

God's Word to Women

100 Bible Studies On Woman's Place In The Divine Economy

by Katharine C. Bushnell

"Hear the Word of the Lord, O ye women, and let your ear receive the Word of His mouth."

Jeremiah 9:20

"Rise up. Ye women that are at ease: Hear My voice, ye careless daughters. Give ear unto My speech."

Isaiah 32:9

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The German Edition

Wach auf, Eva! (*Wake Up, Eve!*)

Erkenne die biblische Wahrheit von Gottes ursprünglicher und unveränderter Absicht der vollen Gleichstellung der Frau (*Recognize the biblical truth of God's original and unchanging intent of the full equality of woman*)

German edition by H. Christian Beese

This translation is dedicated to my wife Sabine, our daughters and our granddaughters.

Special thanks are due to my wife for the editing, to my daughter and her husband for the title and the cover design, and to all three of them for countless conversations without which the project would never have come about.

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About the Author

Katharine C. Bushnell (1856-1946) was a courageous and gifted servant of God who modeled her life's motto "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Phil 4:13). She was a physician, missionary, crusader, reformer, author and speaker as well as a brilliant and original scholar who spoke seven languages and was grounded in Greek and Hebrew. Bushnell left medicine to do what she considered the more important work of reforming conditions of human degradation through leadership in the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) of the 19th century women's movement. The scriptural status of women was of intense concern to Bushnell who came to believe that mistranslations were responsible for the social and spiritual subjugation of women. She left the WCTU in 1896 to spend her remaining years writing and sharing the biblical truth of God's original and unchanging intent of full equality for women.

God's Word to Women by Katharine Bushnell is a groundbreaking study that carefully examines every scripture relating to women. Jessie Penn Lewis said that the material opened up the Scriptures in a way that can only be described as containing a revelation direct from God. For many today, it is the book that set them free to be what God has called them to be and to do the work that the Holy Spirit has placed in their hearts.

"Bushnell died believing that her life had made little impact. God knew better!"

While in China as a medical missionary, Bushnell discovered that the Chinese Bible was mistranslated to support cultural prejudice against the ministry of women. She wondered whether the same male bias might prejudice English translations as well and renewed her study of Hebrew and Greek. Later, while traveling throughout the world for the WCTU, she made good use of hours spent on trains, boats and in rooms where she was staying to carefully compare biblical translations with the Word as found in the original languages.

Through experience and study, the Lord was preparing Bushnell to write *God's Word to Women*. Begun in 1908 as a correspondence course, it was first published privately by Bushnell. Despite positive early reaction, the book soon disappeared; and Bushnell died believing that her life had made little impact. God knew better! The book was rediscovered and continues to be republished by those who see its priceless value. Today it is finally receiving well-deserved recognition as a foundational reference for those working on the cutting edge of biblical equality for women.

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Foreword by the Editor and Translator of the German Edition

Another “book on women” from a Bible-believing perspective? Aren’t there enough of those already? That may be so, but (almost) all of them represent one and the same view: that of so-called “complementarianism.” This term conveys the idea of mutual completion, of man and woman meeting on equal footing. On closer reflection, however, it turns out to be a euphemism. According to Wikipedia, “a euphemism (also called a glossing, softening, veiling or cloaking expression) is a linguistic expression that names a person, a group of people, an object or a state of affairs in a way that glosses over it, softens it or is meant to conceal it.” That is exactly what the term “complementarianism” does: it describes, in a glossing, softening and concealing way, the reality of the one-sided subordination of woman to man. The term itself is relatively new, but the thing—or rather the doctrine hidden behind it—is ancient; not, however, as some would have us believe, as old as creation, not even as old as the Fall.

In the USA a lively debate has long been underway among Bible-believing Christians between “complementarians” on the one hand and “egalitarians” on the other. In Germany this debate is still in its infancy. At present the “complementarian” view holds undisputed air supremacy in wide circles of the evangelical world. This book is a strong plea for the “egalitarian” view.

The doctrine of the subordination, subjection or submission of the wife to her husband—indeed of woman to man in general—has established itself in many Bible-believing, evangelical circles as a *sine qua non* of orthodoxy. It fastens on a few verses in Paul’s letters and in 1 Peter, but it reaches back even further, into the creation account in the first chapters of Genesis, and it even anchors its doctrine in the inner structure of the Holy Trinity. In doing so it assumes, implicitly or explicitly, a greater “original guilt” on Eve’s part, which has burdened and impaired the female sex continually down to the present day and which prevents equal standing in the life of the redeemed church on earth. Since such a concept calls into question the reach and efficacy of Christ’s substitutionary atoning sacrifice on the cross of Golgotha, this debate is about nothing less than the foundations of the Christian faith. In this respect we can even be grateful to the determined advocates of complementarianism for openly expressing, for all who have ears to hear, the un-evangelical character of this doctrine: they de facto present the man as a mediator between the woman and Christ, and thus contradict Paul’s teaching that there is *one* God and *one* mediator between God and human beings, namely the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5).

The relatively young, still fragile Reformed movement in Germany has not been spared this thinking either. Through various channels, not least from U.S. evangelicalism and neo-Calvinism, this doctrine has dug itself deep into the soteriological, anthropological and ecclesiological foundation of this

movement, so that many who absorbed it with their spiritual mother's milk can no longer imagine a faith outside such thinking about the position of women.

One phenomenon is that women in the churches also defend this view emphatically. This is less puzzling, and psychologically understandable, when one considers that a whole series of further euphemisms is deployed here, such as "true womanhood," "a woman after God's own heart," etc., etc.

Another phenomenon is that even those who are suspicious or critical of "complementarianism" usually hold back and shy away from debating it—a debate that the "complementarians" often wage with unfair weapons. Anyone who holds a different view is reflexively classified as a liberal, a modernist and a feminist who disregards "God's clear words" and rebels against "God's ordinances." Since there is a lack of understandable, logically coherent arguments for a one-sided subordination of Christian women, even consistent deniers of God's sovereign predestination and election like to appeal, on the "woman question," to God's sovereign freedom with which he established his "hierarchical orders."

The whole thing is blown through by a strong breeze of that legalism which Paul tirelessly denounced and fought in his letters. On the internet you can find entire sermon series on this topic. In one sermon the pastor admits that "we do not know" what Paul meant by the "veil"; yet, in order to be "obedient and on the safe side," all women should cover themselves in the worship service as a precaution, and "the pastors' wives are already setting a good example."

The spiritual "air supremacy" of "complementarianism" is flanked by prominent names and by high-ranking, widely read, otherwise good commentaries, study Bibles and systematic theologies. On closer inspection, however, one thing stands out in them: whereas on almost all topics and aspects of spiritual doctrine every last linguistic and exegetical stone is turned over and over, on the "woman question" there prevails, to put it kindly, a certain carelessness—one could also say something close to manipulative exegetical slyness. When, for example, Wayne Grudem in his *Systematic Theology* writes about the not insignificant point that the word rendered "Gehilfin" (a female assistant) in German Bibles in Genesis 2:18 actually means "helper" (Hebrew *`ezer*)—a word which, as he correctly explains, is frequently used of God himself—that "whenever someone helps another, ... the person who helps takes a subordinate and lesser position relative to the person being helped," this is not only unworthy of a mind that is very capable in other contexts, but a disparagement of God, who is our great Helper. Or when another interpreter derives a general claim of the man's superiority and dominion over the woman from the fact that Adam gives Eve a name twice ("woman" and "Eve, mother of all the living"), this is absurd in view of the fact that people in the Old Testament repeatedly gave names to God spontaneously after great experiences of deliverance. These are two examples from current works. Further cases could be cited, but I will leave it at that.

I often hear the argument that the early Christians, the church fathers and the Reformers all held the "complementarian" view, and that anyone who dares to take a different view of the "woman question" comes into conflict with 2,000 years of church history. It is true that many church fathers had a very questionable view of women, and that the Reformers of the sixteenth century likewise brought no new light into this question. But if we accepted longevity as an argument for the validity of a doctrine, there should never have been a Reformation; for the great Reformation, too, was not least a challenge to firmly established false teachings that had persisted for many centuries. It is to be hoped that for the "woman question," too, the time will come when encrusted patterns of thought break open, for the

good of both sexes in the church, and a new spirit of that Christian freedom (including freedom from gender-based prejudice) to which we are called can enter.

The importance attached to this doctrine in Western countries is, not least, a phenomenon of civilization or of affluence. From countries such as Iran or China there are reports that women play an above-average role in spreading the gospel and building young churches under the most difficult conditions.

In this book, originally published at the beginning of the twentieth century as a correspondence course, Katharine Bushnell takes us on a journey through the Bible—from Genesis to Revelation. Along the way she treats countless passages of Scripture relevant to the “woman question.” Her sound knowledge of the biblical languages and her years of study shed new light on many a cryptic-seeming passage of Scripture. She also engages with many arguments, both from so-called historical-critical scholarship and from Darwinism. She quotes numerous natural scientists and cultural anthropologists of her time. As a widely traveled medical missionary and ambassador of the gospel, she repeatedly brings in personal experiences and practical insights.

