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THE SPIRITUAL RHETORIC OF EARLY METHODIST WOMEN SUSANNA WESLEY, SARAH CROSBY, MARY BOSANQUET FLETCHER, AND HESTER ROGERS

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THE SPIRITUAL RHETORIC OF EARLY METHODIST WOMEN
SUSANNA WESLEY, SARAH CROSBY, MARY BOSANQUET FLETCHER,
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A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the rhetorical features of letters and journals composed by Susanna Wesley, Sarah Crosby, Mary Bosanquet Fletcher, and Hester Rogers, all prominent and influential women in the early years of the Methodist religious movement in Great Britain in the eighteenth century. These women were all personally acquainted with John Wesley, the founder of Methodism; Susanna Wesley was John's mother.

To provide helpful heuristics to aid in the study of these, and other, early Methodist texts, three perspectives of Jewish-Christian rhetoric are examined and juxtaposed to form a new theoretical and methodological model of spiritual rhetoric. Similarly, several theoretical spaces that focus on feminist rhetoric are compared, contrasted, and then combined to create a model that considers the voices, knowledge, texts, and experiences of women rhetors.

Susanna Wesley, Sarah Crosby, Mary Bosanquet Fletcher, and Hester Rogers—and their texts—are introduced with an overview of the birth and early years of Methodism. This historical summary helps explain the women's purposes for writing, the spiritual beliefs which informed their texts, and the impact of their words on readers.

Susanna Wesley is shown to be an intellectual woman with strong religious and political viewpoints which she persuasively asserts in letters to her husband, Samuel Wesley and others. Sarah Crosby and Mary Bosanquet Fletcher, both early Methodist preachers, defend women's preaching in letters written to John Wesley. The evolution and development of John Wesley's views and authorization of women's preaching is

also traced. Finally, the spiritual experience journal of Hester Rogers is analyzed to show how Rogers creates spiritual rhetoric for her own persuasive goals.

In their letters and journals, Susanna Wesley, Sarah Crosby, Mary Bosanquet Fletcher, and Hester Rogers combine many rhetorical appeals to form their own distinctive persuasive and empowering spiritual rhetoric. Through rhetorical analysis of their texts, this study shows the power and influence these women's discourse had upon the establishment and shaping of the Methodist religious movement, and it contributes to broadening scholars' interpretations of the revolutionary creativity and inventiveness of women's rhetoric by suggesting new understandings of how four eighteenth-century early Methodist women constructed their persuasive message despite the constraints of their patriarchal culture.

Chapter 1

Women's Works and Words in the Era of John Wesley

From the beginning of the Methodist religious movement in Great Britain in the eighteenth century, women played many important rhetorical roles including praying publicly, giving testimony, explaining biblical texts or sermons, and even preaching. They also recorded their spiritual experiences in diaries and journals which were often published and widely distributed, wrote theological pamphlets, and used written correspondence for a variety of persuasive purposes. These methods of public and private expression were supported by John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, who also encouraged women to act as "models of the Christian life" and to take unprecedented leadership roles in the Methodist movement as advisors, counselors, and leaders of small groups (Earl Kent Brown 20, 31, 42, 67, 72, 107). As a result of John Wesley's support and encouragement, women were empowered to speak, write, and take on public roles that otherwise were prohibited to them, and all of these pursuits were marked by significant rhetorical activity, both written and spoken.

Definitions of rhetoric

Aristotle defines rhetoric as "an ability, in each particular case, to see the available means of persuasion" (14). George Kennedy expands this definition by explaining that Aristotle viewed rhetoric as referring to the "ability, capacity, faculty . . . potentiality . . . [and] the art of 'seeing' how persuasion may be effected" in a specific situation (*On Rhetoric,* 36). When I use the term rhetoric in this study, I refer to the Aristotelian definition and the "act of using language effectively to bring about desired change in an audience" (Collins, "Speaker" 547). I also follow after Quintilian's

definition of rhetoric as “a good man speaking well” (12.1.1) to show that rhetoric is also good *women* speaking—and writing—well.

My purpose: to examine rhetoric in early Methodist women’s texts

The purpose of this study is to reveal and examine the rhetorical features of selected letters, journals, and other texts, composed by eighteenth-century Methodist women, which remain unstudied or inadequately studied rhetorically; these texts represent a variety of rhetorical roles that women played in the early years of the Methodist movement. The authors of these objects of study—Susanna Wesley, Sarah Crosby, Mary Bosanquet Fletcher, and Hester Rogers—were all prominent and influential women in the fledgling Methodist movement, they were personally acquainted with John Wesley (Susanna was John’s mother), and their writings are representative of the various texts early Methodist women produced. Yet none of these texts have been adequately analyzed rhetorically, a task which I take up in this study.

In my analysis of selected texts written by these early Methodist women, I discover these women carefully craft their rhetorical appeals by using and modifying many aspects of traditional religious, biblical, and Aristotelian rhetoric to create distinctive spiritual rhetoric that helps them achieve their religious goals. Much of the power in these women’s texts is for the purpose of persuading or empowering their audiences or defending their own right to carry on activities—such as preaching—that were at that time considered off limits for women. The early Methodist women I study also defend their opinions and beliefs despite these sometimes being at odds with contemporary viewpoints of that era. Finally, the women repeatedly challenge and transform the patriarchy of their time—and of traditional male rhetoric—by

constructing their spiritual rhetoric in their own ways. They also transform the patriarchy by changing the male-dominated rhetorical dynamic in their homes and religious meetings through successful methods of argumentation. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell suggests that early feminist rhetors "rose to inventive heights" (9) and that they "used the full range of rhetorical possibilities" (190). I discover that this is exactly how Susanna, Sarah, Mary, and Hester create their distinctive empowering spiritual rhetoric.

Over the past several decades, scholars in many fields have written about eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Methodist women. For example, Earl Kent Brown, Paul Wesley Chilcote, Richard Heitzenrater, and Jean Miller Schmidt, working in the fields of theology and church history, study historical activities and roles of early Methodist women. Lucille Sider Dayton, Donald W. Dayton, Nancy Hardesty, Randy Maddox, Kenton Stiles, and Ruth Tucker and Walter Liefeld have investigated aspects of feminism and feminist activities undertaken by Methodist women and the relationship of the Methodist and Wesleyan/holiness religious movements to the women's rights and feminist movements.[1] Studies by Susie Stanley and by Hilah Thomas and Rosemary Skinner Keller have shown how early Methodist women were empowered by their spirituality to move beyond traditional female roles.

In the field of rhetoric and composition, Patricia Bizzell investigates the ethos of two nineteenth-century American Methodist women, Phoebe Palmer and Frances

[1] In the nineteenth century in the United States, several groups broke away from the Methodist church and formed new denominations that retained John Wesley's theological beliefs. Thus, some scholars use the term Wesleyan/holiness to include all followers of John Wesley. The eighteenth-century women I study were Methodists, and I use the term Wesleyan/holiness only for accuracy when discussing other scholars' work.

Willard. Vicki Tolar Burton considers the rhetorical activities of several early Methodist women, and she investigates the historical aspects surrounding the publication, promotion, and popularity of the eighteenth-century spiritual experience journal written by Hester Rogers. In her recent, magisterial work, Spiritual Literacy in John Wesley's Methodism, Burton investigates the importance John Wesley placed on literacy—teaching reading, writing, and public speaking—as a key component of spirituality. Other scholars of rhetoric and composition, including Jane Donawerth, Roxanne Mountford, and Felicity Nussbaum, include Methodist women and their rhetorical activities among the historical figures and discourse they study. Still other scholars, like Susan Kates in her study of Hallie Quinn Brown as an activist educator in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, consider Methodist women, not because they were Methodist, but because of other significant contributions they made in the field of composition and rhetoric. Indeed, the contributions made by Methodist women can be found in virtually every genre and site of female rhetorical activity in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries.

This publication history—albeit only a partial list—indicates the broad interest in Methodist women's activities and discourse that extends far beyond church historical circles. However, none of these scholars looks in fine detail at the texts and the persuasive techniques used by early Methodist women who wrote, testified, prayed, and preached. This gap in the scholarship is significant. Without an in depth understanding of the specific texts and rhetorical appeals of early Methodist women, we cannot fully understand the power and influence these women had, nor can we fully appreciate their lives and character.

To better understand the context and the texts composed by the early Methodist women Susanna Wesley, Sarah Crosby, Mary Bosanquet Fletcher, and Hester Rogers, this study begins by looking at the founding—and founder—of Methodism. I also explore the historical context out of which Methodism was born, how these conditions affected women's roles within the movement, the rhetorical situations and exigencies for which early Methodist women composed their texts, the spiritual beliefs which informed the texts, and the impact of the texts on their audiences.

The Birth of Methodism

In the late 1720s, John Wesley's brother Charles, a tutor at Oxford, formed a small group of Oxford students that met for study and spiritual enrichment; the group became known derisively as the "Holy Club." In 1729, John, an ordained priest in the Church of England and fellow at Lincoln College, Oxford, took over leadership of the group from Charles—who willingly yielded the leadership to him—and John quickly developed rules by which the group would carry out their religious study, prayer, and good works. The group followed these rules in an orderly manner or "method" which attracted attention of others at Oxford, and this fledgling band was soon scornfully called Methodists (Pudney 32-35).

John Wesley's early life and the Holy Club

John Wesley was born in 1703, the fifteenth child of Church of England rector Samuel Wesley and his wife Susanna Annesley Wesley. At the time of John's birth, the family lived in the town of Epworth in Lincolnshire, about 150 miles outside of London. John matriculated at Christ Church, Oxford at the age of 17 in 1720. Five years later, he was ordained as an Anglican priest, and the next year, he became a fellow at

Lincoln College, Oxford, where he taught Greek, gave lectures on the New Testament, and directed debates called "daily disputations." In 1727, he left Oxford and for two years was the priest of a small parish near his birthplace. He returned to Oxford and his former position as a fellow at Lincoln College in 1729 and became the leader of the Methodist Holy Club (Pudney 7-8, 16, 20-21, 27, 29, 32).

John's rules for the Holy Club included personally praying fervently every night and meeting with others in the group for three hours each evening for prayer, worship, and study of the Greek New Testament. John also asked for self-examination of one's prayer life: "Have I duly used intercession before [doing Christian work], after speaking to any [about God], for my friends on Sunday, for my pupils on Monday, for those who have particularly desired it, and for the family in which I am, every day!" Beyond nurturing their own spiritual lives, the Holy Club members cared for needy and sick people, and they visited in prisons where they preached the message of Christianity, educated the prisoners and, when possible, gave relief to those jailed for debt (Pudney 35, 32).Years later, many of the disciplines that John initiated in the Holy Club would become part of the Methodist way of life, with both men and women devoting hours to prayer, religious study, and helping others.

John Wesley goes to the colonies as a missionary

Despite his good works, strict disciplines, and his leadership positions as ordained priest, university fellow, and leader of the Holy Club, Wesley experienced a spiritual crisis, and inner peace eluded him. As a result of this spiritual frustration, in 1735 Wesley accepted the opportunity to become a missionary to the Native Americans in General Oglethorpe's Georgia colony (Mitchell 96, 98-100), and his brother Charles

accompanied him. Wesley did not hide his reason for going to the American colonies and wrote in his journal that "our end in leaving our native country was . . . singly this—to save *our* souls; to live wholly to the glory of God" (*Heart* 3; emphasis added). The Wesleys embarked on their trip to Georgia because John knew of the deficiencies in his own spiritual life and hoped the trip and new environment would be conducive to his spiritual growth. It would be several more years, however, before John Wesley would receive assurance that his soul truly was saved.

Definitions of salvation and sanctification

In Wesleyan theology, salvation refers to "the experience of having been accepted and pardoned by God through faith in Christ" (Chilcote, *Her* 23). Wesley borrowed from the homily of the Church of England—and the biblical passage in John 3:16-18—when he explained salvation as follows: "God sent his only Son into the world to fulfil the law for us and, by shedding his blood, to make satisfaction to his Father for our sins" (Outler 124).[2] Salvation, then, is the act of accepting God's forgiveness of sins that is made possible by the death and resurrection of Christ.

John Wesley also believed in another spiritual experience—sometimes called a second work of grace—that usually occurs separately and at some time interval after salvation. The terms holiness, sanctification, and Christian perfection are often used interchangeably in the writings of John Wesley and other early Methodists to name this second spiritual experience. Paul Wesley Chilcote defines and explains these terms:

[2] Unless noted otherwise, all biblical quotations are from the King James Version which the early Methodists used.
John 3:16-18 reads as follows: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

Holiness . . . refers to the whole process of becoming Christlike in our lives. It includes the idea of both sanctification (the process of growing in grace and love) and Christian perfection (the love of God and neighbor filling one's heart and life), which is, perhaps, the most important of all Wesleyan concepts . . . [and was the] goal toward which all of the Methodist women aspired (*Her* 23)

In this study, I use the terms salvation and sanctification and consider them as two separate spiritual experiences, as did John Wesley and his followers.

John Wesley fails as a missionary and experiences spiritual salvation

Aboard ship and in Georgia, Wesley became acquainted with a group of German missionaries who were also traveling to Georgia to do missions work; the missionaries were from the Moravian Church (Pudney 43, 45-46), an evangelical Protestant denomination which emphasized living according to biblical examples and doing missionary work (Mead and Hill 79).[3] From his friendship with these missionaries, Wesley began to better understand the lack in his own spiritual life. He wrote in his journal of being asked by one of the Moravian pastors if he knew that Jesus Christ was his Savior. Wesley answered, "I do," but also confessed, "I fear they were vain words" (*Heart* 8).

In 1738, Wesley returned to England from Georgia, having failed in his missionary labors, and a few weeks later, on May 24, 1738, while unwillingly attending a religious meeting on Aldersgate Street, London, he "felt my heart strangely warmed,"

[3] Interestingly, the *Handbook of Denominations in the United States* reports the following about the Moravians' missionary work in Georgia: "The Moravians attempted to establish a settlement in Georgia in the 1730s, but the only lasting result of that work was the conversion of John Wesley. . . to 'heart religion'" (79). In his writings, John Wesley defines heart religion as "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (*Works*, Vol. 3, 441).

and for the first time "felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death" (Wesley, Heart 43). This experience of spiritual salvation is considered the watershed moment in John Wesley's life; after years of struggling spiritually, studying and teaching religious topics, and doing good works, John Wesley finally received the assurance of salvation which he sought.

Beginnings of the Methodist societies

Almost immediately after his salvation experience, John Wesley altered his life and activities, and he traveled to Germany for an extended stay with the Moravians for the purpose of learning about their work. After staying with the Moravians for a few months, Wesley returned to England, and he "began again to declare in [his] own country the glad tidings of salvation, preaching . . . and afterwards expounding the holy Scripture" (*Heart* 45). Wesley preached in Anglican churches in London and around Oxford, visited prisons, and worked to develop the "Fetter Lane Society" in London (Pudney 60) as a group of practicing Anglicans who met for spiritual enrichment. On September 17, 1738, Wesley wrote about the Fetter Lane group that "our little society . . . now consisted of thirty-two persons" (*Heart* 45); these persons would become the first official Methodist congregation. Thus, in 1738, John Wesley received the spiritual assurance of salvation that he sought, and subsequently, the Methodist societies began in earnest in Great Britain (Pudney 60, 67, 70-72).

Open-air meetings and the first Methodist building in Bristol

In 1739, Wesley began preaching to large crowds in open-air meetings around England and many people received spiritual salvation. These meetings were called

"field preaching" and were events that gathered crowds in "homes, town squares, churchyards" or other locations outside a parish church; these events often involved singing to gather a crowd, preaching or exhortation, and Christian worship (Jackson 52-54). Although Wesley became known through the open-air meetings, he was not the originator. John Whitefield, one of the Oxford students Wesley knew from the Holy Club, became famous for his preaching but was banned from churches in London and Bristol because of his enthusiasm. Whitefield began preaching outdoors to crowds as large as 20,000 people. However, Whitefield wanted to return to missionary work, so he recruited John Wesley to replace him as the preacher at the outdoor meetings. Wesley was conflicted about replacing Whitefield, but finally diffidently did so (Pudney 67).

Wesley's style of preaching was quite different than Whitefield's, as John Pudney explains: "Unlike Whitefield, the wild-eyed emotional evangelist, Wesley preached with simple deliberation, yet with a power that went straight to the hearts of the people" (67). Wesley continued the outdoor meetings amid hostility from church leaders and members of the upper class over his methods and because he brought "spiritual hope to the masses." Wesley also used the time in Bristol to form societies of Methodist followers, and land was purchased in Bristol on which to build the first Methodist meeting house for the use of the newly formed societies (Pudney 67, 70-72). Writing in 1978, John Pudney explains the significance of Wesley's agreement to replace Whitefield as the outdoor preacher: "Thus by means of . . . the powerful enthusiasm of young Whitefield, John Wesley at the age of thirty-six diffidently entered into the work which was to spread his renown throughout the world till, two and a half

centuries later, there were more than 20,000,000 full members of the Methodist Church" (67).

Early Methodists and the Anglican Church

Wesley's desire was that the Methodist followers would be welcomed into the Anglican Church and help to revive it; his goal was not to create a new denomination. To that end, he mandated that the Methodist societies—such as the groups that met in the Bristol meeting house—meet at different times from the Anglican services, that the society members not observe the sacraments of baptism and communion outside of the Anglican services, and that they be vital members of the Anglican congregations. Despite Wesley's best intentions, remaining part of the Anglican Church was unsuccessful in many cases, and members of the Methodist societies were persecuted and expelled from the church. Even so, the official break of the Methodists from the Anglicans did not come until 1784—more than 45 years after the beginnings of the Methodist movement—when the Anglican bishop of London refused to ordain a Methodist preacher to be sent to America, so John Wesley conducted the ordination himself (Pudney 108). The fact that Wesley sought diligently for the Methodists to remain part of the Anglican Church for more than 45 years shows Wesley's strong devotion to the established church. Nonetheless, despite his high regard for the Anglican Church and the fact that he remained an ordained Anglican priest until his death, for most of his years of ministry, Wesley was not allowed to preach in some Anglican churches; this opposition within the Anglican Church helped to spread the Methodists' message because it was the catalyst that brought about outdoor field preaching and helped establish the Methodist meeting houses.

Importance of the outdoor meetings

The importance of the outdoor meetings cannot be underestimated. Despite his hesitation to replace Whitefield as the outdoor preacher, John Wesley soon realized the great opportunity the outdoor meetings provided to awaken those who had no religious leanings to their need for spiritual salvation. In fact, for many years, field preaching was the way that most people first learned about Methodism, and it functioned as the site which prepared them for repentance and to attend the Methodist society meetings and classes. Wesley came to understand that "the proper place" for awakening people to the "starkness of God's law" was in the field preaching meetings (Jackson 52-54).

Converting to Methodism

Once a person had been awakened to their need for spiritual salvation—most often as a result of the field preaching—he or she would be invited to attend Methodist society meetings; these large-group events were designed to facilitate spiritual repentance and growth (Jackson 54). After a person had embraced the message of spiritual salvation, they were directed to small-group class meetings that helped them "mature from [spiritual] awakening to conversion and [sanctification]." Class meetings included reading biblical texts, singing, praying, and teaching, exhortation or preaching by the class leader; meetings also including "a personal sharing by the converted . . . of their experience of God" (Jackson 56-59). A class group usually included twelve people of both sexes who met weekly for fellowship. Smaller groups also met in bands comprised of "four or five persons of the same sex and marital status." The purpose of the bands was to encourage accountability between the members and opportunity for those who were seeking sanctification to give "rigorous mutual confession" (Chilcote,

John Wesley 68-69). These class and band meetings were one site where many early Methodist women, serving as leaders, first carried out public rhetorical activities.

Importance of visitation

After outdoor meetings and society, class, and band gatherings, a fourth category of activity for early Methodists was visitation. John Wesley mandated that class leaders and preachers visit the home of each society and class member for the purpose of caring for the members, showing love to them, inquiring—on a one-to-one basis—"into a person's spiritual state," and helping each member to "mature" in their faith. Visiting the poor and checking on their wellbeing was also an important objective (Jackson 59-60) and another way that women greatly contributed to the functions and ministry of the Methodist movement. One aspect of the women's home visitation was spiritual conversations in which the women often spoke casually about their religious beliefs for the purpose of guiding the hearer to his or her own spiritual experience of God; often spiritual conversations were also used to introduce persons to Methodism and draw them into the societies (Earl Kent Brown 20). Jane Donawerth has shown that conversation is a critical part of women's discourse, especially in the period of 1600 to 1900, when most women's roles were domestic, and "conversation rather than oratory" became the primary method of women's public verbal communication (*Conversational* 1-2). In chapter 5, we will see that spiritual conversation is one of the ways early Methodist women ministered to new converts and to the poor and infirm, and many spiritual conversations occurred as part of the early Methodist women's visitation activities.

Cultural and political context

The period during which Methodism was born was a time of political upheaval, as France and Great Britain struggled for control in Europe and in the colonies. Socially, Great Britain was highly divided by class and economics, with the majority of the population being poor laborers who had little hope of improving their lives (Earl Kent Brown 1-2). Both political and social factors greatly contributed to the acceptance and growth of the Methodist movement. Politically, the nation and the Anglican Church were ripe for change, and into this void came the empowering message of God's grace that Wesley preached.

Methodism provided empowerment

Because much of the Methodist ministry occurred, by necessity, outside the established Anglican Church, and because of the emphasis on the personal experience of God's grace in offering spiritual salvation to each person, early Methodism "empowered the masses of working class . . . people, and women, and trained them to be effective servants of the Word" (Chilcote, *She* 34). This empowerment to the masses came about, at least in part, because the people drawn to Methodism had found "their personal existence unbearable" (Kent 2). John Kent explains: "Wesley was offering a transformation of personal identity as an antidote to despair or as a cure for circumstances, and it is evident from the start that his approach appealed to numbers of people who were dissatisfied with their personal or social lives" (2-3). This transformation of personal identity—in which Methodist followers had a personal experience of God and in which new connections were created between people—was particularly successful and made possible by John Wesley's organization and

methodology in which persons were guided through several stages of attending the Methodist meetings and being visited by class leaders.

Wesley's contribution to literacy

One way that John Wesley empowered the masses of working class people was by providing opportunities for them to learn to read and write. Vicki Tolar Burton calls Wesley a "rhetorician on horseback," from whom scholars can learn much about literacy and rhetoric ("John Wesley" 67).[4] Burton explains that Wesley's interest in literacy was a feature of his ministry from the very beginning of the Holy Club at Oxford. He prioritized the activities of the group to first provide food, clothing, and medicine; second, to provide the poor who could read with a Bible or prayer book; and finally, to teach the children to read ("John Wesley" 70-71). Wesley encouraged this education so that people of the working classes could read the Bible and other spiritual texts, and thus have additional opportunities for spiritual development. Wesley's efforts were highly effective. In 1804, James Lackington wrote that the "difference in degree of knowledge between the poor Methodists and the poor in general is very remarkable" (qtd. in Burton, "John Wesley" 73). Burton concludes that Wesley "expanded the boundaries of eighteenth-century rhetoric in both class and gender" ("John Wesley" 84), and his emphasis on education is one of the ways he helped to transform the personal identity of many people.

[4] During the 53 years of his ministry—from 1738 when the Methodist societies began until his death in 1791—Wesley is said to have traveled 250,000 miles on horseback; he often wrote or read the Bible and other religious works while riding. In the later years of his life, he traveled by carriage (Wesley, *Heart* xxxvii; Pudney 78).

"Nothing to do but to save souls"

Much later in his ministry, in 1784, Wesley instructed the Methodist preachers to maintain the proper priorities. He wrote:

> You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work. And go always, not only to those that want you, but to those that want you most. Observe: It is not your business to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that society; but to save as many souls as you can; to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance, and with all your power to build them up in that holiness without which they cannot see the Lord. (qtd. in Coleman, N. pag)

Wesley's directive to put the highest priority and emphasis on saving souls became the motivation for much of the efforts of both men and women in early Methodism. They understood that the mandate to "save souls" meant that their responsibility was to explain to sinners their need for repentance and that only God could convey spiritual salvation upon repentant sinners. The directive to "save souls" became a shorthand to describe the early Methodists' understanding of their responsibilities coupled with the biblical promises that spiritual salvation is available to all. [5]

Ministry by women

Wesley expanded the boundaries of expression for women by authorizing them to participate in several specific modes of public speech. He encouraged women to conduct spiritual conversations with persons who were new to Methodism, to explain beliefs and encourage new converts to be part of the Methodist societies, to lead small group meetings, to exhort or fervently urge an audience to accept the gospel message, to expound or explain a biblical text, and to give public testimony or witness of their

[5] There is no need to duplicate here the efforts of many excellent studies on the life and ministry of John Wesley and the rise and early years of Methodism. Two comprehensive studies are Heitzenrater and Rack. For a highly accessible study, see Pudney.

spiritual experiences. His emphasis on speaking and leading meetings also led to a few women preaching (Earl Kent Brown 20-24, 43).

Wesley's early and later thinking on women's preaching

During the early part of his ministry, John Wesley rejected the practice of women's preaching. In 1761, he instructed Sarah Crosby to preface her public remarks by saying, "I will just nakedly tell you what is in my heart" (Earl Kent Brown 26). However, eventually, for several reasons, John Wesley developed a fundamental principle: "No one, including a woman, ought to be prohibited from doing God's work in obedience to the inner calling of her conscience" (Chilcote, *She* 124). Factors contributing to Wesley's eventual authorization of women's preaching included practicality—the small group meetings led by women were growing rapidly and experiencing a great "harvest of souls" (Earl Kent Brown 26), the influence of his mother, Susanna, from whom he first learned of the abilities and spiritual ministry potential of women, and the persuasiveness of Mary Bosanquet Fletcher and other women. Chapter 4 takes up the issue of women's preaching and shows the evolution of Wesley's views and instructions on the subject.

Wesley's empowerment of women

Wesley's empowerment of women was significant. Robert F. Wearmouth notes that "it might be claimed that the emancipation of womanhood began with [Wesley]" (qtd. in Dayton and Dayton 69) because he, "more than any man in 18th century England, encouraged women in the service of Christ and humanity" (Dayton and Dayton 69). "Wesley gave concrete expression to his proclamation of freedom in Christ," Paul Wesley Chilcote explains. "Women who were otherwise disenfranchised

in a world dominated by men . . . began to develop a new sense of self-esteem and purpose" (*She* 34). Thus, through John Wesley's support and encouragement—which was grounded in his theology and his concern for saving souls—women were afforded great opportunities to take on public roles that were marked by significant persuasive activity; these activities required skill in rhetoric, learned from immersion in religious activities if not from formal education.

Loss of empowerment after Wesley's death

Unfortunately, Wesley's empowerment of women did not survive for long. After John Wesley's death in 1791, the male ministers moved quickly to once again limit women's ministry roles and many of these limitations remained in force for generations. In fact, Vicki Tolar Collins (Burton) asserted in 1993 that it had taken nearly 200 years for women in Methodism to reclaim the voice that they were afforded under the leadership and support of John Wesley (*Perfecting* 252), which they lost soon after his death. Many of the restrictions on women's ministry in the nineteenth century can be attributed to the belief that "true womanhood" of the Victorian era did not include leadership roles in established religion.

Journals and diaries

For early Methodists, sharing their personal spiritual experiences with others was central to their religious life, and they did so through a variety of communication methods, media, and genres. Both female and male members of the Methodist classes and bands were expected and encouraged to tell of their spiritual experiences and to freely share with others their desires and thoughts (Chilcote, *John Wesley* 71). In addition to testifying of their faith orally in these meetings, John Wesley encouraged his

followers to write about their spiritual experiences in diaries and journals as part of their religious self-expression. In encouraging journal keeping, Wesley asked the early Methodists to emulate his own life-long practice—likely learned at an early age from his mother Susanna—of journal keeping and recording his own spiritual experiences and how he spent his time. Wesley kept a journal from the time he was a very young man, and in the 1740s he edited and published "the more material parts of [his] diary, adding here and there such little reflections as occurred to [his] mind" (Wesley, *Heart* vii). One of Wesley's biographers noted that Wesley published his journal "in the interest of Methodism" and that the installments in which the journal was published were "eagerly expected by a host of readers" (Wesley, *Heart* vii) The first entry in John Wesley's published journal is from October 14, 1735, the day that John and Charles "took boat . . . to embark for Georgia." The last entry was penned on October 24, 1790, just a few months before his death in April 1791 (Wesley, *Heart* 8, xiii).

