



Susanna Wesley

GOD'S CATALYST FOR REVIVAL

Donald L. Kline

SUSANNA WESLEY

**God's Catalyst
for Revival**

Donald L. Kline

SUSANNA WESLEY

Copyright © 1980 by
The C.S.S. Publishing Company, Inc.
Lima, Ohio

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical including photocopying, without permission in writing from the publisher. Inquiries should be addressed to: The C.S.S. Publishing Company, Inc., 628 South Main Street, Lima, Ohio 45804.

ISBN 0-89536-450-6

PRINTED IN U.S.A

My personal thanks to all the faithful people in the Hudson United Methodist Church whose longsuffering and understanding of their pastor's passion for the Wesleys have allowed for the time away from pastoral functions to assemble what follows.

Personal thanks to Lyle Gunning for his labor of love in typing the original manuscript, Kathy Chadwick for her constant optimism and intercession, and the many people whose discerning eyes were focused on the long process of editing and proofreading the material.

Most of all to my wife and partner, Pat, whose consistent, quiet life of prayer in the Spirit has undergirded our common ministry in the body of Christ; and to my children whose patience allowed for time away from family functions to allow for the essential process of editing, I owe a debt of love that cannot be repaid. Knowing that Jesus Christ is the debt-payer makes even the most impossible task possible.

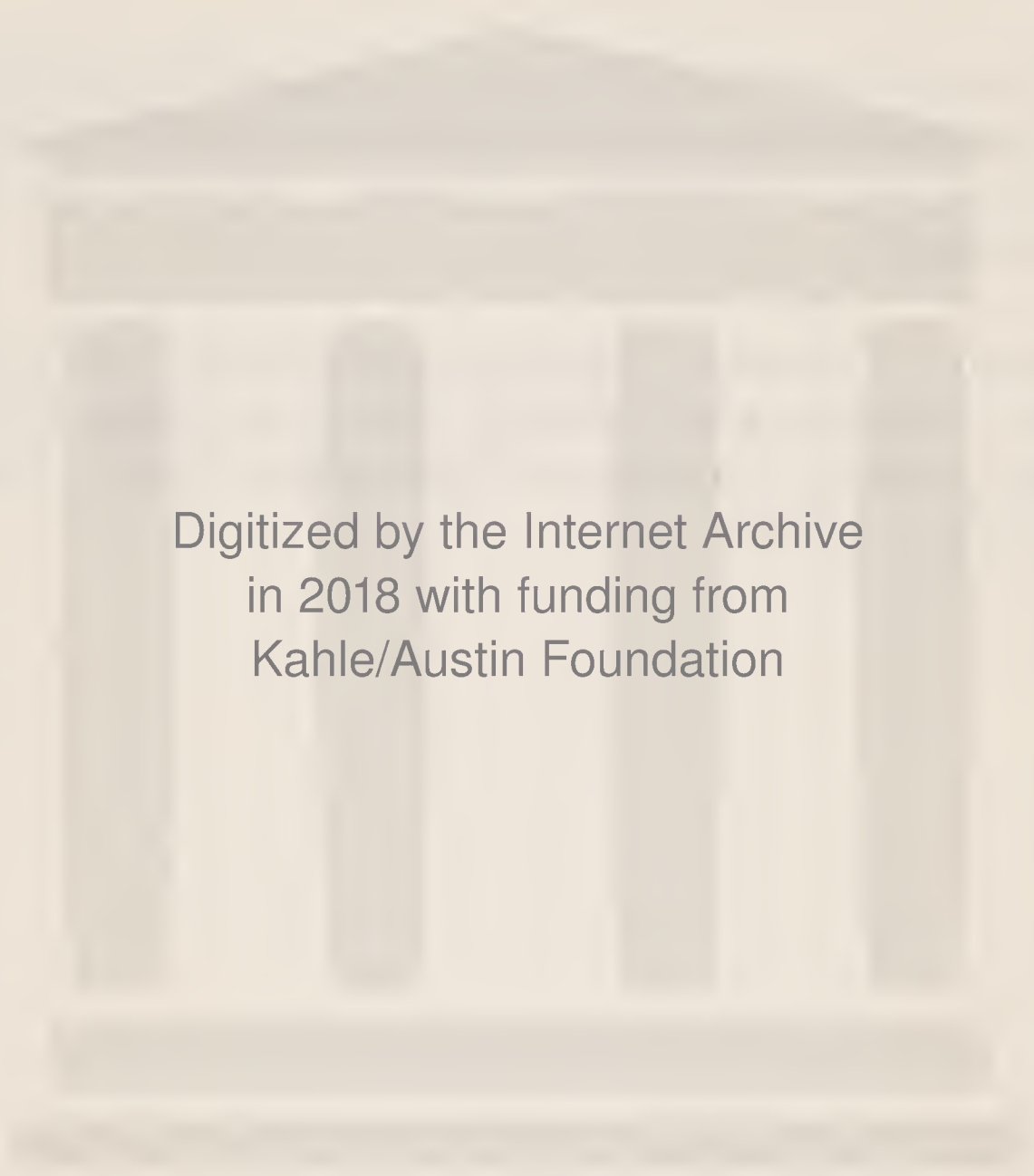
I want to dedicate this book to the memory of the ministry of my brother in Christ Donald Walton who taught me so much about the Love and life-style of Jesus. His early "going home," while fully affirmed in Jesus, leaves us without the prophetic witness to Christ which was always a part of his ministry. His final words to me were written indelibly upon my heart and mind, "WRITE, WRITE, DO IT WHILE GOD GIVES YOU THE STRENGTH."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Prayers of Susanna Wesley are used with permission from *The Prayers of Susanna Wesley* by W. L. Doughty (The Philosophical Library, Inc., New York, 1956).

Letters of Susanna Wesley are quoted with permission from *The Works of John Wesley* (14v) by John Wesley (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan).

Letters of Susanna Wesley quoted with permission from *Memoirs of the Wesley Family* by Adam Clarke (reprinted by Van Hooser Publications, Taylor, South Carolina, 1976).



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2018 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation

CONTENTS

Preface	ix
Children of Samuel and Susanna Wesley	1
Conversation With Susanna	2
The Epworth Fire, <i>Remarkable Providence</i>	4
<i>Advice on the Educating and Raising of Children</i>	8
Susanna, <i>A Preacher of Righteousness</i>	17
Susanna, <i>A Teacher of Theology</i>	21
Susanna, <i>Reflections on the Meaning of Love</i>	24
Susanna, <i>Family Evangelist</i>	27
Susanna, <i>Counselor to the Brokenhearted and Sick</i>	30
Susanna, <i>Profiting by Afflictions</i>	33
Susanna, <i>The Life of God in the Soul of Man</i>	36
Susanna, <i>Death Is Swallowed up in Victory</i>	38
Introduction to the Prayers of Susanna Wesley	41
Plea For Growth in Grace	42
Seeking Kingdom Consciousness	43
Life Investment	44
The Lord's Purpose Established	45
Thou Didst Form My Inward Parts	46
To Make All Men See	47
The Promise of Suffering	48

All Things Work Together	49
The Unchanging Lord	50
Peace Like a River	51
The Mind of Christ	52
God Is Our Sufficiency	53
Delight in Meditation	54
God Gives What We Can Handle	55
Strength Perfected in Weakness	56
Knowing Christ Jesus	57
Confession	58
The Holiness of God	59
Take Up Your Cross	60
Yielding to the Shepherd	61
Christ in Me	62
Every Thought Captive	63
Covenant of Love	64
Illuminating Power of the Holy Spirit	65
God Cares	66
The Discipline of Love	67
The Power of God Experienced	68
Woe Is Me for I Am Lost	69
All Things Work Together	70
The Whole Armor of God	71
Peter, Do You Love Me	72
Before All Things	72
Answered Prayer	73
Integrity of Service	73
Watching Our Words	74
Constant Presence	75
Pray in All Things	76
Obedience	77
Joy in the Morning	77
Be Still and Know	78

References	79
----------------------	----

PREFACE

In the spring of 1969, my wife and I spent some time tracing the heritage of Methodism in England and Wales. One of the rare privileges we enjoyed was the night spent in Epworth in the rectory, sleeping of all places, in Samuel's study. Being immersed in the history of that place renewed a thirst for greater understanding of the thrust of the Methodist movement to which we had been called earlier to serve in ministry.

Surely one must understand the providential hand of God on John and Charles Wesley as they led the great renewal of the Anglican Church in the eighteenth century. God's use of the Wesleys in renewing his church affected every corner of the human enterprise. Within the context of the Industrial Revolution which affected the lives of every living human being, the Wesleys were mightily used in ministry.

The temptation is great to make the attempt to recover the "dynamic" of past experiences of renewal. At best, we are limited in scope to affirm the spiritual foundations that were laid so early in the lives of the Wesleys and to which such a great degree shaped their ministries. Surely we must affirm with Scripture the place of the Holy Spirit in renewing his church. "What gives life is God's Spirit; man's power is of no use at all. The words I have spoken to you bring God's life-giving Spirit." (John 6:63 GNB) It was surely the power of the Holy Spirit breathed anew into John at Aldersgate and even earlier on into Charles that was to so greatly influence the scope of the renewal. The experience of "Resurrection power" referred to by Paul

in Philippians 3:10 was surely the “dynamic” of the eighteenth century renewal.

All of the formative elements of Susanna Wesley’s teaching and life style are evident in her prayer life. A selection of her prayers is included in this work with the hope that they will not only be read but studied and prayed, believing that a great deal of what Susanna proclaimed in her life might find new awakening in our lives as well.

Susanna Wesley was the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Samuel Annesley, and the twenty-fifth child in her home. Her father was a very famous “dissenting” clergyman, having been removed from the Anglican priesthood many years prior to Susanna’s birth for his dissenting opinions.

At the age of thirteen Susanna reviewed the whole issue of dissent and the church and decided that her father was not correct in his views of dissent and became a loyal and devout supporter of the Anglican Church for the remainder of her life. She was, however, her father’s daughter in the matter of intellect and scholarship. While still a teenager she studied Greek, Latin and French and was fluent in all three languages. She was perfectly at home in discussions of all theological topics as well as world problems and social issues. Her keen-witted, high-spirited beauty was laced with a modesty and humility unsurpassed. The aggressive spirit that sometimes found her in direct conflict with her husband, Samuel, and other persons as well, was countered by a firm grounding in the commands of Scripture to submission. Some have said of her that she was probably the most capable woman in all of England in her day. Others have paid tribute to her by indicating her very

close resemblance to the portrait of a virtuous woman painted in Proverbs 31.

At a very early age she was married to Samuel Wesley, a very serious minded Anglican priest, completely dedicated to the Anglican Church. That she comes close to the ideal of mother and wife must not be denied. That she achieved perfection in either role is certainly beyond the evidence. To this marriage were born nineteen children. The financial problems involved in the household were very real. Samuel was not a good money manager and spent some time in debtors' prison for past due debts. Susanna literally worked miracles in holding the family together against unseemingly odds. Her husband was not a popular preacher and suffered under the great amount of open criticism and violent reaction to his ministry. John Wesley was always convinced that the fires in the rectory were not accidental but rather a direct result of detractors of Samuel's ministry in Epworth.

Susanna's educational methodologies and strong sense of personal and family discipline are models that deserve a very close scrutiny as corrective models for our day. Directed by the power of the Holy Spirit, immersed in God's word, Susanna was enabled to lead many to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. She was faithful to her Lord and those to whom she was called in Christian ministry. There never seems to be a time in her life wherein doubt and criticism were given the place of Christ in her life. Her eyes were single and obedience to Christ was her life style.

