envy.* Nor is the doctrine concerning evil spirits wanting in the Pentateuch, as has recently been acknowledged by *Schott*, epit. theol. dogm. p. 113.

The opinion of those who suppose Azazel (to whom the goat is sent out into the wilderness, Lev. xvi. 8.) to be Satan, is accordant with the connexion.† In imitation of *Deyling*,‡ it has been objected by *Baumgarten-Crusius*,§ that an offering to the evil spirit is altogether repugnant to the universal doctrine of the Mosaic religion, as well as to the import of this expiatory rite. But it is here falsely assumed that one of the goats was offered to Azazel. So far as it was considered a sacrifice, it was, like all others, offered to Jehovah: see verse 10. The *sending forth* was merely a symbolical action. By this act they abjured the kingdom of darkness, and its prince, and, so to speak, sent back to him those sins to which he had tempted, and by which he had endeavoured to gain possession of the nation or of individuals. They symbolically declared the truth, that he who receives expiation from God, is free from the power of the evil one. This interpretation must commend itself as just, to every impartial reader of the entire passage. It is, for instance, supported by the opposition between ליהוה and לעוזאזל, verse 8, and by the tradition of

* See *Gesenius*. *Storr* opuscc. ii. p. 426. *Staedlin*, Beitr. z. Phil. u. Geschichte. der Relig. u. Sittenlehr. ii. p. 151. ff.

† See *Spencer* leg. rit. l. iii. diss. 8. cap. 1. § 2. *Gesenius*' Lexicon. *Rosenmüller* in loc. *Winer*'s Lexicon.

‡ *Observationes sacræ*. i. p. 51.

§ *Grundzuge*. p. 294.

the later Jews, among whom Azazel is a name of Sammael. See passages cited by *Spencer, Rosenmüller, Winer, etc. ut supra.*

The passage Deut. xxxii. 17, is more doubtful. The word שְׂדֵיִם which there occurs, is rendered by the LXX. *δαίμονια*, and by the Vulgate, *daemonia*. The opinion that it indicates invisible evil spirits, is supported by a comparison of the Syriac שְׂדֵיִם “evil demon.”

It is undoubtedly true, that Moses touches but seldom upon the doctrine of the kingdom of darkness, and, even when he does so, clothes the subject in an obscurity which is impenetrable, except by the more discerning. For this, however, as we have already observed, he had solid reasons. He pursued a like course with regard to other doctrines, as for instance, that of immortality, of which he gives only brief intimations; yet sufficient for those to whom the truth could be profitable. The derivation of this doctrine among the Hebrews from Chaldea, is opposed, not only by the passages above cited, but by the fact that the Ahriman of the Persians and the Satan of the Jews, are entirely different beings. The Persian Ahriman is the original evil principle, co-eternal with the good, and if not equal in might, so nearly approaching it, as to be able to wage with the other a long and difficult warfare. The Satan of the Hebrews, on the other hand, is wholly subjected to Jehovah, and cannot dare, without divine permission, to injure any one, or tempt any one to sin.

Having thus satisfactorily proved, first, that a real serpent was present in the temptation; and, secondly, that it served as the mere instrument of Satan, the true seducer; we are thence under the necessity of admitting a double sense in the curse of the tempter. This must, in the first instance, fall upon the instrument; it would otherwise have been altogether unintelligible to the first pair, and, for the time, useless. It must, in its principal import, refer to the genuine tempter, for it was he alone who had actually done that which merited the punishment and curse. Upon this principle, let us now attempt the interpretation of the passage: *Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed 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.*

So far as this sentence applies to the serpent, there are two different opinions with regard to it. Some suppose that a change took place in the nature of the serpent, after the fall;