Self-expression and testifying important in early Methodism

The religious self-expression practiced by the early Methodists—in giving testimony of their faith both verbally in class and band meetings and in writing spiritual experience journals—was, according to John Wesley Chilcote, an "important factor in the spread of the gospel" (John Wesley and the Women 96). Wesley believed accounts of spiritual experiences had persuasive power because they showed evidence of God's work in individual lives, and he urged his followers to read the spiritual experiences of others. Wesley also believed the writers of spiritual journals benefited from the self-examination required to compose the journals (Collins, "Women's Voices" 243). He asked his ministers to keep journals "for the profit of their own souls" (Rivers 194), and

he encouraged women who were active in ministry to keep journals as a means of self-expression and as a record of their spiritual growth. As a result of John Wesley's urging and example, keeping journals of individual spiritual experiences became a part of the early Methodists' method of spiritual discipline (Collins, "Women's Voices" 242). Writing spiritual experience journals was firmly linked with Wesley's support of early Methodist women both in giving verbal witness of their spiritual experiences and in giving written voice to their experiences in journals or diaries. We shall also see how early Methodists' self-expression had a significant rhetorical context.

Spiritual experience journals

One of the most interesting and significant surviving spiritual experience journals from the era of early Methodism was written by Hester Ann (Roe) Rogers (1756-1794), a young Methodist woman who wrote passionately about her extraordinary spiritual experiences. First published in 1793, Hester Rogers's journal, *An Account of the Experience of Hester Ann Rogers*, demonstrates John Wesley's well-founded belief in the persuasive power of individual spiritual experiences, and Hester's vivid language captures the quality and intensity of her relationship with God (Collins, "Women's Voices" 248, 240). [6]

Hester Rogers's biography

As the daughter of an Anglican vicar, Hester was trained in Christian virtues and sought spirituality from early childhood. From her journal, we learn that as a teenager,

[6]Scholars generally accept that referring to a man by his last name and referring to a woman by her first name diminishes the value of the woman in relation to the man. I refer to the women whose texts I study by their first names not in any way to diminish their value, nor from any lack of a feminist commitment, but because I feel a kinship with these women which cannot be adequately reflected by referring to them formally by their last name. In this practice, I also follow the precedent set by Vicki Tolar Collins Burton, Paul Wesley Chilcote, and many other scholars.

she struggled with “various evils” while still seeking to live “a new life” (Rogers 7-8). At age 17, she began attending Methodist meetings and experienced spiritual salvation. About two years later, she received sanctification, the “second work of grace,” as taught by the Methodists. A few years later, she met John Wesley and began a lifelong friendship and correspondence with him—she was 20 years old, he was 72. Both before and after her marriage, Hester was active in the Methodist movement as a leader of classes and bands and as a visitor to the sick and dying. She recorded these events in her journal, along with highly personal accounts of her intimate spiritual experiences and struggles which reflect the quality and intensity of her relationship with God. Chapter 5 of this study presents an in-depth rhetorical analysis of Hester’s journal.

Susanna Wesley’s journal

Another insightful—and much earlier journal—was written by John Wesley’s mother, Susanna (Annesley) Wesley (1669-1742). The surviving entries date from 1709 until 1727, with many likely written in the first half of this period (Wallace 199) when John was a child and teenager. Thus, Susanna’s journal predates the official establishment of Methodism in 1738. Nonetheless, Susanna can well be considered an early Methodist woman because of her significant contribution to the movement and the many ways in which John emulated her practices—including journal keeping—in his ministry as the founder of Methodism.

Like Hester Rogers, Susanna Wesley was the daughter of a minister, but Susanna’s father was a Puritan who was expelled from his church in the conservative backlash of 1662 (Wallace 5, Walmsley 51). When Susanna was 12 years old, in 1681, she deliberately left the Puritans to join the Church of England after carefully analyzing

the differences between the two organizations (Wallace 5). As an adult and after her marriage to Samuel Wesley, Susanna continued her intellectual and spiritual disciplines, including three times of daily meditation. Susanna Wesley's journal was "first and foremost an explicit and important part of her spiritual life" (Wallace 197) and where she recorded spiritual ideas and recollections from her daily meditations; it also serves as a way to see Susanna's "questioning, . . . bold resolution, [and] the exploration" of a variety of religious and secular ideas (Wallace 198-199). Chapter 3 of this study includes a rhetorical analysis of selections from Susanna's journal preceded by an in-depth look at several important letters written by Susanna which deal with religious and political issues.

Spiritual letters

In addition to recording their spiritual experiences in diaries and journals and giving testimony of their faith verbally in class and band meetings, many early Methodist women expressed their spirituality through their written correspondence. Vicki Tolar Burton explains the significance of one genre of early Methodist women's letter-writing: "A number of key women in Wesley's movement were active in the role of spiritual companionship to other women, to men in their lives, and to John Wesley. . . . One of the most interesting venues through which Methodist women guided other souls was through the writing of spiritual letters" (Burton, *Spiritual* 175). Burton defines spiritual letters as "correspondence in which the writer addresses religious or spiritual beliefs, often in a personal way, raises or answers spiritual questions, and offers testimony based on experience, usually with the goal of persuading the reader in matters of faith and fostering the spiritual growth of both writer

and reader." Burton further clarifies that not all letters written by religious people are spiritual letters (*Spiritual* 175-176); indeed, early Methodist women wrote letters for a variety of purposes and motivations, as we will see in later chapters.

Introducing Sarah Crosby and Mary Bosanquet Fletcher

Two prolific letter writers within early Methodism are Sarah Crosby and Mary Bosanquet Fletcher. Sarah Crosby (1729-1804) is known as the first woman preacher in Methodism, having been the first female to receive "informal authorization" from John Wesley to carry out activities within the realm of preaching. She experienced spiritual salvation as the result of hearing John Wesley preach in 1750. After her husband left her, in 1757, after only 7 years of marriage, she moved to London and met Mary Bosanquet (later Fletcher), who Sarah spiritually nurtured during Mary's early years as a Christian and a Methodist; Sarah and Mary formed "one of the most significant friendships" among early Methodists (Chilcote, *John Wesley* 50, 119). Within two years after she experienced spiritual salvation in 1750, Sarah became a class leader, and she was part of the group of Methodist women who operated an orphanage and Christian community started by Mary Bosanquet. Sarah traveled widely and preached in England for many years before retiring to her birthplace in Leeds. (Mack, *Heart* 303-304).

Mary Bosanquet (1739-1815) was born into a wealthy British family living outside London. As a young woman, Mary converted to Methodism and, subsequently, was disowned by her family. In 1762, she started an orphanage and "Christian community" in her town of Leytonstone. In 1768, the orphanage and Christian community moved to Yorkshire. She began to preach with John Wesley's endorsement, but soon went beyond the authority given her by Wesley and preached from the Bible.

In 1781 she married John Fletcher, an ordained Anglican priest and the designated successor to John Wesley. Upon her marriage, she moved to the town of Madeley where Fletcher was vicar; John and Mary Fletcher conducted a joint ministry until his death in 1785. When Mary was 75 years old, she still preached several times each week, and she ran the Methodist Society in Madeley until her death; she was the only Methodist woman to have this kind of authority in that era (Mack, Heart 304-305, 310). Some of Mary's best-known letters are those exchanged with John Wesley regarding women's roles in the church. Chapter 4 includes a rhetorical analysis of letters written by Sarah and Mary to John Wesley on women's public roles and the issue of women's speaking in church.

Chapter forecasts and overviews

I have developed this project of analyzing the spiritual rhetoric of early Methodist women as follows: In chapter 2, I examine two perspectives of Jewish-Christian rhetoric that are distinguished by the roles God and the rhetor play in persuasion. Does God accomplish persuasion and thus make persuasive rhetoric unnecessary? Or should Christian believers use persuasive rhetoric with God guiding their writing or speaking? By juxtaposing these two perspectives, I define and characterize spiritual rhetoric as involving both God and the rhetor in persuasion. Following the lead of James L. Kinneavy, I also examine a third perspective of Jewish-Christian rhetoric which involves the relationship between Christian faith and persuasion, and I conclude that God, the rhetor, and faith all have roles in persuasive spiritual rhetoric.

Additionally, in chapter 2, I examine ways in which elements of classical Aristotelian rhetoric are often used in religious texts and how the literary theory of intertextuality comes into play. Finally, I compare and contrast various theoretical spaces focusing on feminist rhetoric, combine these methods, and propose a new model for feminist rhetorical criticism. This model considers the voices, knowledge, texts, and experiences of the women rhetors as important factors which inform new theories of feminist rhetoric operating in the texts of early Methodist women.

Chapter 3 presents Susanna Wesley as an intellectual woman with strong viewpoints that are reflected in her activities and writings. I analyze selected letters and entries from her journal to show that Susanna relies on several rhetorical strategies to assert the validity of her viewpoints, to reject patriarchal constraints, and to persuade her readers of the logic of her arguments.

In chapter 4, I rhetorically analyze the persuasive strategies employed by Sarah Crosby and Mary Bosanquet Fletcher in letters written to John Wesley on the topics of women's public roles and women speaking in church. I also trace the development and evolution of John Wesley's views and authorization of women's preaching.

Chapter 5 cites numerous examples from the spiritual experience journal written by Hester Rogers to show evidence of traditional Aristotelian and Jewish-Christian rhetorical appeals. I examine various features of Hester's spiritual rhetoric to compare and contrast how she uses these traditional appeals and also how she modifies them to form her own distinctive spiritual rhetoric.

This study concludes by suggesting new understandings of eighteenth-century women's rhetoric and of the ways that Susanna Wesley, Sarah Crosby, Mary Bosanquet

Fletcher, and Hester Rogers combine many rhetorical appeals to form a unique blend of persuasive and empowering spiritual and feminist rhetoric. I also reflect on the implications of this study and discuss opportunities for future study. Through rhetorical analysis of selected letters and journals and other texts written by early Methodist women, my study aims to show the power and influence these women's discourse had upon the establishment and shaping of the Methodist religious movement. The study attempts to broaden scholars' interpretations of the revolutionary creativity and inventiveness of women's rhetoric by suggesting ways in which eighteenth-century women were able to construct their persuasive spiritual messages despite the constraints of their patriarchal culture.

Chapter 2

Spiritual and Feminist Rhetoric: Heuristics for Analyzing Women's Religious Texts

Scholars have many theoretical and methodological options from which to choose when studying religious and Jewish-Christian texts, and the lens chosen for a particular rhetorical analysis profoundly affects the study by determining the scope and features of the analysis. My study is informed by two distinct perspectives and methodologies that I have developed based on the work of several scholars of rhetoric; these perspectives and methodologies provide the lens through which, in later chapters, I conduct an in-depth analysis of the spiritual and feminist rhetoric in the selected texts written by early Methodist women Susanna Wesley, Sarah Crosby, Mary Bosanquet Fletcher, and Hester Rogers.

Introducing spiritual rhetoric as a term

Researchers in several fields—especially in literary, rhetorical, religious, and biblical studies—have developed numerous approaches which contribute helpful dynamics to textual studies. As I became acquainted with some of these approaches and began using them in studying religious texts, I realized that by drawing from and juxtaposing the work of several scholars of rhetoric, I had created a new theoretical and methodological category of Jewish-Christian rhetoric which I call spiritual rhetoric. I characterize spiritual rhetoric in the Jewish-Christian tradition as that which actively involves faith, the Spirit of God, and the rhetor in persuasion. Spiritual rhetoric, as constructed by the writer or speaker, shows evidence that the rhetor believes he or she has been given inspiration by the Spirit of God who also helps to create persuasion in

the audience; spiritual rhetoric also requires the rhetor to study and prepare the message to be delivered.[7]

Definitions of spirituality

In some academic disciplines, the terms spiritual or spirituality are used to describe non-religious or unknowable notions or concepts (Boyd, Meeting). However, I use the term spiritual, as defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, as "belonging or relating to, concerned with, sacred . . . things or matters," and "relating to, affecting or concerning, the spirit . . . in a religious aspect" ("Spiritual"). Other scholars frequently use the terms spiritual and spirituality in discussing both early and contemporary Methodism. In the Methodist tradition, spirituality involves accepting "the invitation to receive Christ" and has "its roots in (religious) conversion, the Bible, the cross, and the Christian tradition." Religious conversion is only the beginning of "a life of faith and service to others" that marks early Methodist spirituality and emphasizes "discipline, testing, discernment, sanctification, and mission" (Hempton 75-76). Together, the various elements of early Methodist spirituality cohere as the experience of God which the early Methodists sought, and which, as Paul Wesley Chilcote asserts, includes "an interior life with God manifest necessarily in external relationships of love" ("Early" 2). Early Methodist rhetoric, as we will see in later chapters, is spiritual rhetoric in one part because it is an expression of the early Methodists' personal experience and relationship

[7] The term spiritual rhetoric is sometimes used by scholars in other contexts, so I am not suggesting that I have created a new term. However, as this chapter shows, I have developed new criteria which are useful in rhetorically analyzing religious texts. In doing so, I am following the lead of Gesa Kirsch and Patricia Sullivan who strongly encourage scholars of rhetoric to combine methods to lead to "new ways of conducting and interpreting research." (248).

with God, and in a second part, because it relies on faith, the work of God, and the efforts of the rhetor.

Three viewpoints introduced

To explain and show how I developed the new theoretical and methodological category of spiritual rhetoric, I begin by overviewing three major viewpoints of Jewish-Christian rhetoric that have been advanced by scholars of rhetoric. Each of these views is directly related to persuasion—the foundation of rhetoric—and how persuasion is formed. These viewpoints provide the theoretical lens through which to view the implicit beliefs and motivations that reside in a variety of religious texts.

The first two viewpoints of Jewish-Christian rhetoric—from George Kennedy and John Levison—are distinguished by the roles God and the rhetor play in accomplishing persuasion. In the first view, God is the power that overcomes the writer or speaker; the writer or speaker does not need to create persuasive rhetoric when proclaiming God's Word because God will provide the necessary words, and God is responsible for accomplishing the persuasion (Kennedy, *Classical* 151). In the second view, God is the artificer who provides the speaker or writer with the wisdom needed to speak or write persuasively, and God guides the speaker's or writer's study (Levison 28-29, 34). The third approach, from James Kinneavy, considers the close relationship between rhetorical persuasion and Christian faith. I synthesize and juxtapose these three viewpoints to propose a new theoretical category of religious rhetoric and a new method of studying religious texts—old or new, historical or contemporary.

The Spirit as Overcomer

In the first view of Jewish-Christian rhetoric, advanced by George Kennedy, the writer or speaker does not need to create persuasive rhetoric when proclaiming God's Word because God will provide the necessary words, and God is responsible for accomplishing the persuasion (Kennedy, *Classical* 151); in responding to Kennedy, John R. Levison calls this viewpoint "the Spirit as overcomer" (29).

George Kennedy cites several biblical precedents to support the view of the Spirit as overcomer. For example, in the Old Testament story of Moses and the burning bush, Moses has little confidence in his ability to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt, in part because he believes he is a poor speaker. To Moses's objections, the Lord replies, "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak" (Exod. 4:11-12).[8] Kennedy concludes, "Some practical recognition is given to natural ability, but the Judeo-Christian[9] orator, at least in theory, has little need of practice or knowledge of art as is required of the orator in the classical tradition. He needs only the inspiration of the Spirit" (*Classical* 139).

God controls persuasion

Needing only the inspiration of the Spirit means that the speaker or writer's persuasive powers are entirely under God's control. This notion leads to the second feature of the Spirit as overcomer that can also be derived from the story of Moses and

[8] All biblical quotations in the discussions of the theories of Kennedy, Levison, and Kinneavy are from the Revised Standard Version.

[9] Kennedy, Levison, Kinneavy and other scholars in the field of rhetoric and composition use the term Judeo-Christian to refer to that which has historical roots in both Judaism and Christianity, while scholars in some other fields use the term Jewish-Christian. For inclusiveness, I use the term Jewish-Christian.

Pharaoh: God controls whether persuasion is accomplished. Moses's success in convincing Pharaoh to let the children of Israel leave Egypt depends "entirely on the extent to which God allows Pharaoh to listen" (Kennedy, *Classical* 139). God warns Moses that he will harden Pharaoh's heart "so that [Pharaoh] will not let the people go" (Exod. 4:21). Again, Kennedy concludes, "Persuasion takes place when God is ready, and not through the verbal activities or even the authority of Moses" (*Classical* 140). Kennedy goes on to explain that one Christian belief is that "God must . . . move the hearts of an audience before individuals can receive the Word" (*Classical* 140). This deterministic viewpoint is compatible with predestination, the theological term used to describe the belief in "the action of God . . . in foreordaining or appointing from all eternity certain of mankind through grace to salvation and eternal life." This belief is most often associated with St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, and John Calvin ("Predestination"). Understandably, those who believe in predestination could also believe that only the power of God is needed to bring about persuasion.

John Wesley's view of predestination

Interestingly, John Wesley had strong views and preached and wrote against predestination; he and his friend, George Whitefield, also had a public disagreement on predestination. Whitefield was a member of the Holy Club at Oxford and subsequently became a major revivalist in Britain and North America. Regarding predestination, Whitefield favored the view that God "irrevocably chose some for salvation . . . and some for damnation" while Wesley "steadfastly held to his birthright . . . position, which supported divine love . . . and gave humanity a greater role in the process of salvation." John Wesley's mother, Susanna, near the end of her life, wrote a point-by-

point rebuttal of Whitefield's view on predestination; John Wesley published his mother's treatise as a pamphlet in which Susanna "capably defend(s) one of her own by holding her own against (the) formidable and increasingly popular public figure" of George Whitefield (Wallace 462-63).Wesley and Whitefield were able to continue their professional friendship and John Wesley preached Whitefield's funeral sermon many years later.

New Testament preaching is proclamation

Kennedy also points out that in the New Testament Christian preaching is "not persuasion but proclamation" because it relies on God's power to accomplish persuasion only if it is God's will for persuasion to occur (*Classical* 146). Kennedy bases this view on a biblical passage in Mark in which Jesus warns his disciples about the mistreatment they can expect when preaching the gospel:

> But take heed to yourselves; for they will deliver you up to councils; and you will be beaten in synagogues; and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear testimony before them. And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. And when they bring you to trial and deliver you up, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say; but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. (Mark 13:9-11)

According to Kennedy, this passage points out the importance of testimony. No special eloquence is required because God will provide the words, and the disciples cannot themselves expect to persuade the hearers because persuasion is God's work (*Classical* 145). In other words, the disciples' only task is to speak the words that God gives them. Kennedy explains, "All of this is contrary to the assumptions of the classical orator, who expected to use his eloquence to overcome opposition to his ideas" (*Classical* 145).

God's love determines if persuasion occurs

Kennedy further clarifies the notion that God provides the words and controls the success of persuasion:

> The Christian orator, like his Jewish predecessor, is a vehicle of God's will to whom God will supply the necessary words, and his audience will be persuaded, or not persuaded, not because of the capacities of their minds to understand the message, but because of God's love for them which allows their hearts to be moved or withholds that grace. (*New Testament* 8)

In this statement, Kennedy again asserts his view of the central role that God plays in allowing or preventing an audience from being persuaded. Specifically, Kennedy indicates that God's love determines whether an audience will be moved to accept the spiritual message or whether they will be prevented from doing so. The idea that God, acting in love, would prevent people from understanding the Christian message and receiving salvation, as Kennedy suggests, seems incompatible with theological teachings in the Bible which assert that God wishes all persons to receive salvation. One such scripture is 2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not slow about his promise as some count slowness; but is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."

Levison responds to Kennedy

In analyzing Kennedy's arguments, John A. Levison quotes from early Jewish texts and books of the Apocrypha to also show God's role in persuasion. He concludes that these passages show "persuasion is the result of the indwelling of the Spirit rather than rhetorical techniques. In fact, the Spirit not only imbues the speaker with authority but also the audience with comprehension—quite apart from reason!" (31). In the view

of the Spirit as overcomer, then, God gives the words and God causes persuasion to occur or not occur according to his will.

Implication of God being responsible for persuasion

This notion—that God gives the audience comprehension, or that God and not the rhetor is responsible for causing the audience to be persuaded or not—has important implications for any study of religious rhetoric. In this view, persuasion is unidirectional with the audience as a passive recipient of the power of God to overcome them and persuade them or to not do so. Eloquence is also unidirectional with the rhetor as a passive recipient of the power of God to overcome him or her and provide the words God wants the rhetor to speak. The rhetor is only the mouthpiece through which God's message is transmitted to the audience. Continuing this argument, the rhetor has little or no responsibility for persuasion, a notion that flies in the face of much Christian activity. If the rhetor does not influence persuasion beyond communicating the words God gives, the rhetor may have little or no motivation to deliver the message from God, and even more importantly, the rhetor may see no reason to strive for excellence or to study and prepare to deliver the message from God.

Summary of overcomer and introduction of artificer

To summarize the first view of Jewish-Christian rhetoric—the Spirit as overcomer—God controls persuasion. He supplies the words, and he accomplishes the persuasion; the writer or speaker has only to proclaim the words that God supplies. Conversely, in the second view of Jewish-Christian rhetoric—the Spirit as artificer—both God and the rhetor play quite different roles. Specifically, Christian believers are

expected to use persuasive rhetoric, God guides their study and preparation for writing or speaking (Levison 34), and he gives them the ability to be persuasive.

The Spirit as Artificer

The basis for the view of the Spirit as artificer comes from the "conviction that the Spirit [of God] is a Spirit of wisdom and intelligence" who gives wisdom and understanding to those who seek them. "God does pour forth wisdom and the Spirit, but it is given in tandem with study and meditation. That is, truly inspired rhetoric belongs not to the spiritually overcome individual but to the diligent scribe" (Levison 31-32). In this view, God and the rhetor work together to influence persuasion: God gives wisdom to the rhetor, and the rhetor must also seek wisdom and knowledge.

Wisdom and God's spirit are nearly synonymous

To explain the view of the Spirit as artificer, Levison quotes from the Wisdom of Solomon, one of the books of the Apocrypha, to show that the Spirit is identified with wisdom to the extent that wisdom and the Spirit are nearly synonymous with each other: "[Wisdom has] in her . . . a spirit that is intelligent, holy, unique . . . [and is a] breath of [the] power of God" (qtd. in Levison 31). Additionally, Levison analyzes the Wisdom of Solomon and lists several origins of rhetoric: "the Spirit of wisdom, or wisdom which possesses an intelligent Spirit, or the Spirit identified as wisdom" (31). In this context, according to the Wisdom of Solomon, the Spirit "understands turns of speech and the solutions of riddles," and gives wise people "understanding, and renown in sharing [Wisdom's] words" (qtd. in Levison 31-32). These characteristics indicate that the "Spirit gives understanding to the student of rhetoric," but not in a way that "overcomes the unconscious speaker." Wisdom is to be sought, it "is discoverable and

obtainable" by people to whom God gives the gift of wisdom (Levison 31-32). In the tradition of the Spirit as artificer, persuasive rhetoric is formed through the combined work of the Spirit of God and the efforts of the rhetor.

Daniel receives wisdom from God to speak persuasively

To explain the connection between wisdom and the Spirit of God, Levison also draws from the story of the biblical character Daniel, as recorded in the deutero-canonical story of Susanna, to show that Daniel receives wisdom from God that "allows him to speak persuasively" (32-33). After Susanna is condemned to death, God answers her prayer by giving "as it had been promised, a Spirit of understanding to a younger man by the name of Daniel" (qtd. in Levison 33). As recipient of the Spirit of understanding, Daniel's plan and his speech in defense of Susanna is persuasive and successful, and they show that Daniel is both intelligent and inspired (Levison 33). The wisdom that Daniel receives from God gives him the ability to speak persuasively and provides additional evidence that the Spirit is associated with wisdom. Levison concludes, "The Spirit of Wisdom . . . inspires people to speak wisely and, concomitantly, persuasively. . . . Its presence becomes evident . . . in wise sayings of many sorts, some of which instruct and others of which persuade" (33-34). These two examples—one from the Wisdom of Solomon and one from the story of Susanna—show the important interrelationship between the Spirit of God, wisdom, and rhetorical persuasion which Levison asserts.

The Spirit equips the rhetor to be persuasive

The story of Susanna also includes a challenge to the people of Israel to foster wisdom and knowledge in their young people, a concept that further indicates that

wisdom is not given only to a speaker who is overcome by the Spirit, but that wisdom is given to those who seek it or are responsive to it. The idea that wisdom is given to those who seek it is also confirmed by the biblical passage that states "if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all men generously and without reproaching, and it will be given him" (James 1:5). Levison says that "the Spirit equips the wise person to be intelligent in thought and, consequently, persuasive in speech" (31-32). The Spirit gives wisdom and this wisdom equips the wise rhetor to be persuasive. Daniel's ability to speak persuasively in defense of Susanna is an outcome of the wisdom he receives from God, so the speech is effective as a result of both the Spirit of wisdom *and* Daniel's ability.

Artificer: God and the rhetor work together

In this view of Jewish-Christian rhetoric—the Spirit as artificer—God and the rhetor work together to influence persuasion: God gives the rhetor the wisdom and ability to be persuasive, but the rhetor must also seek wisdom and knowledge, be willing to accept and use wisdom and knowledge when they are given, and must also study and prepare the message to be delivered. The rhetor plays an active role in persuasion and is not persuasive simply because he or she has been overcome by the Spirit of God.

Complimentary and contradictory features of overcomer and artificer

Kennedy's and Levison's views of Jewish-Christian rhetoric are at the same time both complementary and contradictory. Both views involve God in persuasion, and both involve the Christian rhetor who is speaking or writing. However, in Kennedy's view of the Spirit as overcomer, God provides the words that the rhetor writes or

speaks, the rhetor passively dispenses the words he or she is given by God, and God is solely responsible for accomplishing persuasion. In Levison's view of the Spirit as artificer, God gives the believer wisdom and understanding so he or she is able to write or speak persuasively.

Which method is most productive and which represents the rhetoric of the Bible?

A brief discussion of the rhetoric of the Bible helps to point out which view of Jewish-Christian rhetoric most closely represents biblical rhetoric and which is most productive in studying religious rhetoric. (I use the term productive in this context to refer to the opportunity to most fully investigate and analyze religious rhetoric, to best understand the implicit beliefs and motivations of the author or speaker, and to most effectively use the investigation and analysis to develop new theories about religious rhetoric.) Levison examines several biblical passages to show some "haunting clues" that Kennedy's characterization of the Spirit as overcomer "is not the complete story" (35) in representing the rhetoric of the Bible. For example, Levison argues that the biblical passage in Mark 13:9-11, quoted earlier, which Kennedy uses to support his thesis of the Spirit as overcomer, should not be used as a universal account of early Christianity and early Christian rhetoric because it applies to only forensic speeches: "Jesus in Mark's Gospel provides a promise of the Spirit to those who are on trial and persecuted: God will come to their defense; they need not worry," but according to Levison, this "limited application" does not characterize some types of Jewish-Christian rhetoric (35) so it cannot be considered as a universal model of biblical rhetoric.