Susanna had a strong and vigorous mind and undaunted courage. "She feared no difficulty and faced all issues in search of the truth head on. She was beautiful not only in spirit but in body as well. She was

Children of Samuel and Susanna Wesley

Adam Clarke, writing in the *Memoirs of the Wesley Family*, only forty years after the death of John Wesley, laments the lack of information regarding the Wesley family. "Out of the nineteen children of Mr. Samuel Wesley and Susanna, the names of only thirteen can be recovered; and most even of these little or nothing is known." (p. 421) There is substantial evidence to show that the various fires experienced by the Wesley family over the years took their toll in family records.

Of those who were known, the following list is made available:

NAME	PLACE OF BIRTH	DATE	MARRIED NAME
1. Samuel	London	1690	
2. Susanna	South Ormsby	1691	(Died at age 2)
3. Emilia	South Ormsby	1692	Harper
4. Annesley and Jedediah	South Ormsby	1694	
5. Susanna (Sukey)	South Ormsby	1695	Ellison
6. Mary	Epworth	1696	Whitelamb
7. Mehetabel (Hetty)	Epworth	1697	Wright
8. Twins (unnamed)	Epworth	1701	
9. Anne	Epworth	1702	Lambert
10. Martha (Patty)	Epworth	1707	Hall
11. John	Epworth	1703	
12. Charles	Epworth	1708	
13. Kezziah (Kizzy)	Epworth	1710	

Conversation with Susanna

I talked largely with my mother, who told me, that, till a short time since, she had scarce heard such a thing mentioned as the having forgiveness of sins now, or God's Spirit bearing witness with our spirit: much less did she imagine that this was the common privilege of all true believers. "Therefore," she said, "I never durst ask for it myself. But two or three weeks ago, while my son Hall was pronouncing those words, in delivering the cup to me, 'The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee;' the words struck through my heart, and I knew God for Christ's sake had forgiven me all my sins."

I asked, whether her father (Dr. Annesley) had not the same faith: and, whether she had not heard him preach it to others. She answered, he had it himself; and declared, a little before his death, that for more than forty years he had no darkness, no fear, no doubt at all of his being "accepted in the beloved." But that, nevertheless, she did not remember to have heard him preach, no not once, explicitly upon it: whence she supposed he also looked upon it as the peculiar blessing of a few; not as promised to all of the people of God.

Journal, September 3, 1739, John Wesley.

Comment

The subject of John Wesley's conversation with Susanna was not that of salvation by faith, but rather the witness of the Holy Spirit empowering for ministry. It was the assurance of salvation to which John constantly addressed himself from Scripture following on his own assurance of salvation received at Aldersgate in May of 1738.

Susanna died three years after this conversation in 1742.

There is strong evidence in the Journals of John and Charles to show that Susanna remained cool to John's Aldersgate experience while remaining firmly rooted in Anglican orthodoxy that served her faithfully all of her days.

This conversation, recorded by John only three brief years before Susanna's death, reveals a slight crack in a rigid orthodoxy that gives some evidence of her strong but not essentially unwavering will in matters of theology.

The Epworth Fire, A Remarkable Providence

“A Brand Plucked From The Burning” Zechariah 3:2

[Printed in the Year 1778]

The following letter, written by my mother, gives an account of a very remarkable providence: but it is imperfect with regard to me. That part [no]one but I myself can supply. Her account, wrote to a neighbouring Clergyman, begins:

Epworth, August 24, 1709.

On Wednesday night, February 9, between the hours of eleven and twelve, some sparks fell from the roof of our house, upon one of the children's (Hetty's) feet. She immediately ran to our chamber, and called us. Mr. Wesley, hearing a cry of fire in the street, started up, (as I was very ill, he lay in a separate room from me) and, opening his door found the fire was in his own house. He immediately came to my room, and bid me and my two eldest daughters rise quickly and shift for ourselves. Then he ran and burst open the nursery-door, and called to the maid to bring out the children. The two little ones lay in the bed with her; the three others in another bed. She snatched up the youngest, and bid the rest follow; which the three elder did. When we were got into the hall, and were surrounded with flames, Mr. Wesley found he had left the keys of the doors above the stairs. He ran up, and recovered them, a minute before the staircase took fire. When we opened the street-door, the strong north-east wind drove the flames in with such violence, that none could stand against them. But some of our children got out through the windows, the rest

through a little door into the garden. I was not in a condition to climb up to the windows; neither could I get to the garden-door. I endeavoured three times to force my passage through the street-door, but was as often beat back by the fury of the flames. In this distress I besought our blessed Saviour for help, and then waded through the fire, naked as I was, which did me no farther harm than a little scorching my hands and my face.

When Mr. Wesley had seen the other children safe, he heard the child in the nursery cry. He attempted to go up the stairs, but they were all on fire, and would not bear his weight. Finding it impossible to give any help, he kneeled down in the hall, and recommended the soul of the child to God.

I believe, it was just at that time I waked; for I did not cry, as they imagined, unless it was afterwards. I remember all the circumstances as distinctly as though it were but yesterday. Seeing the room was very light, I called to the maid to take me up. But none answering, I put my head out of the curtains, and saw streaks of fire on the top of the room. I got up and ran to the door, but could get no farther, all the floor beyond it being in a blaze. I then climbed up on a chest which stood near the window: One in the yard saw me, and proposed running to fetch a ladder. Another answered, "There will not be time; but I have thought of another expedient: Here, I will fix myself against the wall; lift a light man, and set him on my shoulders." They did so, and he took me out of the window. Just then the whole roof fell in; but it fell inward, or we had been all crushed at once. When they brought me into the house where my father was, he cried out, "Come neighbours, let us kneel down! Let us give thanks to God! He has given me all my eight children: Let the house go; I am rich enough."

The next day, as he was walking in the garden, and surveying the ruins of the house, he picked up part of a leaf of his polyglott Bible, on which just those words were legible: *Vade; vende omnia quae habes, et attolle crucem, et sequere me.* "Go sell all thou hast; and take

up thy cross and follow me."

John Wesley, *Works*, Vol. XIII, pp. 516-518.

Comment

This incident, early in the life of John Wesley, is the origin of the claim by the historians that truly John Wesley was "a brand plucked from the fire." (Zechariah 3:2)

In this letter we are given a clear insight into the remarkable mind of Susanna Wesley. The exactness of detail following a tragic, frightening experience, while sick physically herself, is truly heart rending. It was her careful attention to detail and her strength of mind that found new life in John Wesley's life and work.

The test of Susanna's firm but loving discipline found its affirmation as one by one her family followed parental direction to freedom and safety. There is perhaps a great truth revealed in this often reported episode that bears repeating. For truly Susanna was a remarkably resourceful woman of prayer. Deeply devoted to prayer and God's Word, yet very much the woman of practical necessity, Susanna's life style was early written on the heart and mind of her children.

It is from this legacy that the eighteenth century renewal gained structural integrity. While deeply moved by God, Susanna was also deeply sensitive to the needs of others and no mere detail was spared in resolving the most pressing difficulty.

Susanna was a woman of undaunted faith and courage who walked through many fires of controversy, opposition and discouragement and conquered them all in the power given to her by God through Jesus Christ. The fires in her life failed to consume her

unending devotion and seemingly limitless energy accomplishing the responsibilities laid upon her life.

We should not too quickly criticize her pattern of discipline and education. It would behoove us to hear the depth of sensitivity and spiritual understanding that encouraged her life-style.

Advice on the Educating and Raising of Children

July 24, 1732

Letter to John Wesley

According to your desire, I have collected the principal rules I observed in educating my family; which I now send you as they occurred to my mind, and you may (if you think they can be of use to any) dispose of them in what order you please.

The children were always put into a regular method of living, in such things as they were capable of, from their birth; as in dressing, undressing, changing their linen, etc. The first quarter commonly passes in sleep. After that, they were, if possible, laid into their cradles awake, and rocked to sleep; and so they were kept rocking, till it was time for them to awake. This was done to bring them to a regular course of sleeping; which at first was three hours in the morning, and three hours in the afternoon: Afterward two hours, till they needed none at all.

When turned a year old (and some before) they were taught to fear the rod, and to cry softly; by which means they escaped abundance of correction they might otherwise have had; and that most odious noise of the crying of children was rarely heard in the house; but the family usually lived in as much quietness, as if there had not been a child among them.

As soon as they were grown pretty strong, they were confined to three meals a day. At dinner their little table and chairs were set by ours, where they could be overlooked; and they were suffered to eat and drink as much as they would; but not to call for anything. If they wanted aught, they used to whisper to the maid which

attended them, who came and spake to me; and as soon as they could handle a knife and fork, they were set to our table. They were never suffered to choose their meat, but always made to eat such things as were provided for the family.

Mornings they had always spoon-meat; sometimes at nights. But whatever they had, they were never permitted to eat, at those meals, of more than one thing; and of that sparingly enough. Drinking or eating between meals was never allowed unless in case of sickness; which seldom happened. Nor were they suffered to go into the kitchen to ask any thing of the servants, when they were at meat; if it was known they did, they were certainly beat, and the servants severely reprimanded.

At six, as soon as family prayers were over, they had their supper; at seven, the maid washed them; and, beginning at the youngest, she undressed and got them all to bed by eight; at which time she left them in their several rooms awake; for there was no such thing allowed of in our house, as sitting by a child until it fell asleep.

They were constantly used to eat and drink what was given them that when any of them was ill, there was no difficulty in making them take the most unpleasant medicine; for they durst not refuse it, though some of them would presently throw it up. This I mention, to show that a person may be taught to take anything, though it be never so much against his stomach.

In order to form the minds of children, the first thing to be done is to conquer their will, and bring them to an obedient temper. To inform the understanding is a work of time and must with children proceed by slow degrees as they are able to bear it; but the subjecting the will is a thing which must be done at once; and the sooner the better. For by neglecting timely correction, they will contract a stubbornness and obstinacy, which is hardly ever after conquered; and never, without using such severity as would be as painful to me as to the child. In the esteem of the world they pass for kind and

indulgent, whom I call cruel, parents, who permit their children to get habits, which they know must be afterwards broken. Nay, some are so stupidly fond, as in sport to teach their children to do things which in a while after, they have severely beaten them for doing. Whenever a child is corrected, it must be conquered; and this will be no hard matter to do, if it be not grown headstrong by too much indulgence. And when the will of a child is totally subdued, and it is brought to revere and stand in awe of the parents, then a great many childish follies and inadvertences may be passed by. Some should be overlooked and taken no notice of, and others mildly reproved; but no wilful transgression ought ever to be forgiven children; without chastisement less or more, as the nature and circumstances of the offence require.

I insist upon conquering the will of children betimes, because this is the only strong and rational foundation of a religious education; without which both precept and example will be ineffectual. But when this is thoroughly done, then a child is capable of being governed by the reason and piety of its parents, till its own understanding comes to maturity, and the principles of religion have taken root in the mind.

I cannot yet dismiss this subject. As self-will is the root of all sin and misery, so whatever cherishes this in children, insures their after-wretchedness and irreligion: Whatever checks and mortifies it, promotes their future happiness and piety. This is still more evident, if we farther consider, that religion is nothing else than the doing the will of God, and not our own; That the one grand impediment to our temporal and eternal happiness being this self-will, no indulgences of it can be trivial, no denial unprofitable. Heaven or hell depends on this alone. So that the parent who studies to subdue it in his child, works together with God in the renewing and saving a soul. The parent who indulges it does the devil's work, makes religion impracticable, salvation unattainable; and does all that in him lies to damn his child, soul and body for ever.

