

Selections from *God's Word to Women*

Katharine C. Bushnell

Editor's Note: Katharine Bushnell died in 1946 at the age of ninety, having lived a life of exemplary commitment to Christ. She was a medical doctor, missionary, social reformer, and scholar. She composed scholarly biblical lessons from 1908 to 1916. The lessons were gathered and published as the book *God's Word to Women* in 1921. CBE reprinted the book in 2003. Bushnell's writings are in the public domain, and certain selections pertaining to Gen 3:16 are excerpted below, without any modernization of grammar or style.

You are invited to read more about Katharine Bushnell in *Priscilla Papers*:

Mimi Haddad, review of *A New Gospel for Women: Katharine Bushnell and the Challenge of Christian Feminism*, by Kristin Kobes Du Mez (Oxford University Press, 2015), *Priscilla Papers* 30/4 (Autumn 2016) 27–28.

Ruth Hoppin, "The Legacy of Katharine Bushnell," *Priscilla Papers* 9/1 (Winter 1995) 8–10.

Catherine Clark Kroeger, "The Legacy of Katharine Bushnell: A Hermeneutic for Women of Faith," *Priscilla Papers* 9/4 (Autumn 1995) 1–5.

Julie Walsh, "What Katharine Bushnell Still Has to Teach Us Today," *Priscilla Papers* 34/1 (Winter 2020) 26–30.

LESSON 12. BIBLE INSTRUCTION AS TO ADAM'S AND EVE'S CONDUCT.

[Paragraphs 90–92 are not reproduced here.]

93. But remember, we are now discussing the conduct of Adam and Eve *at one point*—in one incident only—of their lives. But that incident is the sin which has been held to have produced the Fall of the entire world of human beings. We again assert: The Bible nowhere holds Eve accountable for this particular deed; and it does, in the plain, definite language we have just quoted from the N. T., hold Adam accountable for that deed.

94. It is not by one single verse, such as Gen. 3:16 (the correct translation and interpretation of which is doubtful—see future lessons), that Eve's greater culpability can be established, *in spite of clear statements to the contrary*, and many other incidental Scriptural proofs. For instance, God asked Adam, "*Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?*" and He lays no such charge of express disobedience at the door of Eve. And also note that whereas the Almighty told the Serpent that his creeping gait, dust for his food, and his final mortal injury were to be "*Because thou hast done this;*" and whereas the Almighty told Adam that his drudgery, his fight with thorns and thistles, and his final return to the dust out of which he was made, were to be "*because*" Adam has done thus and so, God nowhere says that Eve's sorrowful and oppressed part is "*because*" she has done

anything. Rather, from the highly honoring words regarding Eve the Almighty has just addressed to the Serpent we have sufficient reasons for concluding that all this might result to Eve because God has elevated her to the honorable position of an enemy of Satan and progenitor of the coming Messiah. William Law says that Adam's sin, which brought ruin to the world, "is not to be considered as that single act of eating," but "his express open, voluntary act and deed" of "refusing to be that which God created him to be." On Rom. 5:14, where "*Adam's transgression*" is spoken of as causing death to the entire human race, that high authority, *Bengel's Gnomen* says, "Chrysostom on this passage shows exceedingly well, what Paul intended to prove by his argument, 'that it was not the very sin of the transgression of the law [Eve transgressed it, under deception], but that of the *disobedience of ADAM*, this was what brought universal destruction.'"

[Paragraphs 95–97 are not reproduced here.]

LESSON 13. DID GOD CURSE WOMAN?

98. Can anything be accomplished by clearing the reputation of one so remote in history as Eve? Much, in many ways. The false teaching that God is in some way punishing women for the sin of Eve, at certain times of anguish, has robbed women of much sympathy, and also furnished a cloak for sensuality, and for much unnecessary cruelty to women, throughout past ages, and up to the present hour. The teaching that God punishes Christian women for the sin of Eve is a wicked and cruel superstition, and unworthy the intelligence of Christians. But in addition to this, the doctrine has laid a blighting hand upon woman's self-respect, self-confidence and spiritual activity, from which causes the entire Church of Jesus Christ suffers moral and spiritual loss, and therefore we offer no apology for expending much time and thought in a thorough examination of Genesis, third chapter.

99. Woman had been constituted by God, in words addressed to Satan: (1) The progenitor of the coming destroyer of Satan and his power; (2) and *in her own person also* an enemy of Satan. This latter is a point of much importance to women, and generally passed over very lightly. With such an appointment as this to fulfill in life (and none could be nobler), what would Satan, who knew it, wish done to woman, his enemy? It is not difficult to conjecture; he would have her so crippled she could not contend with him successfully. How better could he cripple her than to incite her husband,—the one living closest to her who has strength to do it—to hamper her activities as much as possible? And then, knowing of a Seed whose coming would be his doom, Satan would aim his sorest blows *at her function of motherhood*, and torture her by every means that could be devised, in her child-bearing. How he would hate her every time she was about to become a mother!

100. Now all this, which common sense tells us Satan would *most certainly* wish to do, most Bible expositors (as we are about to show), tell us GOD DID. For once then, *if* God did so, God and Satan would be found working on the same side, for the same result. Can we imagine such a thing as this? God and Satan working harmoniously together in the treatment of women, after the same fashion, from the Fall in Eden as long as this world lasts?