Paul as rhetorician

Continuing to discuss problems he sees with Kennedy's definitions, Levison also provides examples from various writings by the Apostle Paul in which Paul uses "rhetoric unreservedly" and "relies even more on external logic"; these instances are evidence of Paul's "*studied* and prepared display of rhetorical ability" (37; Levison's emphasis). For example, as evidence of the combination of rhetoric and the Spirit in Paul's writings, Levison cites I Thess. 1:5: "For our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction." Levison concludes that in Paul's writings "eloquence and the Spirit complement each other . . . [and Paul's] true opinion of his preaching emerges: it is a combination of rhetoric and Spirit" (39). Paul's preaching—which combines the Spirit of God and rhetoric—is a universal model of biblical rhetoric and other religious rhetoric. That Paul was skilled and knowledgeable in rhetoric is not surprising nor is the fact that his rhetorical moves have for centuries been modeled in religious rhetoric. Paul was highly educated "according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers" (Acts 22:3) and this education involved studying Greek rhetoric and philosophy. Paul later applied these techniques to his writing and preaching. The view of Paul as a model rhetorician is confirmed by numerous scholars, including George Kennedy who states that many of the writers of the New Testament spoke and wrote Greek and had been educated in Greek schools. As a result, the books of the New Testament "employ some features of classical rhetoric combined with Jewish traditions . . . modified by beliefs and values of Christianity" (*New Testament* 14).

Proclamation = preaching

Equating preaching with proclamation—as George Kennedy does—is a common theological move, and contemporary handbooks on preaching technique often use the terms proclamation and preaching almost interchangeably to refer to the verbal presentation of spiritual concepts. Verbally proclaiming the gospel message was important in early Methodism, and John Wesley characterized it as a "public announcement . . . to all people of what God has done through the prophets and Jesus." For the early Methodists, proclamation involved "preaching, exhortation, teaching, and other aspects of worship" conducted by the spiritual leader, "conversion through repentance" of those who heard the proclamation of the gospel, and guiding the new converts to "Christian perfection" or sanctification. (Jackson 64, 45-46, 55). While early Methodists would agree with George Kennedy that God controls the success of the proclamation, they certainly also understood the importance of preparation by the spiritual leader so his or her message would be most persuasive to the audience. Early Methodists—both male and female—prepared in various ways to proclaim the gospel, including receiving training on how to evaluate and "question people about their spiritual states" and on how to explain the experience of spiritual conversion (Jackson 50).

Combining overcomer and artificer to form spiritual rhetoric

In Kennedy's model of religious rhetoric, God provides *inspiration* when the Spirit of God overcomes the rhetor and gives him or her the words to speak or write. In Levison's model, God provides *learning* when his Spirit is the artificer who gives wisdom and understanding to the rhetor. The attributes that God provides—inspiration

and learning—are highly compatible with each other. In fact, Levison says inspiration and learning "are the closest of associates. The former makes no appearance without the latter" (32). Taking Kennedy's viewpoint of the Spirit as overcomer together with Levison's viewpoint of the Spirit as artificer, and further bolstered by evidence of rhetoric *and* Spirit at work in the Apostle Paul's writings, I conclude that Jewish-Christian rhetoric is combination rhetoric—the Spirit is *both* the overcomer *and* the artificer. I call this combination rhetoric spiritual rhetoric, because it combines the work of the Spirit with eloquence, inspiration, and learning. The Spirit gives inspiration to the rhetor and helps to create persuasion, and the rhetor must study and prepare the message to be delivered. This new theoretical and methodological model of spiritual rhetoric acknowledges the rhetor's belief in the active involvement of both the Spirit of God *and* the rhetor in persuasion, and this model is also the most productive for studying religious texts because it provides a framework that allows scholars to most fully analyze the range of rhetorical moves in those religious texts.

Model 3: Christian Faith and Aristotelian Persuasion

The idea that spiritual rhetoric within the Jewish-Christian tradition combines the work of the Spirit of God with traditional persuasive rhetoric is consistent with another view of Jewish-Christian rhetoric. James Kinneavy explains that the Greek word for persuasion Aristotle uses in his *Rhetoric* is *pistis*, and the Christian word for faith used in the New Testament is also *pistis.* Kinneavy asserts that this commonality of terms indicates a close relationship between rhetorical persuasion and Christian faith: "A substantial part of the concept of faith found in the New Testament can be found in the rhetorical concept of persuasion" (143). Additionally, Kinneavy says the concept of

faith can be correlated to the concept of persuasion because the Bible is largely rhetorical and presents a persuasive message: "The presence in both notions of *pistis* [as faith and rhetoric]—of . . . trust in the speaker, of a promise of good to be achieved by the listener who freely assents to the message, and of the acquisition of some knowledge—constitutes [the] basis" of faith and rhetoric as common elements of persuasion (51-52), and he firmly links faith and persuasion as features of rhetoric.

Aristotle's categories and corresponding appeals in the Bible

In expanding the relationship between faith, persuasion, and rhetoric, Kinneavy juxtaposes Aristotle's categories of classical rhetoric—*ethos, pathos, and logos*—with corresponding rhetorical appeals in the New Testament:

> The classical appeal to the authority of the speaker, which Aristotle called the "ethical," is related to the use of the authority argument in the New Testament. The author of the Gospel or Epistle, for example, may appeal to the authority of Jesus or the Father or of the Spirit, or Jesus Himself may appeal to the authority of the Father, or the writer of the work or the person he is quoting may appeal to the authority of the Scriptures. . . . Second, the appeal that is based on the interests and emotions of the audience, which Aristotle called the "pathetic" appeal, is most frequently seen in the New Testament in the form of miracles or signs promised to the audience or the reader or in the form of everlasting life or justification proposed as rewards for faith or in the form of threats made to those who do not believe. The subject matter appeal, called by Aristotle the "logical" pistis, is seen in the New Testament in the form of examples or parables or as miracles or signs reported (not promised). (106-108)

Using these three Aristotelian appeals as a model for rhetorical analysis, Kinneavy analyzes 491 occurrences of *pistis* (faith) and *pisteuein* (to believe) in the New Testament (109-119). From this analysis, he concludes that in the New Testament *pistis* means "'persuade' or 'persuasion' just as . . . [the term] meant in the contemporary Greek of the time" (Kinneavy 133). Kinneavy also asserts that all six meanings of *pistis*

in the Greek rhetorical tradition are "incorporated into the Christian concept of faith," and that the writers of the New Testament took "the notion of persuasion . . . from Greek thought and simply applied [it] to the notion of religious persuasion" (135). Kinneavy's assertion of the strong relationship between the Greek rhetorical tradition and New Testament Christianity forms the basis for a close connection between Christian faith and persuasion.

Ancient rhetoric appropriated by Christianity

Cheryl Glenn summarizes Kinneavy's argument by noting that "pistis, or belief, the cornerstone of early persuasive political and social practices, became the cornerstone of Hebraic-Christian piety" because Christianity took from ancient rhetorical practices the techniques which became preaching and teaching ("Rhetoric, Religion" 31). By linking pistis, or belief, to rhetoric, persuasion, and religious discourse, Kinneavy and Glenn clearly indicate that Christian faith and persuasion are compatible and that they can be—and should be—studied together. Additionally, Kinneavy's method of comparing the rhetorical nature of faith in the New Testament with the "rhetorical structure of classical persuasion" (Kinneavy 106) from Aristotle provides a useful template with which scholars can analyze other spiritual rhetoric to find the operative means of persuasion.

Compatibilities of the Spirit, faith, and religious rhetoric

The studies of Jewish-Christian rhetoric by George Kennedy and John A. Levison show the relationship of *the Spirit of God* and persuasive rhetoric; James Kinneavy's study of the rhetoric of the New Testament shows the relationship of *faith* and persuasive rhetoric. Taken together, these three studies show the compatibility of

the work of God *and* Christian faith with persuasive rhetoric. These studies also bring new dimensions to the inquiry of rhetoric and religion by *combining* the work of God and Christian faith with Aristotelian and Jewish-Christian rhetoric to form the new theoretical and methodological category of religious rhetoric which I call spiritual rhetoric. Additionally, Kennedy, Levison, and Kinneavy provide an opportunity to investigate the ways in which traditional rhetorical appeals are refigured in spiritual rhetoric.

Characteristics of spiritual rhetoric

Spiritual rhetoric is persuasive because it combines the work of the Spirit of God and Christian faith with traditional attributes of rhetoric that the speaker or writer contributes—attributes such as "grace, authority, and *logos* . . . . [which] partially correspond, respectively, to the *pathos*, *ethos*, and *logos* of Aristotelian rhetoric" (Kennedy, *Classical* 140). Due to the spiritual nature of Jewish-Christian rhetoric, the attributes of Aristotelian rhetoric are sometimes manifested similarly and sometimes differently than in traditional rhetorical appeals, an opportunity that provides infinite flexibility for the Christian rhetor to use traditional rhetorical attributes on some occasions and at other times to refigure *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* for specific religious applications. By refiguring *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* for religious purposes, the rhetor also works to study and prepare the message to be delivered.

Spiritual rhetoric includes traditional persuasion and overcomer and artificer

The notion that spiritual rhetoric combines the work of the Spirit as overcomer and as artificer with traditional attributes of persuasive rhetoric is confirmed further by John A. Levison when he refers to the Apostle Paul's writings:

> *What* Paul says [in I Cor. 1-2], then—that he came with power but not eloquence—fits well into the early Jewish tradition of the Spirit as overcomer. *How* [Paul] writes—with all the resources of classical rhetoric—indicates that he considers his rhetoric to be a product of the Spirit as artificer. (39; Levison's emphasis)

Spiritual rhetoric, then, brings together features of both Kennedy's and Levison's views of Jewish-Christian rhetoric, *and* it combines traditional attributes of persuasive rhetoric with the work of the Spirit. This new theoretical and methodological model of spiritual rhetoric acknowledges the active involvement of both the Spirit of God *and* the rhetor in persuasion. It does not rely only on God to supply the words and accomplish the persuasion, but instead also uses carefully crafted appeals—specifically customized for the religious topic and audience—to persuade. Furthermore, spiritual rhetoric as a model is most productive for studying a variety of religious writings because it provides a framework that allows scholars to most fully analyze the full range of rhetorical moves in religious texts. Finally, Kennedy, Levison, and Kinneavy provide "an opening for the acceptance of classical rhetoric within Christian discourse" (Kennedy, *Classical* 146)—an invitation I accept as an opportunity to use and juxtapose their methodological heuristics in creating my model of spiritual rhetoric and in analyzing the persuasive qualities of spiritual rhetoric written by the early Methodist women I study.

Artistic proofs; how classical rhetoric is refigured in religious texts

Understanding ways in which elements of classical rhetoric are accepted and often used in Christian discourse is critical to finding the means of persuasion in religious texts. Various scholars, including George Kennedy and James Kinneavy, explain how attributes of classical Aristotelian rhetoric are sometimes manifested differently in religious rhetoric. Aristotle asserts that there are three modes of artistic

proof: *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*. George Kennedy explains: "Logical argument is called *logos*; the projection of the speaker's character is called *ethos*; awakening the emotions of the audience is called *pathos*" (Aristotle ix). Kennedy states that e*thos*, *pathos*, and *logos* "inhere respectively in speaker, audience, and discourse," the three "universal factors" in any persuasive situation (*New Testament* 15). Often in religious discourse these artistic proofs, come together to form persuasive spiritual rhetoric. In later chapters, we will see numerous examples of each of these rhetorical appeals—and some additional proofs—in early Methodist women's texts.

Ethos and its subsets

George Kennedy notes that *ethos* means moral character that is the result of deliberate actions and "habit of mind" (Aristotle 163); *ethos* also refers to the trust engendered in the audience based on the character and authority of the speaker (Bizzell and Herzberg 1629). Kennedy explains how and why *ethos* functions to project the author's or speaker's character to the audience: "The audience is induced to trust what [the author or speaker] says because they trust [her], as a good [wo]man or an expert on the subject" (*New Testament* 15).

Traditional v. spiritual meaning of practical wisdom, virtue, and goodwill

From Aristotle's *Rhetoric* we learn "there are three reasons why speakers themselves are persuasive. . . . These are practical wisdom [*phronesis*] and virtue [*arete*] and goodwill [*eunois*]" (120-21). In Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, practical wisdom [*phronesis*] means having common sense or knowing about things of the world (121). In a Christian sense, practical wisdom means knowing about things of the spiritual realm. One way that the early Methodist women's practical wisdom is seen in their texts is in

their constant quest for spiritual salvation first, and later, for spiritual perfection or sanctification. In Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, virtue [*areta*] means excellence in *civic* responsibility and citizenship (121). In a Christian sense, virtue means excellence in *spiritual* responsibility and citizenship. Finally, the third aspect of *etho*s is the goodwill [*eunois*] that the speaker feels toward the audience.

St. Augustine also conceptualizes *ethos* occurring in religious texts as different from Aristotle's traditional *ethos*. Augustine defines *ethos* as being expressed in "Christian works, the life of the teacher, and the extent to which [her works and life] accords with [her] teaching, as known to the audience" (Kennedy, *Classical* 179). In later chapters, we will see how the texts written by early Methodist women exhibit practical wisdom, virtue, and goodwill as characterized by Aristotle, and how the women endeavor for their lives and activities to accurately represent their Christian beliefs.

Pathos

In Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, *pathos* is "an appeal to those states of mind that have an emotional component" (Covino, *Elements* 8). Pathetic appeals raise the audience's or readers' emotions in ways that are favorable to the speaker or writer (Bizzell and Herzberg 171). George Kennedy notes that Aristotle lists numerous states of mind in negative/positive pairs for the purpose of helping a speaker arouse these emotions in the audience in order to accomplish persuasion (*On Rhetoric* 122). Some of the emotions Aristotle discusses are anger, calmness, friendliness, enmity, fear, confidence, shame, shamelessness, kindness, unkindness, pity, envy, and emulation. These emotions are commonly manifested in religious discourse by "the promise of eternal life or threat of

damnation" (Kennedy, *New Testament* 15) or as "miracles or signs promised to the audience or the reader" (Kinneavy 107-108). In later chapters, we will see how the texts written by early Methodist women use promises, threats, and emotions to gain their audiences' attention and persuade them.

Logos in religious rhetoric

Considering the rhetorical attributes of *logos*—also called logical appeals—demonstrates yet another way in which classical rhetoric often operates in Christian discourse, explains the way traditional appeals are sometimes manifested differently in religious rhetoric than in traditional rhetorical appeals, and introduces one of the most significant methods early Methodist women used to create their spiritual rhetoric. In classical rhetoric, *logos* refers to "proofs available in the words, arguments, or logic of a speech" (Herrick 86) which are commonly introduced to "support details or to give an appearance of reason or to justify a decision which is in fact made largely on the basis of *ethos* or *pathos*" (Kennedy, *New Testament* 17). Logos occurs when rhetors "show the truth or the apparent truth from whatever is persuasive in each case" (Aristotle 39). The same is almost always true in religious rhetoric where *logos* is most often manifested by the use of biblical texts and language or scriptural allusions which support the writer's or speaker's logical arguments. *Logos* comes from using "the arguments of Scripture" that the audience accepts as reliable and "divinely revealed" and therefore certain. "The premises of argument are usually based on a scriptural authority or personal intuition, enunciated in sacred language" (Kennedy, *New Testament* 16-17). Quoting Scripture and using biblical language support the rhetor's logical arguments by reinforcing the work of God.

The concept of *logos*, as coming from familiar Scripture as the source for truth, is clearly applicable to the rhetoric of John Wesley and his followers. Because of their belief in the Bible as God's inspired truth, to the early Methodists there could be no stronger logical arguments than the arguments of Scripture. To them, what is most persuasive in each case is the truth from Scripture.

Objection raised and eliminated regarding *logos* as being secular

Scholars who subscribe to the Spirit-as-overcomer view of Jewish-Christian rhetoric may raise the objection that *logos* is dangerously secular and that it undermines the effectiveness of the rhetor who is overcome by the Spirit of God. This may be a valid viewpoint if one considers only the classical form of *logos*, but when divinely revealed scripture is the source of *logos*—as is the case in many Jewish-Christian texts *and* in many early Methodist texts—the examples, parables, and miracles reported in scripture are seen as tools God uses to overcome and persuade the audience. In spiritual rhetoric—which combines faith with the overcomer and artificer views of Jewish-Christian rhetoric—*logos* from scripture compliments the work of the spirit and of faith, and it provides eloquence, inspiration, and learning. Both the classical form of *logos* and the religious form of *logos* are consistent with actions which religious audiences can accept as the work of God: they believe revelation is given by God and miracles are done by God.

Scripture forms the strongest *logos*

Scripture records the miracles God has done and reveals the revelation God has given—according to the belief of most religious audiences. For example, in I Cor. 1-2, St. Paul "demonstrates the power of the Spirit with quotations of, and allusions to,

biblical texts" (Levison 39). Using biblical texts and language supports the writer's or speaker's logical arguments by reinforcing the work of God. The Bible is also familiar to most audiences of religious rhetoric, and they consider it to be God's inspired truth and the most authoritative source; this is especially true for the audiences to which early Methodist women direct their texts. For those audiences, there are no stronger logical arguments than the arguments of Scripture. In later chapters, we will see how early Methodist women artfully recognize the persuasive potentiality of incorporating scripture and biblical allusions into their texts. They use scripture in a variety of ways and for a variety of purposes as the means of persuasion for their specific audiences and rhetorical situations. For example, Hester Rogers fills her journal with scriptural quotations and allusions and biblical examples which support her logical arguments and encourage her readers to heed the spiritual meaning of her stories. Susanna Wesley employs familiar scripture to bolster her argument for equality and to argue for her right to viewpoints that differ from her husband's opinions, and Mary Bosanquet Fletcher appropriates scripture to legitimize her work of continuing the ministry of her late husband. Scripture is one common persuasive tool that all these female rhetors use in responding to different rhetorical situations and audiences.

Logical arguments from examples, parables, and *enthymemes*

Another way that logical appeals are often shown in the New Testament is by "examples or parables or as miracles or signs reported" (Kinneavy 108). The use of parables or miracles in spiritual rhetoric can be connected to Aristotle's three divisions of rational appeals: *enthymeme*, maxim, and example (Bizzell and Herzberg 171). *Enthymeme* "means 'held in the mind'" and is "an argument built from values, beliefs,

or knowledge held in common" and previously agreed upon by the audience and the rhetor (Herrick 81, 13, 82). Bizzell and Herzberg note that the *enthymeme* "takes its major premise from received wisdom, which the audience has been conditioned to respect" (31), and they quote Kennedy in saying that an *enthymeme* is "the kind of reasoning an audience of nonexperts can easily understand" (qtd. in Bizzell and Herzberg 172). A maxim is "an assertion . . . of a general sort . . . about things that involve actions and are to be chosen or avoided in regard to action" (Aristotle 182). Finally, the persuasiveness of an example comes from the "audience's belief that history repeats itself" (Covino, *Elements* 11), and .examples "must be recognizable and meaningful to audience members as part of their own cultural history" (Bizzell and Herzberg 31). In spiritual rhetoric, *enthymeme*s, maxims, and examples based on the wisdom of the Bible, or on spiritual beliefs, are effective for persuasion; parables or examples guide the readers' actions, and *enthymemes* and maxims reduce complex spiritual tenets to a "shorthand" the audience can understand based on their cultural history or training; to the readers of spiritual rhetoric, who have been conditioned to respect the Bible, *enthymeme*s, maxims, and examples are understandable and persuasive.

Enthymemes

George Kennedy's interpretation of biblical *enthymemes* helps to explain the basis for logical appeals that are present in the early Methodist women's texts. Kennedy writes:

> Deductive proof in rhetoric is called the *enthymeme.* An *enthymeme* commonly takes the form of a statement and a supporting reason, as in "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3). The word "for" in English . . . is commonly the indication of

> an *enthymeme*. Behind any *enthymeme* stands a logical syllogism. "Those who receive the kingdom of heaven are blessed" would be a major premise, universal and positive, acceptable by definition. "The poor in spirit will receive the kingdom of heaven" would then be the minor premise. This would not be an acceptable premise to a sophisticated classical audience, but it probably was acceptable to Jesus' audience. It is an example of a premise couched in sacred language. (*New Testament* 16)

The importance and universality of scripture in women's spiritual rhetoric cannot be underestimated. Its persuasive potential goes far beyond just providing support for logical arguments; scripture also adds significant credibility and increases the *ethos* of the rhetor. In the context of a speech or in written text, using scripture and biblical allusions has a powerful effect on the audience; they hear or read language that sounds like the language of the Bible and helps them to be persuaded by the arguments being made. Consciously or subconsciously, the audience recognizes the words as being from the Bible so they accept what the rhetor is writing or speaking must be true and right and should be believed.

Scripture is "figure of communion"

According to Shirley Wilson Logan, using scripture or biblical allusions for rhetorical purposes functions as "a figure of communion" as explained by Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca (*We* 34):

> "There is allusion when the interpretation of a passage would be incomplete if one neglected the deliberate reference of the author to something he evokes without actually naming it; this thing may be . . . knowledge of which is peculiar to the members of the group with whom the speaker is trying to establish communion (qtd. in *We* 34-35)

In spiritual rhetoric, very often the knowledge that is peculiar to the audience is the knowledge of the Bible which functions to establish communion and understanding between the rhetor and her audience. However, as Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca

indicate, no communion or understanding can occur unless the audience understands the meaning of the scripture or biblical allusion used by the rhetor. Assuring the audience's understanding of the persuasive rhetoric is where another dynamic—intertextuality—comes into rhetorical play.

Intertextuality

Intertextuality refers to the idea that texts are "mutually interdependent" (Jeannine Brown, *Scripture* 225) and are "made possible by prior works which they take up, repeat, challenge, transform" (Culler 43). Literary theorist Jonathan Culler explains that intertextuality is the notion that texts derive meaning from their relationship to other texts and "to the tradition that makes [the texts] possible; new texts are also "energized by echoes of past [texts] (44, 109). New texts are created and are meaningful because older texts exist. Intertextuality also requires something more: the audience must understand the older texts which the newer texts take up, repeat, and transform.

Virtually every sentence—indeed nearly every word—in spiritual rhetoric can be attributed to the concept of intertextuality. Spiritual rhetoric is deeply steeped in and dependent upon religious traditions and texts that come from scripture, testimony, sermons, and prayers, and these traditions and texts are constantly being taken up, repeated, and transformed in new texts. If the audience understands the older texts, then the older texts function to make the new texts possible, to legitimize and give meaning to the new texts, to communicate the rhetor's implied beliefs, and to make the new texts persuasive. Additionally, the older texts provide "antecedent texts" which the rhetor can assume, cite, or allude to (Jeannine Brown, *Scripture* 226) in the new texts. Assuming, citing, and alluding to biblical texts or concepts is one example of intertextuality in

Jewish-Christian rhetoric, and the Methodist women whose texts I analyze in this study are masters of this kind of persuasive intertextuality.

Thus far in this chapter I juxtaposed the viewpoints of George Kennedy, John Levison, and James Kinneavy, and from their work I developed a model of spiritual rhetoric. I also showed how classical Aristotelian rhetoric and the literary concept of intertextuality operate in spiritual rhetoric, and I discussed how rhetors often use scripture as a persuasive tool. In later chapters, I will use these heuristics in analyzing texts composed by early Methodist women.

Swearingen uses Kinneavy for analyzing women's texts

C. Jan Swearingen adds a further dimension to Kinneavy's work—which strongly links rhetorical persuasion and Christian faith—by using it to suggest a different way of looking at women's rhetorical discourse and the rhetoric of religion in general. Swearingen posits that emotion "has been culturally encoded as feminine or, at the very least, as weakness, as passive or reactive, as nonrational, and as an abandonment of control, skepticism, detachment, and circumspection that have for so long been definitive of Western rationality and discourse" (124). By contrasting the traditional views of women's rhetoric as emotional, weak, and passive with contemporary theories of women's discourse as knowledgeable, cognitive, and deliberate, Swearingen provides important criteria by which to judge women's texts, and she sets the stage for incorporating the theories of women's discourse with Kinneavy's theories of Greek and Jewish-Christian rhetoric. Swearingen also juxtaposes various scholarly works to create a view of religious rhetoric that is compatible with

feminist ideologies, and by extension, is compatible with spiritual rhetoric and the persuasive strategies of the early Methodist women I study.

Swearingen appropriates work on *pistis* for feminist analysis

Additionally, Swearingen cites three elements of Kinneavy's work on *pistis* that may be productively appropriated for feminist rhetorical analysis. First, she foregrounds the notion that rhetorical practice and theory have evolved from the concept of "a passive audience acted on by a more skilled and knowledgeable speaker" to acknowledge the importance of free will and the "conscious and willing assent of the listener" (Swearingen 127). Second, she notes the cultural tradition of considering faith "and particularly the elements of willing assent, volition, and surrendering of self in order to be renewed or reborn" as feminine qualities that are encoded with "New Testament metaphors of the church as [the] bride" of Christ, and she encourages further scholarship to examine the "feminine aspects" of faith (Swearingen 128). Finally, Swearingen notes that Kinneavy's methodology of "recovering the positive aspects of persuasion under the heading of the audience's volition, free will, and assent" can also be used to rescue the "feminine aspects" of persuasion (128).

Definitions of feminism and feminist rhetoric

In recent decades, the presence of feminine aspects of persuasion have often been debated, and scholars of feminism and rhetorical criticism have worked to articulate the issues and procedures involved in conducting rhetorical criticism from a feminist perspective. It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss feminist theories largely developed outside the field of rhetoric and then appropriated by scholars as the informing theories in developing methodologies for feminist rhetorical criticism.

However, some definitions may be helpful to contextualize this study: Feminism is "the principle that women should have political, economic, and social rights equal to those of men" ("Feminism"). Susan Frank Parsons notes that "a feminist is one who takes most seriously the practical concerns of women's lives, the analysis and critique of these conditions of life, and the ways in which women's lives can become more fulfilling" (8). Both of these definitions recognize the rights and equality of women and acknowledge feminists' desires to improve the lives of others. In the same way that feminism strives to enhance lives, Kathy Davis suggests feminist rhetoric seeks to "focus on the empowerment of women" (qtd. In Covino and Jolliffe 396), and Sonja K. Foss notes feminist rhetoric is "aimed at improving conditions for women" (165).

History of feminism term

The word feminism dates from the mid-nineteenth century (Andermahr, Lovell, and Wilkowitz 76), so it is historically inaccurate to use the word feminist to refer to eighteenth-century authors or rhetoric. However, Marla J. Selvidge comments about women interpreters of the Bible from much earlier centuries that "their goals, strategies, and conclusions could be placed squarely within feminism today" and "all of them hoped for the improvement in lives of both women and men" (4, 6). The same is true for the early Methodist women I study, and so, using Selvidge's precedent, I consider their writings as feminist rhetoric.

How early Methodist texts can be considered as feminist rhetoric

At first, theorizing that texts written by early Methodist women in the eighteenth century include feminist rhetoric might seem anachronistic, and further explanation is necessary to juxtapose the contemporary characteristics of feminism and feminist

rhetoric—as seeking to improve the lives of others—with the early Methodist texts written in the eighteenth century. One explanation for characterizing the texts as being feminist comes from the reason the women wrote their texts. As discussed in chapter 1, early Methodists—both women and men—kept journals to benefit themselves spiritually, as a means of self-expression, and as a way of sharing the message of spiritual salvation with others. In addition to being a staple of the eighteenth-century culture, letter writing provided a means for women rhetors to most intimately and specifically communicate with others their spiritual concerns. Other texts, such as women's theological writings, also were composed to communicate spiritual and theological concerns, often to a wider audience and with less intimacy than either letters or journals. The ultimate purpose of most texts written by early Methodist women—and indeed the purpose of the entire Methodist movement—was to change and improve lives spiritually and physically, and close examination of these texts in later chapters will show that, despite the patriarchal culture in which these women lived and wrote, they created their own distinctive empowering feminist rhetoric that is quite consistent with features of modern feminist rhetoric.