This book is deliberately designed to invite self-study and further work. (Almost) every one of the 100 lessons ends with a space for your own notes, and at the end of the book an extensive index of Bible references and an index of terms and names with explanations of words are appended.

Katharine Bushnell repeatedly inserts emphatic, well-founded appeals to her sisters to devote themselves to the study of the biblical languages, in order to read what God’s Word really has to say to them, rather than what men say it says to them. I am convinced: before we experience the spiritual revival we long and pray for, our churches must undergo a reorientation on this enormously important question, so that women are freed from their muteness and their shadowy existence and can follow their God-given calling as equal coworkers in the gospel.

H. Christian Beese, Hamburg, October 2020

Lesson 6 – GOD’S LAW OF MARRIAGE

“Therefore shall a man [husband] leave his father and his mother, and cleave unto his wife.”

45 Obedience to this fundamental marriage law of Genesis 2:24 would have saved women from ever becoming mere chattels, and thus have kept the entire race on a higher level. Imagine, please, what could be accomplished even now, for the elevation of pagan races, if missionaries would require their converts to observe the Scriptural law of marriage. The factors that would operate to relieve the oppression of Oriental women would be as follows: (1) The husband, as a *bread-winner*, would have a pecuniary value in the home of his wife; whereas, as it now is, the wife, as a producer of more children to be fed, is subject to abuse, more particularly when she brings forth a female child. (2) Man, not handicapped by unborn children, nurslings, or a helpless little brood, could not be reduced to slavery in an alien home, because he would forsake it, and leave his helpless wife and children for those who abused him to support. But the hampering effects of motherhood, and the strength of mother-love, leave the mother a victim of those who would enslave her. (3) Man is not so constituted that he can be robbed, by force, of his virtue, or his person be made a matter of trade and gain for an alien household; but these calamities are so frequently the lot of a widow left in the alien home of her deceased husband, that in some Oriental countries, notably India, the very word “widow” is

disreputable. (4) Before gestation and parturition a mother would generally be tenderly cared for, if with her own mother, under her father's roof, or near by. But in an alien home she is often shamefully neglected at such times; and this weakens the entire race, in course of time. (5) The practice of keeping the daughter at home, after marriage, and sending the son out of the home, after marriage, would put a tremendous check upon child-marriage, since parents would be in no great haste to part with wealth-producing members of the family.

46 All women should know that the Word of God started the world right, in this regard, and put such a tremendous bar to her degradation as this marriage law, in the very forefront of human history,—it being, in fact, the first social moral law enunciated for human guidance. Moreover, the testimony is increasing daily, that in the earliest ages of human history this law was not a dead letter, as it is at the present time, with few exceptions. It was customary for the husband either to go and live under the roof of his wife's parents, or to make frequent visits to her there—she never leaving the protection of her parents. The *parents* were the "natural protectors" of their married daughters,—not the husband who not infrequently has proved unworthy of his trust. The early custom was, to eye him with a certain amount of wholesome suspicion, as an alien, until he had actually demonstrated his ability to care for a wife in a proper manner.

"The parents were the "natural protectors" of their married daughters,—not the husband who not infrequently has proved unworthy of his trust."

47 Above all things, the greatest advantage of a woman remaining with, or near, her own kin, after marriage, (her family being her "natural protectors"), is, that it would conserve social morality. Some years ago, a physician in one of our largest cities was given police aid to make a very thorough investigation into the "social evil" of the city; and he published the sifted testimony of hundreds of women and girls in the disreputable ranks of life. I have not his book at hand to quote from, but his conclusion was, as I remember, that *marriage to wicked men* was a prolific cause of prostitution. Young girls married those who made love to them, without much thought or knowledge of the character of the men; and after that, marriage placed them in such a disadvantageous position, in relation to their husbands, that they could be driven, or worried, into the street, to earn money by their vice. Perhaps, in the first place, the husband may not have married with the object of compelling his wife to earn her living after such a manner; but having no proper sense of decency himself, when hard times came on, he could appreciate no reason why his wife should not help to earn the living by vice. Now it is precisely against such emergencies, that a woman's own kindred ought to have the right to interfere, if any such danger threatens. The marriage law should allow them to keep in close touch with their daughter or sister. But as it now is, such a husband can carry his wife off to the ends of the earth, if he wish, and no one can hinder his doing so.

48 With what results, one only has to visit a large Oriental city to learn. We shall not soon forget, to instance one such investigation only, a visit, after dark, to a notorious street in one of these great Oriental cities. Among the many unfortunate girls that we saw, we were told that a large number were young wives who had thought themselves married to gentlemen of large affairs in Oriental business houses. Slave-hunters had found these girls in the villages of Europe, England and America, they had made love to them, and gone through a regular marriage ceremony with them, and then brought them to the Oriental slave-market. Regularly, every evening, their "husbands" would go the rounds of the houses they owned, and see that everything was in order for the night. Then they would go to their near-by Club House (which we went and saw, in their absence), feast themselves on the food and drink

their slaves had earned, and return, at two or three o'clock in the morning, after an abundant carousing, and take away from their slave-wives every penny that they had earned in the meantime. Often they flogged them if the amount of money fell below the usual amount expected. The White Slave Trade will never receive its death-blow until we have marriage laws which will allow of an adequate protection of women as against wicked husbands; and such protection will not be adequate until a wife's own kindred, if respectable, are recognized by law as her "natural protectors," laws which will not permit a husband to take his wife away to a strange country, even if the over trustful wife is willing to go, if the removal is against the judgment of her family,—that is, unless he can show adequate reason for doing so, before the courts.

"What lessons God's marriage law teaches us, as to God's fatherly care and protection for His daughters!"

49 Precisely this same abuse of the marriage relation can be seen among the Japanese (and to a painful extent), on the Pacific Coast of the United States. There is in Japan a secret marriage agency, constantly on the lookout for Japanese girls who will go to America to be married. Also, men of this agency return to Japan, over and over, to marry girls and bring them to America. Often these Japanese men belong to good families, but they themselves have become corrupted by residence in foreign parts. Knowing they are of good families, the parents of girls trust them to bring their daughters away, after they have married them. So these girls are entrapped; and every night, in America, they are driven out upon the street, and to Japanese lodging houses, to earn money for these "husbands," to whom they were honorably married. This is no imaginary picture. We have it on the testimony of Christian Japanese gentlemen, Christian mission workers, Japanese consuls, and such persons.

What lessons God's marriage law teaches us, as to God's fatherly care and protection for His daughters! Away back at the beginning, His first uttered commandment shows that He had their rights and dignity on His heart.

Lesson 7 – GOD'S LAW OF MARRIAGE (Cont'd)

50 God meant that human marriage should be a type of Christ's union with the Church, or "New Jerusalem," His bride. Christ laid aside all His glory with His Father and came to this earth to unite Himself to us. But marriage was not meant merely to typify Christ's first coming, but to include the thought of His second coming as well; only in both these events does the type fully represent the antitype. Every Christian marriage should celebrate these two events. The husband's renunciation of ties of kinship should offset the wife's renunciation of self-love by taking up the risks of childbearing and child rearing. This is what Paul teaches, in Ephesians 5:31, 32, where he quotes the obligation that the husband should forsake his kindred for his wife, and adds, *"I speak concerning Christ and the Church."* Adam and Eve were created at the same time, and were together, and then they were separated during a "deep sleep," which came upon Adam. So Christ was with us, and then separated from us by the "deep sleep" of death, while we came, as it were, from His risen side, by faith in His shed blood. Adam was separated, that he might be re-united to Eve, in greater joy than ever,—such joy that poetry burst from his lips, in celebration of the event, which Dr. R. F. Horton renders:

*"She, she is bone of my bone,
And flesh of my flesh is she;
'Woman' her name, which has grown*

Out of man,—out of me."

51 And one day Christ will come again, "to our joy,"—for it was "expedient" for Him to go, and return again, He told us. And one day we shall recognize, as we do not now, that Christ is our very "other self," as Adam did of Eve; "*for we are members of His body,*" and "*joined to the Lord,*" we are "*one spirit,*" also. Mary Magdalene seems to have first discovered this, in experience,—for she exclaimed to the supposed gardener: "*Tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away,*"—an unconscious claiming of His body as *her very own property*, in a love of sexless chastity. No wonder that He could but manifest Himself to such love! (John 20:11-18).

52 The custom was, when Christ was on earth, for the wedding procession of the bridegroom and his male friends to go and fetch the bride from her father's house to his own father's home. But Christ's parable of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25 :1-13), presents no such picture of the violation of God's law. The virgins wait *at the home of the bride*, and at the cry that the bridegroom is coming, go forth to meet him, and fetch him and his train to a feast at the bride's home. "Ordinarily the bride was fetched by the bridegroom and his friends; but here it is the office of the virgins to fetch the bridegroom, and the wedding seems to take place in the house of the bride, as in Judges 14:10" (De Wette, quoted by Lange). So will it be when Christ comes again. Those who are waiting, and prepared for His coming, at the cry of His coming, will go forth to "*meet the Lord in the air,*" and return to the earth, the Bride's home, for the marriage feast, where they will live and reign with Him a thousand years (see 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Revelation 20:6).