The children of this family were taught, as soon as they could speak, the Lord's Prayer, which they were made to say at rising and bed-time constantly; to which, as they grew bigger, were added a short prayer for their parents, and some Collects; a short Catechism, and some portion of Scripture, as their memories could bear.

They were very early made to distinguish the Sabbath from other days; before they could well speak or go. They were as soon taught to be still at family prayers, and to ask a blessing immediately after, which they used to do by signs, before they could kneel or speak.

They were quickly made to understand they might have nothing they cried for, and instructed to speak handsomely for what they wanted. They were not suffered to ask even the lowest servant for aught without saying, 'Pray give me such a thing;' and the servant was chid, if she ever let them omit that word. Taking God's name in vain, cursing and swearing, profaneness, obscenity, rude, ill-bred names, were never heard among them. Nor were they ever permitted to call each other by their proper names, without the addition of brother or sister.

None of them were taught to read till five years old, except Kezzy, in whose case I was overruled; and she was more years learning, than any of the rest had been months. The way of teaching was this: The day before a child began to learn, the house was set in order, everyone's work appointed them, and a charge given, that none should come into the room from nine till twelve, or from two till five; which, you know, were our school hours. One day was allowed the child wherein to learn its letters; and each of them did in that time know all its letters, great and small, except Molly and Nancy, who were a day and half before they knew them perfectly; for which I then thought them very dull; but since I have observed how long many children are learning the horn book, I have changed my opinion. But the reason why I thought them so then was, because the

rest learned so readily; and your brother Samuel, who was the first child I ever taught, learned the alphabet in a few hours. He was five years old on the 10th of February; the next day he began to learn; and as soon as he knew the letters, began at the first chapter of Genesis. He was taught to spell the first verse, then to read it over and over, till he could read it off hand without any hesitation; so on to the second etc., till he took ten verses for a lesson, which he quickly did. Easter fell low that year; and by Whitsuntide he could read a chapter very well; for he read continually, and had such a prodigious memory that I cannot remember ever to have told him the same word twice.

What was yet stranger, any word he had learned in his lesson, he knew, wherever he saw it, either in his Bible, or any other book; by which means he learned very soon to read an English author well.

The same method was observed with them all. As soon as they knew the letters, they were put first to spell, and read one line, then a verse; never leaving, till perfect in their lesson, were it shorter or longer. So one or other continued reading at school time, without any intermission; and before we left school, each child read what he had learned that morning; and ere we parted in the afternoon, what they had learned all day.

There was no such thing as loud talking or playing allowed of; but every one was kept close to their business, for the six hours of school: And it is almost incredible, what a child may be taught in a quarter of a year, by a vigorous application, if it have but a tolerable capacity, and good health. Every one of these, Kezzy excepted, could read better in that time, than most of women can do as long as they live.

Rising out of their places, or going out of the room, was not permitted unless for good cause; and running into the yard, garden, or street, without leave, was always esteemed a capital offence.

For some years we went on very well. Never were children in better order. Never were children better disposed to piety, or in more subjection to their parents;

till that fatal dispersion of them, after the fire, into several families. In those they were left at full liberty to converse with servants, which before they had always been restrained from; and to run abroad, and play with any children, good or bad. They soon learned to neglect a strict observation of the Sabbath, and got knowledge of several songs and bad things, which before they had no notion of. That civil behaviour which made them admired, when at home, by all which saw them, was, in great measure, lost; and a clownish accent, and many rude ways, were learned, which were not reformed without some difficulty.

When the house was rebuilt, and the children all brought home, we entered upon a strict reform; and then was begun the custom of singing psalms at the beginning and leaving school, morning and evening. Then also that of general retirement at five o'clock was entered upon; when the oldest took the youngest that could speak, and the second the next, to whom they read the Psalms for the day, and a chapter in the New Testament; as, in the morning, they were directed to read the Psalms and a chapter in the Old: After which they went to their private prayers, before they got their breakfast, or came into the family. And, I thank God, the custom is still preserved among us.

There were several by-laws observed among us, which slipped my memory, or else they had been inserted in their proper place; but I mention them here, because I think them useful.

- (1) It had been observed, that cowardice and fear of punishment often lead children into lying, till they get a custom of it, which they cannot leave. To prevent this, a law was made, That whoever was charged with a fault, of which they were guilty, if they would ingenuously confess it, and promise to amend, should not be beaten. This rule prevented a great deal of lying and would have done more, if one in the family would have observed it. But he could not be prevailed on, and was therefore often imposed on by false colours and equivocations; which

none would have used, (except one) had they been kindly dealt with. And some, in spite of all, would always speak truth plainly.

- (2) That no sinful action as lying, pilfering, playing at church, or on the Lord's Day, disobedience, quarrelling etc. should ever pass un-punished.
- (3) That no child should ever be chid or beat twice for the same fault; and that if they amended, they should never be upbraided with it afterwards.
- (4) That every signal act of disobedience, especially when it crossed upon their own inclinations, should be always commended, and frequently rewarded, according to the merits of the cause.
- (5) That if ever any child performed an act of obedience, or did anything with an intention to please, though the performance was not well, yet the obedience and intention should be kindly accepted; and the child with sweetness directed how to do better for the future.
- (6) That propriety be inviolably preserved, and none suffered to invade the property of another in the smallest matter, though it were but of the value of a farthing, or a pin; which they might not take from the owner, without, much less against, his consent. This rule can never be too much inculcated on the minds of children; and from the want of parents or governors doing it as they ought, proceeds that shameful neglect of justice which we may observe in the world.
- (7) That promises be strictly observed; and a gift once bestowed, and so the right passed away from the donor be not resumed, but left to the disposal of him to whom it was given; unless it were conditional, and the condition of the obligation not performed.
- (8) That no girl be taught to work till she can read very well; and then that she be kept to her work with the same application and for the same time, that she was held to in reading. This rule also is much to be observed; for the putting children to learn sewing before they can read perfectly, is the very reason,

why so few women can read fit to be heard, and never to be well understood.

Journal, Vol. I, p.387 ff.

Comment

There is a not too evident truth apparent in Susanna's life regarding her sense of parental discipline. That truth is that she did not expect anything more of her children than what she herself was willing to impose as a discipline on her own life.

Probably the most thought-provoking section in this "manual of discipline" is that section on the breaking of the self-will of children. Susanna correctly understands the necessity of a subdued will in order to come into salvation and submission to the Lord Jesus Christ. How decisively she makes the connection between the biblical admonitions for discipline of children and their acceptance of salvation!

The breaking of the self-will of a child was correctly seen by Susanna as the foundation of all teaching, both religious instruction and academic learning. The strong-willed child whose will has not been broken faces the doom expressed by Susanna as "without which both precept and example will be ineffectual."

How refreshing to hear that we are responsible as parents to form the minds of our children. How cruel we are as parents, she reminds us, when we allow our children to "get habits, which they know must be afterwards broken."

The content of education in the Wesley household greatly affected the foundations of the Methodist movement. The very practical aspects of life, Scripture, praying, etc., all received the same quality of

discipline and significance for living. Jeremiah's admonition to "eat the word" clearly applied in the Wesley Schoolhouse. (Jeremiah 15:16)

Many critics have seen only the severe nature of that discipline in the Wesley home. It seems clear to me that Susanna's severity in discipline is only matched by her deep compassion and understanding and recognition of her own sinful nature. In fact it is that very recognition that seems to deepen her thirst and hunger for the salvation of all of her children.

These rules of discipline give us clear insight into the character of a woman greatly endowed with both intellect and compassion. Here was a woman with a clear sense of direction in her life and with a faith in Jesus Christ that would not be moved!

Adam Clarke, in his *Memoirs of the Wesley Family*, says of Susanna, "Mrs. Wesley . . . seems to have possessed every qualification requisite for either a public or private teacher." (p. 320)

From her [Susanna] Mr. John Wesley derived all that knowledge in the education of children, which he has detailed so amply, and so successfully enforced. It has been wondered at, that a man who had no children of his own could have known so well how they should be managed and educated; but that wonder will at once cease, when it is recollected by whom he was himself educated, and who was his instructress in all things during his infancy and youth. (p. 324)

Susanna,

A Preacher of Righteousness

February 6, 1711

Letter to Samuel Wesley.

As I am a woman, so I am also mistress of a large family. And though the superior charge of the souls contained in it, lies upon you; yet, in your absence, I cannot but look upon every soul you leave under my care, as a talent committed to me under a trust, by the great Lord of all the families, both of heaven and earth. And if I am unfaithful to him or you in neglecting to improve these talents, how shall I answer unto him, when he shall command me to render an account of my stewardship?

As these, and other such like thoughts, made me at first take a more than ordinary care of the souls of the children and servants, so — knowing our religion requires a strict observation of the Lord's day, and not thinking that we fully answered the end of the institution by going to church, unless we filled up the intermediate spaces of time by other acts of piety and devotion — I thought it my duty to spend some part of the day, in reading to and instructing my family: And such time I esteemed spent in a way more acceptable to God, than if I had retired to my own private devotions.

This was the beginning of my present practice. Other people's coming and joining with us was merely accidental. Our lad told his parents: They first desired to be admitted; then others that heard of it, begged leave also: So our company increased to about thirty; and it seldom exceeded forty last winter.

But soon after you went to London last, I light on the

account of the Danish Missionaries. I was, I think, never more affected with any thing; I could not forbear spending good part of that evening in praising and adoring the divine goodness, for inspiring them with such ardent zeal for his glory. For several days I could think or speak of little else. At last it came into my mind, though I am not a man nor a Minister, yet if my heart were sincerely devoted to God, and I was inspired with a true zeal for his glory, I might do somewhat more than I do. I thought I might pray more for them, and might speak to those with whom I converse with more warmth of affection. I resolved to begin with my own children; in which I observe the following method: I take such a proportion of time as I can spare every night, to discourse with each child apart. On Monday, I talk with Molly; on Tuesday, with Hetty; Wednesday, with Nancy; Thursday, with Jacky; Friday with Patty; Saturday, with Charles; and with Emily and Sukey together on Sunday.

With those few neighbours that then came to me, I discoursed more freely and affectionately. I chose the best and most awakening sermons we have. And I spent somewhat more time with them in such exercises, without being careful about the success of my undertaking. Since this, our company increased every night; for I dare deny none that ask admittance.

Last Sunday I believe we had above two hundred. And yet many went away, for want of room to stand.

We banish all temporal concerns from our society. None is suffered to mingle any discourse about them with our reading or singing. We keep close to the business of the day; and when it is over, all go home.

I cannot conceive, why any should reflect upon you, because your wife endeavours to draw people to church, and to restrain them from profaning the Lord's day, by reading to them and other persuasions. For my part, I value no censure upon this account. I have long since shook hands with the world. And I heartily wish, I had never given them more reason to speak against me.

As to its looking particular, I grant it does. And so

does almost any thing that is serious, or that may any way advance the glory of God, or the salvation of souls.

As for your proposal, of letting some other person read: Alas! you do not consider what a people these are. I do not think one man among them could read a sermon, without spelling a good part of it. Nor has any of our family a voice strong enough to be heard by such a number of people.

But there is one thing about which I am much dissatisfied; that is, their being present at family prayers. I do not speak of any concern I am under, barely because so many are present; for those who have the honour of speaking to the Great and Holy God, need not be ashamed to speak before the whole world: But because of my sex. I doubt if it is proper for me to present the prayers of the people to God. Last Sunday I would fain have dismissed them before prayers; but they begged so earnestly to stay, I durst not deny them.