Relationship of Methodist theology to feminism

Scholars have suggested that the Wesleyan tradition "shares a distinctively kindred theological spirit with contemporary Christian feminists" (Maddox 2), and others have shown the relationship of the Wesleyan/holiness movement to the women's rights and feminist movements. In addition to the desire to change and improve lives spiritually and physically, the Wesleyan tradition has been congenial to feminism because of the belief in equal salvation for all. John Wesley held the conviction that

"justification and salvation are open to all people regardless of gender, class, or race" (Collins *Perfecting* 251), and this belief led to the commitment by early Methodists to providing physical comfort and aid to the disadvantaged as well as offering spiritual succor. Additionally, having their own personal relationship with Christ and experiencing salvation and sanctification were often the catalysts and motivators that empowered the early Methodist women to compose their texts.

Empowerment coming from an experience of God and sanctification

One empowering force for Methodist and Wesleyan/holiness women was their personal relationship with Christ. Vicki Tolar Collins (Burton) points to Christ as the force that authorized Hester Rogers to tell her story in her spiritual experience journal. Collins explains, "Christ is God's material rhetoric, incarnate and persuasive in human darkness. The narrative of Christ's life is the light which authorizes others who experience the light to tell their stories" (*Perfecting* 263-64), and the same was true for other women writers. Additionally, early Methodist women were empowered by their experiences of sanctification. Jean Miller Schmidt argues that sanctification—which is given to believers as a result of God's grace—was sufficient to provide salvation and also gave early Methodist women the ability to live holy lives (*Grace Sufficient* 20-21). Susie C. Stanley argues that the sanctification experience empowered Wesleyan/holiness women to "challenge the claim that women's sphere was in the private realm of domesticity" ("Empowered" 1). The common theme running through both Schmidt's and Stanley's studies is the idea that the experience of sanctification gave women power and sufficiency that they had not experienced before and provides "a basis on which Christian feminists can build their own understanding of

empowerment" (Stanley "Empowered" 2). In their studies, Schmidt and Stanley show Methodist and Wesleyan/holiness women as examples of those who were empowered by their spirituality.

Spirituality empowers feminism

Numerous other studies also show how early Methodist and Wesleyan/holiness women's experience of God empowered their lives and activities. For example, the purpose of Hilah F. Thomas and Rosemary Skinner Keller's *Women in New Worlds: Historical Perspectives on the Wesleyan Tradition* is to "trace episodes in the spiritual empowerment which led females beyond silent participation in the established church of John Wesley's day to their rightful place beside men as ministers and preachers" (14). Paul Wesley Chilcote explains that numerous factors, not the least of which was John Wesley's belief in the value of individual persons, also created "a theological atmosphere conducive to the empowerment of women" and enabled the masses who heard Wesley's message: "Wesley gave concrete expression to the freedom he proclaimed in his preaching. Individuals who stood on the periphery of English society were empowered and gifted for service" (*She* 124-25). Thus, from these and other studies, we know that their spiritual experiences and relationships with Christ empowered Methodist and Wesleyan/holiness women to speak, write, preach, and carry on other ministry activities they likely would not have undertaken otherwise.

Introducing my feminist method

I will now turn my attention to comparing and contrasting several of the unique approaches that have been advanced for conducting rhetorical criticism from a feminist perspective; each approach is distinguished by the object of study, but all the

approaches share the feminist commitment to foreground women's rhetorical contributions and to focus on improving lives and empowering women. From these approaches, I develop a comprehensive methodology for analyzing texts written by female rhetors; I use this method in later chapters to analyze texts written by early Methodist women.

Connors on women's absence

In 1992, Robert J. Connors summarized the problem of women's absence from classical rhetoric and modern times:

> The historical place of women in rhetoric *is* so slight that some feminist scholars are now calling for a complete revaluation of what may be called "rhetorical history." Scholars such as Susan Jarratt, Cheryl Glenn, and C. Jan Swearingen wish to open up rhetorical history to include female writers, philosophers, abbesses, mystics, and other historical figures who *used* rhetoric. This . . . expansion of the meaning of the term *rhetoric* may be long overdue; it is certainly necessary if historians are to have any women "rhetoricians" at all to work with in the period before 1800. ("Exclusion" 77-78; Connors' emphasis)

Today, more than 20 years later, Connors' comments can be seen as accurately predicting the project that many historians—including those Connors names—have undertaken to expand the province of traditional male rhetoric to accommodate new practitioners and new practices of rhetoric. This project has been informed by feminist studies, has involved finding unknown rhetors and analyzing previously unknown texts, and it has led to developing research methods for analyzing and acknowledging women's rhetorical contributions.

Introducing the project of juxtaposing methods of feminist rhetorical analysis

More recently, in 1996, Krista Ratcliffe summarizes some of the different theoretical spaces created by scholars focusing on feminist theories of rhetoric:

> Some feminist challenges study women's construction of knowledge claims . . .; others study women's textual strategies . . .; others study how rhetorical theories position women . . .; others study rhetorical theories that women themselves have constructed . . .; still others study intersections of rhetorical theory and pedagogy; or . . . they may study some combination thereof. (2)

Similar to the way I earlier juxtaposed several theories of religious rhetoric to form a new theoretical and methodological model of spiritual rhetoric, I will now juxtapose several approaches to feminist rhetorical theory—including some which Ratcliffe mentions—to form a new model for conducting rhetorical criticism from a feminist perspective. The first approach challenges the rhetorical tradition by studying women's texts as the basis for new theories of rhetoric. The second approach recognizes the needs and experiences of women as the basis for rhetorical analysis, and the third approach considers women's unique ways of knowing and knowledge making. By virtue of the objects of study, each approach informs a methodology of feminist rhetorical criticism.

Model 1: Challenging the rhetorical tradition

In challenging the rhetorical tradition, one of the most foundational tasks is to acknowledge women and their contributions to the theory and practice of rhetoric; this is the task Connors looked toward in 1992 when he wrote of scholars' call for a "complete revaluation" of rhetorical history. Since that time, the greatest volume of feminist historical work in the field of rhetoric has worked to incorporate women and women's texts into the traditionally male rhetorical tradition. To challenge the rhetorical tradition, Krista Ratcliffe suggests using four interwoven moves: *recovering*, *rereading*, *extrapolating*, and *conceptualizing* (2; emphasis added). Patricia A. Sullivan notes that feminist scholarship in composition focuses on *reexamining* received knowledge and

recuperating "feminine modes of thinking" (40; emphasis added), and Cheryl Glenn challenges scholars to "*reconsider* . . . rhetoric [and] its traditions and ... histories," and by so doing scholars will "*[redraw]* the boundaries of rhetoric to include new practitioners and new practices." (*Rhetoric Retold* 16-17; emphasis added). All of these moves—recovering, rereading, extrapolating, conceptualizing, reexamining, recuperating, reconsidering, and redrawing—ask scholars to carefully reevaluate women's past rhetorical contributions to create a new rhetorical theory.

Ratcliffe's moves: *recovering, rereading,* extrapolating, conceptualizing

According to Ratcliffe, "*recovering* involves the archaeological project of discovering lost or marginalized theories of rhetoric," including retaining both once-popular texts as well as texts considered worthless; recovering can also return lost rhetors to rhetorical history (2-3; emphasis added). The second move that may be used to challenge the rhetorical tradition is *rereading*, an activity that involves "revising our interpretations of canonical and recovered theories of rhetoric" and "explod[ing the] patriarchal assumptions and implications for composition studies" (Ratcliffe 3). *Extrapolating*, Ratcliffe's third rhetorical move, involves rereading texts such as "essays, etiquette manuals, cookbooks, fiction, diaries, etc." which can provide "a rich interdisciplinary resource for . . . constructing women's and feminist theories of rhetoric" (4), and extrapolating theories of rhetoric from these texts. Finally, *conceptualizing* involves "writing new theories of rhetoric" that transform classical rhetorics and allow for "multiple standpoints and practices" (Ratcliffe 5-6) within feminism. All of Ratcliffe's moves require scholars to look critically at texts composed by women, either in an attempt to rediscover the rhetoric of the texts, to reevaluate the

texts in light of rhetorical theories, or to create a new feminist rhetorical theory based on the texts.

Sullivan's moves: *reexamine* and *recuperate* and *reinterpret*

Patricia A. Sullivan moves beyond feminist texts to note the focus of feminist scholarship in composition:

> It focuses on received knowledge—on the existing studies, canons, discourse, theories, assumptions and practices of our discipline—and *reexamines* them in the light of feminist theory to uncover male bias and androcentrism; and it *recuperates* and constitutes distinctively feminine modes of thinking and expression by taking gender, and in particular women's experiences, perceptions, and meanings, as the starting point of inquiry . . . feminist critique in composition [also] involves a *reinterpretation* of the extant literature of our discipline. (40-41; emphasis added)

Sullivan's techniques require scholars to use feminist theory—based on women's experiences and perceptions drawn from their texts—to *reexamine* the discipline, to *recuperate* "feminine modes of thinking and expression" and then *reinterpret* the canon and rhetorical theories.

Glenn's moves: look back, *reconsider, redraw,* and *remap*

Finally, Cheryl Glenn asks researchers to "look backwards at all the unquestioned rhetorical scholarship that has come before" (*Rhetoric Retold* 15) as a way of making possible the *reconsideration*, *redrawing*, and *remapping* of rhetorical history and theories. "Each time we encourage such *remappings* and reconceptualize basic assumptions about rhetoric, we are *redrawing* the boundaries of rhetoric to include new practitioners and new practices" (Glenn, *Rhetoric Retold* 17; emphasis added).

Summary of moves from Ratcliffe, Sullivan, and Glenn

Taken together, these moves suggested by Ratcliffe, Sullivan, and Glenn—recovering, rereading, extrapolating, conceptualizing, reexamining, recuperating, reconsidering, reinterpreting, and redrawing—can be seen as both sequential and recursive tasks in challenging the rhetorical tradition; these moves also infer the activity of going back and considering again. The challenge begins with Ratcliffe's moves of recovering and rereading women's texts from which to extrapolate and conceptualize new theories of rhetoric. Sullivan's moves then take new theories of rhetoric and use them to reexamine and recuperate rhetorical history. Finally, the last two moves—reconsidering the rhetorical tradition and redrawing the boundaries of rhetoric—can only be accomplished by incorporating the new texts and using the new rhetorical theories that the earlier moves have facilitated. However, in addition to this linear structure, the process of challenging the rhetorical tradition is also recursive: texts are examined, theories are created, boundaries are redrawn, and in the redrawing new texts are discovered. In the end—if there can ever be an end—this approach seeks to give voice to lost or forgotten women by transmuting their texts into new rhetorical theory.

Model 2: Avoiding "adding women" to the canon

A second model for feminist research is really not a model at all. Sandra Harding argues that looking at research methods is not the way to identify the features of feminist research, and she decries a "distinctive feminist method of research" that "'add[s] women to traditional analyses" (1, 3). She makes this argument on the basis that expecting to understand current gender roles based on learning about women in the past is unrealistic. "Insightful as these 'lost women' were, their work could not benefit

from the many feminist theoretical breakthroughs of the last decades" (Harding 4). Rather, Harding suggests features of research that will best illuminate current feminist issues. First, feminist research must generate "its problematics from the perspective of women's experiences" and then allow women to "reveal *for the first time* what [their] experiences are" (7; Harding's emphasis).[10] Second, research problems must be designed for women in order to provide them with answers they need and want in order to be able to change their conditions (Harding 8). Studying women's experiences in these ways is vital because doing so can help women understand themselves, and because this method is also groundbreaking: "the world can claim virtually no history [of studying women's experiences] at all" (Harding 8), so studying women's experiences becomes a feminist project.

Sullivan responds to Harding

Patricia A. Sullivan responds to Harding by noting that the characteristics of Harding's study represent a "radical departure from traditional assumptions and paradigms of knowledge making" because they challenge assumptions of gender neutrality and inclusiveness (51). Harding's characteristics also represent a radical departure from the historicized research paradigm advanced by the Ratcliffe, Sullivan, and Glenn model which extrapolates from the past to the present; instead Harding moves feminist research to deal with concerns about present-day issues. Additionally, according to Sullivan, Harding has revealed a fundamental difference between "a feminist approach and traditional approaches to . . . research" (57). The differences

[10] The first model, from Ratcliffe, Sullivan, and Glenn, which challenges the rhetorical tradition, also advocates studying women's experiences. However, that model focuses primarily on historical women's experiences while Harding's focus is on contemporary women's experiences.

between traditional and feminist approaches, Sullivan explains, are that "feminist inquiry wears its heart on its sleeve: it originates in an ideological agenda that, instead of masking, it declares up front" while the traditional approach "has produced no self-generated practice of reflection on its racial, class, and gender biases" (57). Harding's consideration of women's experiences requires yet another activity of inquiry: the researcher must look at her own viewpoint to see how it affects what she studies and the ways in which she conducts her research.

Harding: consider researcher's experiences and perspectives

Scholars must remember that their research is never neutral—it is always accompanied by the researcher's assumptions and beliefs which "shape the results of the analysis" (Harding 9). In fact, Robert J. Connors points out that the researcher's current perceptions are "*the most important data*" affecting his or her understanding ("Dreams" 16; emphasis added). That being the case, then, Harding's features of feminist research involve both the subject women's experiences *and* the researcher's experiences as important factors in the feminist rhetorical study. As the researcher in this study, I freely "wear my heart on my sleeve"—as described by Sullivan—and declare that my scholarly point of view is informed by my religious upbringing and my personal faith. Any attempts to eliminate my experiences as a factor in my rhetorical study would render my study to be non-feminist and traditional, a move which I am reluctant to make given my strong commitment to studying early Methodist women's texts from a feminist viewpoint.

Summary of feminist models 1 and 2; introducing model 3

In the first approach to feminist rhetorical criticism—that of challenging the rhetorical tradition—Ratcliffe, Sullivan, and Glenn focus their attention primarily on historical texts written by women and use those texts to create new rhetorical theories and histories. In the second method—that of avoiding simply "adding women" to the canon—Harding focuses research attention on the present-day issues and experiences of the women being studied and on the experiences and perspectives of the researchers. We will see that the third approach to feminist rhetorical criticism represents yet another fundamentally divergent way of thinking of women and their rhetoric.

Model 3: Accepting women's ways of knowing

A third way of looking at women's rhetorics is to consider that women are instruments of knowledge and of knowing (Harding 3) and that they communicate this knowledge in their texts. This is the project presented in *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* by Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Mattuck Tarule. The book examines "the ways of knowing that women have cultivated and learned to value" (Belenky et al. xxv) and describes five different viewpoints "from which women view reality and draw conclusions about truth, knowledge, and authority" (Belenky et al. 3). Although this study was done in the field of psychology and was published more than 15 years ago, it remains a valid heuristic for feminist rhetorical criticism by using the five categories of knowledge—silence and received, subjective, procedural, and constructed knowledge—to analyze women's interwoven rhetorical activities.

The five perspectives of knowledge, as presented by Belenky and her co-authors, are:

> *Silence*, a position in which women experience themselves as mindless and voiceless and subject to the whims of external authority; *received knowledge*, a perspective from which women conceive of themselves as capable of receiving, even reproducing, knowledge from the all-knowing external authorities but not capable of creating knowledge on their own; *subjective knowledge*, a perspective from which truth and knowledge are conceived of as personal, private, and subjectively known or intuited; *procedural knowledge*, a position in which women are invested in learning and applying objective procedures for obtaining and communicating knowledge; and *constructed knowledge*, a position in which women view all knowledge as contextual, experience themselves as creators of knowledge, and value both subjective and objective strategies for knowing. (Belenky et al. 15; Belenky's emphasis)

Using Belenky's model in rhetorical analysis

Each of these five perspectives has a rhetorical component and can be useful as a heuristic in analyzing women's rhetorical activities. Collectively these five perspectives form a hierarchy which represents the development of women's knowledge and voice, ranging from silent—or silenced—to women coming to voice and being creators of knowledge. Belenky and her coauthors adopt the metaphor of voice to refer to a "sense of mind, self-worth, and feelings of isolation from or connection to others," (18); all of these feelings are rhetorical constructs that are also intricately interwoven with each other through the epistemology that each represents. The authors also note that their work was "embedded in a larger context of feminist theory about voice and silence"—more rhetorical constructs—and that as the study progressed they became aware of their own shifting perspectives on feminist theory as a result of their studies on other women's voices (19-20).

Using metaphor of voice in feminist rhetorical criticism

Using the metaphor of voice is one way in which the study by Belenky and her coauthors can serve as an approach to feminist rhetorical criticism. The authors repeatedly characterize voice in much the same way as rhetoricians have defined feminine style. For example, Belenky et al. note that their use of voice as a term reflects "selflessness" and "humbleness" (xvi), and that "women's talk" is hesitant and qualified and concerned with the practical and the everyday (16). In rhetorical studies, feminine style has been defined as being supportive, nurturing, cooperative, non-confrontational, conciliatory, modest, and providing a way for others to save face. In much the same way that the voices of Belenky's study subjects are hesitant and qualified, women have long used feminine style to "'encode' their concerns in a linguistic form that would be 'acceptable' to their audiences" (Bacon, *Humblest* 113). The selflessness and humbleness of Belenky's metaphor of voice functions in much the same way as the cooperative, conciliatory, and modest voice of feminine style; Belenky's hesitant and qualified "women's talk" closely compares to feminine style's method of non-confrontational and face-saving communication. The commonalities between Belenky's metaphor of voice and rhetoric's feminine style is instructive in analyzing the ways in which women develop their voices and how the newly developed voices become rhetorical and persuasive.

Summary of three feminist models

I have now considered three different approaches to a feminist model of rhetorical criticism. The first model challenges the rhetorical tradition by extrapolating new theories of rhetoric from women's texts. The second model focuses on present-day

issues and experiences of the writer and the researchers. The third model considers women's unique ways of knowing and knowledge making. Many other scholars of rhetoric have proposed additional ways of doing textual analysis; I will briefly mention one additional method which brings helpful dynamics to the rhetorical analysis of women's texts which I undertake in this study.

George Kennedy's method of rhetorical criticism

George A. Kennedy advances a methodology of several stages or steps which he uses to conduct rhetorical criticism of the New Testament (*New Testament* 33-38). However, Kennedy's process is infinitely adaptable to analyzing a variety of texts—secular or religious—and it is a recursive process in which the stages or steps may be repeated indefinitely until the text has been adequately analyzed. In Kennedy's model, the first stage in rhetorical criticism is to *determine the rhetorical unit*; this unit must be large enough to have a beginning, middle, and ending and have an argument or action as a unifying device. Second, the rhetorical critic must *determine the rhetorical situation*, a step which Kennedy explains as involving a "situation under which (the rhetor) is called upon to make some response: the response made is conditioned by the situation and in turn has some possibility of affecting the situation or what follows from it." In determining the rhetorical situation, the critic should consider the rhetorical problem to which the rhetor is responding and evaluate several aspects of the situation—including the context and the audience—which influence the objectives and the text the rhetor will compose. Third, the critic should *evaluate the arrangement of material and the stylistic devices* to see how the text functions in response to the rhetorical situation. Finally, the critic may *review the text's success or failure* in

responding to the rhetorical situation (*New Testament* 33-38; Kennedy's emphasis and emphasis added).

Compatibility between Kennedy's method and other methods

In suggesting that rhetorical criticism must consider the rhetorical unit and situation, and that it must evaluate the arrangement and style, Kennedy stresses the necessity of analyzing texts in a way that is consistent with the methods set forth by Ratcliffe, Glenn, and Sullivan, but that gives more emphasis to textual strategies. Additionally, in asking the critic to analyze the text's success or failure, Kennedy requires the critic to go beyond simple textual analysis of primary texts to also ascertain how the text was received by the audience; in some cases determining the audience response requires the critic to conduct additional historical research in secondary texts.

My model: start with the texts

Following Gesa Kirsch's and Patricia Sullivan's invitation to combine methods to lead to "new ways of conducting and interpreting research" (248), I will now propose a new model for feminist rhetorical criticism that incorporates many of the features of all four approaches I have just overviewed. In the new model, the starting point will be the texts (as advanced by the Ratcliffe, Sullivan, and Glenn model and by George Kennedy), the experiences of the women writers (as advanced by the Harding model), and the rhetorical situation (as advanced by George Kennedy). Texts, experiences, and situations are intricately interwoven and must be considered together; in fact, it is not possible to have any without the others. Texts respond to situations and speak of experiences, either implicitly or explicitly, and experiences and responses to situations are communicated through texts.

My model steps 2 and 3: analyze texts and experiences; develop theories of rhetoric

The next step in the new model of feminist rhetorical criticism is to analyze the texts and experiences of the women writers to understand their ways of knowing and knowledge making (as advanced by the Belenky et al. model) and to analyze their voices and their silences. Analyzing voice and silence, and evaluating arrangement and style (as advanced by the Kennedy model), keeps scholars deeply rooted in the texts and in the experiences of the writers and the situations to which they are responding, and also allows scholars to use those texts and experiences as a point of departure for the next step in which the success or failure of the texts is evaluated (as advanced by the Kennedy model). Finally, scholars develop theories of rhetoric based upon the texts and their style and success, the experiences reported and the situations responded to, and the knowledge of the women rhetors.

How I used my model for analyzing Hester Rogers's journal

The new model of feminist rhetorical criticism I have developed brings together all the salient features of the four approaches discussed earlier. It combines these features into a method that allows the voices, knowledge, texts, *and* experiences of women in any era and on any topic to inform new theories of rhetoric. Interestingly, as I researched and synthesized this new model of feminist rhetorical criticism from the works of various scholars, I realized that I had already put this model into practice. In my M.A. thesis, I conducted rhetorical analysis of the text of the spiritual experience journal written by Hester Rogers (Jensen); portions of that project are included in chapter 5 and elsewhere in this study. My departure point in my thesis was Hester's

experiences, and I was first drawn to Hester's journal by reading about her life in academic work done by other scholars. From there, I went to the text of the journal and quickly saw that Hester refigured traditional Aristotelian appeals to create a unique persuasive spiritual rhetoric. As I delved deeper into the text, I soon discovered my study would be incomplete without analyzing Hester's feminist rhetoric and her feminine style. Finally, based on this deep textual work in Jewish-Christian, Aristotelian, and feminist areas, I concluded my thesis with several new rhetorical theories that I extrapolated from the life experiences of Hester and the text of her journal. This earlier project indicates that the new model of feminist rhetorical criticism I have developed is functional and effective in studying women's texts.

Before commencing my study of texts written by early Methodist women, one additional distinction should be explained. A methodological commonplace understood and used in the field of rhetoric and composition holds that rhetorical analysis usually states the researcher's understanding of the rhetor's meaning or viewpoint. One example may be helpful to explain this important distinction that functions in rhetorical criticism. As mentioned earlier, in writing about Hester Rogers's journal, Vicki Tolar Collins (Burton) explains, "Christ is God's material rhetoric, incarnate and persuasive in human darkness. The narrative of Christ's life is the light which authorizes others who experience the light to tell their stories" (Perfecting 263-64). If not familiar with the commonplace of stating the rhetor's meaning or viewpoint rather than the researcher's viewpoint when analyzing texts, a reader could assume that here Dr. Collins is asserting her personal belief that Christ is the embodiment of God, that he is incarnate, and that his story is the authorization others appropriate when testifying of

their experiences. However, there is no indication that Dr. Collins's intention here is to give her religious viewpoint, and one cannot accurately determine from this statement what Dr. Collins may personally believe; rather her statement can be understood as a description of how she interprets the text written by Hester Rogers. My analysis of the texts written by Susanna, Sarah, Mary, and Hester follows this methodological commonplace.

With the goal of conducting rhetorical criticism from a feminist viewpoint, several methodologies have emerged for conceptualizing and carrying out research; I have reviewed and synthesized four approaches to create my new model that I will use in later chapters to analyze the spiritual rhetoric of early Methodist women. My work in this chapter demonstrates that feminist rhetorical criticism can be conducted in many ways and with many different approaches but the concern with women's lives and empowerment remains constant and paramount. Additionally, the rewards from a pluralistic research method—such as I have developed and use in the next chapters to study early Methodist women—are immense because the method foregrounds women's rhetorical achievements in the context of their lives and experiences.

Krista Ratcliffe concludes her challenge to the rhetorical tradition by stating that "language functions through subjects, contexts, and texts to construct meanings that influence public and private cultural spaces" (12). When researchers—such as myself—study women's experiences and their texts, use those texts to develop new theories of rhetoric, and acknowledge the women's unique ways of knowledge making—as I do in the next chapters for several early Methodist women—then the language, subjects,

contexts, and texts all interweave to show the enormous contributions these women have made.

Chapter 3

Susanna Wesley: "A Preacher of Righteousness"

When John Wesley stated in 1742 that his mother, Susanna Wesley, "had been, in her measure and degree, a preacher of righteousness" (Wesley, *Heart* 90), he was referring to Susanna's role in holding Sunday evening worship services in her home and implicitly acknowledging his debt to his mother for first creating these meetings which, many years later, he duplicated in his own Methodist societies (Wallace 13-14). Although Susanna Wesley (1669-1742) is best known as the mother of John Wesley, her letters, journals, and other writings show her to be an educated and intellectual woman who held strong beliefs on politics, religion, and family issues. In her writings, Susanna relies on several rhetorical strategies to assert the validity of her viewpoints, to reject patriarchal constraints, and to persuade her readers of the logic of her arguments.

"A fascinating figure"

Charles Wallace Jr., the editor of the only complete collection of Susanna Wesley's texts, notes that Susanna "deserves to be regarded not just as the mother of the founders of Methodism but also as a fascinating figure in her own right, a woman enmeshed in and yet pushing against many of the patriarchal constraints of early eighteenth-century church and society" (vii). In using the plural "founders of Methodism," Wallace is including John Wesley's brother, Charles, with John as the founders of Methodism. As mentioned earlier, at Oxford, Charles formed a "Holy Club" that met for study and spiritual enrichment. John took over leadership and developed an orderly manner or "method" for their activities, and this group was soon called Methodists (Pudney 32-33). Most scholars consider John Wesley alone to be the

founder of Methodism, despite Wallace's inclusion of Charles. Other scholars have suggested that the beginnings of Methodism should be attributed to Susanna because she initiated many of the methods John later incorporated into the Methodist ritual. These include journal keeping, the discipline of meditation and prayer several times a day, and the organization of the Sunday evening worship services led by a lay person.

Susanna's writings

In collecting Susanna's extant writings, Wallace gives prominence to Susanna's letters because her "letters give us a better view of the whole person than do her larger theological and educational writings and her devotional journal" (31); this statement is at least partially true because many of Susanna's earlier writings were destroyed by a fire in 1709, and no letters written prior to 1702 are known to exist. Additionally, more letters exist than of any of Susanna's other writings. The vast majority of Susanna's extant letters were written to her sons Charles and John (Wallace 31); understandably Charles's and John's prominence and fame contributed to the collection and preservation of documents they received. While Susanna's letters to her sons provide interesting opportunities for analysis, I have deliberately chosen to first analyze letters that do not directly involve Charles or John in order to focus more closely on Susanna's texts in their own right rather than doing so in the reflected light of her famous sons. Moreover, the chosen letters show an astonishing rhetorical ability to present and defend her viewpoints.

I begin by focusing on several significant letters Susanna wrote in response to political and religious disagreements with her husband, Samuel Wesley, and I will conclude this chapter with a discussion of Susanna's extant journal. Through such

analysis, I wish to provide a new reading of Susanna's letters and journal and take a closer look at her whole person as revealed in her writings; my reading is new because it attempts to analyze Susanna's persuasive rhetoric by using the heuristics I have developed in earlier chapters.

Susanna's texts and feminist rhetorical criticism

In chapter 2, I proposed a new model for feminist rhetorical criticism that considers the texts and the experiences of the women rhetors, acknowledges the rhetorical situations in which they are writing or speaking, evaluates their ways of knowing and knowledge making, and analyzes their voices—the ways in which they construct their texts—and the things left silent or unsaid. In using this model, I judge the success or failure of the texts and develop theories of rhetoric. One of the first steps in analyzing Susanna's spiritual rhetoric is to examine the historical and intellectual atmosphere in which she lived.