101. Although Eve had given the evidences we have mentioned of having become one of the Household of Faith; although God had exalted her to a relation with believers equal to Abraham's; although God had put enmity between her and Satan, so that she was no longer associated with God's great enemy, yet the Bible commentary represents that God now turned and pronounced a curse, or several curses upon her. *We are sure that if anyone would curse her under such conditions, it would not be God, but Satan, her enemy.* Surely God and Satan would not unite to curse.

102. It is not necessary to translate the language addressed to Eve by the Almighty on this occasion, as our English Bible translates it. Let us hold Savonarola's banners high today: "*Nothing has been learnt from any man;*" "*We accept no authority save our own experience and reason.*" . . . Scripture nowhere says Eve was cursed, or women either. . . . As Christian women, we refuse to address ourselves to the task of working out Eve's "curse" for sin, if indeed she ever had one. We will not deny the faith; we will not discount the sufficiency of the atonement. Since theology points no other way for women through this chapter in Genesis but into a "curse", we must do some sappers' and miners' work, and hew a hermeneutical and exegetical road for ourselves.

103. But first, as to what theology teaches: The comments of Dean Alford—not the harshest by any means—quite fairly represent the line of theological teaching here, "I will greatly multiply the pain of thy pregnancy," is his translation and he adds: "And yet, though this shall be so, the woman, as a second curse, shall desire again the occasion of this pain; and thirdly, [that is, note his words, in accordance with a third curse], 'though the subject of all the suffering which accompanies the propagation of the race, she shall be subordinate, and ruled over by man.'"

104. But what does all this mean if not that Adam, or man, is to be wonderfully rewarded for his part in that Garden fruit-eating? He is to be *elevated* to government over women; and to be allowed to dictate, by his own whims, how much or how little physical suffering she is to endure, as the price of his fleshly indulgence! And has God so honored man for all time as to give him this, which often amounts to the power of life and death over a fellow creature, forsooth because Adam accused God of unwisdom and sheltered Satan from blame? We know very well who, if anyone, will reward man thus, if only we will exercise common sense,—the one whom Adam favored, Satan. If God and Satan both award man thus, here again we find for a third time these, two working together for the same result. We said a moment ago if anyone caused Eve to suffer, or cursed Eve it was her enemy, Satan; if anyone rewarded Adam for shielding Satan, it was Satan again.

[Paragraphs 105–106 are not reproduced here.]

LESSON 14. THE FALSE INTERPRETATION.

107. But the need of a different translation and interpretation of Genesis 3:16 will scarcely be realised by those not familiar with the usual teachings to be found in our Bible commentaries, which defy principles of morality and justice, as well as outrage the sense of the original words, as can be proved by the ancient versions. This latter statement we will make good.

Excepting that it seems necessary to the proof of our point, and to secure revision, we could not bring ourselves to reproduce samples of what is being taught along this line by scholars highly esteemed as Biblical expositors by the Church. Dean Alford's teaching, in par. 103 should be re-read: Browne says, "Desire here expresses that reverential longing with which the weaker [woman] looks up, to the stronger." Addis says "Woman is to desire man's society, notwithstanding the pain and subjection which are the result."

108. The assumption is more or less general that morbidly intense sensuality, when it displays itself in the female character, is of Divine manufacture. Knobel interprets God as saying, "Thou shalt be possessed by passionate desire for him." Keil and Delitzsch, "She was punished with a desire bordering upon disease." Dillmann comments on the passage: "The special punishment of the woman consists in the evils by which she is oppressed in her sexual vocation, in the position she occupies in her relation to man," and yet, doubtless he would scarcely hesitate to pronounce such a relation "Holy Matrimony!" Driver declares "She shall desire his cohabitation, thereby at the same time increasing her liability to the pain of childbearing." If this sensuality were the state of woman's mind in general it would not be necessary to starve women out of industrial lines, and put a check upon their mental development, lest they be disinclined to marry if capable of self support; yet these are the methods which have been used in order to maintain the "domestic" desires of women. Calvin says, "This form of speech is . . . as if He [God] said, 'Thou shalt desire nothing but what thy husband wishes'. She had, indeed, previously been subject to her husband, but that was a liberal and gentle subjection; now, however, she is cast into servitude." In other words, Calvin would have us believe God first ordained marriage, but afterwards substituted "servitude." Patrick, Lowth, etc., in their commentary declare of the husband that he shall have the power "to control thy desires," but we have never known of a husband who could do more than control the outward acts of his wife. Poole elaborates this decree into, "Thy desires shall be referred to thy husband's will and pleasure, to grant or deny them as he sees fit." Dr. Adam Clarke says: "It is a part of her punishment, and a part from which even God's mercy will not exempt her . . . Thou shalt not be able to shun the great pain and peril of child-bearing, 'thy desire shall be to thy husband.' . . . Subjection to the will of her husband is one part of her curse; and so very capricious is this will often, that a sorer punishment no human being can well have."

109. But the astounding part of this teaching is, that these men fail to see that, if a wife must be under a "curse" because she is under a husband who exercises the cruelties that constitute that curse, this is equivalent to saying that God has ordained that man and marriage shall be a curse to woman. Such teaching relieves a husband of the duty to observe nearly the entire decalogue, if only the person he practices his transgressions upon happens to be the one he has vowed, before the marriage altar, that he will "love and cherish."