Journal, Vol. I, p. 385.

Comment

In paragraph one, Susanna evidences a style of precise commitment and grace in carrying out her duty as wife and mother to the Wesley family. There is clear evidence that her familiarity with Scripture underlies all of her thinking and doing.

Never in the course of her ministry did Susanna neglect biblical priorities. Her methodical nature and great attention to the details of family life and education continue to influence many today.

Susanna knew well the promise of Hebrews 13:2, “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” Hospitality was central in her home, never to the neglect of her own family, but in cadence with God’s leading in her life.

There is also much of the strong-willed tempera-

ment of Susanna revealed in this letter. There is even a little bit of self-righteous indignation revealed in her rather open discussion with Samuel regarding his obvious disagreement with the leading of worship services that she was doing in his absence.

Her evident disdain for the criticism leveled by the *World* regarding her activities is also clear. One can almost hear her loudly proclaim: "I have long since shook hands with world!" There is a sense in which she responds even more clearly and precisely under the pressure of criticism and conflict. She truly was a woman of one mind, heart and soul for the Lord of her life.

Samuel's love for Susanna should not be questioned beyond the evidence. That he surely "met his match" in Susanna is clear, for the formative theological mind which is clearly revealed in her prayers far surpasses the depth and concrete faith of a more philosophical Samuel living somewhat detached from the fervor of God's working in Susanna and her sons.

Susanna,

A Teacher of Theology

Letter to John Wesley
July 18, 1725

Dear Son,

I have often wondered that men should be so vain to amuse themselves by searching into the decrees of God, which no human wit can fathom; and do not rather employ their time and powers in working out their salvation, and making their own calling and election sure. Such studies tend more to confound than to inform the understanding; and young people had best let them alone. But since I find you have some scruples concerning our article of predestination, [Article No. 17 in the Anglican Articles of Religion] I will tell you my thoughts of the matter and if they satisfy not, you may desire your father's direction, who is surely better qualified for a casuist than me.

The doctrine of predestination, as maintained by rigid Calvinists, is very shocking, and ought to be abhorred, because it charges the most holy God with being the author of sin. And I think you reason very well and justly against it; for it is certainly inconsistent with the justice and goodness of God to lay man under either a physical or moral necessity of committing sin, and then punish him for doing it. Far be this from the Lord! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right!

I do firmly believe that God, from all eternity, hath elected some to everlasting life; but then I humbly conceive that this election is founded in his foreknowledge, according to that in the eighth of Romans, verse 29, 30: 'Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son: moreover, whom he

did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.'

Whom, in his eternal prescience, God saw would make a right use of their powers, and accept of offered mercy, *he did predestinate*— adopt for his children, his peculiar treasure. And that they might be *conformed to the image of his only Son*, he called them to himself by his eternal Word, through the preaching of the gospel; and internally by his Holy Spirit: which *call* they obeying, repenting of their sins, and believing in the Lord Jesus, he *justifies* them — absolves them from the guilt of all their sins, and acknowledges them as just and righteous persons, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ. And *having thus justified*, he receives them to *glory* — to heaven.

This is the sum of what I believe concerning predestination, which I think if agreeable to the analogy of faith; since it does in no wise derogate from the glory of God's free grace, nor impair the liberty of man. Nor can it with more reason be supposed that the prescience of God is the cause that so many finally perish, than that our knowing the sun will rise tomorrow is the cause of its rising.

Clarke, *Memoirs*, p. 333 ff.

Comment

Biblical theologian par excellence! One might wish to take exception to Susanna's logic but I would suggest that who ever made that decision should have also been aware of the mind they had set out to question. Here is a mind that is not only deeply rooted in Scripture, but capable of translating that Scripture clearly in very practical terms. The incisive nature of her prose must have set many teachers of theology back on their proverbial heels.

Here in Susanna one comes away with a sense of having listened to a contemporary theological debate.

The discipline she exacted in her home was clearly formulated and demonstrated in her own mind and heart. A strong mind and heart with a compassion for submission to her Lord combined with a logical presentation of the Gospel produced Methodism's first systematic theologian. The tragedy of the fire in Epworth is that most of her early work in letters and papers was destroyed. We are left with few letters, prayers and short cryptic remarks that do not tell the whole story of this grand lady of theology.

Susanna, Reflections on the Meaning of Love

Letter to John Wesley
May 14, 1727

Dear Son,

The difficulty there is in separating the ideas of things that nearly resemble each other, and whose properties and effects are much the same, has, I believe, induced some to think that the human soul has no passion but LOVE; and that all those passions or affections which we distinguish by the names of hope, fear, joy etc., are no more than various modes of love. This notion carries some show of reason, though I can't acquiesce in it. I must confess I never yet met with such an accurate definition of the passion of love, as fully satisfied me. It is indeed commonly defined "a desire of union with a known or apprehended good." But this directly makes love and desire the same thing; which, on a close inspection, I conceive they are not, for this reason; desire is strongest, and acts most vigorously, when the beloved object is distant, absent, or apprehended unkind or displeased; whereas, when the union is attained, and fruition perfect, complacency, delight, and joy fill the soul of the lover, while desire lies quiescent; which plainly shows (at least to me) that desire of union is an *effect* of love and not love *itself*.

What then is love? or how shall we describe its strange mysterious essence? It is — I do not know what! A powerful something! Source of our joy and grief! Felt and experienced by every one, and yet unknown to all! Nor shall we ever comprehend what it is, till we are united to our First Principle, and there read its wondrous nature in the clear mirror of uncreated Love; till

which time it is best to rest satisfied with such apprehensions of its essence as we can collect from our observations of its effects and properties; for other knowledge of it in our present state is too high and too wonderful for us; neither can we attain unto it.

Suffer now a word of advice. However curious you may be in searching into the nature, or in distinguishing the properties, of the passions or virtues of human kind, for your own private satisfaction, be very cautious in giving nice distinctions in public assemblies; for it does not answer the true end of preaching, which is to mend men's lives, and not fill their heads with unprofitable speculations. And after all that can be said, every affection of the soul is better known by experience than any description that can be given of it. An honest man will more easily apprehend what is meant by being zealous for God and against sin, when he hears what are the properties and effects of true zeal, than the most accurate definition of its essence.

Dear Son, the conclusion of your letter is very kind. That you were ever dutiful, I very well know. But I know myself enough to rest satisfied with a moderate degree of your affection. Indeed, it would be unjust in me to desire the love of any one. Your prayers I want and wish; nor shall I cease while I live to beseech almighty God to bless you. Adieu.

Clarke, *Memoirs*, p. 336.

Comment

The ferment of the Wesley Schoolhouse really never ceased. John, in school studying theology, is tutored by Susanna by correspondence. Here the great intellect and demanding personal discipline is clear. Never on the fence in any discussion, Susanna proclaims the end of all preaching to, "mend men's lives and not fill their heads with empty speculation." One begins to wonder of her choice of adjectives for our modern day educational institutions, especially

the seminaries.

Susanna offers special caution regarding the theme of love in public gatherings. I suspect that Susanna would have sounded like Carrie Nation in some of our gatherings where love is worn like an armband of piety and expressed in ways that would be abhorrent to her as a display of affection rather than as a means of bringing more men to salvation.

There is a sense when one reads Susanna's letters that we feel quite at home in them. They are extremely personal and deeply aware of Scripture. The literary quality is supreme. She practiced her concern that women be as well educated as men. Recall rule number eight in the Wesley Schoolhouse: "That no girl be taught to work till she can read very well; and then that she be kept to her work with the same application and for the same time, that she was held to in reading . . . the putting of children to learn sewing before they can read perfectly, is the very reason, why so few women can read fit to be heard, and never to be well understood." Susanna was speaking clearly to the Industrial Revolution that was beginning to use young children at demeaning tasks in factories. She was fearless in her effort to proclaim God's Word in her home, in the community and to the whole world!

She had no time to spare for frivolous or demeaning activity that avoided the calm of God on every soul: man, woman and child. Her singleness of purpose, heart and mind, remained to her dying day the steadfastness of her soul. She had prepared her family for the "Great Day of the Lord." (2 Peter 3:9-10)

Susanna, Family Evangelist

Letter to Sukey

January 13, 1709

(Following second great fire which separated the family members)

Dear Sukey,

Since our misfortunes have separated us from each other, and we can no longer enjoy the opportunities we once had of conversing with one another, I can no way discharge the duty of a parent, or comply with my inclination of doing you all the good I can, but by writing.

You know very well how I love you. I love your body; and do earnestly beseech almighty God to bless it with health, and all things necessary for its comfort and support in this world. But my tenderest regard is for your immortal soul, and for its spiritual happiness; which regard I cannot better express, than by endeavoring to instill into your mind those principles of knowledge and virtue that are absolutely necessary in order to your leading a good life here, which is the only thing that can infallibly secure your happiness hereafter.

The main thing which is now to be done is, to lay a good foundation, that you may act upon principles, and be always able to satisfy yourself, and give a reason to others of the faith that is in you: for any one who makes a profession of religion only because it is the custom of the country in which they live or because their parents do so, or their worldly interest is thereby secured or advanced, will never be able to stand in the day of temptation; nor shall they ever enter into the kingdom of heaven. And though, perhaps you cannot at present comprehend all I shall say, yet keep this letter by you, and as you grow in years by your reason and judgment will improve, and you will obtain a more clear

understanding in all things.

[This section of the letter serves as a prelude to what ends up being a twenty-page dissertation on theology using the Apostles' Creed as the format. The dissertation would stand well in any theological library as formative, instructive and pressing for knowledge and the experience of salvation.]

Comment

I commend to your reading the rest of this letter as it appears in Adam Clarke's *Memoirs*, p. 347ff. Here we understand the explicit nature of Susanna's concern for the salvation of every one of her children. It is here that all of the biblical admonitions for training and discipline take root and shape in the practical experience of a family.

Susanna was not ashamed of the gospel. In fact, she proclaimed it clearly and fully within her household. No one can doubt that her depth of concern for the salvation of her children is the point of context for her life. She deserves a place among the Hannahs (1 Samuel 1) and the Marys (Luke 2) of biblical faith. She truly understood the fullest meaning of disposal prayer and submission to Jesus Christ. Lordship was her goal in all that she did and said!

Perhaps we might learn from Susanna as we study the directness of her approach to family evangelism. How often do we search for the right techniques by which we can carefully slide the gospel into family life and discussions? How often are we devising plans for others to witness to our children through church school, vacation Bible schools, Christian schools, etc. What if we were as knowledgeable and forceful as Susanna? What if we were of one mind in regard to the

need for salvation in our homes? Susanna took seriously the biblical injunction to train up her children in God's way. (Proverbs 19:18; 22:6; Deuteronomy 31:13).