We have not been merely speculating as to the advantages God's marriage law would secure to women. God's marriage law *was obeyed* in the earliest ages of humanity. This fact archaeologists are now bringing to light; and we will give a short sketch (all we now have room for) of their discoveries.

53 The first, in modern times, to write on this subject, was Bachofen, a Swiss jurist, in 1861. Mr. J. F. McLennan became his exponent in English, as well as publishing his own investigations of the subject. Many others, as Tylor, Westermarck, Fraser, Lord Avebury (Sir John Lubbock), and Robertson Smith have followed. In fact, no modern history of an early people is considered complete unless it begins with the days when there were matriarchs, as well as patriarchs. In the 36th chapter of Genesis, we discover that some of the "dukes of Edom" were women.

54 Three leading features are characteristic of this early civilization: (1) The parents of a wife, together with her own kin, remain her "natural protectors" throughout life: (2) the household property is held by the women; (3) kinship is reckoned through the women, not the men, because when men marry they are detached from their kin; the children are known by the mother's family name. This form of civilization is often called by the name, "female kinship," because the 3rd point mentioned is the cause of all the rest. For instance, McLennan, in speaking of the decline in dignity of Grecian women, says: "We see that *no causes* could have produced it, so long as relationships through women preserved their old importance. On the other hand, we can discern a sufficient cause for degeneration in the gradually increasing preponderance of male kinship, and in the changes in the marriage system which made that preponderance."

55 We may ask, what brought about this change from female to male kinship. Modern evolutionists who will not admit a Divine revelation say that, first of all universal promiscuity prevailed; and as no man knew his own children, in consequence, therefore, female-kinship alone was recognized. But the foremost evolutionists, Darwin and Spencer, say that such promiscuity never prevailed; and that is very

strong evidence against the theory, for they were the chief evolutionists. And besides, the Bible reveals the truth to us, and we need not stay to consider the evolutionists' theory. God's marriage law established female kinship, in the beginning; and why should such a hateful character as Lamech ever have been delineated in the Bible, excepting to record the violation of this marriage law, and the beginning of polygamy? A little further on, in the opening verses of the 6th chapter of Genesis, we read of the wholesale appropriation of women: *"and the earth was filled with violence,"* the record says. Lamech's son "whetted cutting instruments," as we read, in chapter four; and the first use of weapons of warfare was for the capture of women. As these captive wives were torn from their kindred, they became identified with their husband's kin, as well as their children; and so male kinship came to pass. The flood did not exterminate the habit of capturing women, for we read, in Judges, of Deborah waging war with Sisera, for his crimes against women; and Sisera's mother is represented as watching for her son's return with the spoils of war,—*"to every warrior a damsel or two."*

56 Dr. A. C. Dixon, in an article in the *London Christian* (Nov. 16, 1911) says: "Turn to this civilization which God Himself founded, and you will hear Him say: '*A man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh.*'" Woman is given the pre-eminence. It is not the woman leaving the father and the mother, and cleaving unto her husband; but it is the man leaving his mother and father, and cleaving unto his wife." At one point we disagree with Dr. Dixon. Civilization founded on this marriage law of God did *not* make the wife her husband's superior; but it prevented her becoming his subordinate. In this connection the story of Jacob and his wives, Leah and Rachel, is instructive. When he wishes to leave his father-in-law, he humbly asks his wives to accompany him. And they do not say: "It is our duty to follow our husband," but, "We are warranted in going for two reasons: Our father has given us no inheritance; and he has kept for himself Jacob's wages, and they should have been paid over to us, and our children" (Genesis 31:14-16). It is evident, from this, that men did not *sell* their daughters in marriage, where these women lived, nor did wives feel bound, by marriage, to follow their husbands to the ends of the earth. Scholars of note tell us that Abraham said to Abimelech, Genesis 20:13, concerning Sarah, *"Then God caused her to wander with me,"* not simply, *"when God caused me to wander."* The difference in the meaning is this: It was not expected, in those days, that a wife would follow her husband in his wanderings, but quite the contrary. God wished Sarah and Abraham both to come out of idolatrous surroundings; therefore He gives a revelation of His will to Sarah, lest she should follow the usual custom and remain with her kin.

"Civilization founded on this marriage law of God did not make the wife her husband's superior; but it prevented her becoming his subordinate."

Lesson 8 – THE EARLY DIGNITY OF WOMAN

57 Says Prof. Robertson Smith of Cambridge: "In Genesis, marriage is (defined as implying that a man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife and they become one flesh. This is quite in accordance with what we find in other parts of the patriarchal story. Mr. McLennan has cited the marriages of Jacob, in which Laban plainly has the law on his side in saying that Jacob had no right to carry off his wives and their children; and also the fact that when Abraham seeks a 'wife for Isaac, his servant thinks that the condition will probably be that Isaac shall come and settle with her people." [In this case, Abraham would not consent, because God had expressly called him away from their idolatry]. "Joseph's children by his Egyptian wife became Israelites only by adoption: and so in Judges 15, Samson's Philistine wife remains with her people and he visits her there. All these things illustrate

what is presented in Genesis 2:24 as the primitive type of marriage." And we might ask, what does that primitive form of language mean,—"cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh," but that he shall become of the same kin as his wife? The same writer says: "Mother kinship is the type of kinship, common motherhood the type of kindred unity, which dominates all Semitic speech." J. P. Peters, D.D., writing of this same passage in Genesis says: "In the relation which man is here represented as holding towards woman, we have, apparently, another of those incidental evidences of the great antiquity of this story. It is not the woman who leaves father and mother, and cleaves to the man, but the man who leaves father and mother, and cleaves to his wife. It would seem as though we had a survival of the old matriarchate, that relation of marriage of which we have an example in the Samson story, where the woman remains with her tribe, or clan, or family, and is visited by the man. The offspring in such a case belongs to the woman's family, not the man's" (*Early Hebrew Story*, p. 223).

58 Prof. Flinders Petrie, the great archaeologist, has also written interestingly on this topic, and we linger to quote rather lengthily from him,—our object in giving these quotations being to show that we are not straining a point. He says: "We have become so accustomed to the idea that women were always dependent in the East—as they are now under Mohammedanism—that we need to open our eyes to a very different system which is shown us in the early history of the patriarchal age. Broadly, it may be said that our present system is the entire mixture of men and women in society, while men retain all the rights and property. The early ideal in the East was separate worlds of men and women, while women retained their own rights and all the property."

"Mother kinship is the type of kinship, common motherhood the type of kindred unity ..."

59 To continue: "The first woman [aside from Eve] that appears as a personality in the O. T.¹ is Sarah, the 'chieftainess,' as her name implies. *Sar* is the regular old term for a chief, still kept up in the East. . . Her independent position is seen by her living in the palace of Pharaoh, or in the court of Abimelech, quite irrespective of Abraham. The attempt at explaining this away by later writers will not at all account for this independence, which was ignored in after ages.

"Sarah had her independent residence at Mamre, and lived there, while Abraham lived at Beersheba; and it is said that he came to mourn for her and to bury her. Her position, therefore, during her wanderings and in later life was not by any means that of secluded dependence, but rather that of an independent head of the tribe, or 'tribal mother.'

60 "As Sarah had no daughter it was needful to get one of the family to head the tribe, and Rebekah was brought over from the old home. Sarah's state tent was removed by Isaac three or four days' journey from Mamre down to Beer-lahai-roi, and as soon as Rebekah came, she was installed in the tent. Then after that, Isaac married her; and she appears quite as independent as Sarah. Rebekah, having no daughter to succeed her, Jacob needed to marry Leah, the eldest in succession, and could not have Rachel until Leah's position was thus assured.

61 "On coming to the descent into Egypt, there is only one daughter named along with eleven sons, and that is Dinah, 'the female judge,' [as the meaning is], daughter of the chieftainess Leah. On her marrying a Hivite² her brothers were furious, because she would thus subject her judgeship to another race; and only the incorporation of the Hivites with the Israelite race by circumcision could remedy the position (Genesis 34:1- 24). Still later we can trace this descent in the name of the only woman of the next generation that is named, Serah (Genesis 46:17), a form of Sarah, 'the chieftainess.' As Dinah

seems to have no children, the next thing was to take a descendant of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid. So Asher, over whom Leah has specially rejoiced, supplied the next chieftainess in his daughter Serah."

62 Something of this early dignity of woman can be traced throughout the Scripture story, notably in the "queen mother," next in power to the king, who is spoken of as late as the time of Jeremiah 13:18 (here the word is wrongly translated "queen"), 600 B.C. These will be considered again later.