110. But does this teaching accord with the general tenor of Scriptural morals? Not at all. Abraham, once upon a time, desired to maintain a polygamous household, and Sarah objected. Did God speak to her about the matter, and say: “Remember Eve, and the penalty: Thy desire shall be thy husband?” He spoke to Abraham, saying: *“In all that Sarah saith unto thee, obey her voice”* (Gen. 21:12). The word rendered, in English, “hearken unto,” in this passage means obey, and it is translated “obey” in very many other passages,—such as Gen. 22:18. When Hannah centered all her “desire” upon a hoped-for son, her husband exhorted her to center it, rather, upon himself, saying, *“Am I not better to thee than ten sons?”* Hannah did not obey the expositor’s teaching as to Gen. 3:16, and God blessed her in this sort of “disobedience” to her husband, by sending the son. So we might go on illustrating the fact that God has shown no zeal in enforcing this supposed “law” of His. But one quotation is sufficient to entirely destroy the fallacious interpretation of Gen. 3:16, and that is the well-known Golden Rule, uttered by Jesus Christ: *“Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.”* We have never yet found the man who longed to be ruled by the will of his wife. All men led by the Spirit of Christ obey this Golden Rule, which sets at defiance the so-called “law” of Gen. 3:16, as interpreted by these expositors.

111. But three passages speak to us against the specific sense that has been put upon that word “desire,” by most of the commentators. Lev. 20:18 is a law which punishes the wife, with the husband, if she should yield her will to his under improper conditions. This law necessitates the view that God holds woman as a free agent in the marriage relation. Further, the Apostle Paul, 1 Cor. 7:4, makes the authority of the wife precisely equal to the husband’s in the marriage relation, saying, *“The husband hath not authority over his own body, but the wife.”* We are quite aware that this verse has been reduced to a mere sophism by Bible commentaries. But “authority” does not mean “authority” at all, unless it comprehends the idea of being able to act with perfect independence either one way or in the precisely opposite way. Later, we have a lesson on this passage in Corinthians. The third passage is found in three of the Gospels (Matt. 24:19, Mark 13:17, Luke 21:23). It is the “Woe” of the Lord pronounced upon mothers (not fathers), found “with child,” or with sucklings at the time of the Great Tribulation, yet to come,—for, as Fronmüller has said (referring to these with other passages), woe is “an utterance . . . of frequent occurrence in the speeches of our Lord, expressive of pain and indignation, and conveying the threat of punishment.” It can by no means be given an exceptional meaning here.

112. It must, then, impress reasoning minds that the interpretation of Gen. 3:16 has had a history something like this: Men of old found a phrase here that seemed to have to do with woman’s relation to her husband, but it was beyond their comprehension. Unconsciously these men of olden time have consulted their own ideas of what a wife *should be*, in her relation to her husband, and inserted those ideas into their interpretation. The interpretation has been accepted by other men, without challenge, because it conformed to their unsanctified wishes, and handed on from generation to generation, until it became weighty through “tradition.” No effort, scarcely, has been put forth to reconcile such teachings with the spirit of Jesus Christ. A letter, relating to the passage, has come to me, during the preparation of these Lessons, from an eminent Bible scholar, to whom I suggested the need of a better interpretation. He replies: “I

should hardly have thought a correction of the text was either called for or probable.” Of course, our proposal had never been to amend the text, as he well knew, but the interpretation and translation. Prejudice blinds men, even in their treatment of the Word of God, if a faulty rendering coincides with their preconceptions.

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113. The Bible nowhere uses such an expression as “the curse” regarding women. We get the teaching about the woman’s “curse” wholly through tradition. Pain is invariably an outcry of God’s natural law against abuse; and pain must be contrary to God’s will. This is as true regarding the pain of childbirth as it is regarding any other sort of pain. If this were a lesson in Physiology, we could abundantly account for such suffering as some women endure periodically and in childbirth, quite apart from the fiction that God Himself inflicts such pain upon women. Woman suffers in childbirth more than any other female animal, because other female animals protect themselves (by the only proper means, of course), from all possibility of becoming mothers excepting at suitable seasons; they will not brook tyranny in such a matter.

LESSON 15. SATAN’S LYING IN WAIT.

114. A clock needs a most careful fitting of all its parts. It is quite conceivable that a typewriter wheel might be used for other purposes, but it could never be fitted into a clock, to take the place of a broken clock wheel. It would be too heavy or too light; the rim too thick or too thin; the hub too big or too little, and the cogs too many or too few. It would prove to be a misfit all around; the clock would not keep proper time. So it is with Scripture: *“Every word of God is tried,”* and if we attempt to insinuate a false interpretation into it, it proves, on close inspection, a misfit all around. We shall demonstrate, by the misfit all around, that the usual interpretation of Gen. 3:16 is not correct. It bears a *resemblance* to the correct interpretation as a typewriter wheel may resemble a clock wheel, but it does not fit accurately anywhere.

115. As introductory, we go back to verse 15, *“It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”* “Bruise” is an obscure word; to quote Dr. Tayler Lewis, “The general sense of this passage is plain, but there is great difficulty in fixing the precise action intended by the Hebrew word *shuph*, in consequence of its occurrence but three times in the Bible.” The two other places are Job 9:17, “breaking,” and Ps. 139:11, “cover.” Now what word could imply, according to its context, either bite, crush, break, or cover? That is the question,—for our verse certainly means that the serpent will bite the heel, and the “seed” of woman crush its head.