The "consciousness raising" that Susanna accomplished in her life and encourages in our lives must be followed by the practice of the gospel in our homes. As we eat the Word together, letting it be a part of every segment of our lives, then the Word of God will become what it has promised to become . . . living and active . . . full of power . . . sufficient for all of our needs. (Hebrews 4:12-13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Susanna, Counselor to the Brokenhearted and Sick

Letter to Lady Friend
August 5, 1737

Dear Madam,

To your goodness I am obliged for the kind present sent by Charles, and return many thanks, particularly to good Mrs. Norman. I heartily sympathize with the young lady in her affliction, and wish it was in my power to speak a word in season, that might alleviate the trouble of her mind, which has such an influence on the weakness of her body. I am not apprised of her particular complaints, but am apt to believe that want of faith and a firm dependence on the merits of Christ is the cause of most, if not all, her sufferings. I am very well satisfied she doth not allow herself in willful sin; and, surely, to afflict herself for mere infirmities argues weakness of faith in the merits of our Redeemer. We can never be totally freed from infirmity till we put off mortality; and to be grieved at this, is just as if a man should afflict himself that he is a man, and not an angel. It is with relation to our manifold wants and weaknesses, and the discouragements and despondencies consequent thereupon, that the blessed Jesus hath undertaken to be our great high priest, physician, advocate, and Saviour. His satisfaction related to the forfeiture of all the good we had in possession; and his intercession is with respect to our great distance from God, and unworthiness to approach him. His deep compassion supposes our misery; and his assistance, and the supplies of his grace, imply our wants, and the disadvantages we labor under. We are to be instructed, because we are ignorant; and healed, because we are sick; and disci-

plined, because so apt to wander and go astray; and succored and supported, because we are so often tempted. We know there is but one living and true God, though revealed to us under three characters — that of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In God the Father, we live, move, and have our natural being; in God the Son, as Redeemer of mankind, we have our spiritual being since the fall; and by the operation of his Holy Spirit the work of grace is begun and carried on in the soul; and there is no other name given under heaven by which men can be saved but that of the Lord Jesus.

Clarke, *Memoirs*, p. 397

[The letter continues in pressing home the mark of sin upon our lives, the need for repentance and a concrete decision for Jesus Christ.]

Comment

Susanna Wesley could well gain recognition in our time as one of the original “nouthetic counselors.” There is no doubt of a Sovereign God in her letter to a sick friend. There is no doubt of his healing power and the necessity of salvation. At the conclusion of the letter Susanna adds: “only give me leave to add one request, which is, that you would commit your soul, in trust, to Jesus Christ, as God incarnate, in a full belief that he is able and willing to save you. Do this constantly, and I am sure he will never suffer you to perish.” (Clarke, p. 399)

The “Reality Therapy” of Susanna Wesley incorporated the best of the healing words of Scripture along with the personal nature of her literary style. No one could doubt to whom she was speaking nor from whence she derived her authority. There is no “fence-sitting” in Susanna’s counsel. To her credit those who came in contact with her counsel were brought face to

face with Holy Fire and a living Jesus Christ. There were no other terms acceptable or workable!

It is this same counsel that she administered consistently within her own family. I must believe that it is the same counsel that did so much to inspire the tenacity and forthrightness so evident in John and to some extent in Charles. The dimensions of maturity and spiritual wisdom in Susanna can only be measured by the Scripture that consumed so much of her mind and heart and life!

Susanna, Profiting by Afflictions

Letter to John Wesley
July 26, 1727

It is certainly true that I have had large experience of what the world calls adverse fortune. But I have not made those improvements in piety and virtue, under the discipline of Providence, that I ought to have done; therefore I humbly conceive myself to be unfit for an assistant to another in affliction, since I have so ill performed my own duty. But blessed be God! you are at present in pretty easy circumstances, which, I thankfully acknowledge, is a great mercy to me as well as you. Yet if hereafter you should meet with troubles of various sorts, as it is probable you will in the course of your life, be it of short or long continuance, the best preparation I know of for sufferings is a regular and exact performance of present duty; for this will surely render a man pleasing to God, and put him directly under the protection of his good providence, so that no evil shall befall him, but what he will certainly be the better for it.

It is incident to all men to regard the past and the future, while the present moments pass unheeded; whereas, in truth, neither the one nor the other is of use to us any further than they put us upon improving the present time.

You did well to correct that fond desire of dying before me, since you do not know what work God may have for you to do ere you leave the world. And besides, I ought surely to have the pre-eminence in point of time, and go to rest before you. Whether you could see me die without any emotions of grief, I know not; perhaps you

could; it is what I have often desired of the children, that they would not weep at our parting, and so make death more uncomfortable than it would otherwise be to me. If you or any other of my children, were like to reap any spiritual advantage by being with me at my exit, I should be glad to have you with me. But as I have been an unprofitable servant, during the course of a long life, I have no reason to hope for so great an honor, so high a favor, as to be employed in doing our Lord any service in the article of death. It were well if you spake prophetically, and that joy and hope might have the ascendent over the other passions of my soul in that important hour. Yet I dare not presume, nor do I despair, but rather leave it to our almighty Saviour, to do with me both in life and death just what he pleases, for I have no choice.

Clarke, *Memoirs*, p. 337ff.

Comment

Living in but not of the world is the sure example that Susanna set for her family. So immersed in the truth of Scripture and in the full knowledge of the need for the gospel to be preached so that men might come to salvation, the great afflictions of her life were passed on as mere trifles.

Here she shares with the Apostle Paul the desire to remain on earth to perform her duty to God but her real desire is to be with Jesus. (Philippians 1) Susanna was a rare combination of apostolic faith and practice. When her letters are read against the background of her prayers there can be no doubt in any thinking person's mind that God greatly endowed her with intellect, compassion and faith beyond measure!

Susanna really had no time to dwell on the afflictions of the moment. They were seen as endurance

trials not to be discussed but to be dealt with by doing exactly what God calls us to do. There was no sense in which she offered counsel to spend precious hours dealing verbally with her afflictions. "The best preparation I know of for sufferings is a regular and exact performance of present duty . . ."

Susanna was fully armed with the power of God in his Word. The means of prayer and the constant affirmation to duty were her constant companions. Any effort to view her life, critically, from a segmented position will miss the genius demonstrated in her life. I am fully convinced that Susanna demonstrated the integrity, discipline and spiritual maturity that were enabling factors in the eighteenth century renewal in which God was so forcefully to use her sons, John and Charles.

Susanna, The Life of God in the Soul of Man

Letter to John Wesley

November 27, 1735.

(A few months after Samuel's death)

God is Being itself! The I Am! and therefore must necessarily be the supreme Good! He is so infinitely blessed, that every perception of his blissful presence imparts a vital gladness to the heart. Every degree of approach toward him is, in the same proportion, a degree of happiness. And I often think, were he always present to our mind, as we are present to him, there would be no pain nor sense of misery. I have long since chosen him for my only Good; my All; my pleasure, my happiness in this world, as well as in the world to come. And although I have not been so faithful to his grace as I ought to have been; yet I feel my spirit adheres to its choice, and aims daily at cleaving steadfastly unto God. Yet one thing often troubles me, that, notwithstanding I know that while we are present with the body we are absent from the Lord; notwithstanding I have no taste, no relish left for anything the world calls pleasure, yet I do not long to go home as in reason I ought to do. This often shocks me; and as I constantly pray (almost without ceasing) for thee, my son; so I beg you likewise to pray for me, that God would make me better, and take me at the best.

Your Loving Mother,
Susanna Wesley
Clarke, *Memoirs*, p. 341ff.

Comment

Henry Scougal, a Scottish Anglican Pastor serv-

ing a Presbyterian Church, wrote a letter of spiritual counsel to a friend in the year 1677. The intention of the letter was to stimulate a sincere interest in the vital, inward feeling of religion as opposed to the legalism prevalent in a more formal religious experience. True religion he says is not in the form of religion but in the union of the soul with God, Christ literally formed in us.

Susanna Wesley read this book, *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*, and there is a strong tradition that indicates she was influential in securing its effect in both John and Charles' lives. John Wesley was so taken by the book that he abridged the original edition and had it printed no less than seven times for distribution. The Wesleys passed this book on to George Whitefield who found it to be of great inspiration to his ministry.

In Scougal's book (recently republished by Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1976) one is left with a deep sense of the disposal of a man's soul before the throne of Grace. It is a must reading for any who would come to understand the Wesleys and the impact of Susanna upon the eighteenth century renewal. You will see much of Scougal in the prayers of Susanna.

Susanna, Death is Swallowed

Up in Victory

I Corinthians 15:54

Friday, July 23, 1742

About three in the afternoon I went to my mother and found her change was near. I sat down on the bed side. She was in her last conflict; unable to speak, but I believe quite sensible. Her look was calm and serene, and her eyes fixed upward, while we commended her soul to God. From three to four, the silver cord was loosing, and the wheel breaking at the cistern; and then without any struggle, or sigh, or groan, the soul was set at liberty. We stood round the bed, and fulfilled her last request, uttered a little before she lost her speech: "Children, as soon as I am released, sing a psalm of praise to God."

Journal, p. 384

Sunday, August 1, 1742

Almost an innumerable company of people being gathered together, about five in the afternoon, I committed to the earth the body of my mother, to sleep with her fathers. The portion of Scripture from which I afterwards spoke was, "I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." It was one of the most solemn assemblies I ever saw, or expect to see on this side of

eternity.

We set up a plain stone at the head of her grave, inscribed with the following words:

*Here Lies The Body
of
MRS. SUSANNAH WESLEY,
The Youngest and Last Surviving Daughter of
Dr. Samuel Annesley*

*In sure and steadfast hope to rise
And claim her mansion in the skies,
A Christian here her flesh laid down,
The cross exchanging for a crown.*

*True daughter of affliction, she,
Inured to pain and misery,
Mourn'd a long night of griefs and fears,
A legal night of seventy years.*

*The Father then revel'd his Son,
Him in the broken bread made known:
She knew and felt her sins forgiven,
And found the earnest of her heaven.*

*Meet for the fellowship above,
She heard the call, "Arise, my love!"
"I come," her dying looks replied,
And lamb-like, as her Lord, she died.*

Later another stone was set in place of the one above:

*Here lies the body of
MRS. SUSANNAH WESLEY,
Widow of the Rev. Samuel Wesley, M.A.,
(late Rector of Epworth, in Lincolnshire,)
who died July 23, 1742
Aged 73 years.*

*She was the youngest Daughter of the
Rev. Samuel Annesley, D.D., ejected by the Act*

*of Uniformity from the Rectory of St. Gile's,
Cripplegate, Aug. 24, 1662.*

*She was the Mother of nineteen Children,
of whom the most eminent were the
REV. JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY;
the former of whom was under God the
Founder of the Societies of the People
called Methodists.*

*In sure and certain hope to rise,
And claim her mansion in the skies,
A Christian here her flesh laid down,
The cross exchanging for a crown.*

Journal, p. 384.

Comment

Adam Clarke concludes his summary of Susanna's life with these words:

I have traced her life with much pleasure, and received from it much instruction; and when I have seen her repeatedly grappling with gigantic adversities, I have adored the grace of God that was in her, and have not been able to repress my tears. I have been acquainted with many pious females; I have read the lives of several others, and composed memoirs of a few; but such a woman, take her for all in all, I have not heard of, I have not read of, nor with her equal have I been acquainted. Such a one Solomon has described in the last chapter of his Proverbs; and to her I can apply the summed-up character of his accomplished housewife: Many daughters have done virtuously; but Susannah Wesley has excelled them all.

Memoirs, p. 420.

Introduction to the Prayers of Susanna Wesley

The following prayers of Susanna Wesley were published in a small book, *The Prayers of Susanna Wesley*, edited by Mr. W. L. Doughty, and published by the Philosophical Library in 1956. Unfortunately, that little volume of praise is now out of print and therefore unavailable to the majority of persons interested in Wesleyan foundations.

Originally, these prayers, as edited by Mr. Doughty, were collected from private papers of John Wesley. A number of them were originally collected by an anonymous contributor to *The Wesley Banner* and published under the title: "Journal of Mrs. Susanna Wesley" and added to the collection already published by Dr. Adam Clarke in his *Memoirs of the Wesley Family*, 1848. [Recently reprinted by VanHooser Publications, P.O. Box 856, Taylors, South Carolina 29687, 1976.]