others, that it continued to have exactly the same nature as before; but that after the fall, that was a punishment, which before the fall was a natural property. The latter opinion is defended with much ingenuity by *Calvin*. "Nihil erit absurdum, si fateamur pristinæ conditioni iterum addici serpentem, cui naturaliter jam subjectus erat, ac si dictum esset: tu ausus es, miserum et putidum animal, in hominem insurgere, quem præfeceram totius mundi dominio! quasi vero tuum esset, quum terræ esses affixus in cœlum penetrare. Ergo unde emergere tentasti, jam te retraho, ut sorte tuo contentus esse discas, nec amplius insolescas in hominis contumeliam." But we must, nevertheless, declare ourselves to be of the former opinion, because, as *Le Clerc* and *Rosenmüller* have justly remarked, it is far more accordant with the text; and, indeed, no one would ever have thought of any other interpretation, who had not received a bias from doctrinal prepossession. The difficulty which has led to the second interpretation is imaginary. It is consistent with what we might expect, and with the usual methods of Satan, that he should choose a pleasing and attractive instrument of seduction. According to the views of the writer, the fall not only overturned the whole nature of man, but diffused its influence through all the creation, covering it with a curse, Gen. iii. 17; and since before the fall, the whole animal creation bore the image of man's innocence and happiness, and the law of mutual hostility had not yet pervaded its ranks,* how can we find any difficulty in supposing that the instrument of the temptation endured the consequences of the fall in a peculiar degree?

And thus, in these words, it is made the destination of the serpent, to represent the abominable nature of sin, by that horrid form, which, with all that is evil and odious, was superinduced by the fall; to be, in a manner, also the visible representative as well of the kingdom of darkness, as the head of this kingdom, by whom it was used as an instrument.

But we are here met by the objection; that the curse pronounced on the serpent was unreasonable, as the poor creature

* See ch. 1, 30. It has been well shown by *Krummacher*, to be impossible that the whole animal world should have proceeded from the hand of the Creator in its present condition. *Paragraphen*. p. 63. In opposition, however, to Scripture, imperfection and evil are now attributed to the intractable nature of matter, at the creation: and thus a Dualism is established.

had no knowledge of its being abused by a higher power.* We need not seek a new reply to this, as that which was long since given by Calvin, is satisfactory. “Si cui absurdum videtur pœnam de bruto animali exigi alienæ fraudis, in promptu est solutio: quum esset in hominis gratiam creatus, non temere maledici, ex quo versus est in ejus perniciem. Hac ultione probare Deus voluit, quanti æstimet hominis salutem; quemadmodum si pater gladium, quo filius occisus fuerit, execrationi habeat.” The punishment of the serpent is no more unjust, than the miserable condition into which the whole creation is brought by the fall, Rom. viii. 20; or than the Mosaic ordinance by which a beast, in a certain case, was to be burned with the human transgressor; nor than the offering of animals, as sacrifices for sin.

If we now refer this verse to the spiritual author of the temptation, we have, after setting aside what pertains to the mere instrument, the following idea: The most extreme contempt, disgrace and debasement shall be inflicted on thee. *Calmet* observes on the passage: “Cet ennemi du genre humain rampe en quelle sorte sur le ventre par la confusion et l’opprobre, où il est réduit.” It was the expectation of Satan that he should advance his kingdom and authority by the temptation of man; but the occurrence had a different aspect in the sight of God, who viewed the fall in connexion with the plan of salvation. The eating of dust or ashes, occurs elsewhere, as expressive of the deepest abasement and grief.

VERSE 15. *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall smite thy head, and thou shalt smite his heel.†*

With application to the serpent, the sense is—Thy offspring shall inflict on that of the woman, wounds which are curable; the seed of the woman shall inflict incurable wounds on thine. A serpent is killed when its head is crushed, while injuries upon other parts of its body are not fatal; on the other hand, there is no part in which a man can be bitten by a snake with greater impunity than the heel.‡

* See *Gabler*, in *Eichhorn’s Urgeschichte*. ii. 1. p. 174.

† We give to the verb ךָש , the signification *to smite, to strike*, as in *Gabler* (ut supr.) II. 1. p. 190. *Jahn*, &c. This rendering has an advantage, as it may be admitted in both clauses, and is likewise applicable to the two passages, Job ix. 17, & Ps. cxxxix. 11. where the word occurs again. According to any other interpretation, different meanings must be given to the word.