116. The sense “bruise,” so unsuitable for the figure of a biting serpent, has been fixed upon on account of St. Paul’s words, Rom. 16:20, *“The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.”* But we have no proof that Paul meant to translate the word *shuph*; he may have meant merely to give the general sense of the phrase, as it relates to man’s part, which is clear to us all, whatever *shuph* means.

Some of the ancient versions translate, here, “lying in wait,” or a kindred idea; and on the strength of this the R. V. gives us this as an alternative meaning in the margin. But this leaves the thought incomplete—to say merely that the “seed” will “lie in wait for his head.” In that case, the seed of woman might in the end be defeated, while the real force of the prophecy is one of victory. No, *shuph* means something else, but we must leave the matter unsettled.

117. But why was the thought of “lying in wait” ever brought in here? This is an interesting point to raise. We hold that verse 16 should have been rendered, “*Unto the woman He said, A snare hath increased thy sorrow*,”—the word “snare” being, literally rendered, “a lying-in-wait.” Instead, it is rendered, “*I will greatly multiply thy sorrow*.” The difference between the two in Hebrew lies wholly in the interlinear vowel-signs (see par. 6), of comparatively recent invention.* [*The difference is, between HaRBeh AaRBeh, “multiplying I will multiply,” and HiRBah AoReB, “hath-caused-to-multiply,” (or “made great”), a lying-in-wait.—the verb, as usual preceding its nominative. The capital letters, alike in both phrases, alone constitute the original text. This participial form, ARB, occurs fourteen times in Joshua and Judges. It is translated “ambush,” and “liers-in-wait,” or “in ambush.” It is possible that we should read, here, “a lyer-in-wait (the subtil serpent) hath increased thy sorrow.”] This would explain why the idea of “lying in wait” still clings to the passage, though it can scarcely be the meaning of the word *shuph*. The thought was obliterated from the opening expression of verse 16, by the words being construed as “multiplying I will multiply” (literal for “*I will greatly multiply*”), and then it was reflected backwards as a possible sense for the obscure word *shuph*. In this connection we must recall that originally Hebrew had no divisions into verses, or even words.

118. We have said, and shown, that the idea of God’s passing a punitive sentence upon Eve, after the wonderful prophecy regarding her in verse 15, is inconsistent. But the rendering which we give is perfectly consistent with the context. We know that the Serpent was pronounced “subtil,” and Eve was said to have been “beguiled,” or deceived. Here, then, is a perfect fit in place of a misfit. This, as we believe, the correct rendering, became lost to us in the “days of mingling” (see par. 86), when the first version—the Greek—was made; when, as we have shown, the natural tendency would be, and was, to conform the story of Eve to the story of Pandora. A philologist of high repute, while doubting the general acceptance of my rendering, writes me, “I agree to the possibility of your translation.”

119. I have written to another gentleman, a high authority in the Hebrew language, and enquired if he could find fault, grammatical or rhetorical, with my translation. His reply simply states: “The translation proposed in your letter would seem to me quite unnatural, or, at any rate, unduly forced, where the usual rendering is natural, and to my mind perfectly correct.” On this point we differ. What could be more unnatural than for God to first repose that greatest promise of all the Bible in a person, and then in the next breath pronounce a terrible punishment upon her? But to first give a great and wonderful promise, but at the same time reveal that with that high and holy calling the enemy of souls would be at war, and much suffering must attend and eventuate from it, as was the case with the Virgin Mary, (Luke 1:28 and 2:35) and St. Paul (Acts 8:15, 16),—this view is both logically and theologically sound, and we imagine that many thoughtful

people will think our reading *more natural* and less forced than the traditional translation and interpretation.

120. We must now consider another portion of Eve’s so-called sentence,—“*and thy conception*,” especially that last word. When our Lord was on earth He promised us that, “*Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled*.” Some have supposed this promise to cover all the scope that it would if spoken concerning such a language as the English. But those who have studied our Lessons 1 and 2 will be prepared to see the case in its true light. The *consonants* of such a language as Hebrew must remain unchangeable or else we can have no hope of preserving the original sense of its words. But even as to English, our law courts every day present cases where the most tremendous decisions turn upon the exact reading of human laws. Our laws must be drafted by experts, with utmost care. We can easily imagine a case in which the fate of life or death might be determined by the precise reading of the law, or even upon its punctuation. Imagine, then, what would be the outcome if we, in the end, at the great Judgment seat, were to be tried by carelessly inscribed or imperfectly preserved laws. Imagine such a state of things even in the days of Israel’s kings. Supposing, in the days when the law was written in consonants only, Rehoboam, who was an especially harsh king (1 Kings 12:10), had chosen to read, as a penalty for an offense, G L S instead of G L, claiming that the law was probably mutilated *at the particular point* where he had chosen to add that S to its consonants. This would have made all the difference between GaoL (jail) and GaLLowS; we take an English word for illustration. Now it is just such perversions as these against which God has undertaken, on the assurance of Jesus Christ, to protect us. That is not unreasonable, is it?