I am entirely indebted to Mr. Doughty and the Philosophical Library for the reproduction of the prayers. It is my sincere hope that God will bless those who use them, both in their spiritual growth and daily experience of the living God who so graciously inspired their writing in the mind and heart of Susanna Wesley.

In the original collection, Mr. Doughty included a number of hymns suitable for the context of each prayer. I have omitted these and inserted Scripture references for the use of the reader in praying the prayers as a devotional guide.

Plea for Growth in Grace

Help me, Lord,

to remember that religion is not to be confined to the church, or closet, nor exercised only in prayer and meditation, but that everywhere I am in Thy presence. So may my every word and action have a moral content.

As defects and infirmities betray themselves in the daily accidents and common conversations of life, grant me Thy grace, O Lord, that I may watch over, regulate and govern them. Enable me so to know myself and those with whom I have to do, that I may conform to the precepts of the Gospel and train myself to those rules of wisdom and virtue of which I am capable.

Help me to discern the proper season and the just occasion of every virtue, and then to apply myself to attain it, by exercising it in those beneficent activities which, for want of due reflection, may not seem of any great importance.

May all the happenings of my life prove useful and beneficial to me. May all things instruct me and afford me an opportunity of exercising some virtue and daily learning and growing toward Thy likeness, let the world go which way it will. Amen.

Ephesians 4

Seeking Kingdom Consciousness

Help me, O God,

to fortify my mind with patience, submission and renewed repentance, that I may be assured of Divine succours when I most need them.

Enable me

to live so as to deserve a friend, and if I never have one on earth, be Thou my friend, for in having Thee I shall have all that is dear and valuable in friendship. May I learn by practice to love Thee above all things, that so I may be out of the power of the world and my earthly circumstances give me no uneasiness.

I would have wealth to be Thy favour, with all the blessed consequences attending it; the virtues of Thy Holy Spirit, purifying my mind, exalting my nature to the dignity of a Divine resemblance, teaching me to undervalue whatever a mistaken world calls good, as unnecessary or a hindrance to that spiritual and eternal good which I would prize above all others.

Though a good name is as precious ointment, yet I remember that I have offered up mine unto Thee, my God, and have resolved never to make my reputation or the esteem of man the end of any of my actions, where Thy glory is not concerned. So I trust Thee with the conduct of my soul, committing myself to Thee in ways of well-doing, praying that Thou wilt not suffer me to do anything that would reasonably reflect upon my Christian profession, but enable me to condemn the reputation of any quality or virtue that terminates in myself. Help me, O Lord to do well. Amen.

Matthew 6:33

John 11:1-44

Life Investment

Be pleased, O God,

to grant unto me that great freedom of mind that will enable me to follow and attend on Jesus with a pure heart to be ever prepared and disposed to observe His example and obey His precepts.

And do thou further help me

to achieve that consummate prudence, great purity, great separation from the world, much liberty and a firm and steadfast faith in the Lord Jesus that will enable me to manage the common affairs of life in such wise as not to misemploy or neglect the improvement of my talents; to be industrious without covetousness; diligent without anxiety; as exact in each punctilio of action as if success were dependent upon it, and yet so resigned as to leave all events to Thee and still attributing to Thee the praise of every good work. Amen.

Ecclesiastes 11:1-8

Hebrews 11

Proverbs 3:5

The Lord's Purpose Established

I have found, O God,

that my peace and happiness depend much on my own opinion of myself and not that of others.

It is inward sentiments I have of myself that raise or deject me; and my mind can no more be pleased with any sensation but its own that the body can be gratified by the relishes of another palate.

Save me from leading an imaginary life in the ideas of others, and so to be eager and forward in showing myself to the world.

Forbid that I should retain, improve and adorn this fictitious being, while stupidly neglecting the true. Help me not to contend with men's interests, prejudices and passions, that rarely admit of a calm dispute, when it can innocently be avoided.

May I be so far a lover of myself as to prefer the peace and tranquillity of my own mind before that of others, and if, after doing all that I can to make others happy, they yet remain obstinately bent to follow those ways that lead to misery, I leave them to Thy mercy. Amen.

Proverbs 19:21

John 3:16; 13:34; 6:63

Matthew 22:34-40

Thou Didst Form My Inward Parts

Almighty God,

I long for a just sense of Thee as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

After so many years of inquiry, so long reading and so much thinking, Thy boundless essence appears more inexplicable, the perfection of Thy glory more bright and inaccessible. Thy sublimity transcends all thought; words cannot express what is so far above their nature; therefore, the simplest and plainest are the best.

I cannot do Thee the justice that I would. I cannot, by the utmost force and energy of all my powers, attain to the proper knowledge of Thine essence, Thine essential glory, wherein all perfections centre. Yet enable me to discover the emanations of that glory; the manifestations it hath made or maketh of itself, in the exercise of Thy Divine perfections, in the creation of the world, the redemption and regeneration of our human nature and the government of the world, particularly in respect to mankind. Amen.

Psalm 139

To Make All Men See

Almighty God,

Inasmuch as I cannot form right apprehensions of Thee by the dim light of nature, I thank Thee because Thou, in Thy mercy and knowing that the happiness of man cannot be secured without that knowledge, hast condescended to reveal that which reason is too weak to discover.

Thou has directed me and all men to search and find Thee as Thou art in Jesus Christ, in whom dwelling the fullness of thy Godhead bodily. For me to know our Lord only as a man is to learn that I have done, and daily do, many things contrary to Thy Divine nature and the dictates of my own reason, which must necessarily lead me to depart.

But to behold Thee in Jesus Christ, reconciling the world unto Thyself:

by faith to see Thee, the infinite, all-glorious Being, assuming the character of a Saviour,

a repairer of the lapses and healer of the diseases and miseries of mankind, penetrates my soul.

It is something my heart feels and labours under, but my tongue cannot express.

I adore thee, O God! I adore! Amen.

Ephesians 3:7-9
John 1:1-16; 1:30
Colossians 2:9-10

The Promise of Suffering

Forbid O Lord,

*that I should take upon myself the profession of a Christian,
without first considering the end of such a profession,
without weighing the difficulties I must encounter in
order to obtain that end;*

*the number and strength of my enemies, what my
powers are, what succours I may expect and rely upon.*

*The end I seek is Thy glory, O God, and my happiness; not
the happiness of the body, but of the mind, which is in-
capable of true happiness till renewed and sanctified, till
restored to its native liberty, till recovered from its lapse and
in all things made comformable to Thy will and Thy laws. So
may happiness and purity hold just proportion to each
other.*

*The difficulties are many and enemies very powerful. But our
Saviour has said: "Whosoever will come after me, let him
deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."*

*I am my own worst enemy. Grant me Thy grace, O Lord!
Amen.*

Romans 5:3-4
Luke 14:27-33
Mark 8:31; 9:1

All Things Work Together

I thank thee, O God,

for the relief and satisfaction of mind that come with the firm assurance that Thou does govern the world; for the patience and resignation to Thy providence that are afforded as I reflect that even the tumultuous and irregular actions of sinful men are, nevertheless, under Thy direction who are wise, good and omnipotent, and has promised to make all things work together for good to them that love Thee.

Since I must expect to meet with many difficulties, much opposition, many disappointments and daily trials of faith and patience in my passage through this world, may it be my highest wisdom to disengage my affections as much as I lawfully may from all transitory, temporal enjoyments, and to fix them on those more rational and spiritual pleasures which we are to enjoy when we enter upon our state of immortality; to endeavour to secure eternal happiness by using my utmost endeavours to gain a treasure that lies beyond the reach of all the storms and tempests of this world; a kingdom that cannot be shaken by faction, cannot be disturbed by ill men; where there are no parties or separate interests to engage or divide men's affections, but all shall most perfectly agree to make up a Divine harmony of praise and adoration. Amen.

Hebrews 12:1-7

Romans 8:28-29

Matthew 6:19-21

Luke 12:13-21

The Unchanging Lord

O God,

I find it most difficult to preserve a devout and serious temper of mind in the midst of much worldly business. Were I permitted to choose a state of life, or positively to ask of Thee anything in this world, I would humbly choose and beg that I might be placed in such a station wherein I might have daily bread with moderate care and that I might have more leisure to retire from the world without injuring those dependent upon me.

Yet I do not know whether such a state of life would really be the best for me; nor am I assured that if I had more leisure I should be more zealously devoted to Thee and serve Thee better than now. Therefore, O Lord, show me that it is undoubtedly best to keep my mind in habitual submission and resignation to Thee, who are infinitely, incomprehensibly wise and good; who canst not possibly err, but dost certainly know what is best for Thy children, and how and where to fix the bounds of their habitation; who has given to us Thy word, that all things shall work together for good to those that love Thee. May that word support and calm my mind in all adverse or uneasy circumstances of life. Enable me to take courage and to suffer not my mind to faint or grow weary, knowing that Thou, my God, art no hard master, and though it may seem best to Thine infinite wisdom to determine me to such a station as will necessarily involve me in much business and thus daily exercise my faith and patience, yet enable me to rest in the assurance that all things shall at last have a happy issue, if my heart be but sincerely devoted to Thee. Amen.

Malachi 3:6

1 Peter 2:22; 4:12-19; 5:7-11

Isaiah 46

Hebrews 4:15

Peace Like a River

Help me, O Lord,

to make a true use of all disappointments and calamities in this life, in such wise that they may unite my heart more closely with Thee.

Cause them to separate my affections from worldly things and inspire my soul with more vigour in the pursuit of true happiness.

Until this temper of mind be attained I can never enjoy any settled peace, much less a calm serenity.

Thou only, O God,

canst satisfy my immortal soul and bestow those spiritual pleasures which alone are proper to its nature.

Grant me grace to stay and center my soul in Thee; to confine its desires, hopes and expectations of happiness to Thee alone; calmly to attend to the dispensations of Thy providence and to have a firm, habitual resignation to Thy will.

Enable me to love thee, my God,

with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my strength; so to love Thee as to desire Thee; so to desire Thee as to be uneasy without Thee, without Thy favour, without some such resemblance to Thee as my nature in this imperfect state can bear. Amen.

Isaiah 48:18

2 Corinthians 10:1-13

The Mind of Christ

I thank thee, O God,

for all effusions of Thy Divine Spirit that illuminate my mind, whereby I have a more clear perception of Thee and of spiritual things; that strengthen my soul and raise my affections.

Help me at such times to beware; to keep a stronger guard upon myself, lest by unfaithfulness to Thy good Spirit I provoke Thee to withdraw Thine influences and so leave me in a state of uncomfortable darkness.

Save me from that inequality of temper which comes through my own inadvertence, and a presumption of my own strength which would render me careless of improving the graces of life and unmindful of the many temptations to which I am hourly exposed and which, by reason of their smallness, I am apt to despise, when, in truth, these lesser but numerous temptations are the greater trials of our virtue.

Forbid that I should entertain too high a conceit of myself, especially when moving amongst people that are licentious in their lives and observe no rule in their actions, lest I should proclaim a superior holiness, so turning Thy grace into wantonness and forgetting that it is Thou who hast made me thus to differ. To whom be glory! Amen.

Philippians 2:5-11

God Is Our Sufficiency

Almighty God,

what an exceeding condescension is it for Thy Holy Spirit at any time to vouch assistance to a creature worthless as I am!

Give me grace to be careful lest at any time I should grieve Thee and provoke Thee to depart from me.

May I not despise or neglect the grace by which alone I stand!

By that grace may my mind be purified from all that would offend Thee; be kept calm and composed and, as much as possible, separate from the world.