Biography and intellectual context

Susanna Annesley was born in London on January 20, 1669 to Dr. Samuel Annesley and his second wife. Susanna was Dr. Annesley's twenty-fifth—and next-to-last—child born to his second of two wives; the name of her mother is unknown (Newton 20, 19). Only nine children—seven girls and two boys—survived infancy (Wallace 4). Annesley was a Puritan minister who was expelled from his church in the conservative backlash after Charles II was restored to the throne (Tomkins 8). When Susanna was 12 years old, in 1681, she deliberately left the Puritans to join the Church of England. Scholars can only speculate on her reasons for changing religious affiliation since a treatise she wrote on the subject was lost in the fire in 1709. However, in a letter

Susanna wrote to her son Samuel Jr. after the fire, she alludes to the burned document and hints at her motivation for leaving the Puritans when she was a child.

> Because I was educated among the Dissenters, and there was somewhat remarkable in my leaving 'em at so early an age, not being full 13, I had drawn up an account of the whole transaction, under which head I had included the main of the controversy between them and the Established Church as far as it had come to my knowledge; and then followed the reasons that determined my judgment to the preference of the Church of England (71)

Instead of following the nonconformists, whom her father led in London, Susanna believed that law and order were requirements of a strong religion, and she thoughtfully aligned her loyalties with the Church of England. Although her father had been persecuted by the Anglicans, he accepted Susanna's departure from the Puritans, and she remained his favorite of his seven daughters who survived infancy (Wallace 4-5).

Susanna's education and intellect

Perhaps because Susanna's father saw the intellectual potential in his daughter, he provided her with an outstanding education that was much more advanced than most girls received at that time; Susanna studied arts and sciences as well as biblical and classical languages (Oden 250). Her outstanding education is vividly revealed in her written response to "Aristotle's error" on the topic of creation, her discussion of Locke and "unnamed Platonists" (Wallace 233), and her attention to Blaise Pascal and his viewpoints on paradox, the "insufficiency of metaphysical proofs of God's existence," and regulating "passions and amusements" (Wallace 283). Susanna's outstanding education and intelligence also stood her in good stead as she soon became the educator for her many children.

Marriage and family life as dissenters

On November 12, 1688, when she was 19 years old, Susanna married Samuel Wesley, a 26-year-old ordained Anglican priest and naval chaplain. Over 19 years, Susanna gave birth to 20 children, including three sets of twins. Only ten children survived to adulthood (Wallace 8). Like Susanna, Samuel Wesley was descended from Nonconformist ministers but had been drawn to the Church of England (Wallace 5, 7). "[Samuel and Susanna] had a great deal to bind them together besides their mutual love. They had a shared background as lapsed Dissenters, uncommon courage and tenacity of purpose, and a real concern for Christianity in earnest" (Newton 69). Yet despite their seeming philosophical compatibility and similar religious backgrounds, the couple were soon to find themselves at odds over both political and religious matters.

Marital discord

In 1702, the couple were living in Epworth—a rural town about 150 miles from London—where Samuel was the rector of the parish church. Early in that year, a political disagreement arose between Samuel and Susanna when she refused to give assent—by saying "amen"—when Samuel prayed for the reigning British monarch, King William III. In a letter written to her acquaintance and neighbor, Lady Yarborough, Susanna describes the disagreement between herself and Samuel after he "observed in our Family prayers I did not say Amen to his prayer for K[ing] W[illiam] as I usually do to all other" prayers (35). When Samuel confronted Susanna and she continued to refuse to give assent, Susanna wrote that he "immediately kneeled down and imprecated the divine Vengeance upon himself and all his posterity if ever he touched me more or came into a bed with me before I had begged God's pardon and his

[pardon], for not saying Amen to the prayer for the K[in]g" (35). The couple's youngest son and a twin, John Benjamin, died in late December 1701 at the age of six months (Wallace 8). There is no evidence to suggest that the baby's death contributed to either Samuel's or Susanna's tenacity in their beliefs about the rightful king, but one can safely assume that their emotions were greatly affected by the death and may have heightened their responses to the disagreement. [11]

Disagreement over the rightful king

The issue that predicated Susanna's refusal to assent to Samuel's prayers for King William III was her belief that King James II, who had been deposed in the Glorious Revolution of 1688, some 14 years earlier, remained the king by divine right. Samuel supported the rule of William and Mary (Wallace 34, 12), in part, perhaps, because he served as a sort of ghost writer for the king and also received a government stipend. Charles Wallace Jr. explains the situation: "Susanna's Puritan conscience, now serving . . . a sectarian right-wing Anglicanism, enabled the otherwise obedient 32-year-old wife to withstand the bluster of her politically more moderate 39-year-old-husband. Having vowed to live apart from her until she apologized, [Samuel] left for London in a huff" (34). Robert Walmsley, who in 1953 discovered the heretofore unknown letters from Susanna to Lady Yarborough, gives additional context and chronology of the disagreement:

[11] Interestingly, John Wesley, the founder of Methodism (born 1703) was the third child born to Susanna and Samuel who was named John. The first child named John was a twin, born in 1699 and died c. 1700; John's twin brother, Benjamin, also died c. 1700. The second child named John was also a twin, born in May 1701 and died in December 1701; he was named John Benjamin (Wallace 8), presumably to honor the memory of the twins John and Benjamin who died c. 1700. At least one scholar cites John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, as being named John Benjamin (Pudney 128), but most scholars give the Methodist founder's name as simply John Wesley. Reusing names of deceased children was a common practice in this era.

> Susanna Wesley's father had been an eminent Puritan divine, one of the ejected of 1662. She herself had gone from one extreme to another—from Dissent to deism and then to Anglicanism and to being a non-juror, more Church than the Church. That is, she followed those who objected to taking the oath to William and Mary on the ground that divine right was with James II. . . . Samuel Wesley, on the other hand, . . . owed his Church [position] to William's party. (51-52)

That Susanna would support the rule of a Catholic king, James II, may seem out of character for this young Anglican woman, but "her conscience would not let her pray for a monarch she could not regard as *de jure*" (Walmsley 51). Samuel remained at home in Epworth "in a state of estrangement" as Susanna wrote, for a few weeks before he left their five small children and Susanna while he went to London for several months. During those months, Samuel came home briefly, and then left again, as Susanna reported to Lady Yarborough, "with a resolution never to see me more" (38).

Lady Yarborough

Lady Yarborough was a noblewoman who had been a maid of honor to the Duchess of York in Charles II's court, and she was a prominent Nonjuror from "that sect of divine-right Anglicans who conscientiously refused to swear allegiance to William and Mary" (Wallace 34, 13). Perhaps Susanna hoped that because both she and Lady Yarborough did not support the rule of King William that Yarborough would provide Susanna with the support she needed to counter Samuel's strong support for the king. In her letter to Lady Yarborough, Susanna asks for advice and prayer, and she expresses her distress and uncertainty if she should "surrender her conscience to [Samuel's] or hold firm whatever the consequences" (Walmsley 51-52).

The fire and its aftermath

Susanna did hold firm. While Samuel was away, the parsonage where Susanna and the children lived was heavily damaged by fire; the fire brought Samuel to his senses, and he returned home in the summer of 1702. Robert Walmsley reports what happened next: “Samuel settled down with his wife in the half-burned parsonage, and on 17th June in the following year John Wesley was born. Had the estrangement not been healed modern religious history might have been very different; John was the first-fruits of the reconciliation” (55-57).

Scholars’ response to Susanna’s disagreement

In addition to providing an interesting anecdote about the circumstances of John Wesley’s birth, this story of Susanna’s and Samuel’s disagreement over the rightful king is well-known among scholars of eighteenth-century British history and literature who have used the story to bolster their arguments about politics and family life in the period. Rachel Weil uses the story as evidence of the interconnections between “the family and the state, marriage vows and political allegiance, husbands and kings” in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (1-2). Similarly, Su Fang Ng uses the story to illustrate the “analogy between state and family” in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (*Family* 360), and Charles Wallace characterizes the incident as being concerned with “sexual politics” and “how far a woman might go in resisting the will of her husband” (34). However, Susanna’s letters about her marital discord written to Lady Yarborough can also be read in several other ways: as an example of Susanna’s rhetorical skill, and as historical documents that give “clues to women’s struggles and triumphs in more restrictive times and places” (Wallace 4); as feminist rhetoric, and as a

reflection of Susanna's deep devotion to God and to her conscience. Charles Wallace Jr. also corroborates the importance of studying Susanna's writings from her perspective and not as "staples of Wesleyan legend in the past" (9).

Susanna's motivation and argument; using Scripture regarding rights of couples

In her first letter to Lady Yarborough, dated March 7, 1702, Susanna strongly argues for her innocence in the disagreement with her husband, and she makes other important rhetorical moves in defending her intellectual equality and her feminist right to her own beliefs. First, she uses, and revises, St. Paul's statement in I Cor. 7:14 to bolster her argument for her equality and to argue for rights to her own body and her own opinion. In writing about the rights of couples, St. Paul asserts "The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife." While St. Paul gives *to each partner* the power over each other's bodies, Susanna uses the same scripture to argue that both she and Samuel have the *right to their own opinion* in the same way that both she and Samuel also have authority over their own bodies. She writes to Lady Yarborough, "I've unsuccessfully represented to him the unlawfulness and unreasonableness of his Oath; that the Man in that case has no more power over his own body than the Woman over her's; that since I'm willing to let him quietly enjoy his opinions, he ought not to deprive me of my little liberty of conscience" (35). In alluding to the biblical passage from St. Paul, Susanna turns the traditional scriptural viewpoint on its head to argue for her rights, and she does so on the basis of scriptural authority. Susanna's use of this biblical passage to argue a differing viewpoint is highly unusual and at variance with typical uses and interpretations of scripture. Additionally, by arguing for her right to her opinion, and for

her authority over her own body, Susanna asserts her intellectual equality with her husband—a move that is entirely consistent with both contemporary and historical definitions of feminism.

Scripture points up Samuel's errors

In using I Cor. 7:14 to bolster her argument, Susanna also implicitly points up the error of Samuel's actions in rejecting her because he disagrees with her opinion, and the scripture further indicts Samuel's actions. In the next verse, I Cor. 7:15, Paul instructs couples to not withhold sexual relations from each other, unless doing so is mutually consensual: "Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency." Although Susanna does not directly use this verse to indict Samuel for "for[saking] my bed" and remaining "a stranger ever since" (36), Lady Yarborough has enough familiarity with scripture to understand the indirect argument that Susanna is making by using Scripture to argue that Samuel is wrong in separating himself from her. By using scriptural allusions to show the error of Samuel's actions, Susanna is also subtly defending herself, her political opinions, and her intellectual equality based on scriptural authority.

Susanna implies Samuel has sinned

Susanna then further asserts her innocence by noting that she "[has] no resentment against my Master [Samuel], so far from it that the very next day I went with him to the Communion, though he that night forsook my bed to which he has been a stranger ever since" (36). In this passage, Susanna is alluding to the Christian belief that those who partake of Holy Communion must do so only if they are spiritually

worthy and in fellowship with other believers. This viewpoint is based on the Scripture in I Cor. 11:27: “Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.” Susanna states that she holds nothing against her husband while he continues to be estranged from her even while he takes communion. The implication is clear: Samuel has sinned by unworthily taking communion while being separated from her.

Scripture as one source of *logos*

As discussed earlier, the concept of *logos*, as coming from familiar Scripture as the source for truth, is also clearly applicable to Susanna’s letters. In Susanna’s short, four-paragraph letter to Lady Yarborough, there are at least ten instances in which she quotes Scripture, uses scriptural allusions, or in which her language is biblical. These uses of Scripture all serve to support details, to give the appearance of reason, and to justify a decision; they also advance Susanna’s logical appeals to her reader. Regardless of which way Susanna uses Scripture, Lady Yarborough reads statements that are similar to biblical passages, and based on her belief in the Bible, she consciously or subconsciously interprets the statements to be true and right and believable. Scripture becomes the authority for Lady Yarborough to logically believe what Susanna writes.

Using scripture to assert innocence

Although Susanna continues to assert her innocence and her political and intellectual equality, she also shows her deep devotion to God by expressing her extreme displeasure with the situation and her concern that she really is innocent before God. Here too, she incorporates many scriptures or scriptural allusions to present her

viewpoint and bolster her argument. She begins by quoting and alluding to scriptures to explain the seriousness of the situation:

> 'Tis a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, or to trifle with the divine Vengeance[12] which we can never sufficiently deprecate. He is too great to be affronted or mocked, to[o] wise to be deceived, no artifice or evasion could possibly pass upon him were I so impious to attempt it (35)

By using these scriptures, Susanna acknowledges her respect for God and his greatness, and she affirms her desire to avoid wrongdoing while still maintaining the right to her opinion. Susanna also subliminally suggests that she will submit to God—because of his wisdom and greatness—but that she is not inclined to submit to Samuel when she believes he is wrong.

Susanna's method of building upon each preceding phrase in the quotation above, as a means of emphasizing and amplifying God's qualities and the importance of obeying him, is very similar to the function of *progymnasmata.* In the Greek rhetorical tradition, *progymnasmata* is a series of rhetorical exercises in which each exercise builds upon that which came before; the purpose of these exercises is to reinforce "old lessons while introducing new challenges" (O'Rourke 562). Susanna uses the series of phrases to construct a hierarchy of reasons to obey God and dangers if one neglects to do so.

Susanna continues to paraphrase Scripture, this time to again assert her innocence in refusing to agree with her husband's political views. She writes, "I value not the world. I value neither reputation[,] friends or anything in comparison of the single satisfaction of preserving a conscience void of offense towards God and man";

[12] Susanna is quoting Hebrews 10:31: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" and alluding to the last part of Romans 12:19: "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

here she is closely paraphrasing Acts 24:16: “And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.” Susanna questions how she can keep a clear conscience before God if she “beg[s] pardon for what I think no sin.” Susanna is emphatic in her refusal to acquiesce or apologize to Samuel. She bases her argument on the axiomatic use of scripture as truth, and she argues enthymematically that she wishes to avoid wrongdoing, and so she will not apologize because doing so would be an “offense [toward] God” (36).

Effectiveness of Susanna’s letters

Apparently Susanna’s persuasiveness in the first letter to Lady Yarborough was effective because Susanna’s second letter implies that Lady Yarborough has a better understanding of the seriousness of the estrangement from Samuel. In the first letter, Susanna writes, “You advise me to continue with my husband and God knows how gladly I would do it but there, there is my extreme affliction: he will not live with me” (35). In the second letter to Lady Yarborough, written about a week later on March 15, 1702, Susanna thanks Lady Yarborough for the comfort and reassurance the letters provided and for her “generous concern and pity of my misfortunes” (36). Lady Yarborough’s response to the first letter has reassured Susanna that her position is justified and eased her anxiety. Susanna also realizes that in the midst of this difficult situation, God “has by these unusual afflictions vouchsafed me many favours [that have] greatly inclined my mind to patience and a more entire resignation to the divine Will [of God].” Susanna’s “extreme affliction” (36, 35) has been eased by her relationship to God, by her recognition of God’s blessings, and by her friendship with Lady Yarborough.

Reassurances from the bishop

Susanna is also reassured by the corroboration of her innocence by "the Gentleman that has seen my Letters." The identify of this gentleman is not clearly stated, but context indicates that Susanna is referring to George Hickes, a non-juring bishop (Walmsley 54), who first learned of Susanna's situation from her letters shown to him by Lady Yarborough (Wallace 37). The gentleman believes, Susanna writes to Lady Yarborough, "that I ought not to comply [with Samuel's requests] any further, but persevere in following the dictates of my own conscience" (36).

Bluster and innocence

Susanna wrote two letters to George Hickes about the conflict with Samuel. The first letter, dated April 1702, was written from Lady Yarborough's home, presumably because Susanna discussed the matter with Lady Yarborough and followed this conversation by writing to Bishop Hickes. In her first letter to Hickes, Susanna summarizes the "uneasy circumstances" she is facing, and lists several issues on which Samuel and Susanna disagree. Samuel "will not be persuaded he has no power over the conscience of his wife," she writes. Samuel wishes the matter to be arbitrated by the area archbishop and bishop, Susanna explains to Hickes, and he further asserts that if Susanna will not follow the archbishop's and bishop's directives—whatever those might be—"he will do anything rather than live with a person that is the declared enemy of his country, which he believes himself obliged to love before all the world" (37). This astonishing religious and patriotic bluster from Samuel is met by equally strong resolve and an assertion of innocence from Susanna. "I see [no] reason," Susanna writes to Hickes, "[that] I have to ask either God Almighty's or [Samuel's] pardon for acting

according to the best knowledge I have of things of that nature," and she stresses "in this [matter] I'm pretty innocent" (37-38). Susanna's conviction that she is acting appropriately and innocently contributes to the fortitude she needed to stand firm against Samuel's insults and bluster.

Insults and heartbreak

Being told by Samuel that he loves his country more than he loves her, and being accused of acting as an enemy of his county (and by extension, being his enemy), must have been heartbreaking to Susanna. In addition to this insult, she also had already faced Samuel's strong disagreement, his estrangement from her, and his departure to London in an angry huff. Yet, in all the historical documentation about the conflict between Susanna and Samuel, there is no evidence that Susanna engaged in angry or tearful confrontations with Samuel. [13] In fact, much of what Susanna records about the situation can be considered to be written in feminine style.

Feminine style

Earlier, I discussed feminine style; it has been defined in the field of rhetoric as being supportive, nurturing, humble, cooperative, non-confrontational, conciliatory, modest, and as providing a way for others to save face; feminine style also relies on personal experience and anecdotes, and it persuades inductively. Jacqueline Bacon explains that women have long used feminine style to "'encode' their concerns in a linguistic form that would be 'acceptable' to their audiences" (113). Repeatedly, Susanna encodes her concerns about the disagreement with Samuel in language that is

[13] The only known documents about this incident are Susanna's own letters, and as is human nature, she may have presented herself and her reactions to Samuel as being more positive than is factual. However, in coming to know of Susanna's ethics and personality through her writings, I suspect that Susanna's description of the situation is reasonably accurate.

cooperative, non-confrontational, humble, and provides a way for Samuel to save face, and as we've seen repeatedly, Susanna also uses many anecdotes and tells of her own personal experiences.

Seeking a trustworthy confidante

In her first letter to Lady Yarborough, Susanna asks her to consult a nonjuring church leader who "might be trusted with such an important secret" (35); as a result of this request George Hickes learned about the disagreement in the Wesley home and he kindly advises Susanna. However, the most significant part of Susanna's request is that she asks for confidentiality from the church leader Lady Yarborough will contact on her behalf, and she repeats the request for secrecy in her second letter to Lady Yarborough and in the first letter to Bishop Hickes. Susanna's reason for asking for confidentiality is important because it shows evidence of feminine style.

Concern for Samuel's reputation at the sacrifice of Susanna's

Susanna first asks that the church leader Lady Yarborough consults with is one who "might be trusted with such an important secret" (35) and she asks that he will protect Samuel's reputation by being "careful that the world may know nothing which may reflect upon my Master [Samuel]" (37). Although Susanna is deeply embroiled in the conflict with Samuel, in her feminine style she remains supportive of her husband and concerned for his welfare and reputation, at the possible sacrifice of her own. In writing to Bishop Hickes, Susanna states that she would willingly admit to wrongdoing if she realized or was convinced of her error. "I would freely retract [my opinion] and ask his pardon before the whole world" (37); admitting her wrongdoing to the whole world would undoubtedly subject her to criticism and ridicule, a punishment she is

willing to take, while at the same time repeatedly requesting confidentiality for Samuel so as to protect him from similar criticism and ridicule. This comment from Susanna—that she would admit her wrongdoing if she was guilty—is also one of several instances in which Susanna's text uses feminine style in expressing her desire for conciliation and cooperation with Samuel. Her humility, inherent in feminine style, is also repeatedly shown in her request to Lady Yarborough and Bishop Hickes for prayer and advice in dealing with the conflict.

Bishop Hickes advises Susanna to follow her conscience

Bishop Hickes's advice to Susanna, which she mentions several times in her letters, was to follow her own conscience, not comply with Samuel's wishes for her to assent to his prayers for King William, persevere, and "against hope believe in hope" for an amicable resolution of the matter with Samuel. Considering the patriarchal culture of the early eighteenth century, and the biblical admonition often invoked in requiring women to submit to their husbands, the possibility of a prominent bishop validating Susanna's position is astonishing, but perhaps George Hickes's response can be attributed to the righteousness of her cause, the persuasiveness of Susanna's letters, and to her ability to first persuade the powerful Lady Yarborough.

The first parsonage fire and unhappy parents

Susanna's first letter to Bishop Hickes was written in April 1702, and her second letter is dated July 31, 1702. In the second letter, she alludes to more unpleasantness with Samuel and to events in the intervening months that have delayed her response to Hickes; one of these was a fire which damaged the parsonage. Susanna writes that she suspects the fire was caused by one of the servants, "by so odd an accident as I may say

of it, [. . .] ‘This is the finger of God’” (39), and she hints that Samuel’s absence has caused an “abundance of trouble to himself and Family” (38). Whatever the cause of the fire, one result was that Samuel returned home, but all was not quickly reconciled between the couple. Susanna ends her second letter to Hickes, dated July 31, 1702, by asking him to continue to pray for God’s mercy on the family, “at least that [God] would spare the innocent Children however he is pleased to deal with the unhappy parents” (39). On June 17, 1703, some ten-and-one-half months later, John was born (Wallace 8), so at some point, the unhappy parents must have found a way to reconcile. This was not to be their last conflict, however.

Conflict over Sunday night meetings

In 1711 and 1712, while Samuel was away for an extended period to attend the Church of England’s governing convention in London, Susanna put special emphasis on the spiritual formation of her eight children who resided at home. This included having a family devotional time, held on Sunday nights in her home. These devotional times involved reading a sermon and prayers and discussing theological issues. Word got out about the religious teaching Susanna was giving her children, and soon the neighbors began attending in large numbers. Scholars often place the location of the meetings in the rectory kitchen (for example, Wallace 13), although there is nothing in Susanna’s letters to confirm this location in the house. With 200 people in attendance—as Susanna mentions—one can assume that even if the meetings began in the kitchen they quickly outgrew that space. When Samuel learned about these meetings, he wrote his wife suggesting that she stop holding her public meetings. Susanna responded by letter to

Samuel's edict with "a fascinating balance of deference and defiance" (Wallace 78) and a broad range of rhetorical strategies.

Samuel's objections to Susanna's public meetings

Susanna begins her first letter to Samuel on this issue—the letter is dated February 6, 1712—by summarizing Samuel's three objections to the public meetings: first, that it will look peculiar or strange to have these meetings; second, that Susanna is a woman; and third, that it is not befitting the rector to have his wife conducting public services. After summarizing Samuel's objections, Susanna then responds to each objection in turn.

Susanna's response to Samuel's objection that her meetings are peculiar

On the first objection, Susanna acknowledges to Samuel that the public meetings will look peculiar but "so does almost everything that is serious, or that may any way advance the glory of God or the salvation of souls." Having public meetings "out[side] of a pulpit" is peculiar, Susanna writes, because spirituality has been removed from the culture and Christians are ashamed to be known as such (79). Susanna's rebuttal of Samuel's first objection shows great rhetorical skill: she is able to agree with Samuel's objection that her meetings are unusual, and then she asserts that other practices of Christianity are also unusual. Samuel can hardly refute this fact, and thus he must concede to her his original objection.

Concession and conversion in Susanna's letters

Peristrophe is the Greek rhetorical term (Lanham 114) used to describe Susanna's act of converting Samuel's argument to her own use. Susanna also employs the rhetorical move of *paromologia* (Lanham 110) when she concedes that public

meetings will look peculiar and then uses that concession to strengthen her own argument. Although we know Susanna was well educated, we can only speculate whether she was trained in Greek rhetorical skills such as she used here, or if she learned these techniques of argument from her wide reading or from hearing arguments in sermons or in daily life. In any event, she skillfully uses these moves to counteract Samuel's viewpoint and present her own opinion.

Susanna's response to Samuel's objection that she is a woman

Susanna gives an even more important motivation for her ministry when she responds to Samuel's second objection that she should not conduct services because she is a woman. She recalls hearing stories of Danish missionaries that made her realize that "though I am not a man nor a minister of the gospel, and so [I] cannot be employed in such a worthy employment as [the missionaries] were; yet if my heart were sincerely devoted to God, and if I were inspired with a true zeal for his glory, and did really desire the salvation of souls, I might do somewhat more than I [have done]" (80). While Susanna recognizes she is not a man or a minister, and thus she does not aspire to preach, nor would she be allowed to do so, she also believes her actions are authorized by God because she seeks to help others; God has empowered her to live a more exemplary life and to be a spiritual guide to others.

Response to Samuel's objection that meetings do not befit the rector's wife

To Samuel's third objection—that it is not befitting the rector for his wife to conduct public services—Susanna presents another effective argument: she wonders how anyone can complain because the rector's wife "endeavours to draw people to the church . . . I cannot conceive" (81). She also explains to Samuel the origins of the

meetings and why she is justified in holding them. The meetings started, she writes to Samuel, because he was absent and as a result, the parish was not holding the normal Sunday afternoon meetings; the substitute rector was mediocre; and the people attended Susanna's meetings rather than the meetings conducted by the substitute rector. Susanna felt it was her duty to fill the hours that would have been spent in the afternoon service on Sundays "reading to and instructing my family" in spiritual matters. The involvement by people other than her family was "purely accidental," she says, as news of the meetings spread by word of mouth. As a result, the previous Sunday the group was more than 200 people and yet many were turned away due to lack of space (78-80).

Samuel's absence calls for Susanna's actions

In her response to Samuel's objection, Susanna deftly implies that if Samuel had been present in his role of minister, the meetings would not have been necessary. Furthermore, the popularity of the meetings—which she did not promote—indicates God's control of the enterprise. As with other objections, Samuel can hardly refute Susanna's defense—in reality he is absent, and he should agree that spiritual nurture must continue while he is away—so she has won this point, also.

Impelled by God, Susanna must do more

In writing about early Quaker women, Su Fang Ng notes that "spiritual condition" was used as one defense of women's preaching. "Women moved by the spirit of God are 'spiritually learned' and possess the authority to speak and thus to teach." Furthermore, when a woman is "impelled" by God, she is obligated to speak. "To keep silent . . . would be to deny God" ("Marriage" 113-14). Susanna's defense of the meetings follows this same logic. Implicit within her telling of the origins and

motivations for the meetings is the idea that she was moved by God to "do something more" (80) than she had done previously for the salvation of souls. Presumably, her devote husband would accept the premise that saving souls is important and justified, so Susanna builds upon this logic. Although she is not a man or a minister, she asserts that her actions are authorized by God because she seeks to help others and guide them to spiritual salvation. Once again we see the evidence of feminist rhetoric in defending her action of holding the meetings and doing so in a way that foregrounds her particular contribution.

Susanna defends her actions on the basis that she is a mother

Susanna continues her defense of the religious meetings in her home by using yet another effective rhetorical move in refuting Samuel's objections: she appeals to her role as a mother. She acknowledges that Samuel is "head of the family"—an allusion to family roles set out in Scripture in Eph. 5:22-24: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. . . . Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." Susanna also acknowledges that Samuel has first responsibility for the family's souls, but she asserts her responsibility as mandated by God as the "mistress of a large family" to provide spiritual training to the children in Samuel's absence (79). By using the scriptural allusion to proper family roles, Susanna has effectively eliminated Samuel's objection to her efforts of spiritual nurture; he cannot legitimately argue against the scriptural injunction to be faithful to the work God has entrusted to her, both as a Christian and as a mother. In writing about early Quaker women, Phyllis Mack notes that they "based their public authority . . . on

their competence and integrity . . . as mothers" (*Visionary* 10). Susanna Wesley uses a similar defense in refuting Samuel's objection that she should not be conducting religious services because she is a woman. Because she is the mother and is responsible for the family in Samuel's absence, she is motivated to assume the responsibility for spiritual training. She uses more scriptural illusions to explain this motivation:

> 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 in heaven and earth. And if I am unfaithful to him or to 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? (79)

In referring to her children—and by extension the parishioners who attend the Sunday evening meetings at her home—as "talents," she brings to mind the biblical parable of the three servants who were given talents. Two servants faithfully used the talents to gain more, but one servant buried his talent. When the master returned, he rewarded the two faithful servants, but rejected the "wicked and slothful servant" for his unfaithfulness (Matt. 25:26). A talent is a very large sum of money, possibly equivalent to what a common laborer would earn in a lifetime. The monetary value of a talent is much less important than the reason Jesus told the story; he used the parable to encourage his followers to be faithful to do the work of God entrusted to them, and Susanna uses the story in much the same way.