Before Hebrew, were the Akkadian and Sumerian languages; and Prof. Sayce tells us that the translators of ancient Sumerian hymns into the Semitic, changed "female and male," to "male and female," and introduced other such changes, to give the male pre-eminence. Sumeria, Akkadia, Babylonia, Arabia, Phoenicia and Egypt,—all these most ancient civilizations were characterized by features of the matriarchy. Sir Wm. Ramsay tells us the same as to Asia Minor. Female kinship can also be traced in early Greece,—the Spartan woman being the last to lose her dignity. As late as B. C. 450, Herodotus wrote, of the Lycians: "If anyone asks his neighbor who he is, he will declare himself born of such a mother, and will reckon up the ancestors of his mother." It was formerly supposed that this was due to the father having more than one wife; but it is now strongly asserted that such is not the proper explanation. The very word "brother" in Greek (*adelphos*) defines a relation through the mother, not through the father.

63 We have got so far away from God's law, that today, in British law, the mother is not a parent. During the reign of Edward VI, the civil and ecclesiastical courts united in declaring that the Duchess of Suffolk was no kin to the son she had borne. The English Church is severe against divorce. Yet, read the Lord's ruling as to divorce, in Matthew 19, and we discover that the conclusion, *"Therefore what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder,"* rests upon the premises, *"A man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall become [R. V.] one flesh."* The Church will never effectually enforce the conclusion of that statute, while it defies the premises upon which it rests.

64 Our Hebrew grammars and lexicons call attention to the fact that nearly all collective nouns referring to peoples, and the names of cities and towns, are *feminine* in form. How did this come about, for it is simply impossible to think of men coining a word of feminine gender to describe such a crowd as Christ fed, in His day? The account states that He fed *"four thousand men, besides women and children."* And on another occasion He fed *"five thousand men, besides women and children."* Again, Peter, Stephen, and Paul on sundry occasions, all address crowds, in The Acts, as *"Men brethren,"* not even mentioning women at all. When the male holds the first place almost exclusively, his sex alone is specified in a crowd. But we can readily see that when a nation of one blood, or a community of one blood was mentioned, in the days when blood was reckoned through women, then nations, cities, communities and crowds would acquire appellations in the feminine gender. These collective words for cities, towns, etc. came to be feminine because such places were composed of clusters of *dwelling owned by women*, and from which those women seldom removed. The very word for towns in Numbers 21 :25, Joshua 15:45, etc. is "daughters." For the same reason "inhabitant of Zion" stands in the original *"inhabitress of Zion"* in Isaiah 12:6, and similar instances are very frequent in the O. T.

Lesson 9 – EVE'S CHOICE, AND ADAM'S

65 In a helpful course of lectures on "The Spiritual Criticism of the Bible," Dr. A. T. Pierson said: "In the intellectual sphere man believes a thing because it is true; in the spiritual, a man knows a thing to be true because he believes it." If, having the Spirit with you to convict you of the truth, you believe what is said in our Lesson today, then *accept the truth* and live by it, and teach it to others, though it may completely overturn previous instruction which you have received, and preconceptions which you may have imbibed.

66 Let us repudiate, once for all, in our Lessons, any desire to discuss, "Which is the greater in the kingdom of heaven, man or woman?" as an unworthy question to raise. But, as women, we are interested, and should be, in woman's destiny. It was fixed in the Garden of Eden. What is it?

67 Please read Genesis 2:17, 18. Just previous to the separation of the sexes, when Adam had reached maturity, and was accountable for his conduct, God forbade him to eat of the *"tree of the knowledge of good and evil."* Eve had not been "builded" yet, as shown by verse 18; the command was given in the second person singular. Precisely what this "tree" was, we are not told. It is allowable to think the expression "good and evil" is practically equivalent to "pain and pleasure," as it is in such passages as 2 Samuel 19:35, Job 2:10, Isaiah 7:15, 16, Jeremiah 42:6, etc. The result of Adam's disobedience of such a law would be, first, the discovering of a marked contrast between "pain" and "pleasure;" and, second, a strong temptation, as to the future, to seek pleasure, and to avoid even wholesome "pain." Perhaps God wished to fix Adam's attention on higher motives and principles of conduct than mere "pain and pleasure." This prohibition, if we so interpret it, had peculiar significance, as just preceding God's providing Adam with a wife. Above all things, the avoidance of the pains of responsibility in the relation of the sexes is to be discountenanced. It means the deterioration of the individual, and eventual deterioration of the race; and it must inevitably entail suffering and undue burden bearing, on the part of the mother-sex.

68 Eve was not "builded" until after this prohibition was uttered, and we are not informed whether she heard it afterwards from the Almighty, or merely heard of it through Adam. So far as the testimony goes, it is to the effect that she had only heard of it through Adam, when Satan beguiled her into disobeying the commandment; for in repeating the story she elaborates the language, making the statement of the law stronger at one point and weaker at another,—and these are the characteristics of a repeated story, not a first-hand account. Eventually they both ate of the tree, and God came in the cool of the evening to deal with them. He asked Adam: *"Hast thou eaten of the tree?"* and the reply was, *"The woman that THOU gavest to be with me, SHE gave me of the tree, and I did eat."* God then questioned the woman, and she replied: *"The SERPENT beguiled me, and I did eat."* Please note the words we have put in capital letters.

69 I think we are warranted in drawing a contrast between these two answers, for in them we find a clue to what follows. Both confess, *"I did eat,"* and both tell truthfully the *immediate* influence that led to the eating. So far they are equal. But Adam is led on to say more. There was a remote cause for his downfall, through Eve,—Satan. But Adam does not, like Eve, mention Satan; and yet he does not remain silent as to a remote cause; he accuses God to His face of being Himself that remote cause,—in giving the woman to be with him. And the worst feature of the case consists in the fact that Satan was present, or near-by, at the interview, and could not have been overlooked, excepting wilfully, if a remote cause was to be mentioned at all. Satan must have rejoiced as much in Adam's attitude

towards God in charging Him with folly, as in Adam's attitude towards himself, the tempter, in shielding him from blame. Is it not this scene, this conduct on the part of Adam, to which Job refers (31:33) when he complains, *"If, like Adam, I covered my transgressions by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom?"* Dr. Lange says (see par. 36), "Adam must watch and protect" the garden from an "existing power of evil." Is not this the reason why Adam does not mention Satan, who has been let inside?

"... he accuses God to His face of being Himself that remote cause,—in giving the woman to be with him."

70 Destiny is an awful word. One's fate may become fixed for a lifetime by the choice of a moment, and that choice, unless Divine interference be invoked, may become the natural bent of one's progeny, through succeeding generations. This is the lesson of the Israelites and the Edomites of Scripture. Esau's life seemed more creditable than Jacob's up to a certain advanced point in Jacob's history. But when Esau stood at the parting of two ways, he chose physical refreshment at the cost of his birthright (Genesis 25:29-34). Much later, Jacob came to the parting of two ways, and at the risk of a murderous attack from his brother finding him alone and unprepared, he wrestled all night for the Divine blessing (Genesis 32:24-32), and secured it. God saw, even before the birth of these two, the sort of choices they would make, and made His "selection" according to this foreknowledge. God is now about to make a "selection," the same one as when, later in history, he chose Jacob as the progenitor of the coming Messiah,—this time on the basis of the choices of Adam and Eve.

71 Adam made an evil choice. Adam advanced to the side of the serpent, in becoming a false accuser of God. But Eve, by her exposure of the character of Satan before his very face, created an enmity between herself and him. What followed was the natural outcome of Eve's better choice. God proposed to draw the woman yet farther away from Satan. He said to Satan, *"I will put enmity between thee and the woman (3:15)*. In effect, he said: "She has chosen to make the breach; I will widen it."

Much is made of the glorious promise which follows, but let us pause and consider this one, in which the expositors, for the most part, find no more depth of meaning than that there will be always a natural animosity between men and the lower animal, the snake!

72 We must not forget that at this time God put enmity between Satan and the woman. This will account largely for a whole train of evils prophesied in the following verse (3:16), which tradition says is the result of Eve's having introduced sin into the world by eating the forbidden fruit, and giving of it to her husband. Satan's enmity is the cause of woman's sufferings. More light on this point follows later in the Lessons.

73 *"And between thy seed and her seed,"* God adds, in these words addressed to Satan, and concerning woman. Despite the popular cry regarding the "universal Fatherhood of God, and the universal brotherhood of man," which is in part true, we who accept the Scriptures as authority must not forget that Satan, as well as God, has his children-- moral and spiritual delinquents—among men. *"The good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one."* John 6:70 reads, *"Have I not chosen you twelve and one of you is a devil?"* When the Jews declared, *"We have one Father, even God,"* Jesus replied, *"If God were your Father, ye would love Me. . . . Ye are of your father the devil"* (John 8:41-43). Even the Apostle of love, John, will not admit that all men are children of God, but warns: *"Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil. . . . In this the children of God*

are manifest, and the children of the devil" (1 John 3:7-8, 10). God does not receive, or acknowledge as His, the unregenerated "bastard" children (Hebrew 12:8) of a fallen Church.

74 "It [woman's seed] *shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise his heel.*" The "shall," in both places, here should have been rendered "will," for the sake of clearness. They are future tenses, not imperatives. God does not command Satan to bruise the heel of the woman's seed; He only prophesies that these things will come to pass. The prophecy has special reference to the great enemy of Satan, Jesus Christ, born of the virgin Mary; but it also refers to all believers, for St. Paul says, "*The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly,*" in his letter to the Romans (16:20). We will continue this subject in our next Lesson.