121. We have before us such a case as this, in this supposed law of retribution upon all womanhood, because Eve sinned. The “sentence,” *I will multiply . . . thy conception*,” has wrought terrible havoc with the health and happiness of wives; because, so read it has been understood to rob woman of the right to determine when she should become a mother, and to place that right outside her will, and in abeyance to the will of her husband,—at least, the law has been read thus, because of its connection with what follows in this passage. This word is spelled, in Hebrew HRN,—but that is *not* the correct Hebrew way to spell “conception.” The latter occurs, and correctly spelled, in Ruth 4:13 and Hosea 9:11, and nowhere else. The real word, “conception,” as it occurs in the above passages, is spelled HRJWN. This word in Genesis comes two letters short of spelling the word. All Hebrew scholars know this. For instance, Spurrell says: “It is an abnormal formation which occurs nowhere else in the Old Testament.” Our highest lexical authorities (Brown, Briggs and Driver) call it a “contraction, or erroneous.” Indeed! and is one half the human family to be placed at the mercy of the other half, on such a flimsy claim as this! So could Rehoboam have sent a man to the gallows, instead of sending him to gaol, by such a method of manipulating the law. We stand for our rights, as women, on the assurance of our Lord, that *no word* in Divine law has lost any of its consonants, or angles of a consonant; and on our Lord’s promise we can demand a very different rendering of the word. While it is possible that the W of this word might be omitted in this particular formation, the J is a *consonant* of the root, and cannot be lost or omitted, *particularly* at the end of a phrase where the voice pauses or rests for awhile upon it; such is the Hebrew rule in an instance like this. The Septuagint gives the correct reading here,

which is, “*thy sighing*,”—the whole sentence meaning, then, “*A snare hath increased thy sorrow and thy sighing*.” Many ancient authorities agree with the Septuagint.

LESSON 16. GOD’S WARNING TO EVE.

122. The N. T. teaches us that “*He that committeth sin is of the devil . . . Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin . . . In this the children of God are manifest and the children of the devil*” (1 John 3:8–10). Eve repented; but there is no inference that Adam repented at this time, for he was expelled from the garden. What must have happened, after this? Before Cain could have been born (Gen. 4:1) either Adam must have repented and become again the child of God, or Eve must have turned from God and followed Adam out of Eden. The fact that Cain was a murderer certainly argues that Eve followed Adam.

123. Eve was, then, the first woman to forsake her (heavenly) kindred for her husband. She reversed God’s marriage law,—“*Therefore shall a man forsake his father and his mother, and cleave to his wife*.” Had Eve remained steadfast with God, Adam might, through the double influence of God and Eve, have returned to God. Marriage might have been consummated by Adam, the husband, forsaking the devil, his father, and cleaving to his wife, thus returning, like the prodigal he was, to the heavenly Father’s home.

124. God spoke warningly to Eve at this time, telling her that she was inclining to turn away from Himself to her husband, and telling her that if she did so her husband would rule over her. The correct rendering of the next phrase of Gen. 3:16 is this: “*Thou art turning away to thy husband, and he will rule over thee*,”—not as it has been rendered, “*Thy desire shall be to thy husband*.” This assertion, as to the correct meaning of the phrase we shall now prove. As we have said before, a misinterpretation of a passage of Scripture can be proved by the misfit. The usual construction put upon the language of this verse fits accurately nowhere; the correct interpretation fits all around.

125. The original word used here is *teshuqa*, and as it only occurs three times in the Hebrew language, its sense must be fixed (1) by studying its relation to other words in the sentences where it occurs: (2) by studying its derivation and structure: (3) and by studying the way it is rendered in the ancient versions of Scripture.

126. To study its relations to other words, we will leave it untranslated, but, write it in its proper sentences, inserting the noun equivalents for the pronouns used.

Gen. 3:16,	“and-to-Adam,	Eve’s <i>teshuqa</i> .”
Gen. 4:7,	“and-to-Cain,	Abel’s <i>teshuqa</i> ” (or perhaps sin’s <i>teshuqa</i>)
Sol. Song 7:10,	“and-to-the-Church	Christ’s <i>teshuqa</i> ” (as usually interpreted).

Now compare. No verbs are expressed. The conjunction is one for all and also the preposition. This is true of the Hebrew original also. In fact there is no variety in the three sentences, excepting in the proper nouns implied in the pronouns used. The sense of the three passages must be similar.

127. All the stress of teaching woman’s supposed obligations to man is in the “*shall be*,” which is *supplied* by the translators. The force of the mandatory teaching, then, rests upon a *hiatus* in the sentence. If it be contended that the context proves that this is an imperative, then the previous sentences must be imperative, or the following. *Must* woman bear children in *sorrow*, whether she wishes to rejoice or no? *Must* the serpent bruise the heel of the woman’s seed, whether he will or no? As to the following clause: *Must* man rule woman, whether he will or no? We think women have more liberty in Christian countries than heathen because man loses the disposition to rule his wife when a Christian.

If this be a commandment of God, and man must rule woman, the more carnally-minded a man is the better he keeps that sort of “law!” But the Apostle Paul says: “*The carnal mind . . . is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*” (Rom. 8:7). Thus we see that the context does not prove that this “*shall be*” of the sentence translated, “*thy desire shall be to thy husband*” is imperative. We can assert positively that this sentence is a simple future or present, warning woman of the consequences of her action. So it is rendered in all the ancient versions; never as an imperative. As a prophecy it has been abundantly fulfilled in the manner in which man rules over woman, especially in heathen lands. But Jesus Christ said, as much of women as of men: “*NO ONE can serve two masters*.”