I have found that the still, small voice can be heard amongst the thunder and noise of tumulting passions. Keep, then, my mind in a temper for recollection.

Be pleased, often in the day, to call it in from outward objects, lest it wander into forbidden paths.

Help me to do my duty and to make use of all the means for obtaining Divine grace which Thou dost afford me.

I throw myself upon Thy Divine goodness for success and firmly rely on the merit of Christ Jesus to supply my deficiencies. Amen.

2 Corinthians 3:5

Jeremiah 33:8

Luke 6:37-45

Delight in Meditation

Enable me, O God,

to collect and compose my thoughts before an immediate approach to Thee in prayer.

May I be careful to have my mind in order when I take upon myself the honour to speak to the Sovereign Lord of the Universe, remembering that upon the temper of my soul depends, in very great measure, my success.

*Thou art infinitely too great to be trifled with;
too wise to be imposed on by a mock devotion
and dost abhor a sacrifice without a heart.*

Help me to entertain an habitual sense of Thy perfections, as an admirable help against cold and formal performances.

Save me from engaging in rash and precipitate prayers and from abrupt breaking away to follow business or pleasure as though I had never prayed. Amen.

**Psalm 1:2
Matthew 6:1-21**

God Gives What We Can Handle

Almighty God,

inasmuch as we receive knowledge of things about us by our senses, and we cannot wholly prevent the strong impressions that sensual objects are wont to make upon the mind,

help me to maintain the superiority of my mind over matter, lest it be corrupted by a too close adherence to sensible things.

Give me power to preserve the government of reason and not suffer passions to gain the ascendancy over me.

Very heartily and earnestly do I pray unto Thee, O God, for strength to govern and regulate my passions. It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps, therefore I humbly implore Thee to steer my soul by Thy Holy Spirit through all the intricate scenes of human life. I depend not on my own strength or wisdom, but only on Thine infinite wisdom, believing that Thou wilt guide me by Thy counsel and at last conduct me to Thy glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Strength Perfected in Weakness

Almighty God,

I thank Thee because day after day has verified the truth of our Saviour's words: "Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof."

Through the weakness and corruption of human nature and the unavoidable business of my station in life; in many unforeseen accidents and unexpected company; in cross occurrences, with abundance of other things incident to human life, I find occasion given to me daily to exercise virtues of one kind or another.

One day calls me to use justice and patience, and another prudence, temperance and charity in forgiving injuries.

I draw near unto Thee, the supreme fountain of virtue, for grace in the perplexed affairs of life, and thank Thee for every occasion on which I have found Thy strength to be made perfect in weakness; and I thank Thee that Thou art truth itself and that all Thy promises are yea and amen, through Jesus Christ, Thy Mediator. Amen.

2 Corinthians 12:9; 1:17-20

Matthew 6:34; 5:37

John 7:37-39

Philippians 4:19

Knowing Jesus Christ

I thank thee, O God,

because I know that religion does not mean melancholy and moroseness, tending only to destroy the comforts of our environment.

But I have learned that all things in the world, where religion is wanting, cannot possibly make men happy or easy to themselves or others.

Whatever I enjoy of the good things of this life is attained with so much vanity and vexation of spirit that my happiness, even in this world, depends entirely on Thy favour.

When I am peevish and morose, it is not because of religion, but of my want of it. Help me not to be discouraged by my own failures, nor to spend too much time in thinking of them, remembering that perfection is my Saviour's endowment and sincerity is mine.

Help me with firm faith to rely on His merits, joined with my sincere endeavour to obey Thy whole will. Amen.

Matthew 21:16

Philippians 3:8-16

Confession

*I have much need of humbling myself before thee,
the great and holy God, because of the sins that I am daily
guilty of in thought, word and deed against Thy Divine Ma-
jesty.*

*Help me to overcome habitual levity in my thoughts and to
shun vain and impure thoughts which, though they do not
take up their abode in my mind for any long continuance,
yet, in their passing through, often leave a tincture of im-
purity.*

*Enable me to keep my heart with all diligence, my thoughts
and affections, for out of them are the issues of life.*

How oft have I offended in this kind!

*Cleanse Thou me from secret faults, for out of the abun-
dance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*

*Help me to guard against vain and unnecessary words, and
to speak of Thee, my God, with that reverence, that humil-
ity, that gravity that I ought. Amen.*

Psalm 51
Ezra 9

The Holiness of God

Almighty God, the high and lofty one that inhabitest eternity, the Creator of the universe, I would speak magnificently and more worthily of Thee.

Thou art immense, infinitely perfect mind. Holiness is Thy essence, the eternal, infinite rectitude of Thy nature. Thou are absolutely separated from all moral imperfection; there is no contrariety or contradiction in Thee, no variableness neither shadow of turning.

Thou art power, wisdom, justice, goodness, truth.

Thou art perfection of being, which comprehends all and infinitely more than we can possibly conceive.

Thou art essential glory, nor can Thy glory admit of excess or diminution by any act of Thy creatures. It is an impropriety of speech to say we glorify Thy name, for it is the exercise of Thy mercy and goodness upon man that reflects Thy glory on these perfections. Amen.

Ephesians 1:1-14

1 Peter 2:9-10

Take Up Your Cross

I thank thee, O God,

for the abundant reason that I have to adore, to praise, to magnify Thy goodness and love in sending Thy Son into the world to die for sinners.

What reason have I to praise and adore and love that Saviour who suffered so much to redeem me!

What sentiments of gratitude should I conceive for such boundless charity to souls!

Help me gladly and cheerfully to take up my cross for him who suffered death upon the Cross for me.

Enable me to praise and adore the blessed Spirit, who sanctifies and illumines the mind; who co-operates with the means of grace; who condescends to visit and assist and refresh my soul by His powerful influences.

Glory be to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, joint Authors of my salvation! Amen.

Matthew 28:16-20

Yielding to the Shepherd

*How uneasy is my mind, O God,
when either company, business or anything else diverts it
from its usual course.*

*I praise Thee for suffering me to meet with no more interrup-
tion and am thankful for daily opportunities and common
mercies that are often unregarded.*

*Forgive me and enable me to see that the more common the
mercy the more valuable it is. For Thy repeated acts of
goodness I render repeated acknowledgments and praise.*

*I thank Thee because, when I have been for some time inter-
rupted in my work and my thoughts of Thee have been
diverted, I have found how pleasing it is to my mind to feel
the motions of Thy Spirit quickening me and exciting me to
return.*

*How much more delightful is it to find a constant sense of
Thy presence in my soul . . .*

*Not thankful when it pleaseth me,
As if thy blessing had spare days
But such a heart, whose pulse may be
Thy Praise! (G. Herbert, Gratefulness)*

*This, O Lord, the temper of a Christian, is what I chiefly
desire to get and keep. I do not despair, because with Thee
all things are possible. To Thee, my God, be glory! Amen.*

Psalm 23

John 10

Christ in Me

I praise thee, O God,

for any ability to serve Thee and for enabling me to perform relative duties, which are a great part of natural and revealed religion.

I am apt to be discouraged by the constant sense of my infirmities, but Thou, O God, wilt not despise the day of small things.

It is Thy grace that makes me what I am, that keeps me to stated times of devotion and that in any measure preserves me from total apostacy.

I grant that my performances are mean and contemptible and unworthy of Thine acceptance, yet, if Thou didst utterly reject them, Thou wouldest not so often give me grace to repent and enable me to rejoice in any little victory which I get over my daily infirmities.

I would not willingly offend Thee, and I therefore rely upon the merits of my Saviour and never despair of mercy. Amen.

Luke 16:1-13

Matthew 13:32

Every Thought Captive

I praise thee, O God,

for illuminating my mind and for enabling me to prove demonstratively that Thy wisdom is as infinite as Thy power.

Help me to use these discoveries to praise and love and obey, and may I be exceedingly careful that my affections keep pace with my knowledge. Show me that if I study the Divine perfections as matter of mere speculation, my acquisitions of knowledge will but enhance my guilt.

Help me to know, that I may adore and love. As I am now more rationally persuaded that Thou art infinitely wise, so may I learn by this knowledge to practise a more hearty and universal subjection to Thee; more cheerfully to bow before the order of Thy providence; to submit my reason so far to my faith as not to doubt or scruple those points of faith which are mysterious to me through the weakness of my understanding. May I adore the mystery I cannot comprehend.

Help me to be not too curious in prying into those secret things that are known only to Thee, O God, nor too rash in censuring what I do not understand. May I not perplex myself about those methods of providence that seem to me involved and intricate, but resolve them into Thine infinite wisdom, who knowest the spirits of all flesh and dost best understand how to govern those souls Thou hast created. We are of yesterday and know nothing. But Thy boundless mind comprehends, at one view, all things, past, present and future, and as Thou dost see all things, Thou dost best understand what is good and proper for each individual and for men, with relation to both worlds. So deal with me, O My God. Amen.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

1 Corinthians 13

Covenant of Love

Almighty God,

I have found that to know Thee only as a philosopher; to have the most sublime and curious speculations concerning Thy essence, Thine attributes, Thy providence; to be able to demonstrate Thy being from all or any of the works of nature and to discourse with the greatest elegancy and propriety of words of Thine existence or operations, will avail me nothing, unless at the same time I know Thee experimentally;

unless my heart perceive and know Thee to be its supreme good, its only happiness;

unless my soul feel and acknowledge that she can find no repose, no peace, no joy, but in loving and being beloved by Thee;

and does accordingly rest in Thee as the center of her being, the fountain of her pleasure, the origin of all virtue and goodness, her light, her life, her strength, her all;

everything she wants or wishes in this world and forever.

Thus let me ever know Thee, O God! I neither despise nor neglect the light of reason, nor that knowledge of thee which may be collected from this goodly system of created things, but this speculative knowledge is not the knowledge I want and wish for above all other. Teach me Thy way, O Lord! Amen.

Deuteronomy 7:6-11

John 14

Galatians 5:17-23

Illuminating Power of the Holy Spirit

Morning and evening I commit my soul to Jesus Christ, the saviour of the world.

Enable me, O God, to observe what He saith unto me:

resolutely to obey His precepts and endeavour to follow His example in those things wherein He is exhibited to us as a pattern for our imitation.

Make plain to me that no circumstance nor time of life can occur but I may find something either spoken by our Lord Himself or by His Spirit in the prophets or apostles that will direct my conduct, if I am but faithful to Thee and my own soul. Amen.

John 16:12-15

John 1:29

John 6:35, 53

John 14:6-7

God Cares

Be with me, O God,

in a time of deep adversity, which is apt to affect my mind too much and to dispose to anxious, doubtful, and unbelieving thoughts.

May I give way to no direct murmurings, no repinings at the prosperity of others, no harsh reflections on Providence, but may I maintain a constant acknowledgment of Thy justice and goodness. Save me from thinking severely or unjustly of others; from being too much dejected or disposed to peevishness, covetousness, or negligence in affairs; from working too much or too little.

Forbid that I should ever wholly omit to implore Thy Divine blessing and assistance in honest prospects and endeavours, or be too solicitous and earnest in prayer for external blessings.

May no slight access of trouble have power to ruffle my temper, and to indispose or distract my mind in my addresses to Heaven, in reading meditation or any other spiritual exercise.

I would ever lay to heart the words of our Lord: "Be careful (anxiously) for nothing. Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for the morrow." Amen.

1 Peter 5:7-11

Job 26

The Discipline of Love

I have found, O God,

that the Christian religion is of so complicated a nature that I must give myself entirely to its discipline, if I would steadfastly adhere to any of its precepts.