Urgent need authorizes Susanna's actions

Susanna emphasizes that she has been entrusted with the spiritual care of her children and the parishioners, and she intends to be faithful in carrying out the work she has been given by God to do. Her task includes "improve[ing] these talents" which Susanna understands to involve teaching the children and parishioners about spiritual

matters. By using the allusion to biblical talents, Susanna has effectively eliminated Samuel's objection to her efforts of spiritual nurture; he cannot legitimately argue against the scriptural injunction to be faithful to the work God has entrusted to her both as a Christian and as a mother. In using this argument, Susanna is also following a precedent set by Leveller and Quaker women who "used arguments that blended a need for immediate action or redress, biblical and historical injunctions to act, and the contention that they are as responsible for the well-being of society as their male colleagues" (Hilda Smith, "Introduction" 3-4). Susanna saw an urgent need to provide spiritual training to her children, and she believed that the Bible and her role as mother made her responsible for her family's spiritual well-being and authorized her to act as she did in conducting the Sunday evening meetings in her home.

Significance of the meetings in Susanna's house

Related to Susanna's defense of her actions because she is the mother of the family, the location of the meetings, held in Susanna's home, is also significant. Various scholars have shown the importance of the household as a site which allowed women freedom that was not available outside the home, and as Helen Wilcox has written, "women and the house were explicitly identified with one another" (744). Although Susanna acknowledges her subordination to her husband as the spiritual leader of the family, she also implicitly asserts her spiritual authority by conducting the meetings in the feminine space of her home. According to Helen Wilcox, "the household was, in principle at least, a place of learning, particularly of spiritual instruction" (744). Since Susanna has long been educating her children, and the origin of the Sunday evening meetings was spiritual instruction for her family, she is, by

extension, expanding her authority to the spiritual instruction of the parish people who came uninvited to the meetings.

Uses Herbert to bolster her argument

In yet another example of deference and defiance, and in a move which bolsters the argument that her actions are authorized by God, Susanna extracts verses from the poem "The Priesthood" by George Herbert to assert that she will "resign [her]self to [God]" to be used "as an instrument in doing good" (80). Using Herbert's poetry is significant in this period as both the "Nonconformists and Anglicans sought to put Herbert to use in [their] ecclesiological struggles" including using Herbert's writings to authorize both sides' theology, devotional and worship practices, and political traditions (Achinstein 430-32). Since Susanna was raised a Puritan and later became an Anglican, she was undoubtedly quite familiar with the common use of Herbert by both the dissenters and the church to support their causes, and she recognized the effectiveness of using Herbert to bolster her own argument; Herbert was also one of Susanna's favorite poets and she often quoted him in her diaries and correspondence. In using the stanzas from Herbert's poetry, Susanna is subtly defying Samuel's request that she stop the meetings—she is saying that the situation is out of her control and is in God's control—while she also defers her future actions to the guidance of God. In this period, Herbert's poetry was also used as a symbol of a "harmonious" Anglican Church as well as "a symbol for the disenfranchised ministry, an image around whom the godly ministers, denied their work, could maintain faith" (Achinstein 432, 441). By evoking Herbert in her letter, Susanna also shows her desire for harmony between herself and

Samuel and within the church, and she puts herself in the company of male ministers whose work had been denied.

Susanna's ambivalence

Susanna ends her letter of February 6, 1712, by expressing her distress at having non-family members present for family prayers because she recognizes that she is a woman and it may be improper for her to carry out the normal role of the male clergy in presenting "the prayers of the people to God." Yet she did so because the group "begged so earnestly" (81). This closing statement shows Susanna's ambivalence toward the situation. On one hand, she feels compelled to "draw people to the church" and to "deny none that asks admittance" to the meetings in her home while, on the other hand, she recognizes that presenting the prayers may be inappropriate because she is a woman and not the priest. From the time of the medieval church, one of the obligations of the clergy was to read the morning and evening prayers (Neill 68), so Susanna's hesitation to take on this role is understandable.

Susanna convinces Samuel

Samuel apparently responded quickly to Susanna's letter of February 6, 1712, dating his letter February 16. Only eight days later, on February 25, Susanna penned another letter to him, although she ironically states she "made no great haste to answer" because she thought they both needed time to think about this "matter of such great importance." Although we do not know what Samuel wrote in his letter of February 16, apparently Susanna's defense of the Sunday evening meetings was successful, because she comments that he has experienced a "hasty and unexpected change of [his] judgment" in agreeing with her arguments in the February 6 letter (81).

New issues require new defenses

Now, however, the issues have somewhat changed since Susanna's February 6 letter, and she must mount a defense of the meetings based on issues involving interpersonal relationships in the parish and the positive outcomes of the meetings. Susanna reports to Samuel that two or three troublesome parishioners, "the worst of your parish," have condemned the meetings that "you so very lately approved." Susanna further clarifies that only three or four persons, at most, are against the meetings and not "any one person [has] ever said one word against [the meetings] to me," (81-82). The small number of disgruntled parishioners seems to have little effect on the meetings or on the other attendees, except for the fact that the substitute cleric, Mr. Inman, is against the meetings, if "for no other reason, as I suppose, but that he thinks the sermons I read better than his own," Susanna reports with some audacity (82).

Susanna v. Mr. Inman

The meetings may represent something of a power struggle between Inman and Susanna which perhaps was exacerbated for Inman by Susanna's seeming lack of concern for his feelings and lack of respect for him as a clergyman and by the popularity of Susanna's meetings when compared to the reduced attendance at his church services. However, in the second letter to Samuel, in one sentence, Susanna both defends Inman and notes his stupidity in how he responded to her meetings. One of her many defenses of the meetings involves her concern in protecting Inman from prejudice against him that "may raise in the minds of these people" if the meetings are cancelled. Susanna fears Inman will be judged by the congregation as being responsible for the cancellation of the meetings because he "has had so little wit as to speak publicly

against [the meetings]" (82). Susanna continues by explaining that if her meetings are canceled, she suspects that the people who attend her meetings will "never go to hear [Mr. Inman] more, at least those that come from the lower end of the town." On the other hand, if her meetings continue until Samuel returns home, Susanna hopes that God will change the hearts of the people so that "they may love and delight in [Mr. Inman's] public worship so as never to neglect it more" (82).

Cooperation and conciliation

Susanna's comments about her concern for Inman's standing with the congregation if her meetings are canceled could be interpreted as an opportunistic attempt to exploit her enemy for her personal gain, but they can also be seen as feminine style in which Susanna's concern is with providing Inman with a way to save face in the community. While Susanna's reports to Samuel about Inman are forthright and, presumably, honest representations of Inman's actions, Susanna makes the comments in a private letter to Samuel. Her more public response to Inman seeks to be cooperative and conciliatory so that he can succeed in the time he remains as substitute rector.

Good consequences

In the second letter to Samuel, Susanna's response to the troublesome parishioners, the unhappy Mr. Inman, and her defense of the meetings, is at least partially for the purpose of forestalling new objections to continuing the meetings that Samuel may put forth, and here again, she employs traditional rhetorical methods. *Prolepsis* is the Greek rhetorical term used to describe the act of forestalling objections through various methods (Lanham 120-21). Susanna's method of forestalling objections

is to list the "good consequences" of the meetings: they have done much good and "by God's blessing may do more good." The people are enjoying harmony and fellowship, and they are "much reformed in their behaviour on the Lord's Day." In holding the meetings, Susanna has a new opportunity to do good to the parishioners while Samuel is absent, she is able to "[converse] with this people" and to provide them "the greatest and noblest charity . . . to their souls" (81-82). By listing good consequences of the meetings, Susanna has again greatly deflated any new objections Samuel could marshal; Samuel cannot in good conscience ask her to stop holding the meetings when they are resulting is so many spiritual and physical blessings for Susanna and the parishioners.

More people are attending church

Susanna quantifies her report of the good consequences of the meetings by stating and explaining yet another positive outcome: the meetings have "brought more people to church than ever anything did in so short a time," she writes. "We used not to have above twenty or twenty-five at evening service, whereas now we have between two and three hundred, which is many more than ever came before to hear Inman in the morning" (82). Susanna's comparison between the numbers of persons attending her meetings and Inman's services is significant because, in making the comparison, Susanna considers her meetings to be church services. She makes this assertion despite the fact that her meetings are quite dissimilar from typical church services in several ways: she is "not a man nor a minister" (80) as is expected for the cleric who conducts the service, she is not preaching at the meetings as is usually done at church services, and the gatherings are not held in the church building.

Susanna has church

For Susanna to consider the meetings held in her home to be church services might be considered unimportant or presumptuous, but this distinction is very significant. Susanna's ways of conducting the meeting in her home became part of the model on which John Wesley patterned the early Methodist's classes and band meetings, and those meetings, over time, became part of the basis for establishing the Methodist denomination. Susanna's meetings were held at a time which did not conflict with the regular church services; John also mandated that the early Methodist meetings be held at different times than the Anglican services so that the Methodist followers would remain members and participants in the Anglican ritual. Susanna did not preach at her meetings but read sermons and prayers to the attendees; the leaders of the early Methodist classes and bands—and especially the female leaders—also did not preach, although over time, the distinction between preaching and simply exhorting the congregation became blurred. Finally, Susanna was a woman who led the Sunday evening meetings with great spiritual success; John Wesley allowed and encouraged women as leaders of the early Methodist classes and bands.

Susanna does what Samuel cannot

In reporting the good consequences to Samuel, Susanna mentions another benefit of the meetings which has particular historical interest. She writes, "Besides the constant attendance on the worship of God, [the meetings have] wonderfully . . . conciliated the minds of this people toward us, insomuch that we now live in the greatest amity imaginable" (82). Many scholars have documented Samuel's lack of popularity with his congregation, and evidence exists indicating that the parsonage fire

in 1709 may have been set by an unhappy parishioner (Wallace 11). For Susanna to indicate that her meetings have "conciliated" the people and brought "amity" to the parish shows quite clearly that Susanna has been able to accomplish spiritual and interpersonal reconciliation that Samuel had been unable to do.

Susanna asserts she won't stop the meetings unless forbidden

Susanna concludes her second letter to Samuel with what Charles Wallace Jr. calls "one of her more stunning rhetorical flourishes" (13). If Samuel wants the meetings to stop, as a result of the latest difficulties with the troublesome parishioners, Susanna asks him to specifically forbid her from having the meetings. Just telling her that he *desires* her to stop the meetings "will not satisfy my conscience," but a direct command will "absolve [me] from all guilt and punishment for neglecting this opportunity for doing good to souls, when [we] shall appear before the great and awful tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ" (82). Susanna alludes to the scripture in 2 Cor. 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." This allusion has the effect of reminding Samuel that his actions, and hers, will someday be judged by God. Even her use of the word "neglecting" alludes to the well-known biblical admonition in Heb. 2:3 which asks "how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation."

Submitting and acting righteously

By asking Samuel to give a direct command to stop the meetings, Susanna is also again implicitly acknowledging the biblical command for wives to submit to their husbands, while also indicating her belief that she is acting righteously and in

accordance with God's guidance when she holds the meetings. Hilda L. Smith notes that in the seventeenth century, "fundamental religious differences" between a husband and wife was the only commonly accepted situation in which women were allowed to be disobedient to their husbands (*Reason's* 55-56). Certainly Susanna was aware of this principle, and she uses it to her advantage. In answering Samuel's objections, she attempts to create common ground with him in order to reduce their differences on the subject. Since she has created common ground, however, her defense of disobeying on the basis of religious differences is now invalid so she asks Samuel to clarify his request so that if she proceeds with the meetings she is not doing so in disobedience.

The crisis resolved

No further letters exchanged by Susanna and Samuel exist on this issue, so we do not know precisely how the crisis of the Sunday evening services was resolved. Biographers believe that Samuel relented, and Susanna continued the Sunday evening meetings until Samuel returned from London, resumed his pastorate, and held evening worship services at the church (Rogal 29, Harmon 80).

Susanna's spiritual journal

The disagreement between Susanna and Samuel over his prayers for King William, and the crisis over Susanna's Sunday evening meetings, are documented in the letters I have just analyzed; these letters represent some of the best existing examples of Susanna's writing about historical events. With the exclusion of other letters on a variety of topics, most of Susanna's other existing texts are more overtly spiritual and theological, and include, for example, treatises on the Apostles' Creed and the Ten Commandments. Susanna's journal also fits securely within this category of theological

and spiritual writings. In chapter 1, I quoted from Charles Wallace, Jr., who notes that Susanna's journal was "first and foremost an explicit and important part of her spiritual life" (197). Susanna recorded in her journal spiritual ideas and recollections from her daily meditations; her journal also serves as a way to see Susanna's "questioning,[. . .] bold resolution, [and] the exploration" of a variety of religious and secular ideas (Wallace 198-199). While time and space do not allow for an in-depth analysis of the hundreds of surviving entries from her journal, I would like to briefly consider a few aspects of Susanna's journal from which we can gain additional insights.

Earlier in this chapter, and in other chapters, I discuss in some detail the use of Scripture and the presentation of spiritual ideas in the letters and journals of Susanna, Sarah, Mary, and Hester. Thus, in examining Susanna's journal, I will primarily discuss portions of her journal which are less overtly religious while at the same time proceeding from an understanding, as Charles Wallace states, that the journal was primarily a spiritual means of grace to Susanna, and it is suffused with biblical quotes and allusions (197). Additionally, rather than minutely parse the text of Susanna's journal, I briefly deal more generally with the types and categories of entries in the journal.

A brief comparison between Susanna's journal and the journal of Hester Rogers, which I analyze in Chapter 5, helps to explain the ideas recorded and the methods used by Susanna in her journal. As mentioned earlier, and discussed in detail in chapter 5, Hester Rogers first wrote her spiritual experience journal to record details about her spiritual life. After her spiritual experiences of salvation and sanctification, and under the direction of John Wesley, Hester edited her manuscript journal for the new purpose

of creating a persuasive document that would show readers of the published journal "what the Lord had wrought" (51) in Hester's life.

Rhetorical purposes

Notwithstanding Charles Wallace's description of Susanna's journal as being a record of her spiritual life, her journal has a completely different rhetorical purpose than Hester's. The vast majority of the 244 extant journal entries included in *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings* are entries Susanna wrote during her three times of spiritual meditation daily. Many of the entries are strongly didactic, as the following example shows. On April 21, 1711, Susanna writes

> *Endeavour* to keep a due guard over your words, that you may habitually *speak nothing* but what is true on all occasions. *Consider* 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, *be careful* to speak deliberately and calmly, *avoiding* immoderate mirth or laughter on the one hand and uncharitableness and excessive anger on the other, injunction. . .] ever *remembering* you are in the presence of the great and holy God (215; emphasis added).

Out of context, or at first glance, and based upon the many action verbs italicized above that begin the sentences and phrases in this and many other entries, it would be easy to conclude that in this passage Susanna attempts to instruct a young or inexperienced person in good deportment and that she seeks to persuade him or her to speak and act truthfully. However, Susanna's journal is private, not meant for others to read, and written strictly for her own purposes. This being true, then, why does Susanna construct many of the entries in her own personal and private journal in a persuasive and instructional mode? The answer is that Susanna wrote her meditations as instructions and reminders to herself. Whether she rereads her entries the next day or years in the future, she is reminded of the lessons she learned and is again persuaded of the activities

she should do; the person Susanna is instructing and persuading in her journal is herself. Susanna confirms that her journal acts as a reminder to herself of past lessons learned and future activities to do when she writes to herself, “Why do you not take more care to practice your own rules? What reason or for what end do you write them down, if not that you may remember to practice them in your conversation in the world?” (221). In these statements, Susanna questions herself about her commitment to her own plan for daily spiritual activities; Susanna further implies that she has not always been faithful to this daily discipline.

The vast majority of Susanna’s journal entries deal with theological concepts and spiritual topics such as atonement, repentance, faith, and prayer; others reflect on Bible stories or Scripture passages, and most entries—regardless of topic—are filled with scriptural language and concepts applied to the topic. However, several entries, including the April 21 entry quoted above, deal with topics that are not inherently religious or, more specifically, are not strictly Christian constructs. With only minor editing, the entry above could easily be stripped of all religious connotations and become simply instructions for living a good and upstanding life. We can conclude from this one brief example that, on one hand, Susanna’s ostensibly spiritual journal contains much that is not religious, while on the other hand, Susanna infuses into virtually every concept she discusses some aspect of religious thought. Making every topic a religious topic is evidence of Susanna’s personal experience of God which permeates every aspect of her life.

Susanna's distinctive rhetoric

This chapter—in which I have closely analyzed several letters written by Susanna regarding religious and political viewpoints—has shown that despite the constraints of the patriarchal culture in which Susanna lived and wrote, she was able to use a variety of carefully crafted rhetorical appeals to convey her persuasive message to a variety of people including a powerful aristocrat, Lady Yarborough; a prominent bishop, George Hickes; and Susanna's husband, Samuel. Regardless of which rhetorical method she uses or who she is addressing, Susanna always constructs her rhetoric in a distinctive way to present her beliefs or arguments in the manner that will be the most persuasive to her reader. Sometimes her rhetoric uses traditional persuasive appeals and arts, sometimes it follows the pattern of the Bible, and sometimes it incorporates feminist ideologies or feminine style, all of which work effectively in increasing her public role and powers.

Additionally, Susanna's spiritual journal—which she wrote as part of her daily discipline of spiritual meditation and which is a personal and private document—functions as a means of persuasion to Susanna herself by reminding her of the spiritual lessons she has learned, of the religious tasks she must do, and of the important ideas she is considering.

Susanna aptly named a preacher of righteousness.

Susanna died in 1742 at age 73. When John preached the sermon at his mother's funeral—about 30 years after the crisis of the Sunday evening meetings—he named himself and five of Susanna's other male relatives who were clergymen, and then he included Susanna in this long line of clergy by quoting from II Peter 2: 5 and calling her

"a preacher of righteousness" (Wesley, *Heart* 90). In using this phrase to describe his mother, John Wesley honors her by grouping her with the many esteemed male clergy in her family and with heroes and righteous men of the Bible, such as Noah and Lot. Wesley takes the biblical phrase out of context, but does so to make his rhetorical point of giving honor and ascribing greatness and godliness to his mother and her righteous activities.[14] No evidence indicates that Susanna ever preached—in the sense in which eighteenth-century Christians considered preaching; instead, she worked to stay in the liminal territory of leading religious services and trying not to preach, but as we have seen, there is ample evidence of her greatness, her godliness, and her ability to present her religious and political convictions much as a minster would do and through a variety of persuasive methods. We can conclude, then, that John Wesley's characterization of his mother as "a preacher of righteousness" is an appropriate and accurate way of representing her as a righteous and godly woman and as a powerful and effective communicator.

[14] In explaining II Peter 2:5 in his *Explanatory Notes on the Bible*, John Wesley states that Noah escaped the flood because he was a "preacher as well as practiser of righteousness." Thus, in naming his mother as a "preacher of righteousness," he is honoring her for her private practice of righteousness as well as for her public activities similar to those of a preacher.

Chapter 4

Letters to the Leader: Sarah Crosby and Mary Bosanquet Fletcher Defend Women's Preaching to John Wesley

In the last chapter, I discussed letters and the journal written by Susanna Wesley, a woman who did not preach but who carried out a variety of putatively non-preaching leadership roles which were marked by rhetorical activity. In this chapter, I consider correspondence and other texts regarding the issue of women's preaching and public speaking roles within the Methodist movement. These documents, written by Sarah Crosby and Mary Bosanquet Fletcher, both preachers themselves, and by John Wesley, reveal the persuasive strategies employed by women in seeking Wesley's authorization of their public speaking, and they present his instructions on how to conduct the class and band meetings. These documents also show the evolution of Wesley's views on women's preaching which led to his authorization of female preachers.

Introducing Sarah Crosby and Mary Bosanquet Fletcher and their letters

Sarah Crosby (1729-1804) is known as the first woman preacher in Methodism, having been the first female to receive "informal authorization" from John Wesley to carry out activities within the realm of preaching (Chilcote, *John Wesley* 50, 119). Entries in her journal and letters from John Wesley reveal important information about the evolution of views on the issue of women's preaching, and they also point out numerous rhetorical moves in her texts and in the ways she conducted the services in which she preached.

Mary (Bosanquet) Fletcher (1739-1815) is one of the most well-known early Methodist women. This distinction is largely the result of the many contributions she made to the Methodist movement, including establishing an orphanage, working to improve literacy, leading Methodist classes and bands, writing a variety of theological documents, and preaching. Her marriage at age 48 to John Fletcher, a prominent Methodist minister, contributed to her visibility. A letter she wrote to John Wesley during a time of controversy over the issue of women's preaching may have contributed to Wesley expanding the limits of what were the authorized public speaking roles for women.

The issue of women's preaching

At issue for the early Methodists were the appropriate forms of women's public speaking as they occurred in the Methodist class and band meetings and in public meetings. Documents from the era of early Methodism, and scholars of Methodism, identify several modes of public utterances which form a continuum from casual spiritual conversations to formal preaching. Earl Kent Brown lists seven of these modes, from informal to most formal: conversing with others about spiritual matters, praying or speaking in class or band meetings, praying at public meetings, giving testimony, exhorting, expounding, and preaching. Brown notes that early Methodists considered preaching to be public biblical exegesis and application, whereas modern definitions of preaching would include testifying, exhorting, and expounding, as well as biblical exegesis and application. Spiritual conversations involved speaking casually with persons who were new to Methodism to explain beliefs and draw them into the societies (20). Exhortation is the act of "admonish[ing] earnestly" by using "stimulating words"

to urge the audience to laudable conduct ("Exhort"). Expounding refers to interpreting or explaining doctrines, Scripture, or other ideas in detail ("Expound"). As these definitions imply, all of these activities are highly rhetorical.

The issue and the Pauline prohibitions

While the dilemma the early Methodist women faced regarding public speaking is most often referred to as being about women's preaching, this was not the entire issue. Because of the relatively limited scope of preaching as defined by eighteenth-century Christians, some women who spoke publicly, but may not have preached, were nonetheless also concerned that Methodism authorize other forms of their public utterances, such as praying, exhorting, expounding, and testifying so their ministry to others would be beyond reproach. Outside Methodism and the Quakers, traditionally women were generally prohibited from speaking publically for any religious purpose.

That the appropriateness of women's public speaking was an issue of discussion and contention is based upon and often buttressed by the New Testament writings of the Apostle Paul which are widely accepted as the most significant factor in silencing women, both in the church and elsewhere and both in the eighteenth century and to the present time. These scriptures, often called the Pauline prohibitions, include I Cor. 14:34-35: "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church," and I Timothy 2:12: "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

Evidence suggests, and scholars posit, that Paul's training in the Greek rhetorical tradition—and specifically his knowledge of Aristotle's philosophy and negative views of women—may have contributed to his instruction for women to remain silent in church. As a Roman citizen, Paul almost certainly studied Greek rhetoric and philosophy, was familiar with Aristotelian writings and, according to George Kennedy, adapted classical rhetoric for his own needs (*Classical* 139). Karlyn Kohrs Campbell draws the following connection between Aristotle and Paul:

> For much of their history women have been prohibited from speaking, a prohibition reinforced by such powerful cultural authorities as…Aristotle and Scripture.…In the *Politics,* Aristotle approvingly quotes the words, 'Silence is a woman's glory,' and the epistles of Paul enjoin women to keep silent (1)

This connection between Aristotle and Paul further reinforces the connection between rhetoric, persuasion, and women's public speaking.

Constance F. Parvey explains the impact of the Pauline prohibitions on women:

> The Church's interpretation of its attitudes toward women has traditionally centered on these two Corinthian outbursts.[15] [. . .] These passages [. . .] have provided the shape for the fundamental religious and social attitudes toward women in both the Eastern and Western churches to the present day. These references have been used as proof texts for explaining why women should be prohibited from priestly and liturgical roles, and they still constitute today a major justification for maintaining women in a subordinated role in the Church and in society at large. (124-25)

The significance of Paul's statements as they relate to women's discourse cannot be underestimated. In many cases, even to the present, these statements remain unquestioned and have become the default view of women's roles in the church;

[15] Parvey is referring to 1 Cor. 14:34-35, quoted above, and to 1 Cor. 11:4-5: "Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven."

because of the long-standing propagation of views which silence women, their public roles in the church—or the lack thereof—have become naturalized so as to be almost invisible.

My own experience anecdotally shows how certain situations and viewpoints can easily be overlooked. While studying the issue of women's preaching several years ago, I began to consider for the first time my own experience of hearing women preach. My experience is very similar to Roxanne Mountford's as she describes it in *The Gendered Pulpit*. She notes that she was an adult before she heard a woman preach. She writes, "As a child, I never saw a woman preach; the only women who stepped before the pulpit gave announcements, led hymns, or told tales of missionary work in Third World countries. . . .The first time I heard a women preach was in 1989, when I was twenty-seven years old" (15). I believe I first heard a woman preach sometime in the mid-1980s. A friend, who is a few years younger than me and from a similar religious background, had a similar experience. Unfortunately, this recollection points out how my friend and I, even as scholars and self-identified feminists, failed to notice the absence of women preachers in our own lives.

Approaching the Pauline prohibitions from a different angle, John Temple Bristow argues that ancient prejudices against women survived and flourished because gross misunderstandings of Paul's intentions and early mistranslations of his writings led to an erroneous view of what Paul really believed and meant when he wrote the Scriptures that came to be called the Pauline prohibition. The irony of the situation, according to Bristow, is that the meanings of Paul's words were unwittingly molded by early Christians to conform to ancient, pagan viewpoints, and those beliefs are now

"often preached from Christian pulpits, innocently assumed to be biblical theology" (xi-xii).

Finally, relatively new scholarship gives a different view of the Pauline prohibitions. In the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, parentheses around I Cor. 14:33b-36 indicate scholars now believe these verses were redacted into the text and were not written by Paul. Similarly, scholars believe the books of Timothy were not written until long after Paul died so they cannot be considered part of Pauline literature (Boyd, E-mail). While scholarship such as this brings a new dimension to the study of the New Testament, it does not change the fact that these scriptures have been for centuries—and continue to be—used to silence women's public speaking inside and outside the church.

The issue of women's preaching for early Methodists

The first two ancient and contemporary interpretations of the Pauline prohibitions I very briefly reviewed are only two of many responses to these Scriptures, but they also represent the issues debated within the early Methodist movement more than 250 years ago. On one hand, if taken literally, Paul's statements prohibit women from speaking in church, while the opposite view argues that the Scripture which enjoins women to "keep silence in the churches" is not meant to be interpreted literally with regard to preaching and other public speaking; proponents of this view also argue that the Bible provides precedent for various exceptions to this rule of silence. Both arguments were used in various ways by the early Methodists while attempting to develop a standard of conduct women could follow when speaking publicly. A brief introduction of Sarah Crosby and Mary Bosanquet Fletcher, two women who figured

prominently in the debate within early Methodism, and a brief history of this debate will illuminate the issue as it developed within early Methodism, and will contextualize the correspondence written by Sarah, Mary, and John Wesley on this topic.