128. Compare again: The word *teshuqa* does not necessarily refer to the appetite between male and female, for it would then be out of place in the second sentence. And it does not necessarily imply the subordination of Eve to Adam, as the marginal reading of the A. V. puts it; for then, in the third sentence, Christ is subordinated to the Church, or according to the other interpretations of the Song of Solomon, the man is, at any rate, subordinated to the woman.

Nicholas Fuller, an eminent Oriental scholar, wrote an interesting chapter on this subject in a Latin work entitled *Theological Miscellany*, published in 1612. In reply to those who hold that the sense of the passage is, “the appetite of the wife is about to be in the power of the husband and subdued by him,” he says: “Just as if nothing would be longed for by the wife excepting what would be pleasing to the husband. Absurd notion! Others again wish the appetite to be understood as that by which a woman seeks marital dominion. And yet it is not very probable that this yoke is sustained by spontaneous longing for it . . . This is not effected by longing, then, but it is suffered because not declined. Besides, Scripture saith not, ‘The appetite of the wife shall be inclined to the dominion of the husband,’ but ‘to the husband’ himself. Wherefore, if *teshuqa* is allowed to be translated ‘appetite’ certainly this appetite is common and by nature reciprocal, and bending each in like manner to the other. Therefore, it displays a more equitable condition of life than dominion. Nay, moreover, if this form of speech declares the appetite for a ruler, Christ would adopt the Church as His ruler, for in the same manner the Church speaks, when, of Christ as a Spouse, in Canticles 7:10 it says, ‘*I am my beloved’s, towards me is His appetite*,’ as indeed they would there translate.”

Lewis’ note in Lange’s Commentary declares: “The sense of this word [*teshuqa*] is not *libido*, or sensual desire.”

129. As to the structure, and derivation of *teshuqa*, apparently it is derived from the verb *shuq*, meaning in its simplest form “to run.”

The prefix, *te*, gives the word an abstract sense, and it corresponds to our termination,—“ness,” in such words as “goodness,” “kindness,” etc. The ending *a*, is added to give the word the feminine form usual to Hebrew abstract nouns. If this word is taken from the intensive form of the verb, it would bear the sense “to run repeatedly,” that is “to run back and forth.” But to keep running back and forth would necessitate frequent turning, and hence the word might easily have the derived sense of “turning;” and an abstract noun be derived therefrom, not meaning a literal “turning,” but a quality of the character, a “turning.” The sense “desire” has come to us from the Talmud, in the “Ten Curses of Eve.” All the most ancient versions, this we will show in our next, give the idea of “turning,” and that alone, for this Hebrew word “*teshuqa*.”

**If *teshuqa* is allowed to be translated ‘appetite’
certainly this appetite is common and by
nature reciprocal, and bending each in like
manner to the other. Therefore, it displays a
more equitable condition of life than dominion.**

LESSON 17. THE ANCIENT RENDERINGS OF *TESHUQA*.

130. The SEPTUAGINT GREEK version of the Old Testament is the most important of all the versions. It is also the most ancient. Tradition says it was the work of seventy-two Jewish scholars, and its name means “seventy.” Made at Alexandria, about 285 B. C., certainly more was known about Hebrew then than at any time since. The version was much in favor among the Jews until the Christians used its translation of the prophecies to prove that Jesus was the Messiah, when it fell under Jewish displeasure. Nearly every quotation from the Old Testament to be found in the New, is an exact reproduction of the Septuagint reading. This accounts for N. T. quotations not seeming always accurate. Dean Stanley says: “If there ever was a translation which, by means of its importance, rose to a level with the original, it was this. It is not the original Hebrew, but the Septuagint, which is the Bible of the evangelists and the apostles of the first century, and of the Christian Church for the first age of its existence . . . Whatever may be the value of the Hebrew text itself, or its value in the present Jewish Church, or the present Church of Western Europe, the Septuagint was the text sanctioned probably by our Lord Himself, certainly by the apostles.” The Pentateuch of the Septuagint is especially esteemed for its accuracy. This version renders *teshuqa* into the Greek word *apostrophe* in both passages in Genesis: and *epistrophe* in Canticles. The former word, *apostrophe*, is familiar to us all: it means “turning away,” and the latter, “turning to.” The teaching is, that Eve is turning away from God to her husband, and, as a consequence of that deflection, Adam will rule over her.

131. Next in order of excellence is the SYRIAC PESHITTO of the second, or perhaps first, century after Christ. This version gives the same sense, rendering, “*thou wilt turn*,” (Gen. 3:16); “*will turn*” (Gen. 4:7), and “*turning*” for the third passage. We have only the Pentateuch in the SAMARITAN version. It translates both the passages in Genesis, “*turning*.” The OLD LATIN version gives “*turning*” in all three places. We have a COPTIC (Sahidic), of not

great value, which gives the same rendering for the first and third passage; and the more valued BOHAIRIC COPTIC which so renders the passage in the first two. These two copies are not complete Bibles, but fragments. The AETHIOPIAN version of about 500 A. D. renders all three passages by words signifying “turning.” In fact, as regards the third passage, all the ancient versions without any exceptions whatever, give no other sense but “*turning*” for *teshuqa*.