Lesson 11 – EVE AND HER TRADUCERS

82 Did space permit, we might add interesting comments by others besides Dean Payne-Smith as to Eve's belief that Cain was the Coming One, the Messiah. Particularly valuable are the comments of Dr. Peter Lange, of Bonn University, and his editor and translator, Dr. Tayler Lewis. The latter says: "The greatness of Eve's mistake in applying the expression to one who was the type of Antichrist rather than of the Redeemer, should not so shock us as to affect the interpretation of the passage, now that the Covenant God is revealed to us as a being so transcendently different. The limitation of Eve's knowledge, and perhaps her want of due distinction between the Divine and the human, only sets in a stronger light the intensity of her hope, and the subjective truthfulness of her language. Had her reported words, at such a time, contained no reference to the promised seed of the woman, the rationalist would doubtless have used it as a proof that she could have known nothing of such a prediction, and that, therefore, Genesis 3:15 and Genesis 4:1 must have been written by different authors, ignoring or contradicting each other."

83 It is not Adam, but the Word of God itself, that says Eve was "*the mother of all living.*" Delitzsch remarks here, "The promise purports truly a seed of the woman. In the very face, therefore, of the death with which he is threatened, the wife is for Adam the security for both, as well for the continuance, as for the victory of the race." On the point as to all believers being "the seed of the woman," Dr. Monroe Gibson asks, "Who are her seed?" and replies, "Many superficial readers think it is all mankind. In a certain sense, of course, all mankind are 'the seed of the woman;' but suppose you include all mankind, where do the seed of the serpent come in [with whom her seed are at enmity]? Is it not quite obvious that 'the seed of the woman' cannot mean all mankind,—but simply those who are not only literally, but spiritually the 'seed of the woman,' those who are found on the side of good, the side of God and righteousness? Those who are of an opposite spirit are the seed of the serpent, 'the children of the devil.' In the same way, when . . . we are told that '*Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living*' [3:20], most readers take it in the sense that she was the mother of all mankind. But why give her a name to indicate a thing so obvious? On the other hand, when you take the 'living' in the spiritual as well as the literal sense as those 'alive unto God', those who are to have the 'life' which God gives through His Son, how beautifully all the references correspond! 'The seed of the woman,' 'the mother of the living,' 'the generation of Adam.' There is, properly speaking, no present tense in Hebrew only the past and future. So when the future is used, it may denote the present, running on into the future. So here, it is not only 'I will put enmity;' but I am putting, and will put enmity between thee and the woman. The work is begun. . . . She is the first type

and representative of all the separated ones who constitute the Church of God." (*The Ages before Moses*, page 122).

84 Now let us compare four passages, out of many that might be chosen. God tells Abraham, Genesis 22:16-18, "*By Myself have I sworn . . . in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed My voice.*" To Isaac He says, "*In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because that Abraham obeyed My voice*" (Genesis 26:4, 5). To Jacob He said the same (Genesis 28:14). To David He says, "*I will raise up thy seed after thee. . . and I will establish his throne forever*" (1 Chronicles 17:11, 12). Then, Galatians 3:29, "*If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise,*" Was it a special honor to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David to be mentioned as in this stream of blessing which was to descend to humanity? Then it is well for us to remember that the *source* of this blessing, on the human side, is Eve, of whom God said, to Satan, "*I will put enmity between thee and the woman; . . . her seed...shall bruise thy head.*" The promise honors Eve quite as much as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the honor could not have been conferred upon her but for the same reason as upon them,—namely, because of excellence found in her.

85 In our next Lesson we will show that the N. T. teaches that Adam, rather than Eve, was the one who brought sin into the world, and death through sin. But how, then, can we account for this slandering of Eve's character? Where did it take its source? We think the answer to these questions is simple enough. Historically speaking, the earliest definite accusation against woman as the source of all evil is the pagan Greek myth of Pandora. According to Hesiod, who lived about 800 B.C., Jupiter was angry because Prometheus ("Forethought") had stolen fire from heaven, and in revenge ordered Vulcan to make a beautiful woman. Minerva adorned her with all gifts, and she was named Pandora ("All-gifted"),—but Mercury gave her a deceitful mind. She was brought to Epimetheus ("Afterthought"), who received her, contrary to warnings, in the absence of Prometheus. When admitted among men, Pandora opened a casket and allowed to escape all the evils of mankind, excepting delusive hope. There are many variations of this myth, but they all teach the one view,—that woman is the source of human ills.

86 The time between the O. T. and the N. T. story has been called in Jewish history "the days of mingling," because of the effort, on the part of the Jews, to reconcile the teachings of the O. T., and the customs of the Jews, with Greek paganism. Archdeacon Farrar³ tells us that at this time, "Palestine was surrounded by a cordon of Greek cities in which many Jews mingled freely with the heathen population. In Jerusalem itself we witness the growth of a wealthy and powerful party, in close alliance, alternately, with the Greek kings of Syria and of Egypt. Fascinated by the attractions of Greek life and literature, they wished to adopt Hellenistic ideals, and to obliterate the most essential distinctions of Jewish life and religion. This semi-faithless epoch was described as 'the days of mingling.'"

87 It is nothing strange, then, that during this time the attempt should have been made to reconcile the story of Pandora and the account of Eve in Genesis; and the most ancient extant reference to Eve as the source of evil is to be found in that book of the Apocrypha which is known as *Ecclesiasticus*, or *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*. This, a Palestinian production of uncertain date, was originally written in Hebrew, probably about 250 B. C., but early translated into Greek, in Egypt, and it contains these words: "From woman a beginning of sin; and because of her all die" (25:24). Tennant tells us that "Ben Sira was the precursor of the Talmudic teaching as to the Fall."⁴ We shall presently show what some of that Talmudic teaching was as regards Eve,—so please do not forget this point.

“... the most ancient extant reference to Eve as the source of evil is to be found in that book of the Apocrypha which is known as *Ecclesiasticus*, or *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*.”

Other Jewish writers, of later date, enlarge upon this culpability of Eve. At Alexandria, particularly, was the effort carried forward of reconciling the Scriptures with Greek pagan teachings. Unfortunately for Christian theology, after the Greek version of the O. T. was made at Alexandria (B. C. 285 saw its beginning), these Jewish, uninspired writings, called *The Apocrypha*, all written in Greek, not Hebrew, were incorporated with that version, which was used, to the exclusion of the Hebrew Scriptures by the Church; and many of the church fathers quoted the Apocrypha as authoritative; and all were influenced by its teachings. Thus it easily happens that the character of the mythological Pandora is ascribed to Eve. No saying that reflects upon Eve's character can be traced further back than "the days of mingling."

88 Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons in 177 A. D., following the teaching of Ben Sira and other Jews, says of Eve: "Having become disobedient, she was made the cause of death, both to herself and to the entire human race." But Tertullian of Carthage, a few years later, is particularly severe, and visits Eve's sin on all Christian women, in the following language: "Do you not know that you are an Eve? God's verdict on the sex still holds good, and the sex's guilt must still hold also. YOU ARE THE DEVIL'S GATEWAY, you are the avenue to the forbidden tree. You are the first deserter from the law divine. It was you who persuaded him [Adam] whom the devil himself had not strength to assail. So lightly did you esteem God's image. For your deceit, for death, the very Son of God had to perish." But, except for woman, would humanity have ever afforded any entrance of the Son of God into the world, to perish, or for men to preach?

89 Many of the theological views of the present day show the shaping of Tertullian's hand upon them, for, to use the concise statement of *Lippincott's Biographical Dictionary*, "He acquired great influence among the Christians of his time." Not a few of his literary works remain to this day. With such a view of woman, to start with (shut out by perpetual "guilt" from participation in the merits of Christ's atonement), it is small wonder that the next Scripture verse that we shall consider (Genesis 3:16), has been construed, in accordance with the teaching of the Talmud and Tertullian, as God's perpetual curse upon the entire female sex.

Lesson 46 – NEEDLESS APOLOGIES FOR PAUL'S LOGIC

346 Now what alternative have we to this view that Paul is giving advice suited to a great emergency,—and that he *is not* arguing for the perpetual silencing and subordination of woman? We have, according to expositors, the statement that the very Apostle who spent so much time combating the "Jewish fables" of the Judaizers, was himself very deeply dyed by the same school,—for it is impossible to escape from the representation that Paul indulged freely in frivolous Jewish sophistries here, unless we conclude that *someone else* has interlined Paul's teaching with interested sophistries. For instance, Calvin says of the argument, "Adam was formed first." "Yet the reason which Paul assigns, that woman was second in the order of creation, appears not to be a very strong argument for her subjection, for John the Baptist was before Christ in order of time, and yet was greatly inferior in rank,"—and Calvin might have added: "Every man has a mother who was made before himself, and yet she is held to be his inferior." Or, if Paul referred to the primary act of creation, "Cows were made before men—even before theologians,—men must be subordinated to cows." For our part, we should sooner believe that the expositor has made use of unworthy sophistries than that Paul has done so.