Sarah Crosby: the first female Methodist preacher

Sarah Crosby (1729-1804) is known as the first woman preacher in Methodism, having been the first female to receive "informal authorization" from John Wesley to carry out activities within the realm of preaching. She experienced spiritual salvation as the result of hearing John Wesley preach in 1750. After her husband left her, in 1757, after only 7 years of marriage, she moved to London and met Mary Bosanquet (later Fletcher), who Sarah spiritually nurtured during Mary's early years as a Christian and a Methodist. Sarah and Mary formed "one of the most significant friendships" among early Methodists (Chilcote, *John Wesley* 50, 119). Within two years after she experienced spiritual salvation in 1750, Sarah became a class leader, and she was part of the group of Methodist women who operated an orphanage and Christian community started by Mary Bosanquet and others. Sarah traveled widely and preached in England for many years before retiring to her birthplace in Leeds. (Mack, *Heart* 303-304).

Mary Bosanquet Fletcher: defender of women's right to preach

Mary Bosanquet (1739-1815) was born into a wealthy British family living outside London. As a young woman, Mary converted to Methodism and, subsequently, was disowned by her family. In 1762, she started an orphanage and "Christian community" in her town of Leytonstone. In 1768, the orphanage and Christian community moved to Yorkshire. She began to preach with John Wesley's endorsement, but soon went beyond the authority given her by Wesley and preached from the Bible.

In 1781 she married John Fletcher, an ordained Anglican priest and the designated successor to John Wesley. Upon her marriage, she moved to the town of Madeley where Fletcher was vicar; John and Mary Fletcher conducted a joint ministry until his death in 1785. When Mary was 75 years old, she still preached several times each week, and she ran the Methodist Society in Madeley until her death; she was the only Methodist woman to have this kind of authority in that era (Mack, Heart 304-305, 310).

John Wesley's evolving views on women's preaching

As mentioned in chapter 1, early in his ministry, John Wesley prohibited women from preaching, but over the course of nearly two decades, his views evolved and eventually several Methodist women preached under his authorization. One of the first documented incidents in which John Wesley addressed the issue of women's preaching occurred in 1761. Sarah Crosby feared she had strayed from the standards of appropriate behavior when nearly 200 people attended the second class meeting she led—30 people were expected—and out of necessity she spoke to the crowd. She recorded the event in her journal and wrote to John Wesley for guidance:

> I was not sure whether it was right for me to exhort in so public a manner, and yet I saw it impracticable to meet all these people by way of speaking particularly to each individual. I, therefore, gave out a hymn, and prayed, and told them part of what the Lord had done for myself, persuading them to flee from all sin (qtd. in Chilcote, *She* 64)

Sarah's dilemma is how to fulfill the responsibilities of her position as a class leader, which included individualized ministry to each member of the class. However, with 200 people attending the meeting, she realized she could not speak to each person individually, but she also believed that the people needed spiritual guidance, so she prayed, led hymn singing, and gave testimony of her spiritual experience to the whole

group at once. This experience points out a foundational issue that the early Methodist women often faced. On one hand, a woman could choose to follow Paul's injunction to keep silent in church and in so doing withhold from the audience the spiritual message she felt compelled to give. On the other hand, a woman could ignore the Pauline prohibitions and proceed to give spiritual nurture by speaking publicly.

Purposes of women's preaching

Sarah's situation in dealing with the unexpectedly large crowd at her class meeting also points out two aspects with rhetorical significance. First, she clearly states that her goal in speaking to the group is to persuade them to flee from all sin, and in so stating, she establishes persuasion as being an important aspect of her public speaking. The same or similar assertion is frequently made by early Methodists, including John Wesley. Virtually every time Wesley gives guidance to women on the issue of preaching, he mentions or alludes to saving souls as the motivation and ultimate goal of preaching. Saving souls becomes one authorizing factor in allowing women to preach or give verbal utterances despite the Pauline prohibitions; the act of spreading the gospel message supersedes obedience to Paul's command for women to be silent in church. In authorizing women to speak publically for the purpose of saving souls, John Wesley also inexorably links persuasion as criteria for appropriate public speaking roles for women.

The second rhetorically significant action Sarah took in the meeting filled with 200 people was to tell them "part of what the Lord had done for myself." Sarah may seem to be overly concerned about the appropriateness of giving testimony—telling others what the Lord had done—but her request for advice or approval from John

Wesley is one example of the concerns early Methodist women had about the appropriateness of other forms of public utterance besides preaching. In using her personal testimony to persuade the audience to flee from sin, Sarah has also inexorably linked giving testimony as one persuasive method. Doing so, of course, is consistent with the early Methodists' discipline of journal keeping and of publishing some of those journals to report what God had done in their lives. I take up this discussion in chapter 5 in discussing in detail the persuasive aspects of the spiritual experience journal written by Hester Ann Rogers.

"The Methodists do not allow women preachers"

John Wesley's letter to Sarah, dated February 14, 1761, reassures her of the appropriateness of her actions and provides guidance for what she should do in the future. He wrote

> I think you have not gone too far. You could not well do less.[. . .] All you can do more is, when you meet again, to tell them simply, 'You lay me under a great difficulty. The Methodists do not allow [. . .] women Preachers: Neither do I take upon me any such character. But I will just nakedly tell you what is in my heart.' This will, in a great measure, obviate the grand objection [against women preaching based on the Pauline prohibitions. . . .] I do not see that you have broken any law. Go on calmly and steadily. *(Works)*

Paul Wesley Chilcote considers this communication to be the first statement of Wesley's approval of women preachers, one in which Wesley authorizes Sarah's activity of speaking publicly as long as she does not name it as preaching (*She* 65). I see Wesley's statement as representing one revision in the evolution of his views on women's roles and as being a qualified approval of some public speaking, accompanied by his instructions for Sarah to declare she is not a preacher and does not aspire to be a

preacher. At this point in Wesley's evolution of views, he is still, in effect, rejecting the terminology and the act of preaching by women.

John Wesley continues his direction about what Sarah should do in her meetings by stating "if you have time, you may read to them the Notes on any chapter [in the Bible] before you speak a few words; or [you could read] one of the most awakening sermons, as other women have done long ago" *(Works)*. This statement, too, has important rhetorical significance. First, Wesley indicates that the goal of Sarah's reading, and the choice of reading matter, is for the purpose of awakening—persuading—her audience. Second, Wesley alludes to the practice of his own mother, Susanna Wesley, who read sermons during the Sunday evening meetings she held in the rectory (Chilcote, *She* 65); see chapter 3.

Speaking allowed if not teaching large groups

John Wesley operated from the principle that situations or persons should be dealt with according to Scripture (Chilcote, *She* 65). In 1765, he again invoked the Bible in dealing with the issue of women's public speaking roles and in responding to the Pauline prohibition against women's preaching. At the Methodist general conference that year, Wesley and the male Methodist ministers took up the issue of whether women attending the small group meetings should be encouraged to speak publically considering that "it is a shame for women to speak in the Church" (qtd. in Chilcote, *John Wesley* 128) as indicated in I Cor. 14:35 (quoted above). John Wesley's response to this query clarified the issue and set out important criteria for women's public speaking. First, he noted that in the I Cor. verse speaking refers to acting as a "public teacher" which Paul did not allow "because it implied 'usurping authority over

the man'" as indicated in I Tim. 2:12 (quoted above). Second, Wesley said that the churches to which Paul refers means "the great congregation" (qtd. in Chilcote, *John Wesley* 128), and in this context, a small group meeting cannot be considered as church. His statement gave to women the authority to speak in church so long as they did not act as a public teacher before a large crowd.

Never take a text or talk for more than five minutes

A few years later, in 1769, John Wesley gave even more explicit instructions to Sarah Crosby about what she (and other women) were allowed to do in leading the Methodist classes and bands. He wrote, "Even in public you may properly enough intermix short exhortations with prayer; but keep as far from what is called preaching as you can: therefore never take a text; never speak in a continued discourse[16] without some break, about four or five minutes" (qtd. in Chilcote, *John Wesley* 130). Wesley hoped that his instructions would forestall objections to women's public speaking, but in this matter, Wesley's optimism was misplaced, and soon he realized that "he must accept an occasional woman preacher by virtue of [her having received] an 'extraordinary call'" to preach; Wesley came to this realization, at least in part, as a result of the works of mercy being done by Sarah Crosby, Mary Bosanquet, and their female co-workers at the orphanage in Yorkshire and from a thoughtful and highly

[16] The term discourse, as John Wesley uses it here, refers to rhetorical activity. While at Oxford, Wesley taught the skills of argumentation and debate ("Disputation")—called "daily disputations" (Pudney 20-21)—so it is not surprising that he would use a rhetorical term in describing women's public speaking. Interestingly, the *Oxford English Dictionary* uses a quotation from Wesley to illuminate the definition of discourse: "Discourse, strictly speaking, is the motion or progress of the mind from one judgment to another" ("Discourse"). Based on this definition of discourse, Wesley instructs Sarah to limit the length of time she spends guiding the hearers' minds to understand spiritual matters. This limitation is significant as it clearly differentiates Sarah's four or five minutes of speaking from the lengthy sermons often delivered by male preachers.

persuasive letter on the topic which Mary wrote to John Wesley in 1771 (Chilcote, *John Wesley* 131, 142)

Mary Bosanquet defends women's preaching to John Wesley

Paul Wesley Chilcote calls Mary's letter "the first serious defense of women's preaching in Methodism" and notes that it is "marked by sound and prudent judgment and cogent argumentation" (*John Wesley* 131, 142). [17] As Mary's ministry evolved and expanded, she found it necessary to speak publically, but after some complained, she realized that she must consult with John Wesley on the issue of her preaching, and she did by letter in the summer of 1771. This is the letter that may have contributed to John Wesley's realization that some women had an extraordinary call from God to preach and he should allow them to fulfill that call.

Mary begins her letter by requesting John Wesley's "advice and direction [on] an important point" [18] and asking for indication if he agrees with her understanding of the issue. The issue and important point to which Mary refers is how she should respond to the viewpoints of others and the commands of God regarding her public speaking. Earlier she had been uncertain of her own beliefs, she says, because she had been "toss[ed] between the temptations of Satan [to stop speaking publicly] and the arguments of men [against public speaking]," but now she understands the issue more

[17] Mary's letter is not only the *first* defense of women's preaching, it is also nearly the *only* letter defending preaching written by an early Methodist woman. In his seminal work, *John Wesley and the Women Preachers of Early Methodism*, Paul Wesley Chilcote lists eleven additional letters written by women "related to the question of women's preaching in early Methodism" from 1761 to March 2, 1791 when John Wesley died (288-292). Of those eleven letters, however, only one letter was addressed to John Wesley—the only person who could authorize any significant change in policy related to women's preaching within the Methodist movement. This was a letter from Sarah Crosby for which a draft resides in a manuscript letterbook in archives at Duke University; as far as I can ascertain, this letter has never been published.

[18] The text of Mary's letter to John Wesley appears in Paul Wesley Chilcote's book, *John Wesley and the Women Preachers of Early Methodism*, pages 299-304.

clearly, and she is ready to write candidly to John Wesley about her beliefs. In asking for Wesley's advice and direction, Mary also strongly commits—at both the beginning and the end of her letter—that she will follow his direction so her conscience will be clear about how she proceeds in this matter.

There are notable similarities between Mary's deference to John Wesley's direction regarding her public speaking and Susanna Wesley's similar deference to Samuel Wesley regarding holding the Sunday evening meetings in her home; see chapter 3. Both situations involve issues of public speaking and the appropriate roles and activities for women. Both Mary and Susanna also promise to follow the guidance of the male in authority, even if doing so is opposed to their spiritual convictions or God's law, and they both assert that they take no spiritual responsibility for their actions if they follow John or Samuel's guidance which is against God's law.

In addition to deferring to John Wesley's direction about her public speaking, Mary also asserts her commitment to support and peacefully cooperate with the local Methodist leadership—"those that act as heads among us"—who she respects because of the good works they do. Mary then paraphrases a Scripture verse and refers to a historical event to explain why the issue of public speaking is important to her and why she is committed to peaceful cooperation. She writes:

> That word of the prophets has oft come to my mind, "Woe is me that my mother has borne me a man of contention"; how painful is it to be forced to contend with those with whom one desires above all things to live in peace, is well known to you, Sir, by experience.

Mary is paraphrasing Jer. 15:10, a part of which reads as follows: "Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth!" In context, the verse refers to the contentious response the prophet Jeremiah

encountered after he criticized the Israelites for their wickedness (Henry, "Jer. 15"). Mary, however, uses this verse to decry the disagreement that has arisen between herself and the male Methodist minister over her public speaking. She indicates she wants to peacefully coexist with the male minister—he doing his ministry and she doing hers—but instead she has been "forced to contend" with him. Wesley, too, has encountered contentious relationships, she says, and he, like her, has wished to "live in peace" with those who insist upon stirring up strife and criticizing him. Here Mary is referring to actual incidents of in-fighting which occurred between the Methodist ministers and against John Wesley.

Mary's contention with the local minister over her public speaking is friendly, she reports, although "he thought it quite unscriptural for women to speak in the Church." From her conversations with him and others, she was almost "strongly persuaded" by Satan to "swallow [the minister's objections] down altogether" and stop speaking in church; doing so would have been easy and comfortable for her to do, she says, implying that speaking publicly is not easy for her to do, but is a responsibility she must do. However, before discontinuing her public speaking, she "[weighed] the thing before the Lord" and came to believe that she is "called to do all I can for God," and so she must continue to speak publicly.[19] Doing all she can in all the ways she can includes a variety of public activities which she enumerates to John Wesley, including speaking, singing, and praying at the Methodist meetings.

[19] Mary's comment that she is "called to do all [she] can for God" is very similar to the famous "Rule of Life" attributed to John Wesley: "Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as ever you can." However, according to Richard Heitzenrater, a leading authority on John Wesley, there is no evidence that Wesley wrote these words (Jacobs). Perhaps this statement has become associated with John Wesley because it seems consonant with his philosophies and ministry activities and with those of his followers, including Mary Bosanquet Fletcher.

After explaining the history of her "very peculiar" situation to John Wesley, Mary uses a variety of rhetorical strategies in presenting her views on the proper role of women's public speaking. She discusses the meaning of the Pauline prohibitions, argues for a limited application of Paul's views, and raises and refutes numerous objections in the best tradition of classic rhetoric.[20]

In her letter, Mary provides several examples as indication to John Wesley why she feels so strongly that she must continue in doing whatever good she can; these examples all center on her belief that she must communicate the gospel in any way possible. Sarah Ryan—the founder with Mary of the orphanage in Leytonstone—held prayer meetings with Mary for small groups who met in private homes (Mack, *Heart* 307). Soon the numbers of people attending and the frequency of the meetings increased so much that, according to Mary, there were "hundreds of carnal persons coming to [the meetings] who would not go near a preaching house." Mary's implication to John Wesley is clear: if not for the public speaking she and Sarah Ryan did in these meetings, the many "carnal persons" would not have heard the gospel.

In other situations, Mary is faced with deciding how to minister when the house prayer meetings are moved to a church building because the crowd is too large to be accommodated in a private home. She writes

> Twice it has happened, [through] the zeal of the people, that they [scheduled] a meeting in a preaching house, because they had no private house that would hold the people, nor one quarter of them. When we came I [. . .] could not tell what to do; hundreds of unawakened persons were there, and my heart yearned over them. I feared my Master should say, "Their blood will I require of you."

[20] Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian all discuss refutation and give methods for raising objections and refuting them, (see Foertsch).

In this situation too, Mary does not immediately know what to do; on one hand, she knows that as a woman she is not allowed to speak publically in church, while on the other hand, she believes that it is her Christian responsibility and a mandate from God to speak to the spiritually unawakened persons. She fears that if she does not speak, God will hold her responsible for the failure of these persons to experience spiritual salvation.[21]

Mary did speak publically, which she believed was proper, although she was criticized by several persons for doing so. In explaining her motivation for speaking, Mary takes Scriptures from the Pauline prohibitions and argues that these injunctions against women's public speaking do not apply to her current situation. At the same time, she outlines her understanding of what is and is not proper behavior for women in the church. She writes:

> Several object [to my public speaking], saying 'A woman ought not to teach, nor take authority over the man.' I understand that text to mean [only] that a woman shall not take authority over her husband, but be in subjection, neither shall she teach at all by usurping authority, she shall not meddle in Church discipline, neither order nor regulate anything in which men are concerned in the matters of the Church; but I do not apprehend it means she shall not entreat sinners to come to Jesus, nor say, [']Come, and I will tell you what God hath done for my soul.[']

In this statement, Mary outlines her understanding of what is and is not proper behavior for women in church, and in so doing, she concedes as improper nearly every possible reason for speaking publicly except for the two responsibilities which motivate her speaking, that of "entreating sinners to come to Jesus" and telling "what God hath done

[21] Here again there are similarities between Mary's ministry and that of Susanna Wesley, discussed in chapter 3. The Sunday evening meetings Susanna held in her home also had large crowds of attendees, such that her house could not accommodate the numbers who attended. There is no evidence, however, that Susanna's meetings were held anywhere except in her home.

for my soul." Earlier, I explained the motivation of the early Methodists which was based upon John Wesley's statement that "you have nothing to do but to save souls," and this is Mary's motivation for speaking in church. She feels constrained to "entreat sinners to come to Jesus" so that their souls might be saved, and she links giving testimony of "what God hath done" as one means through which sinners will recognize their need for spiritual salvation. Believing she is mandated to save souls also empowers Mary to stand firm against her critics.

Raising and refuting objections to women's preaching

Next Mary responds to real or possible criticism by raising and refuting numerous objections against women's preaching; in doing so, she uses the classic rhetorical move called *prolepsis*, in which the rhetor anticipates and answers objections to his or her argument (Lanham 120). Mary arranges objections and answers in the style of a friendly debate between two persons—presumably Mary and the local Methodist minister with whom she had several friendly conversations—who have differing opinions on the subject of women's preaching. The most significant points in this long and complicated debate can be summarized as follows.

"The apostle says that a woman is not to speak in church," states the critic to Mary.

"Yes," Mary responds, "but this statement means the woman is not to meddle with church government."

"No," the critic counters, "the statement literally means that a woman is not to speak for the purpose of edification."

"If this is true," Mary asks, "why does the Scripture state that a woman must prophesy with her head covered?[22] Can she prophecy without speaking? Or is she expected to speak but not preach?"

"A woman may speak now and then, if under a specific impulse," the critic responds. "But if 40 people come to hear the male ministers' preaching, 150 people will come to your meetings. Won't this discourage the preachers?"

"I am sorry that only 40 people come to the preaching services, but I am not sorry that a 'hundred careless carnal sinners' come to my meetings," Mary responds.

The discussion between Mary and her male critic continues with the minister asserting that the people will not have time to attend both Mary's services and the regular preaching services. He also states that women are more easily deceived than men and thus should not be trusted to teach or preach, and he questions if women's preaching is consistent with the modesty required in a woman who is professing godliness.[23]

Mary responds to her male critic with another effective rhetorical flourish in which she invokes the stories and actions of several influential women in the Bible to show that their behavior and public speaking are consistent with the attributes of purity and humility which are expected of godly women. Mary first writes about the women

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[22] Here Mary is alluding to I Cor. 11:5: "But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head."

[23] Here the allusion is to II Tim. 2:8-10: "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women *adorn themselves in modest apparel*, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which *becometh women professing godliness*) with good works" (emphasis added). These verses immediately precede the Pauline prohibition in II Tim 2:11-12: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

who discovered that Jesus' tomb was empty: "I do not [believe] Mary sinned against either [purity or humility], or could in the least be accused of immodesty, when she carried the joyful news of her Lord's Resurrection and in that sense taught the Teachers of Mankind." Mary Bosanquet is here referring to Mary Magdalene or "the other Mary" (Matt 28:1) who discovered the empty tomb, were told by an angel that Jesus had risen from the dead, and were instructed by the angel to "go quickly, and tell his disciples." The women did as instructed and "ran to bring his disciples word" (Matt. 28:7-8).[24] In her letter to John Wesley, Mary Bosanquet characterizes the disciples as the "Teachers of Mankind" which alludes to the role they would eventually have in the development and spread of the Christian church. Her purpose in retelling this story is to give evidence that the women at the tomb did not act impurely or immodestly in taking the news of Jesus' resurrection to the disciples, and likewise, women who carry "joyful news" by speaking publically for Christ are not acting impurely or immodestly.

Mary continues by mentioning three more notable women from Scripture; they each spoke publically and were highly influential. Mary uses their stories as further evidence of the precedent of women speaking publicly and modestly that is set out in Scripture. Mary writes,

> Neither was the woman of Samaria to be accused of immodesty when she invited the whole city to come to Christ. Neither do I think the woman mentioned in the 20th chapter of [. . .] 2nd Samuel could be said to sin against modesty [. . . though] she called the General of the opposite army to converse with her, and then [. . .] went to all the people [. . .] to give them her advice and by it the City was saved. Neither do I suppose Deborah did wrong in publicly declaring the message of the

[24] This story is told in all four of the New Testament Gospels; in Matt. 28:1-8, Mark 16:1-8, Luke 24:1-11, and John 20:1-2. One notable difference in the four accounts is that the passage from Mark indicates the women said nothing about the empty tomb and the angel "for they were afraid" (Mark 16:8).

> Lord, and afterward accompanying Barak to war, because [he was discouraged about] going without her.

Here Mary brings to mind the familiar Bible story of the outcast woman Jesus met at a well.[25] After conversing with Jesus, the woman returned to her village and "saith to the men, 'Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?'" (John 4:29-30).

The story from 2 Sam. 20 is far less well known but also gives evidence of the power and effectiveness of a woman's wisdom, actions, and speech to avert war. Matthew Henry, in his classic Bible commentary written in 1706, makes several comments about this "good woman" in 2 Sam. 20 that reinforce the usefulness of this story to support Mary's argument in favor of women's public speech. First, Henry describes the woman as being discreet; this characterization helps support Mary's argument that the women from the Bible stories she mentions acted modestly and properly, and similarly women who speak publicly are also behaving appropriately. Henry comments further: "This one woman and her wisdom saved the city. Souls know no difference of sexes. Though the man be the head, it does not therefore follow that he has the monopoly of the brains [. . .] nor is the treasure of wisdom the less valuable for being lodged in the weaker vessel" (Henry, "2 Sam. 20"). That a Bible commentator, writing in the early eighteenth century, would speak of gender equality in spiritual matters is nothing short of astonishing. While we have no knowledge that Mary Bosanquet knew of Henry's comments on this Scripture passage, his strong assertion of equality between men and women on the basis of wisdom and "brains" lends credence

[25] This story is found in John 4:5-42.

to Mary's argument that women speaking publically do so appropriately and with authority.

Finally, Mary mentions Deborah, a prophetess and "a mother in Israel" who served as a judge in Israel.[26] Deborah directed the male warriors when to go to war, and she accompanied them to the battle which was successful. Interestingly, both the story in 2 Sam. 20 and the story of Deborah in Judges 4 and 5, to which Mary alludes in her letter, include the phrase "mother in Israel," and these are the only two instances of this phrase in the entire Bible. The term "mother in Israel" was commonly used in early Methodist discourse as an honorific title, and it helped to establish the ethos of motherhood for the women being honored. Its significance in honoring godly women is increased by the fact that the term comes from relatively obscure Bible stories and appears only twice in the Bible.

Mary presents the stories of these three women from the Bible as a way to refute her male critic's objection that to speak publicly is inconsistent with modesty and godliness. After her lengthy answer about these women, her critic responds with an objection which became the linchpin of John Wesley's qualified approval of women's preaching. Mary's critic asks, "But all these [women in the Bible had . . .] extraordinary calls; [. . . but] you will not say yours is an extraordinary call?" Mary responds by strongly affirming that she has received an extraordinary call to speak publicly:

> If I did not believe [I had an extraordinary call], I would not act in an extraordinary manner [by speaking publicly]. I do not believe every woman is called to speak publicly, no more than every man to be a Methodist preacher, yet some have an extraordinary call to it, and woe be to them if they obey it not.

[26] This story is found in Judges 4 and 5.

The notion that an extraordinary call authorizes women to speak publicly is one important tenet of Mary's argument that there are exceptions to the Pauline prohibitions; this idea seems to have been particularly persuasive to John Wesley.

Mary Bosanquet and Margaret Fell compared and contrasted

Paul Wesley Chilcote observed that Mary's argument in her 1771 letter to John Wesley is very similar to that marshaled by Margaret Fell in her famous discourse "Women's Speaking Justified, Proved, and Allowed by the Scriptures," (*John Wesley* 142) published in 1667, (Donawerth, *Rhetorical* 59) more than a century before Mary wrote her letter to John Wesley. Whether Mary was familiar with Margaret's tract is unknown, but the similarities between the two documents may indicate Mary's familiarity with Margaret's argument and techniques, although there are also notable differences between the two documents.

In "Women's Speaking"[27] Margaret Fell sets out to show how the Pauline prohibition against women speaking has been misinterpreted and to explain God's plan for women. In attempting to speak for God on the issue of women, Fell becomes a prophetic voice speaking powerfully against injustice. In taking on her prophetic *ethos*, Fell rejects the typical feminine style that is supportive, non-confrontational, and conciliatory, and she uses scripture copiously to support her claims. Fell is particularly confrontational and non-conciliatory when she accuses those who object to women speaking of acting on behalf of the devil. She writes, "It is manifest that those that speak against the woman and her seed's speaking, speak out of the enmity of the old Serpent's

[27] The text of Margaret's tract appears in Jane Donawerth's edited collection *Rhetorical Theory by Women Before 1900: An Anthology*, pages 60-72. Donawerth modernized spelling and punctuation, and I quote from this modernized version.

seed" (61). Later, she also writes against those "that speak against" Christ by speaking against women, and she characterizes them as "seed of the Serpent," "blind priests," "ministers of Darkness" and "opposing spirit(s) that would limit the Power and Spirit of the Lord Jesus."

Mary Bosanquet also draws a connection between Satan and those who would prevent women from speaking publicly. As mentioned, Mary says she has been "toss[ed] between the temptations of Satan [to stop speaking publicly] and the arguments of men [against public speaking]," and Satan "strongly persuaded" her to accept the arguments of others and stop speaking publicly. Satan worked through her critics and those who would prevent women from speaking publicly, she indicates, and he was almost successful in getting her to abandon her call to preach.

Similarly, both Mary and Margaret use Scripture to construct their argument, but there are also subtle differences. In Margaret's text, the italicized sections that represent scriptural quotations dominate the article to the point that, on first glance, the article seems to be constructed mostly of scripture verses strung together. On the other hand, Mary refers and alludes to various biblical stories and concepts, some of which I have discussed, but she also quotes directly from the Bible on a much more limited basis. In either case, both women use scripture to create a persuasive argument for why women should be allowed to speak publicly.[28]

Another similarity between the arguments of Margaret Fell and Mary Bosanquet has to do with the "extraordinary call" to preach that some women, including Mary, have received from God. In the passage quoted above, Mary indicates quite clearly that

[28] For more on using Scripture to create persuasion, see Chapter 2.

if she had not received an extraordinary call to preach, she "would not act in an extraordinary manner" by speaking publicly. In much the same way, Margaret Fell makes clear that she is authorizing women who will speak "in the power of the Lord" and not just out of their own knowledge or eloquence. Women who preach must have received "the Everlasting Gospel to preach, and upon whom the Promise of the Lord is fulfilled, and his Spirit poured upon them according to his word," Margaret states. Both Margaret and Mary recognize that the involvement of God to provide an extraordinary call and the ability to preach is a prerequisite to any public ministry.

As discussed, Mary uses the story of the women at Jesus' empty tomb to show that their behavior and public speaking are consistent with the attributes of purity and humility which are expected of godly women. Margaret Fell uses the same story to justify women's public speaking, but she uses it to state unequivocally that the message of Christ's resurrection and "Redemption of the whole body of mankind" came through the women who mourned Christ's death at his grave and "were ready to carry his Message" to the male disciples. Both Margaret and Mary assert that the story of the women at the tomb sets precedent for authorizing women to speak publically about their spiritual experiences. The women at Christ's grave were so united and "knit unto him in love" (63), Fell indicates, so women of her era should be allowed to speak of their spiritual experiences just as the angel authorized the women at the tomb to speak.