132. Now as to some variations in the rendering of the passages in Genesis: The Talmud, as we have shown, sets forth the teaching that God pronounced “Ten Curses” upon Eve; but the Talmud is not a translation of the Scriptures, but a compilation of the traditions of the Jews. The fifth, sixth and the ninth of these “curses” supply the sense “*lust*” for the Hebrew word *teshuqa*, together with the teaching that woman must center her “desire” upon her husband alone; his “desire” could wander away to other women. From this immoral teaching the English rendering has its sole original authority, so far as we have been able to trace, after very much research. After the Septuagint came into disfavor with the Jews, AQUILA, a proselyte to Judaism, in close touch with Jewish scholars of the second century after Christ, made a Greek translation of the Hebrew, to offset the errors, as was claimed, of the Septuagint. His translation does not exist, so far as known. But Origen compiled a work called the Hexapla, in which he gave the variations between the Septuagint and Aquila’s renderings. According to the Hexapla, Aquila has rendered this word “*coalition*,” or “*alliance*”—a not unnatural sense, since Eve is represented as turning from God to form an alliance with her husband. Origen gives information also in his Hexapla of two other Greek versions made shortly after Aquila’s, both of them, likewise, under the influence of Judaism. Of these, SYMMACHUS follows Aquila in Gen. 3:16, according to some authorities, but other manuscripts use another Greek word here, namely, *horme*, “impulse,” and there is strong testimony that this latter word was employed by Symmachus in Gen. 4:7. But as to the passage in Canticles, we have no light beyond the inference that since Origen called attention to no variations at this point, these Greek translations agreed with the Septuagint. We have not yet mentioned the third Greek translation: All we know of THEODOTIUS’S renderings is, that he used “*turning*” in Gen. 4:7.

133. Jerome’s LATIN VULGATE was made about 382 A. D. He went to Palestine and studied Hebrew under Jewish rabbis. He renders the first passage, “*Thou shalt be under the power of a husband, and he will rule over thee*.” The first phrase is mere guess-work; it is no translation of the original words. The second passage reads, “*his appetite*,”—whatever that may mean in a relation between brothers. The third passage reads, “*his turning*.” The ARABIC is of most uncertain date; probably not earlier than the tenth century. It renders the word *teshuqa* in the three places, respectively, “*direction*,” “*moderation*” and “*turning*.”

134. A TARGUM is not a translation, but a paraphrase,—the Synagogue explanation of the sense of Scripture. The TARGUM of ONKELOS, or Chaldee Paraphrase, was published at Babylon, and therefore would conform quite closely to the traditions embodied in the Babylonian Talmud which teaches the “ten curses of Eve.” This Targum—the most reliable one—relates only to the Pentateuch. It renders, “*lust*” in the first passage, and “*turning*” in the second. A very unreliable Targum, accredited wrongly to “Joseph the Blind,” of about the eleventh century, renders “*lust*” in the third passage.

135. Wiener says: “The coincidences of truth are infinite. In other words, the true hypothesis explains *all* difficulties.” Let us apply this scientific test to our claim that *teshuqa* means “turning:”

Aquila and Symmachus assume that Eve “turns” to make an alliance with her husband, hence they translate “alliance.” Or, according to other readings, Symmachus assumes that the “turning” is rather, as yet, an impulse, than an act,—he translates “impulse.” (This Greek word for “impulse” does not necessarily imply a sensual impulse. It is used in Acts 14:5, and translated “assault,” and in James 3:4,—not rendered in the A. V., but the R. V. reads: “*whither the impulse of the steersman willeth.*”) The Arabic reasons, “If Eve is about to turn away from God, it must be in some direction;” so it renders, “direction.” Jerome plainly shows he does not know what *teshuqa* means, but since the latter part of the phrase refers to the man’s part,—“*he will rule over thee,*”—he concludes that the beginning of the passage must refer to woman’s position, and renders, “*Thou shalt be under the power of a husband.*”

136. Likewise, the sense “turning” reconciles the three passages one with another, whereas the sense “desire” puts them in utter conflict. Eve is “turning” from God, and He warns her that if she does this, she will fall under the dominion of Adam. Abel is “turning” toward Cain, in all the confidence of a younger and unsuspecting brother. God warns Cain prophetically that this confiding approach of his brother will be a temptation to slay him in his defenselessness. The third passage is a joyful boast of the bridegroom’s favor and attention, “*He is turning to me.*”

137. Prof. H. G. Mitchell of Boston University, in his book, *The World Before Abraham*, has well represented the general sense of the phrase translated, “*thy desire shall be to thy husband.*” He says, “This interpretation, however, is not altogether satisfactory. The word here used is found only in two other places in the O. T., Gen. 4:7 and Cant. 7:10. In the former of these two passages, if it means anything, it must mean mere inclination, or something equally removed from sensuality: and in the latter, where a man is the subject, it has the force of affection, devotion. There is therefore ground for the opinion that the author in this passage intended to make Jehovah say that the very tenderness of the woman for the husband would [eventually] enable him to make and keep her his inferior.”

LESSON 18. HISTORY OF THE TRANSLATION OF *TESHUQA*.

138. Were the teaching true that all women must suffer pain and servitude for the sin of Eve, then it were pertinent to ask, Why must they suffer thus,—because they are Eve’s offspring? Are not men equally the offspring of Eve? The only answer is, “Because they are *female* offspring.” But who made them female offspring,—women or God? GOD. Then are we taught that God is punishing women, *not* for their own fault, *not because they are sinners*, not even because Eve sinned; God is punishing women for what He Himself made them,—because they are women, not men. Away with such an attack upon God’s reputation for justice! And further, the idea that “sorrow,” in this verse means labour pains, or periodical suffering in women, is far-fetched; the same word is used of Adam in the very next verse. This word is not used for such suffering anywhere in all the Scriptures.