347 According to the view that Paul is enforcing rabbinical teachings, as Kalisch says, “The New Testament is . . . even more rigorous than the Old; for whilst it commands the woman ‘to learn in silence with all subjection but not to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence,’ she was in the Old Testament, admitted to the highest office of teaching, that of prophets, as Miriam, Deborah and Huldah.” But we would rather believe that the expositor is mistaken, than that the very term “Gospel,”—“Good News,”—proclaims oppression to women, such as was not enforced under Old Testament Law.

348 Sometimes the expositor, content with Paul’s *ruling* but uneasy over Paul’s *reasonings*, as he represents them, attempts to apologize. Says Prof. Reynolds of verse 13, “This may sound to our ears a far-fetched argument, when used to discountenance female usurpation of intellectual supremacy. It was, however, a method current at the time to look for and find in the Scriptures the concrete expression of almost all philosophical judgment.” That sounds very wise. But we are accustomed to believe that the Holy Spirit prompted Paul’s writings; and we do not believe the Spirit needed to study rabbinical rubbish to suggest a reason for silencing and subordinating women. Dire indeed must have been the want of a reason, before Paul could have contented himself to produce those attributed to him!

349 The Apostle who wrote the sustained logic of the Epistle to the Romans, and who either wrote the lucid arguments of the Epistle to the Hebrews, or was instructor of the one who wrote them, did not need to resort to what he himself spoke of with utter contempt,—“Jewish fables”—and warned Timothy to shun, to find a pretext for silencing women. If he did silence them, he had an *honest* reason for doing so, and could have found proper language in which to express that reason. A grave responsibility rests upon those who subject Paul to ridicule, and the Bible to suspicion as to its worth, by trying to support sophistries by lame apologies for Paul. We do not admit for one moment that either the Apostle or the Bible in general needs any apology. Let the expositor consent to give up the attempt to prove egotistical and foregone conclusions, and Paul’s language becomes perfectly lucid and consistently Christian. We have shown that Paul did not argue for the subordination of woman to man; he did not argue that Eve was more guilty than Adam. He only recommended temporary “quietness” on the part of women in the Church because there was special peril to the Church and to woman in contrary conditions. The Neronian persecutions were on, and the virtue of Christian women threatened.

“If he did silence them, he had an honest reason for doing so, and could have found proper language in which to express that reason.”

350 Yet, still persisting in the inference that Paul silences and subordinates all women, for all time, Prof. Ramsay, in *The Expositor*, in the year 1909, pronounces Paul’s language in this place, “A quaint example of the way in which the Jews were wont to derive arguments from Scripture, and to twist and torture its words, in order to support the opinions which they were stating. Even where Paul is expressing a truth which he sees clearly with direct and unerring intuition, he sometimes draws from the Old Testament arguments which to us seem tortuous special pleading and quite valueless as reasoning. The Jewish mind reasoned in a totally different way from us; and by its line of reasoning often offends us. But we must not identify the truth of the opinion with the validity of the reasoning, or conclude that, because the argument is so unconvincing, the opinion is therefore untrue. Accordingly, we may set aside as not appealing to our minds, and barely intelligible to us, the

argument drawn from the conduct of Adam and Eve. So far as it is intelligible, it fails to strengthen Paul's case in the judgment of modern readers. But his case is quite independent of the argument."

351 We are very glad that "in the judgment of modern readers" the case for the subordination and silencing of women, has not been strengthened by the arguments *attributed* to Paul, for we now take hope that the expositor will presently perceive that such flimsy arguments are not Paul's at all, but the work of manipulators of Paul's language. Paul has not twisted Scripture; rather, men have twisted Paul's arguments out of conformity with Scripture. But there is hope, if expositors once begin to acknowledge the twist in the language. Prof. Ramsay assumes that Paul's argument is bad, but his conclusion from the bad argument is true. But a bad tree cannot bring forth good fruit. When once the fact is recognized that man's dominion over woman is a piece of property vested in a faulty title deed, men cannot struggle against a guilty conscience; and woman has God on her side of the contest. Hence we conclude that between the two courses, either to admit that Paul was arguing for something else, or to contend that Paul was arguing dishonestly, by twisting Scripture (for the silencing and subordination of woman), it is far more honoring to Paul and reverent towards God and His Word, to repudiate the latter view of the case and to accept the former.

352 We have shown that a consistent, worthy sense can be found in Paul's words to Timothy about women, quite apart from the idea that he is upholding rabbinical sophistries. But Prof. Ramsay, not to quote others of like views, accuses Paul of "tortuous special pleading" in order to support the teaching (which belongs to rabbinism) that woman is subordinate to man. No one can deny that tortuous special pleading has been employed in enforcing such teaching by means of this Timothy passage. That fact is self-evident: but we deny that Paul is the guilty party, who has handled the word of God deceitfully. We lay the charge at the door of the "Judaizers" of the early church; and masculine interpreters, for (perhaps unconscious) self-interested reasons, have adopted that ready-made tortuous special pleading of the "Judaizers," whose mischievous influence in the church, Paul himself contended against daily throughout his entire ministry. He warned and prophesied against them as follows: "*I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock*" (Acts 20:29). He denounced them and their teachings a score of times in his various epistles; and after Paul's day, Peter wrote warning the Christians against those who wrested the words of Paul's epistles "unto their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:15, 16).

353 Paul declared himself, in 2 Corinthians 4:1, 2: "*Seeing we have this ministry . . . we . . . have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully.*" In order to accept the view that Paul fell into "tortuous special pleading" such as characterized the "Judaizers" of those days, we must believe, then, much more than merely that Paul "twists and tortures" (to use Prof. Ramsay's words) the language of Scripture. We must believe that the Holy Spirit who inspired Paul's writings, has given way to a lying spirit, and that when Paul makes this declaration concerning himself, he was not truthful; and we hold no such opinion of Paul.

Lesson 47 – CONCLUDING REMARKS ON THE HEADSHIP OF THE HUSBAND

354 If the headship of the husband, then, does not imply government by the husband, why is the wife exhorted to "be in subjection" to her husband, rather than the husband to the wife? Because the real meaning of the word "subjection" refers, not to servility, but to conciliation. Where wrong exists, or is supposed to exist, the Christian method is always to exhort the wronged one to efforts to keep the peace, if possible, until the wrongdoer learns the better way. Read 1 Peter 2:18-23 for light on this

point: note the transition to 3:1, especially the word “likewise.” The “subjection” urged is toward a wayward, not Christian, husband. So the Apostle Paul, in Ephesians, fifth chapter, exhorts the wife, who is the one likely to suffer wrong, to one set of duties, summed up in the word “subjection;” and the husband to another set of duties, because he is the one inclined to oppress. The husband is to show that love which gives itself for the good of another.

355 But the expositor wrongly interprets Paul’s *intention*, in the use of the word “subjection.” Let us illustrate: In China, for centuries past, mothers have felt compelled to bind the feet of their girls in order to prepare them for the matrimonial market. This custom is now yielding before the humane influences of the Christian religion, and mothers, with the support of the men of their families, refuse to bind the feet of their daughters, and often unbind their own. But the problem of having free feet is one thing to the daughter, whose feet have *never* been bound, and quite another to the mother, whose feet *have been bound* for years. The reason is, that the very bandages which have so weakened and crippled the feet, have, in the course of time, become an *essential support* to the weakened members; so that, when the woman medical missionary unbinds the feet of the Chinese mother, she must remove the old bandages, *and then put on fresh bandages*,—this time, binding each individual toe to its individual splint,—only until it can go free of all support.

356 Now this latter is a process of binding, but it is done with an *opposite view* to the original foot binding. It looks to the restoration of lost freedom, while the old process aggressively deprived of freedom. It is, moreover, in the very nature of things, a process wholly unsuitable to the girl whose feet have never been bound. Would it be fair, now, or truthful, because of this *temporary device*, looking to eventual complete freedom, which the doctor adopts, to represent the woman doctor as favorable to foot binding? Yet, precisely after this manner has St. Paul been misrepresented by those willing to justify male rule. They ignore Paul’s declared object; they are silent as to Paul’s clear utterances elsewhere, as to “*the glorious liberty of the children of God*;” they disdain the guards Paul puts about his words, and pervert his meaning.

357 Such words as, “*There is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female*,” convey small authority to their minds; but because Paul has twice reminded the wife that her husband is her “head” (“support,” see par. 282), therefore would these expositors permanently rebind upon women the very burdens of oppression which Paul would remove from their bowed backs. This false representation of the Apostle’s intention has led many people into irreverent ridicule of the Bible and Paul; and the perverters of Paul’s meaning are responsible for this. Paul does not speak as an “old bachelor,” but as the mouthpiece of God. Nor is he labouring under the blight of rabbinical training. Paul speaks under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and can be easily understood, with the Spirit’s help, by those who care to understand him rightly. Any other representation of his words is irreverent.