‡ It was long since remarked by Calvin that the head and the heel in-

This was the only meaning of the divine sentence, which then, at least, was understood by our first parents. But even with this imperfect understanding, it must have produced, on one hand, a horror of sin, and on the other, very great consolation. They regarded the serpent as the sole author of that misery, which they then felt as a heavy burden. How consoling must it then have been to them to learn, that their conqueror, who seemed to them so dreadful, from their attributing to him the powers which operated through him, should not continually enjoy the victory, but should suffer a defeat from their offspring! Yet the annunciation must certainly have been far more rich in comfort to them or their descendants, when from the discovery of the serpent's natural powers, they were led to distinguish between the visible and the invisible cause of the temptation.

Experience attests the truth of the divine sentence, that there should be enmity between the races of mankind and the serpent. A horror of the serpent is natural to man. "Fit arcano naturæ sensu, ut ab ipsis abhorreat homo, ac quoties nobis horrorem incutit serpentum aspectus, renovatur defectio- nis nostræ memoria." (Calvin.)

As it regards the principal meaning of the sentence, as applied to Satan, most of the earlier Christian expositors understand directly the Messiah, by the seed of the woman which should bruise the head of the serpent's seed.* This is opposed by the consideration that we are thus constrained to understand by the seed of the woman a single individual; which is the more difficult, as it is evident that we must explain the serpent's seed of a plurality, the spiritual children of Satan, the leaders and members of the kingdom of darkness, who are in the New Testament called *οφεις, γεννηματα εχιδωνων, and τεκνα του διαβολου.*

This difficulty may be avoided by understanding the seed of

dicated a *a majus and minus*—a victory of the human race over the seed of the serpent. "Interea videmus, ut se clementer in homine castigando gerat dominus, in quem serpenti non ultra permittit, quam ut calcaneum attingat, quum illi subjiciat vulnerandum serpentis caput. Nam in nominibus capitis et calcanei distinctio est inter superius et inferius." It is evident that something more is intended than the mutual antipathy between men and serpents, because in that case no special punishment would be threatened to the serpent, which nevertheless appears from the context, to have been the idea of the writer. See *Gabler zu Eichhorn's Urgesch. II. 1. p. 189.*

† So, of late, *De Broix, Ursprung und allmähligē Entwicklung des Messianismus, p. 26. ff.*

the woman, in a general way, as her offspring. Thus interpreted, the words have this meaning: 'Thou hast indeed, now inflicted upon the woman a grievous wound, and thy associates will continue to persecute her offspring. Yet with every desire to injure, thou and thine shall be able to inflict on mankind such wounds only as may be healed; on the other hand, the offspring of the woman shall one day conquer thee, and cause thee to feel all thy impotence.'

This interpretation is found in the Jerusalem Targum, and in that of Jonathan, which explain the seed of the woman to be the Jews, who shall overcome Sammael, at the time of the Messiah. It would seem that this was the understanding of Paul, from his allusion, Rom. xvi. 20, where the promise is made to comprehend Christians in general. It has in later times, been ably defended by *Calvin*.^{*} Among modern writers, it has been adopted by *Herder*,[†] *Storr*, in the treatise above cited, "de Protevangelio," and *Krummacher*, (*Paraphraphen*, p. 100,) the last of whom thus defines the sense: "That which is divine, must gain the victory—the fall must be followed by redemption—Eden, once closed, must be opened again."

Agreeably to this interpretation, the passage is deservedly called the PROTEVANGELIUM; which name has been given to it by the Church. It is true, the future victory of the kingdom of light over that of darkness, is here foretold only in general

* "Quare sensus erit, humanum genus, quod opprimere conatus erat Satan, fore tandem superius. Interim tenendus est vincendi modus, quem scriptura describit. Filios hominum captivos sæculis omnibus duxit Satan pro sua libidine et hodie luctuosum illum triumphum continuat. Sed quia fortior emerit e cælo, qui illum subjugaret, hinc fit, ut illi similiter tota Dei ecclesia sub capite suo magnifice insultet."