139. Since this passage in Genesis, “*Thy desire shall be to thy husband,*” has been the cause of much immorality among men, in the cruelty and oppression they have inflicted upon their wives; since this false translation has been the cause of much degradation, unhappiness and suffering to women; and since this translation has been made the very keystone of an arch of doctrine subordinating woman to man, without which keystone the arch itself falls to pieces; and since the Apostle Paul’s utterances on the “woman question” are always interpreted as though this perversion of the sense of Gen. 3:16 was his accepted foundation upon which he builds his super-structure, it behooves us to review again the history of the ancient translation of the word *teshuqa*, and this we will do with the aid of the appended table:

[The table is not reproduced here.]

From this Table we readily see that of the twelve ancient versions, 10 furnish us with the rendering “*turning*,” in at least one passage.

Of the 28 known rendering of *teshuqa*, in the above Table, the word is rendered “*turning*” 21 times.

In the 7 remaining renderings, only 2 seem to agree; all the others disagree.

140. With such testimony as this before us (and we have quoted every ancient version we have been able to find, and none of importance, as likely to shed the least light on the meaning of this word are omitted from the list),—we can see no justification for rendering this word “*desire.*” Even the Babylonian Targum renders it “*turning*” in the second passage (Gen. 4:7), and thus lends its authority to this sense. Nothing but that rabbinic perversion and addition to the Scriptures, teaching that God pronounced ten curses on Eve (something that Scripture nowhere teaches) seems to be at the bottom of this extraordinary reading. A hint of such a meaning for *teshuqa* as “*lust*” seems to have crept into the Bible through Jerome’s Latin Vulgate. But even he did not give the sense “*appetite*” for the word as relates to Eve, but as to Abel; and further, even Jerome adds his authority, in his translation of the third passage, to the sense “*turning*,” and for 3:16, in his writings,—see Additional Note.

[ADDITIONAL NOTE. It is to be noted that the Church Fathers seem to be ignorant of any other sense but “*turning*” for this word. We have noted that the following employ “*turning*,” in one, two, or all three passages: Philo (a Jew,—not a Ch. Father died 50 A. D.), Clement of Rome (d. 100), Irenaeus (d. 202), Tertullian (born 160), Origen (b. 186), Epiphanius (b. 310 in Palestine), Jerome (b. 335,—in both Genesis verses, in spite of his own different renderings), Ambrose (b. 340), Augustine (b. 354) and Theodoret (b. 386).

In spite of the plain sense of the Greek words *apostrophe* and *epistrophe*, and the Latin rendering of *teshuqa*, *conversio* (all conveying, in their root, the sense of “*turning*”), the well known translation of the Church Fathers, published by T. and T. Clark of Edinburgh, renders the word “*desire*,” in these passages. But these words cannot be lawfully rendered thus.]

141. But let us now trace the adoption of “*desire*” into the English versions. In 1380 appeared the first English version by Wycliffe. It

was not made from the Hebrew original, but from the Latin Vulgate, and it follows its readings in all three places. The Douay Bible, of 1609, of the Roman Catholic Church, is also a reproduction of the Latin Vulgate. Putting these two on one side as mere translations of the Vulgate, we turn to the others.

142. After Wycliffe's version, and before any other English Bible appeared, an Italian Dominican monk, named Pagnino, translated the Hebrew Bible. The *Biographie Universelle*, quotes the following criticism of his work, in the language of Richard Simon: "*Pagnino has too much neglected the ancient versions of Scripture to attach himself to the teachings of the rabbis.*" What would we naturally expect, therefore? That he would render this word "lust,"—and that is precisely what he does in the first and the third place; in the second, he translates, "appetite."

143. Pagnino's version was published at Lyons in 1528. Seven years later, in 1535, Coverdale's English Bible appeared, published at Zurich, probably. Tyndale's version, in sections, had appeared in the time between Pagnino's and Coverdale's, published at Cologne and at Worms. It is to be noted that these were days of persecution, when no English Bible could have been published in England, and this may in part account for these versions being influenced by Pagnino. At any rate, from the time Pagnino's version appeared, every English version, excepting the two Vulgate translations we put on one side, has followed Pagnino's rendering for the first

passage, up to the present day. As to the second passage, Cranmer's Bible (1539) first introduced "lust" into this place, which was later followed by the Geneva Bible, and the Authorised and Revised versions. But Tyndale, Coverdale, Matthew (John Rogers) and Cranmer all retained "turning" in the third passage. But the three latest Protestant Bibles, Geneva, Authorised and Revised, have obliterated all trace of any other sense but "desire." The reading of the older English Bibles which follow Pagnino is, "*Thy lust (or lusts) shall pertayne to thy husband.*"

144. Now will you please turn to the Title Page of your Bible. If you have an Authorised Version, you will read the assurance given to the reader, that the Book has been "Translated out of the original tongues; and with the former translations diligently compared and revised." If you have a Revised Version of 1884, it will claim to be "the version set forth A. D. 1611 compared with the most ancient authorities and revised." These assurances do not hold good, in this case where the status and welfare of one-half the human race is directly and vitally concerned; and the highest good of the other half just as vitally concerned, if even more remotely and less visibly. Pagnino's word has been retained against the overwhelming authority of the ancient versions.

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