358 The Apostle, then, realizing the difficulties under a pagan government, and under civil laws unjust to women, first declares that within the Church bandages of oppression must be removed, but that the bond of matrimony must be carefully conserved (“*Let marriage be held in honor of all*”); wives must be patient; and husbands be used as individual splints to each broken and crushed woman. The revolutionary ethics of a Christ-like love would shortly accomplish all the rest. Like his Master, Paul came “*to proclaim liberty to the captive*,” by his Gospel message,—not to proclaim captivity to the captive. Paul’s goal for women, as much as for men, is “*the glorious liberty of the children of God*,” and he declares it in many ways, again and again; and when once that goal has been attained by women, the *method* is obsolete and meaningless. In Christian lands, in *real* Christian homes, special injunctions

upon the wife to “be in subjection” to her husband, are out of place,—the method has accomplished its work; oppression is gone; the liberty is wrought out.

359 Let us turn now to Ephesians, fifth chapter in the R.V. Verse 22 reads, “*Wives [be in subjection] unto your own husbands, as unto the lord.*” Note first that the words we bracket are not in the original. The duty is the same one that was already laid upon all Christians by verse 21, and this does not design to extend the duties of the wife to indefinite proportions, but to limit them. The form is equivalent to Colossians 3:18, concerning the same set of duties, “*as is fit in the Lord.*” Subjection, to Paul’s mind, could go beyond what is “fit.” For when false brethren came to him and gave him bad counsel, he declares, “*to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour.*” Yes, this Apostle who taught all believers to “be in subjection” one to another, as did Peter also (1 Peter 5:5), declares even of Peter, “*I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed,*” (Galatians 2:3-5, 11). An *unqualified* subjection of one to another has never been enjoined upon man or woman Christian by the Bible.

“An unqualified subjection of one to another has never been enjoined upon man or woman Christian by the Bible.”

360 Very different is Milton’s teaching from the Apostle Paul’s, to women:

“To whom thus Eve, with perfect beauty adorn’d:

‘My author and disposer, what thou bidd’st

Unargued I obey: so God ordains;

God is thy law, thou mine; to know no more

Is woman’s happiest knowledge, and her praise.”

Such teaching as this puts man in the very place of God. It is the spirit of Antichrist who “*sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God*” (2 Thessalonians 2:4 R. V.). It also teaches woman that most hateful of all sins to God, idolatry.

361 If the Apostle does not especially enjoin “subjection” on husbands, as such, it is because he has occasion to set forth more important duties on his part. Verse 23 of this passage in Ephesians tells him that, like his Lord, he is to be to his wife, “*the savior of the body.*” How free and chaste Paul intends her to be! Verse 25 teaches an utter self-renunciation, like Christ’s, for her sake. Verse 26, that by his own cleansed and sanctified fleshly nature, he is to “*sanctify and cleanse*” his wife’s body, so as to be prepared in the end to present her spotless (verse 27) to Christ,—free from all moral injury by his conduct. Verse 28 teaches him to love his wife as he loves his own body, i.e., to nourish and cherish her. The opposite conduct—the oppression of lust—is to hate her. Verse 31: He (not she) is to forsake all others, and to cleave to her alone. (See pars. 45-64.)

362 Woman’s only century, in the Christian Church, was during apostolic days, and a little while thereafter. Prof. Ramsay, in his valuable book, *The Church in the Roman Empire*, states: “The Universal and Catholic type of Christianity became confirmed in its dislike of the prominence and the public ministration of woman. The dislike became abhorrence, and there is every probability that the dislike is as old as the first century, and was intensified to abhorrence before the middle of the second century.” With the growth of this abhorrence, we may rest assured that every conceivable effort would be made to find a warrant for silencing and subordinating women; and the “Judaizer” was at hand to point the method of torturing and twisting Scripture, especially Paul’s words, into teaching the same. Here we have, in a few words, the history of that “tortuous special pleading” which enables conclusions to

seem to be drawn from arguments presented by Paul; arguments which, if rightly read, and interpreted by unbiased minds, would lead to very different opinions of the Apostle Paul and his teachings on the “woman question.”

“Woman’s only century, in the Christian Church, was during apostolic days, and a little while thereafter.”

Lesson 66 – THE FOUNDING OF A CHRISTIAN FAMILY

519 According to the chronology of the O. T. ordinarily in use (Usher's), Abraham was born in 1996 B.C., and Sarah was ten years younger (Genesis 17:17). This household of faith lived, then, about as long before Christ as we live after Christ. The same chronology places Eve's day, when the promise of the conquering Seed was given, at 4004 B. C., thus reckoning the time of Abraham and Sarah as about midway between this memorable promise and the birth of woman's Seed.

520 From the days of Eve to Abraham (at first called *Abram*), God had apparently taken no account of the seed of the male, as having part in the progenitress of the coming Messiah. In the meantime humanity, at least in that part of the world, had abolished the reckoning of posterity as to female descent; and much that characterized the early female dignity was vanishing. By some method trace must be kept of the coming Messiah, otherwise than the general designation that he would be the Seed of woman; and now the light begins to dawn as regards what *nation* He will be joined to when He appears. At the same time, it was in the purpose of God to prepare that nation to receive Him.

521 Abraham, and his wife Sarah, were called away from their idolatrous relatives (Genesis 12:1-5; Joshua 24:2-3). Having arrived in Canaan, God began their religious training, and to elevate their hopes and fix them upon their future posterity. We will do well to study closely this preparation of a previously pagan family as the head of all households of the true faith for all time to come. This family may well be designated the first Christian family, for it was in training to believe in a coming Christ (as Eve did),—just as we believe in a Christ who has come and will come again.

522 We have often watched the erection of the very tall buildings which are so numerous in the large cities of America, and which are now appearing in increasing numbers on both sides of the water. Their construction is quite unlike that of smaller buildings. First of all, a far greater amount of earth is dug away, to make room for a deeply laid and strong foundation; then every beam and rafter is of iron, well riveted together, after the style of bridge building. God wished to found and erect the first household of faith as a pattern for Christian homes for all time. He dug deep; laid firmly His great foundation stones; and riveted all the beams of His building well together. Let us study how He operated.

523 God was promising Abraham a progeny as great as the number of the stars of the heavens, and at the same time not allowing Sarah to bear even *one* child. He took one hundred years to get Abraham ready to become a father, and ninety years to fit Sarah for motherhood. *“The ungodly are like the chaff which the wind driveth away,”* God says; and *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh.”* There is no building of a respectable family on mere chaff. The Bible teaches us that when God wishes a numerous progeny He takes the regulating of the begetting of offspring into His own control. Everything depends upon *quality*; a great family of Ishmaelites or Philistines are no blessing to the world; and such a family is short-lived, anyway; vice and crime and war soon bring it near destruction.

524 *"Sarah, Abram's wife, bare him no children"* (Genesis 16:1). On the one side was the promise of *"seed as the dust of the earth"* (Genesis 13:16) in multitude; on the other, a barren wife. What did it mean? Just this: *quality* is everything with God, even when *quantity* is the desired end. There had been, probably, first of all in Abraham, merely the sensuous delight in Sarah's beauty (Genesis 12:11-14), behind which lurked the desire of the flesh which had led the pagan Abram to marry his half-sister; then that had become mingled with a looking into the future, inspired by God's leading and promises, and Abraham desired an heir to whom he could bequeath the wealth he had acquired, and who would perpetuate his name (Genesis 13:2; 15:3). Then God lifted his longings to fairer worlds than Canaan,—to *"a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God"*; (Heb. 11:10), and then, after his flesh was *"dead"* (Romans 4:19) to all sensual desire, a son was born,—of the holy desire to bless the world, in fulfillment of God's promise, as to his seed (Genesis 12:3; 22:18), which holy desire met God's own desire to bless the world through Abraham and Sarah.

"... quality is everything with God, even when quantity is the desired end."

525 The case is a striking one, and reminds us that when Isaac married, Rebekah was allowed to bear no children, again, until fleshly desire was displaced by holier aspiration. The heir of the promises of Abraham, Isaac, *"intreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord was intreated of him"* (Genesis 25:21), —and so Esau and Jacob came. In their turn, the promise made to Abraham, to bless all the families of the earth, was reposed in Jacob; and the wife of Jacob's choice, Rachel, likewise, found herself unable to bear children until she prayed for them; something more than sensual desire, or human ambition, must enter into the birth of promising offspring. *"God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her."* (Genesis 30:22), and she bare that one against whose character no fault is recorded, Joseph, a notable person, who saved his entire family from starvation; whose sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, were heads of the two tribes about which clustered the other eight which constituted the ten tribes of Israel; so that *"Israel,"* as distinguished from *"Judah,"* is often called *"Ephraim"* in the prophets of the later periods of O. T. history (Jeremiah 31:18, etc.).

"... something more than sensual desire, or human ambition, must enter into the birth of promising offspring."