All virtues are closely bound together, and I find that in breaking but one link of the golden chain I spoil the whole contesture.

*So do virtues mutually strengthen and assist virtues;
 temperance and chastity;
 fortitude and truth;
 humility and patience;
 divine charity and charity toward man.*

All virtues, of what denomination soever, reciprocally cherish and invigorate one another.

Grant me grace, O Lord, to be wholly a Christian. Amen.

Hebrews 12:7-11

Ephesians 6:1-4

Proverbs 19:8; 23:13

The Power of God Experienced

I know, O God,

that philosophy and morality are not sufficient to restrain me from those sins that the constitution of the body and the circumstances of life dispose me to.

I find nature and appetite to be too hard for their precepts. They, indeed, teach me caution and give a check to vicious inclinations in public, but they do not carry me to an inward and universal purity.

This I seek to be effected by the power of religion, directing me to a serious application to Thee, my God, in prayer.

So may I feel a disengagement from the impressions that sensual objects are wont to make on my mind, and an inward strength and disposition to resist them.

Accordingly I would feel, as all good men have felt upon their frequent application to Thee in prayer, a freedom from those ill impressions that formerly subdued me; an inward love to virtue and true goodness; an easiness and delight in all the parts of holiness that are fed and cherished in me by a seriousness in prayer. Grant this grace to me, O God. Amen.

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

1 Thessalonians 1

2 Timothy 3:1-9

Woe Is Me! For I Am Lost

My mind, O God,

is naturally so corrupted and all the powers thereof so weakened that I cannot possibly aspire vigorously to Thee, or have any clear perception of spiritual things without Thine assistance.

May the same almighty power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead raise my soul from the death of sin to a life of holiness.

To know Thee experimentally is altogether supernatural and what I can never attain to but by the merits and intercession of Jesus Christ.

By virtue of what He has done and suffered and is now doing in heaven for me and all men, may I obtain Thy Holy Spirit, the best instructor, the most powerful teacher I can possibly have, and without whose agency all other means of grace would be ineffectual.

May He assist and strengthen my soul, as it is sincere and hearty in its endeavours to avoid any evil and to perform any good!

May the same Holy Spirit enable me to have a good desire, a fervent aspiration toward Thee, my God, that shall not pass unregarded. Amen.

Isaiah 6

1 Peter 3

Luke 24:1-12

All Things Working Together

*I give thee praise, O God,
for a well-spent day.*

*But I am yet unsatisfied, because I do not enjoy enough of
Thee.*

*I would have my soul more closely united to Thee by faith
and love.*

I would love Thee above all things.

Thou, who hast made me, knowest my desires, my expectations. My joys all center in Thee and it is Thou Thyself that I desire; it is Thy favour, Thine acceptance, the communications of Thy grace that I earnestly wish for, more than anything in the world.

I rejoice in Thine essential glory and blessedness. I rejoice in my relation to Thee, who art my Father, My Lord and my God.

I rejoice that Thou hast power over me and that I desire to live in subjection to Thee.

I thank Thee that Thou hast brought me so far. I will beware of despairing of Thy mercy for the time which is to come, and will give Thee the glory of Thy free grace. Amen.

Psalm 18
Romans 8

The Whole Armor of God

I thank thee, O God,

because in the whole course of my life there have been more mercies than afflictions and more pleasure than pain.

Though I have suffered pain and bodily infirmities, I have likewise enjoyed great intervals of rest and ease.

But all my sufferings, by the admirable management of Thine omnipotent goodness, have concurred to promote my spiritual and eternal good.

If, owing to the perverseness of my own will, my frequent lapses into present things and my unfaithfulness to Thy good Spirit, I have failed to reap the advantage of life's adversities which I might have done, I thank Thee because, notwithstanding all my prevarications and all the stupid opposition I have made, Thou hast never totally abandoned me.

Glory be to Thee, O Lord! Amen.

**Ephesians 6:10-13
Philippians 4:10-20**

Peter, Do You Love Me?

Almighty God,

if to esteem and have the highest reverence for Thee; if constantly and sincerely to acknowledge Thee, the supreme, the only desirable good, be to love Thee — I do love Thee!

If comparatively to despise and undervalue all the world contains which is esteemed great, fair, or good; if earnestly and constantly to desire Thee, Thy favour, Thine acceptance, Thyself, rather than any or all things Thou has created, be to love Thee — I do love Thee!

If to rejoice in Thine essential majesty and glory; if to feel a vital joy overspread and cheer my heart at each perception of Thy blessedness, at every thought that Thou art God and that all things are in Thy power; that there is none superior or equal to Thee, be to Love Thee — I do love Thee. Amen.

John 21:15-19

Before All Things

Deliver me, O God,

from a vain and irreligious mind, that, engrossed in the things of the world, fails to note the withdrawal of vital influences and becomes insensible to the grace and comfort of Thy Holy Spirit.

Enable me

to love Thee above all things;

to have a higher estimation of Thee than of any other and of all things that Thou hast created.

May I be incapable of rest or satisfaction of mind under a sense of Thy displeasure!

Help me to clear accounts with Thee, that I may then fully use the innocent enjoyments of life. Amen.

Colossians 1:15-29

Answered Prayer

*Thou, O Lord,
hast called us to watch and pray.*

*Therefore, whatever may be the sin against which I pray,
make me careful to watch against it
and so have reason to expect that my prayer will be
answered.*

*In order to perform this duty aright,
grant me grace to preserve a sober,
equal temper,
sincerity to pray for Thine assistance,
remembering also that sobriety and equality of mind consist
in freedom from all perturbation. Amen.*

Luke 11:1-13

Integrity of Service

*Let it be my great care, O God,
to have special regard to justice and charity,
to preserve the principles of faith inviolate,
and in all cases to perform present duty with the
greatest exactness and integrity.*

*And whenever crosses or troubles are met without,
may all be well within,
and the consciousness of my own innocence be an
admirable preservative against all exterior
calamities!*

*So grant that it may not be in the power of any to rob me of
that peace which results from a firm trust in Thee, through
the merits of our blessed Saviour, to whom, with Thee and
the Sacred Spirit, be all glory! Amen.*

Isaiah 61:1-3
1 Samuel 1:1-20

Watching Our Words

*Enable me, O God,
to keep a due regard over my words,
that I may habitually speak nothing but what is true on
all occasions.*

*Show me what a high offence it is against the God of Truth
to speak falsely, either through design or inadvertence.*

*In telling any story or relating past actions may I
be careful to speak deliberately and calmly,
avoiding immoderate mirth or scornful laughter on
the one hand and uncharitableness and excessive
anger on the other,*

lest invention supply the defect of my memory.

*May I ever remember that I am in the presence of the great
and holy God, and that every sin is a contradiction and of-
fence to some divine attribute, and that lying is opposite and
offensive to Thy truth. Amen.*

James 3

Constant Presence

Almighty God,

*whom my reason declares to be the Author of my being and
from whom we derive all things necessary for my support,
enable me to practise an unfeigned subjection
of myself toward Thee.*

*Save me from the want of consideration and advertence
to these first principles of religion.*

*May I be careful to maintain a constant,
habitual sense of Thee in my mind;
to live and act as in Thy presence;
To think often of Thy power, wisdom, goodness
justice, truth and above all,
of Thine infinite purity,*

*that it may be a check upon my mind and the best preser-
vative against all temptations. Amen.*

*Revelation 1
John 1:1-6*

Pray in All Things

I thank Thee, O Lord,

because never once in my life have I been unheard in what I feared, when I have approached Thee in a full sense of my own impotence of mind, with humility and sincerity to implore Thy divine assistance.

I set to my seal that Thou art true, since I have ever found Thee so.

Forbid that I should venture upon any business without first begging Thy direction and assistance.

So do Thou set a check upon my mind when I would do anything that I know to be unlawful or dubious, and encourage me with hopes of success in my lawful undertakings. Amen.

Philippians 4

1 John 4

Obedience

*My God and Father,
though often interrupted by bodily infirmities,
grant me patience and submission,
remembering that obedience is better than sacrifice.*

*I thank Thee for my being and preservation,
my food and raiment,
but chiefly for what is infinitely more than all we can
receive of temporal blessings,*

*in that Thou has sent Thine only Son into the world to save
sinners, and for this one infinite and inestimable mercy I
would praise and adore Thee to all eternity. Amen.*

Matthew 12

Joy in the Morning

*I thank Thee, O God,
for the peculiar joy which comes with peace of conscience
and for the pleasure and satisfaction of soul when it is
strengthened by Thy grace to perform the several duties of
life.*

*Help me, in the extraordinary occurrences of life, to keep my
mind from being too warm and from speaking too eagerly.*

*I trust Thee with all events and beg Thy blessing upon my
honest endeavours. Do Thou help me to guard my mind this
day and inspire me with devotion in singing Thy praise.
Amen.*

Psalm 30:5

1 Chronicles 16:34

Psalm 36:7

Be Still and Know

Almighty God,

*I cannot possibly aspire vigorously toward Thee
or have any clear perception of spiritual things
without the assistance of Thy grace.*

*Only the same almighty power that raised Jesus Christ
from the dead can raise this soul of mine
from the death of sin to a life of holiness.*

*I do not question that power and I believe that
these desires proceed from Thee.*

Give me faith and patience.

*Help me to wait for Thine enabling grace
without discouragement,
remembering the words of our Savior,*

that men ought always to pray and not to faint. Amen.

Psalm 46:10

Romans 12:9-21

Luke 18:1

References

- Butler, Rev. D. *John Wesley and George Whitefield in Scotland*. New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1899.
- Clarke, Adam. *Memoirs of the Wesley Family*. New York: Lane & Tippet, 1848. [New edition by Van Hooser Publications, Taylors, South Carolina, 1976.]
- Doughty, W. L. *The Prayers of Susanna Wesley*. New York: The Philosophical Library, Inc., 1956.
- Maser, Frederick E. *Susanna Wesley*. Lake Junaluska, North Carolina: Commission on Archives and History, The United Methodist Church, 1976.
- Scougal, Henry. *The Life of God in The Soul of Man*. edited by Winthrop S. Hudson, Minneapolis: Dimension Books, 1976.
- Sauer, Charles A. *A Pocket Story of John Wesley*. Nashville: Tidings, 1967.
- Tuttle, Robert G. Jr. *John Wesley, His Life and Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978.
- Vickers, John A. *John Wesley Founder of Methodism*. Loughborough: Ladybird Books Ltd., 1977.
- Works of John Wesley*. (Authorized edition) Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House. 14 Vols.

SALE PRICE
COKESBURY

DONALD L. KLINE is pastor of Hudson United Methodist Church, Hudson, Ohio. His education has included Ohio Wesleyan University, Baldwin-Wallace College, Drew Theological Seminary, and Westminster Theological Seminary, Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia. Rev. Kline has served pastorates in Cleveland and Youngstown, Ohio, and is a member of the Akron District Committee on Missions.



SUSANNA WESLEY: God's Catalyst for Revival is not a biography or a devotional book, though it contains elements of both. **SUSANNA WESLEY** allows this mother of nineteen children to speak for herself on such topics as God's forgiveness, educating and disciplining children, preaching, prayer, trust in God, profiting by afflictions. Donald Kline has assembled passages from the letters of Susanna Wesley as well as from her prayers. Together with his own commentary, these pages provide keen insight concerning the earliest influence upon those eighteenth century religious leaders, John and Charles Wesley.

1966/ISBN 0-89536-450-6

The C.S.S. Publishing Company, Inc.



0895364506

04/05/2018 12:29-3

22