† "The serpent had injured them; it was to them an emblem of temptation, of evil, and moreover of the curse, of contempt and punishment. The reviving prospect was afforded to mankind that they—that is, the seed of the woman—should become more strong and noble than the serpent and than all evil. They should bruise his head, and his only retaliation should be a wretched attack upon the heel. In short, good should gain ascendancy over evil. Such was the prospect. This is not the place to inquire, how clear or how obscure may have been the views of our first parents upon this subject. It is enough that the most noble champion against evil, the most valiant conqueror of the serpent, who was to descend from Eve, was comprised in this prospect, and fell within it in a remarkable manner: even though at that time the truth was conveyed by a mere sketch or outline of natural imagery, the import of which was first developed in after times." *Herder*, *Briefe das Studium d. Theologie betreff.* ii. 225.

terms, without mention of the *person* of the Redeemer, who should lead the way in this conflict, and from whom proceeds all the strength demanded. Yet more could not be expected in these beginnings of the human race. In the kingdom of grace, as in the kingdom of nature, a gradual progress is observable. The prediction accords in many points with the tradition of other Asiatic nations who had only the darker primitive revelations; while a progressive revelation constantly added to the light of the Hebrews, and filled up with new lines the original sketch.

We shall now briefly examine the arguments which have been advanced for the existence of a primitive evangelical promise in this passage, so far as they affect our exposition. The labour of collecting them from the numerous writers by whom the *Protevangelium* has been impugned, is rendered unnecessary by the work of *Eichhorn* and *Gabler*.*

1. "Why is it that Christ and the Apostles make no use of this passage in the New Testament, when they apply so many Old Testament passages to Jesus? This would have afforded them, in a direct manner, a most important testimony. Why is there not even an allusion to it?" This is easily answered. The reason why the writers of the New Testament do not explicitly refer this prediction to Jesus, is found in the want of explicitness in the prediction itself, which refers only *implicitly* to the person of the Messiah. It was therefore natural that the New Testament writers should prefer the more numerous and determinate passages. It is not true, however, that we find no allusion to these words. See the passages already cited from the Epistle to the Romans; in which even *Rosenmüller* (on Gen. iii. 15.) recognises the allusion. Those citations from the New Testament which we have used to prove that Christ and the Apostles admitted Satan's agency in the seduction, prove satisfactorily that they also here admitted the *Protevangelium*, in our sense of the word. For no one can grant this agency of Satan, without acknowledging also the gospel promise in the text.

2. "The seed of the serpent can scarcely be understood to mean wicked men or angels; for in what sense could the latter be denominated the offspring of the devil? Wicked men are already excluded, since they belong to the posterity of Eve, to which, therefore, they cannot be set in opposition."—To

* *Urgeschichte* Th. ii. p. 292. & ii. 1. p. 197.

this we reply, that nothing is more common in the scriptures, than to transfer the relation between father and son to spiritual relations. In this very book, men of a godly spirit are called sons of God. The disciples of the prophets are denominated their sons; and the above-cited appellations of the wicked, in the New Testament, show that the reference of the term to spiritual connexion with Satan, is not unusual. Also, in the passage which has been quoted from the book Sohar, they are called "the children of the old serpent."

With regard to the second part of the argument, it is by no means sufficient to exclude wicked men from the seed of the serpent, though it is not to be restricted to these, but to comprise all Satan's progeny. As *Storr* has observed, (p. 431.) "Facile videmus etiam serpentis progeniem esse progeniem mulieris, sed indignam hoc nomine ex quo desciverit ad communem sui generis hostem."*

3. "Such a *Protevangelium* would have been altogether unintelligible to our first parents; for they as yet felt no need of a Redeemer, and had indeed no conception of his destined office."—The allegation is contrary to the narrative. That Adam and Eve were seized with a deep sense of guilt, after partaking of the fruit, appears from their shame, the common fruit of sinful desire produced by the fall, and of their accusing consciences. The same thing is apparent in their painful fear of God, with whom they had hitherto maintained affectionate communion. This sense of guilt must have been greatly augmented, when the curse of God upon the earth went into effect, and man was expelled from Paradise. He was more and more reminded of his guilt, by all nature, once subjected to him, but now rising in opposition—by his own body, already become perishable, and from the very moment of the fall, beginning to die; above all, by the tumult within his breast. But, together with this sense of guilt, there is a conviction that redemption is needed; and with the latter, a capacity for receiving the promise of an approaching victory over the kingdom of darkness. This annunciation was useful, not to Adam and Eve alone, but to all their posterity. It is from this and similar instructions communicated to our progenitors, that those reflected intimations of future deliverance and glory have proceeded, which are found among the heathen.

*See Calvin *in loc.*