526 And thus it was again when God desired a deliverer for Israel. Samson's mother *"was barren, and bare not,"* and as an angel finally appeared to her and gave instructions as to the coming child, we have reason for inferring that she and her husband had prayer about this matter,—especially as we know Manoah, the father, prayed for more definite guidance as to the rearing of the expected child (Judges 13:8). Then we come to that rarely beautiful character, the founder of the schools of prophets, Samuel. He came, not in answer to fleshly desire, but in answer to Hannah's fervent prayers (1 Samuel 1:20). God, in this case also, hindering her from bearing children until her desire had become a sanctified one. Such may have been the experience of many other mothers, though not specially recorded, who bore great children in past times.

527 Now we go into the New Testament, to learn the same lesson from the experience of Elisabeth. God was about to make ready the Forerunner for Christ's entrance into the world. He chose the family of Zacharias and Elisabeth, and at once closed the way against a child of the flesh, that Elisabeth might give birth to one born of holy, unsensual desire. He waited long,—until all fleshly desire had ceased; then the angel was sent to announce: *"Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son. He shall be great in the sight of the Lord—and he shall be filled with the*

Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1:13-15). Thus are great men born into the world; that is, men who are great in the sight of God though the world may despise them, as Herod despised John the Baptist, imprisoning him first, and then beheading him.

"Thus are great men born into the world; that is, men who are great in the sight of God though the world may despise them ..."

Additional Note

There is a most striking contrast between God's purpose in His dealings with these parents of holy offspring, and the purposes served by the modern devices for "birth-control." Two phases of desire struggle for expression, and God decrees that for holy offspring the fleshly desire shall decay, and desire for offspring, spiritually expressed in prayer and supplications, shall supervene. On the contrary, the modern human devices would curtail expression of longing for offspring, and give full rein to irresponsible fleshly desire. "Base-born" indeed would be offspring of such unions, when finally permitted to come to birth.

Lesson 100 – A BIRTHRIGHT OR A MESS OF POTTAGE?

829 That false teaching derived from the Talmudic "Ten Curses of Eve," (see par. 106), that God is punishing women, at certain times of anguish, for the sin of Eve, is a wicked and cruel superstition which has not support in Scripture and is unworthy of our intelligence. Genesis 3:16 furnishes a cloak for masculine selfish and hypocritical sensuality within the marriage relation, as perverted and read, *"Thy desire shall be to thy husband."* The teaching is, moreover, a travesty on Divine Justice, for are not men as much the offspring of Eve as women? The punishment does not fall upon *sin*, but upon *sex*; and God Himself is alone responsible for the sex of an individual.

830 Furthermore, the teaching that woman must perpetually "keep silence" in the Church, be obedient to her husband, and never presume to teach or preach, because Eve sinned, blights the doctrine of the atonement, and robs Christ of glory, in that His death atoned for all sin, including Eve's of course. It is entirely contrary to the spirit of Protestantism. Luther says: "It is a great error to seek ourselves to satisfy God's justice for our sins, for God ever pardons them freely by an inestimable grace."

831 And yet, amazing as it seems, Luther, as well as others, seems never to have grasped the idea of "free grace" for women. It is recorded of him that he said: "If a woman becomes weary and at last dead from bearing, that matters not. Let her only die from bearing; she is there to do it." Luther made much of "liberty of conscience," yet as regards women he said: "She must neither begin nor complete anything without man: where he is, there she must be, and bend before him as before a master, whom she shall fear and to whom she shall be subject and obedient." He left no place for "liberty of conscience" for women.

832 Luther is not an exception to the general run of Bible expositors. He may be a little more vivid in his utterances than some others. Fortunately for women, when they have heard "free grace" heralded by ministers, they have taken it to themselves. And contrary to the supposed teaching of St Paul, women have of late years been encouraged to take part in public meetings in the churches, since it was discovered that the meetings were dull without their participation. But what right has the Church to endorse a line of doctrine which by its own practices it sets at defiance? Is it not time for the Church

to either change its practice or expunge these teachings from its commentaries, making them consistent one with the other? The duty is laid specially upon women to bring about this reconciliation between their own practice, in taking part in public meetings, and the popularly *supposed* teachings of the Bible.

833 But if we banish from our belief and from our teaching, that God has laid a blighting hand upon the entire sex to which Eve belonged, because of Eve's sin, then what will become of the teaching that the promise that the seed of the woman shall bruise the Serpent's head, belongs to all women? The difference is here: The sad prophecy of Genesis 3:16 has been abundantly fulfilled in the *physically inherited* sorrow and suffering of women. The glorious prophecy of Genesis 3:15 will be abundantly fulfilled also, *not* by a physical inheritance at all, but by a voluntary *choice*.

834 Prophecy is not fate. No woman is fated for the glorious destiny of fulfilling this prophecy, that the seed of the woman will bruise the serpent's head. This will not come to me, in spite of myself,—so that I can glory in what is coming, whatever I do. We are merely told that *some women* will grasp this prize of a high calling in Christ Jesus; and if I do not take my place with such, my humiliation, and my eventual punishment will be the greater, because the prize was set before me, and I despised it.

835 As we have said before, in all the Bible no sin is held up to human contempt more than Esau's. He had a birthright in prospect, and a father's prophetic blessing to follow that birthright. But these were things for the future, and might be long delayed in coming, while there was on him the urgent necessity of physical appetite. He might have stood in the line of ancestry through which Christ came into the world: but Christ was not coming for a long time,—did not, in fact, come for about seventeen hundred years. He sold his birthright for a mess of pottage.

836 The New Testament pronounces him "*a profane person . . . who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright,*" and adds, "*Ye know how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected.*" (Hebrews 12:16, 17). His father's blessing on him as inheritor of the birthright, would have added much to his temporal advantage; but having sold that birthright, he could not inherit that blessing. The deed had been done long before. There was no place left for a change. He got a mess of pottage but he lost a double portion of his father's estate, and the place of honor in the family. Isaac would not transfer the birthright-blessing he had uttered on Jacob back to Esau. He had perceived, as we think, that it was only the *temporal* advantages that Esau was after.

837 No greater contrast could be drawn than that between the case of Esau, and the case of Moses, of whom this same author of the Epistle to the Hebrews writes: "*By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter . . . esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt,* which were all laid at his feet for self-indulgence (Hebrews 11:24-26). Think of it! This fine Moses, learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; son of the daughter of the king! He turns away from it all, and joins himself *to slaves of Egyptians!* What a fanatic! Looking for a Christ, and sacrificing all the world for that Christ, fifteen hundred years before Christ ever came!

838 And what will the women of our day do? Will they say: "The prospect is too remote to be attractive to me. If I could see that by much effort, and by practicing a great deal of self-denial, anything could be accomplished worthwhile, *in my day*, the case would be different. But the little that I can do to hasten the evangelization of the world, and the coming of Christ will make no difference. I do not care to teach, or preach, or pray in public. I do not wish to be among those who are all the time

proclaiming that Christ is coming again, and He never comes. They are a laughing-stock. I cannot join them.” Such do not *“esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.”*

“And what will the women of our day do? Will they say: *“The prospect is too remote to be attractive to me.”*”

839 To which body will we belong? That is the question for each woman of us to answer to herself. This is not a matter concerning which indecision is of any avail. A great promise and prophecy—the very greatest in all the Bible—lies before us women. We cannot escape; we must either choose the best that could be, from the highest standpoint, or by failing to choose prove ourselves Esau. God has given the challenge to our faith. Shall we despise our birthright? God forbid!

From Genesis to Revelation, Katharine C. Bushnell provides a thorough treatment of (almost) every Bible passage that deals with women. As a scholar of Hebrew and Greek, she studies the passages in their original languages and in their historical context, and in doing so she comes upon insights that have sometimes been obscured by Bible translators. The book grew out of Bushnell’s lifelong efforts for social reform on behalf of women, in which she observed connections between the status of women and misunderstandings of Holy Scripture. Researchers have relied on her groundbreaking work since its first publication in 1921 and regard it as one of the best whole-Bible approaches to the question of the role of women in the church, in the family and in society.

Wake up, Eve — for heaven is about to break over you!

Katharine C. Bushnell (1856-1946) was a courageous and gifted servant of God who modeled her life’s motto “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” (Phil 4:13). She was a physician, missionary, crusader, reformer, author and speaker as well as a brilliant and original scholar who spoke seven languages and was grounded in Greek and Hebrew. Bushnell left medicine to do what she considered the more important work of reforming conditions of human degradation through leadership in the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) of the 19th century women’s movement. The scriptural status of women was of intense concern to Bushnell who came to believe that mistranslations were responsible for the social and spiritual subjugation of women. She left the WCTU in 1896 to spend her remaining years writing and sharing the biblical truth of God’s original and unchanging intent of full equality for women.



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Notes

1. Because of the length of the words, "Old Testament and New Testament," hereafter throughout these lessons O. T. will stand for the first, and N. T. for the second expression, while the capital letter M will refer the student to the marginal reading of a verse in either.
2. Hamor's treatment of Dinah, among those primitive Hivites really meant marriage. That Jacob had other daughters we know from Genesis 46:7.
3. The Herods, p. 15.
4. The Talmud contains "not less than forty" citations from Ben Sira,—*Lange's Commentaries*, Apocrypha, p. 276.