Like Mary's rhetorical strategy of anticipating and answering objections, Margaret also foresees and forestalls differing opinions regarding women's public speaking. One of the most striking examples is where Fell responds directly to the scriptures in the Pauline prohibition. Here she puts into context 1 Corinthians 14:34-35

and 1 Timothy 2:11-12 in order to respond to the traditional objections often advanced against women speaking. Her argument can be summarized as follows: You say women are to be silent; the scriptures say that men are also to be silent. You say that Paul "stopped women's praying or prophesying"; actually Paul instructs women to cover their heads when praying or prophesying. You say women shouldn't teach or have authority over men; Paul is speaking of the roles within a married couple. You say women should not speak; Paul specifically asked for help to be given to women "who labored with him in the gospel." You say the law prohibits women speaking; women who are "led by the Spirit of God" are not under the law. Again and again, point after point, Fell takes up objections to women speaking and quickly answers each of them.

Comparing and contrasting Mary Bosanquet's and Margaret Fell's defense of women's preaching reveals the many logical and inventive ways in which these two women marshaled every strategy they could to counteract a tenet of their religious faith which they believed had been incorrectly interpreted and wrongly applied in their situation. [29]

Women's calling defended

Mary Bosanquet's letter to John Wesley elicited what Paul Wesley Chilcote calls Wesley's "most definitive [statement] defending the legitimate nature of [Mary's] unique calling" (*John Wesley* 143). On June 13, 1771, Wesley wrote to Mary:

> I think the strength of the cause rests there, on your having an *Extraordinary Call*.[. . .] It is plain to me that the whole Work of God

[29] There are also notable similarities—and some differences—between the arguments about women's preaching written by Margaret Fell in the 1660s, by Mary Bosanquet Fletcher in the 1770s, and by Frances Willard who wrote *Woman in the Pulpit* in 1889 (Donawerth, *Rhetorical* 243). This history indicates the frustratingly slow progress made over more than 230 years with regards to women's preaching.

> termed Methodism is an extraordinary dispensation of His Providence. Therefore I do not wonder if several things occur therein which do not fall under ordinary rules of discipline. St. Paul's ordinary rule was "I permit not a woman to speak in the congregation." Yet, in extraordinary cases he made a few exceptions.

Wesley's letter to Mary reveals his view of women preachers continues to evolve and expand. He acknowledges that God is the originator of an extraordinary call and that this call is consonant with God's "extraordinary dispensation" conveyed upon Methodism. Paul Wesley Chilcote notes that Wesley applies the "same basic rationale" to women preachers that he had used to justify "his own irregularities" in the Methodist movement; now he would "allow and even encourage similar activities" among women (*John Wesley* 144).

Along with his letter to Mary, John Wesley also posted a letter to Sarah Crosby, dated the same day, June 13, 1771, in which he instructs Sarah regarding what she should do when leading a public meeting: "read a chapter [from the Bible] or part of one and [make] short observations [which] may be as useful as any way of speaking," (qtd. in Chilcote, *John Wesley* 144). Mandating the use of Scripture and allowing "short observations" about the Scripture is significant because doing so brings Sarah's public speaking—and that of other women—much closer to having the attributes of traditional preaching. Wesley's instructions to use scripture are also indicative of his change of mind about the mode and content of women's public speaking in the sixteen years since he had instructed Sarah to "just nakedly tell . . . what is in [your] heart" and in the eight years since his instructions to "keep as far from what is called preaching as you can: therefore never take a text."

Explicit authorization of preaching

About six years later, in 1777, John Wesley again wrote to Sarah Crosby and gave explicit instructions "even in the face of what seemed, even to him, the clear ruling of the scripture against women preaching" (Middleton 5). Wesley wrote to Sarah regarding the differences in belief between the Methodists and the Quakers on the Pauline prohibitions. "The difference between us and the Quakers in this respect is manifest," Wesley wrote. "They flatly deny the rule [ordering women to be silent in church . . .], although it stands clear in the Bible. We allow the rule; only we believe it admits of some exceptions." Here Wesley asserts the Methodist belief in the legitimacy and validity of the Scriptures, and specifically of the Pauline prohibitions, but also provides the opportunity for a variety of exceptions to render the rule of no effect in those cases.

Roy Middleton sees the allowable exception as based on Wesley's belief that women could have an extraordinary call to preach (6), but that is only one of several exceptions Wesley allowed or which are in evidence in the literature of the early Methodists. When Wesley authorized women to give particular public utterances, he frequently did so based on the importance of saving souls which he believed superseded obedience to Paul's instruction for women to remain silent. Wesley also asserted that one reason he encouraged females to preach was because "God owns them in the conversion of sinners, and who am I that I should withstand God" (qtd. in Middleton 6). In so saying, Wesley reaffirms that another exception to the Pauline prohibitions is based on the effectiveness of what is accomplished by women's public speaking. If the women are being successful in "the conversion of sinners," Wesley must allow them to

preach. Mary's lengthy defense of women's preaching also includes other exceptions: she must be allowed to speak because the "hundreds of carnal person" that she was able to speak to would not go near a church, and she must be allowed to speak because she is called to do all she can for God. These exceptions must be allowed not just because she has an extraordinary call, but also because she has the responsibility to use all her abilities for God.

Surprisingly, in 2003, Roy Middleton ends his discussion of John Wesley's legacy related to women preachers by stating, "*Though contrary to scripture*, at the centre of Wesley's legacy is the public ministry of women" (7; emphasis added). That Middleton would, as late as the last decade, hold to the belief that public ministry of women is contrary to Scripture is astonishing at best and troubling at worst. As mentioned earlier, Vicki Tolar Collins (Burton) asserted in 1993 that it has taken nearly 200 years for women in Methodism to reclaim the voice that they were afforded under the leadership and support of John Wesley and which was lost to them after his death (*Perfecting* 252). Based on Middleton's comment alone, there is still much progress needed so that women's public ministry can be accepted on the basis of the many exceptions to the Pauline prohibitions that John Wesley allowed and which authorized women to preach more than 200 years ago.

In chapter 5, we will see how Hester Rogers, a woman who did not preach, inventively uses a variety of rhetorical appeals in her spiritual experience journal for the purpose of empowering and encouraging the readers to follow her example of spirituality.

Chapter 5

Hester Ann Rogers: Reporting "What the Lord Hath Wrought"

Hester Ann (Roe) Rogers (1756-1794) has been called one of the most influential and devout women of the eighteenth century and one of the "elect ladies" of early Methodism; this homage is largely the result of the impact and popularity of her spiritual experience journal which was widely published and sold in the late eighteenth century and in the nineteenth century.

Hester's journal is a highly personal account which reflects the quality and intensity of her relationship with God and in which she reveals her most intimate spiritual experiences to her readers. In this chapter, and in an earlier study (Jensen),[30] I look in detail at the rhetorical appeals Hester uses in her journal and at the spiritual beliefs that informed her rhetoric. I conclude that Hester's journal is a rhetorical device uniquely qualified to impact the lives of her readers. Studying Hester's rhetorical appeals and spiritual beliefs is important because her text contributes much to the journal's power and popularity; her journal also provides an interesting perspective of John Wesley's ministry, and reveals important details about roles women played in early Methodism. Indeed, without the vivid eloquence of Hester's text, the journal would be nothing more than just another diary that may have been quickly lost and forgotten after the writer's death. Instead, because of the compelling qualities of the text, Hester's journal lives on nearly 220 years after her death, and she is among the best-known and most-mentioned women of early Methodism.

[30]Material in this chapter was first developed in my M.A. thesis, *The Spiritual and Feminist Rhetoric of Hester Ann Rogers, an Early Methodist.*

Hester's biography

Hester Ann Roe was born on January 31, 1756, in Macclesfield, Cheshire, England (Rogers 3), where her father was an Anglican vicar. From her early childhood, Hester was drawn toward spiritual experiences, and she writes about praying and receiving answers to prayer at age four and of reading the Bible at age five. Once, at age six, she forgot to say her prayers, but her "conscience greatly accused me; so that I began to tremble lest Satan should be permitted of God to take me away body and soul, which I felt I deserved!" (Rogers 4). This incident of conviction made such a lasting impression on Hester's tender conscience that she "never after dared to neglect commending myself to the protection of God before I slept" (Rogers 5).

When Hester was nine years old, her father died, and Hester mourned deeply. After a time, her mother decided that Hester should learn to dance—a practice Hester's father had forbidden before his death—"in order to raise (Hester's) spirits and improve (her) carriage" (Rogers 7). Hester writes that learning to dance was a "fatal stab to my seriousness and divine impressions; it paved the way to lightness, trifling, love of pleasure, and various evils" (7). Dancing and the "various evils" in which Hester participated began a period in her life that Vicki Tolar Collins describes as a "crazy quilt of flagrant frivolity alternating with intense self-chastisement" ("Women's Voices" 241) in which Hester succumbed to "vain customs and pleasures" (Rogers 8) such as attending parties, dressing fashionably, reading romance novels, and attending the theater. Yet during this time, Hester continued to be drawn toward spiritual experiences with "keen convictions, gentle drawings" which she attributes to God who "often wrought strongly upon my mind." She admits, however, that she rejected the

spiritual impulses and in doing so "did . . grieve and resist the Holy Ghost!" (Rogers 8). At age 13, Hester attended church confirmation classes, which gave her a new seriousness and the "strong resolutions to lead a new life" by vowing against "anger, pride, disobedience . . . neglect of secret prayer and church going" (8-9). Nonetheless, Hester despaired to find that she could not keep her vows, and "for several months (she) thus repented and sinned, resolved, and broke all (her) resolutions; sinned and repented again" (10).

When Hester was 17 years old, she learned that the new Anglican curate in her town was a Methodist. Based on stories from her childhood, Hester thought the Methodists to be "false prophets" and "many other things equally false and absurd; but all of which I believed" (Rogers 15-16). However, once she heard the new curate speak, Hester reported that his "sermons began to sink more deeply into my heart . . . I would come out of the church weeping, and with the next person I met, would ridicule the sermon that affected me, lest I should be thought or called a Methodist" (19). Hester's spiritual conflict—of secretly wanting to have the experience of God about which the curate preached while nearly simultaneously mocking his preaching—continued for many months until, as a result of the Methodist teachings, Hester experienced spiritual salvation and "forgiveness, and could call God my Father and my Friend" (Rogers 32). Nearly two years later, in February 1776, Hester experienced "one[ness] with God" (Rogers 46), the spiritual experience the Methodists called sanctification or holiness.

Only a few weeks after her experience of sanctification, on April 1, 1776, Hester met John Wesley when he visited her town, and she wrote of the meeting in her journal: "He behaved to me with parental tenderness, and greatly rejoiced in the Lord's

goodness to my soul; encouraged me to hold fast, and to declare what the Lord had wrought" (51). In asking Hester to tell of God's work in her life, Wesley established what was to become the overriding objective for which Hester wrote her journal and later edited it for publication. At the time of this meeting between Hester and John Wesley, she was 20 years old; he was 72. This meeting began a close friendship and correspondence between Hester and Wesley that continued for the rest of his life.

Hester does not mention her formal education in her published journal, but evidence from several sources suggests she was well educated and highly intelligent. She reported that, as an adolescent, she read religious books and "several English and Roman histories, Rollin's Ancient History, and Stackhouse's History of the Bible, intending to go through the Universal History also" (Rogers 18-19). After her spiritual experiences, the Bible became Hester's main source of study, but several times she also mentions reading sermons by John Wesley and others. James Rogers also notes his wife's intelligence and abilities, stating that she "had a critical knowledge of the English tongue," that she was "capable of conversing upon almost any subject," and that "writing seemed to be her peculiar talent; and she took great delight therein" (Rogers 121-22).

From around the time of her experience of spiritual salvation in 1774, Hester recorded accounts of her spiritual life in a manuscript journal. After meeting John Wesley a few years later, Hester clearly took to heart his admonition to record what God did in her life. Presumably, the enjoyment and opportunity for self-reflection and self-expression Hester derived from writing her journal, coupled with Wesley's encouragement to her and the mandate of journal writing as a discipline of Methodism,

motivated her to continue journaling. Many years later, Wesley asked Hester to edit her manuscript journal, and a brief excerpt was published in 1793, two years after his death and just a year before Hester died from complications of child birth.

Just as journal writing was an important part of the early Methodists' spiritual discipline, so too was attending small-group class and band meetings formed by the early Methodist societies to nurture the spiritual development of their members. After Hester's salvation and sanctification experiences, she continued to attend Methodist classes and bands, and she eventually becoming a leader. John Wesley apparently recognized Hester's ability as a leader when he wrote to her, "You are likewise to watch over the new-born babes. Although they have much love, they have not yet either much light or much strength" (qtd. in Earl Kent Brown 48). Wesley's statement, and his use of the common metaphors of babies and light, direct Hester to assume responsibility for guiding new converts who have spiritual fervor but little experience or knowledge of how to live as a Christian.

There is no evidence to suggest that in her role of small-group leader Hester preached, according to the eighteenth-century definition of preaching as explaining and interpreting biblical texts and their application, but she did read, interpret, and perhaps embellish John Wesley's sermons with additional Scripture to the members of her classes and bands. She reported her activities in a letter to John Wesley: "On Tuesday last, as I was repeating and enforcing some of the passages of your last Sermon, and a few parallel promises, another young woman . . . by faith" was guided to accept spiritual salvation (qtd. in Earl Kent Brown 21). Hester's report to John Wesley

indicates her success in fulfilling the objective of the small-group meetings in helping guide others to their own personal experience of God.

Almost immediately after her sanctification experience, Hester also began her ministry of visitation to the sick and dying. Throughout her published journal, in numerous examples, Hester writes of these visits and of the results; her spiritual rhetoric is particularly vivid and notable in the accounts of her visits to those in need.

In 1784, at age 28, Hester married prominent Methodist itinerant preacher James Rogers shortly after he was widowed. Their marriage was encouraged by John Wesley, who wanted the newly married couple to go to Dublin to continue Methodist revival work there; James and Hester did so a few days after their wedding (Earl Kent Brown 216). In 1790, during the last months of John Wesley's life, James and Hester moved to London so Hester could be Wesley's housekeeper and James could travel with Wesley and assist with the Methodist services. Due to her declining health, Hester was unable to continue in this position for long (Wesley, *Journal* 8:131), and another prominent Methodist woman, Elizabeth Ritchie, replaced Hester as housekeeper. Nonetheless, Hester was at Wesley's bedside when he died in April 1791 at the age of 87, and she recorded the event in her journal: "To be with that honoured and much-loved servant of God, Mr. Wesley, for five months; and then to be witnesses of his glorious exit, was a favour indeed. But O! how awful the scene!—how unspeakable the loss!" (72-73).

At the time of Hester's marriage to James Rogers, she assumed maternal responsibilities for James's two children from his first wife. Hester also gave birth to five children over a period of nine years (Earl Kent Brown 217) with her death coming

a few hours after the birth of the fifth child in October 1794. Hester was 39 years old when she died (Rogers 112-13).

Hester Rogers's spiritual experience journal

"The name of Hester Ann Rogers is historical and saintly in the early annals of Methodism. For more than half a century her 'Memoirs' . . . have had a salutary influence on the spiritual life of the denomination" (Stevens 98). So begins the section about Hester in the 1866 edition of *The Women of Methodism* by Abel Stevens. Indeed, as Vicki Tolar Collins shows, *An Account of the Experience of Hester Ann Rogers* was one of the most published, promoted, and popular texts of the early Methodists; it was published in more than 50 editions in Great Britain and the United States in the nineteenth century ("Women's Voices" 239, 248). Most published editions have several additional texts that were accreted to the core text of Hester's journal; these include spiritual letters she wrote to John Wesley and others, the sermon preached at her funeral, tributes by her husband and others, and a short essay in which she encourages her friends and family to prepare spiritually for their deaths.

By the time Hester's journal was published in 1793, Hester was a prominent Methodist woman and the wife of one of the leading Methodist ministers. She had been the confidante of the late John Wesley, she had traveled widely with her husband to minister in Methodist meetings, she had been a tireless visitor to the sick and dying, and although Hester was not a preacher, she had brought many converts into the church through her leadership of classes and bands and her "spiritual conversations" (Collins "Women's Voices" 235). Spiritual conversations, as mentioned earlier, often involved speaking casually with persons who were new to Methodism to explain beliefs and

draw them into the societies; conversation was one method of women's public discourse that was common and accepted in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, and Hester made the most of this method of connecting with persons in need of spiritual help. Based on this wide experience and firsthand knowledge of her audience and the goals of the Methodist movement, when Hester edited her manuscript journal for publication at the request of John Wesley, she selectively tailored its rhetoric to suit the audience and the spiritual and practical goals she—and Wesley—wanted the journal to achieve. Hester admits she edited the text when she states, "I here transcribe a brief extract from my journal, kept at the time, as it will most clearly describe the language of my heart" (40).

The published journal truly is a "brief extract": James Rogers said that Hester's manuscript journal was "not less than three thousand quarto pages," but the edited journal in many editions is only 74 tiny pages. By "transcribing a brief extract," Hester creates what Vicki Tolar Collins (Burton) calls "a constructed text" (*Perfecting* 65) that, like all autobiography, "[assigns] meaning to a series of experiences, after they have taken place, by means of emphasis, juxtaposition, commentary, omission" (Sidonie Smith 45).

In her journal, Hester created her constructed text by recording day by day the intimate details of the ebb and flow of her spiritual life, but she barely mentions her marriage, children, or her other work among the Methodists (Collins, "Women's Voices" 242). Collins explains, "Her rhetorical purpose is to describe her spiritual experience, and this intent shapes her selection of material, the relative space she devotes to various aspects of her life, the imagery she uses, the virtues she commends,

and the personal defects she abhors" (*Perfecting* 66). By recording particular intimate details of her spiritual experiences, Hester gives them rhetorical significance; by emphasizing her spiritual experiences over her marriage and children, Hester communicates her belief in the importance of spiritual life over all other pursuits. Collins concludes, "Hester Rogers carefully constructed a text that focuses almost exclusively on her spiritual journey and her relationship with God," (*Perfecting* 67).

In editing her journal to create her constructed text, Hester clearly followed John Wesley's own method of journal editing in which he eliminated "those particulars which I wrote for my own use only, and which would answer no valuable end to others, however important they were to me" (*Heart* vii). Likely Wesley personally encouraged Hester to use similar criteria, and her journal clearly indicates that she did as Wesley suggested.

By using Hester's published journal to lift her up as a model of the Christian life, Wesley hoped others would benefit spiritually and be encouraged to imitate Hester's spiritual life and piety. Vicki Tolar Collins explains the message that John Wesley wanted Hester's journal to convey to the readers and gives us a glimpse of Wesley's views on the roles of women in early Methodism. She writes:

> John Wesley's concern was Hester's relationship to God . . . Wesley's regard for Hester is representative of his belief that justification and salvation are open to all people regardless of gender, class, or race. . . . To Wesley, individuals were souls before they were women or men. . . . Wesley counted the authority of [Hester's] call more heavily than he counted scriptural or cultural limitations on women's roles. (*Perfecting* 251)

This emphasis that Wesley placed on God's call to women, over their gender or what were considered acceptable traditional roles for women at that time, is the basis of much of the empowerment Wesley conferred to women during his lifetime.

After John Wesley's death, his successors and leaders of the new Methodist denomination heavily promoted Hester's journal, it was widely published, and it became very popular, sometimes outselling even published excerpts from John Wesley's journal (Collins, *Perfecting* 50-51). Very little study of the first century of Methodism is required to also quickly see the rhetorical impact of Hester's journal.

In chapter 2, I discussed the close relationship between Aristotelian and Jewish-Christian rhetorical appeals, and I compared and contrasted the ways these appeals are exhibited in classical rhetoric, in the Bible, and in spiritual rhetoric. In Aristotelian rhetoric, there are three modes of artistic proof: the ways the writer or speaker presents her character is called *ethos*, arguments based on logic are called *logos*, and methods which arouse the audiences' emotions are called *pathos*. Hester Rogers's journal exhibits many of these traditional attributes of Aristotelian rhetoric, but because of the spiritual nature of her journal, these attributes are also sometimes manifested differently from traditional rhetorical appeals.

From the first sentence of her published journal, Hester uses deliberate actions to set up her moral character and authority—her *ethos*—and to show that she is an expert on the subject about which she writes:

> I was born at Macclesfield, in Cheshire, January 31, 1756, of which place my father was minister for many years; being a clergyman of the Church of England. . . . I was trained up in the observance of all outward duties, and in the fear of those sins . . . I was not suffered to name God but with the deepest reverence. (3)

Hester tells that she is the daughter of a minister and was taught Christian beliefs from her earliest days. She goes on to reveal her childhood longings for God, her teenage love of worldly pursuits, her attempts and failures to live a holy life, and her salvation and sanctification experiences. These stories are effective in developing Hester's moral character and in creating identification with her audience, many of whom were also brought up in the Anglican Church, may have struggled and failed in doing right, and were now seeking salvation and sanctification. Additionally, one does not need to read beyond the first few pages of Hester's journal to see that she clearly is an expert on the struggle to live a spiritual life, and later, that she is also a vivid example of the transformation she reports as having received from her salvation and sanctification experiences. The stories Hester tells function to establish her *ethos* and legitimize her journal to serve as a spiritual guide for others.

Aristotle further divides *ethos* into three attributes that speakers or writers can develop and which make them persuasive; these attributes are practical wisdom [*phronesis*], virtue [*arete*] and goodwill [*eunois*]." To Aristotle, practical wisdom [*phronesis*] means common sense or knowing about things of this world (120-21). In a Christian sense, practical wisdom means knowing about things of the spiritual realm. One way Hester's practical wisdom is seen in her journal is in her constant quest for spiritual salvation first, and later, for spiritual perfection or sanctification.

While she is seeking salvation, Hester tells of getting up at 4 o'clock one morning "that I might wrestle with the Lord," an allusion to the biblical story in Gen. 32 in which Jacob wrestled all night with an angel. Hester writes that she prayed and paced and "[groaned] for mercy" and cried to the Lord: "O show me how to believe: show me

what is the gospel faith, or I am yet undone. I desire not deliverance except in thy own way: I desire no happiness, but thy favour. What shall I do? O teach me, O help me, or I am lost" (29-30). After her salvation experience, she reads sermons by John Wesley and others regarding Christian perfection and she begins to seek this experience for herself. She writes:

> From hence I could not rest, but cried to the Lord night and day, to cast out the strong man, and all his armour of unbelief and sin: assured that the power of the living God, and not death, must be the executioner; the blood of Jesus the procuring cause; and faith the only instrument. (40)

Despite her unceasing search for holiness, she prays for even more fervor. She writes, "I have been too easy, too lukewarm, while thy enemies have had a lurking place in my heart! O forgive me, and help me to be more in earnest!" (41). Another time, she rereads John Wesley's sermon "Plain Account of Christian Perfection" and again seeks Christian perfection for herself: "O how very ignorant, how stupid have I been, respecting this great salvation. . . . Lord, teach me, and save me fully" (41-42), she states.

As Hester continues her pursuit of sanctification, she often quotes Scripture or uses scriptural allusions to express her intense spiritual desires. Here she quotes a passage from Ps. 42:1-2, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God" when she writes, "This day I can say, 'As the hart panteth after the water brook,' so thirsteth my soul for the perfect love of God. O may I never rest till I have received this blessing!" (41). Another time, she reports, "My cry was this evening, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit

within me.'[31] And in private prayer I was blessed in a wonderful manner. I lay at the feet of my Lord, as clay in the hands of the potter" (41). In characterizing herself as "clay in the hands of the potter" she is represents herself as being obedient and pliable to God and appropriates the metaphor of clay from the biblical passage in Isa. 64:8, "But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand." Taken together, these examples of Hester's quest for salvation, sanctification, and a fuller spiritual life all help to establish her *ethos* by showing her practical wisdom about spiritual things.

Hester's act of seeking sanctification or Christian perfection also contributes to the construction of her *ethos* in another way. Vicki Tolar Collins (Burton) notes that in his role as production authority, John Wesley shaped the *ethos* of the women speakers of early Methodism. In the case of Hester, he authorized her "mystical experience of perfection" as the result of his own theological beliefs (*Perfecting* 121-22). Collins explains:

> As Wesley points out again and again, Christian perfection is not the result of an individual's works or even the individual's own efforts to refrain from sin. Rather it is a gift from God, the result of God's grace. . . . Perfection, then, could be seen as existing when a person is fully made or completed by love, thus becoming the creation God intended. (*Perfecting* 130-31)

Based on this viewpoint of Christian perfection, a perfected creation, then, has the ultimate *ethos*, the most perfect moral character and virtue, and as a result, engenders the greatest trust and authority in the audience. Wesley's theology of Christian perfection provides a pattern by which Hester establishes her own *ethos* and by which Wesley was also able to build her character and credibility within early Methodism. Not

[31] Here Hester is quoting verbatim from Ps. 51:10.

incidentally, Hester's story of seeking and receiving holiness also brings legitimacy to Wesley's message of sanctification. Hester's *ethos* is developed because she is the epitome of someone who seeks spiritual perfection, and as Collins notes, through her "*ethos* of perfection" Hester is able to persuade other (*Perfecting* 152).

Hester's account of her sanctification experience on February 22, 1776, helps to build her *ethos* in yet another way: it shows her as receiving spiritual wisdom from God. Hester wrote, "I take thee, Almighty Jesus, for my wisdom, my righteousness, my sanctification" (45). Hester is using biblical language similar to 1 Cor. 1:30, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." Another time, when Hester began attending Methodist meetings and her mother "persecuted" her for doing so, Hester also receives wisdom from God. She reports, "The Lord gave me a mouth and wisdom to plead my own cause, with arguments from his word." The result of speaking these God-given words was that her relatives who tried to dissuade her from Methodism "were in some measure all put to silence" (Rogers 26); this statement shows very clearly that Hester was aware of the persuasive rhetorical power of using "arguments from (God's) word."

Hester's journal also shows, in the Aristotelian sense of *phronesis*, that she has practical knowledge about things of the world that pertain to women such as dancing and wearing fine clothing. She describes her lifestyle as a teenager: "Dress, novels, plays, cards, assemblies, and balls, took up the most of my time . . . I loved pleasures, and after them I would go" (14). At the same time, Hester also tried to maintain the appearance of being religious. She reports that she "still frequented church and sacraments, still prayed night and morning, fasted sometimes, and especially in Lent;

and because I did these things, esteemed myself a far better Christian than my neighbours" (Rogers 14-15). When Hester was 17 years old, she heard that the new Anglican curate in her town was a Methodist and "preached against all my favourite diversions, such as going to plays, reading novels, attending balls, assemblies, card-tables" (16). Hester was determined to debate the minister to "prove such amusements were not sinful" (16), and to prove her point, she embarked on a study of biblical characters who danced. However, after her study she concedes that "nothing therefore which I found in Scripture countenanced dancing in any measure" (16-17), and she realizes that dancing "enervates the mind, dissipates the thoughts, weakens if not stifles . . . serious and good impressions; and quite indisposes the mind for prayer" (17). Despite coming to this conclusion, Hester was not yet ready to give up the practice. She continued to attend dances, although she says that her "conscience bled; and often in the midst of the dance, I felt as miserable as a creature could be, with a sense of guilt, and fears of death and hell. . . . Yet I would not acknowledge my unhappiness to any, but carried it off with the appearance of gayety" (Rogers 20). At one event, she danced until 4 o'clock in the morning, keeping herself occupied so as not to admit she felt conviction about her activities (Rogers 20). Shortly thereafter, Hester heard a Methodist sermon on the Ten Commandments, and she was further convicted of her sins. She notes what she did when she went home after hearing the sermon:

> [I] made a solemn vow to renounce and forsake all my sinful pleasures and trifling companions. . . . [I] took all my finery, high dressed caps . . . and ripped them all up, so that I could wear them no more; then cut my hair short . . . and [in] the most solemn manner vowed never to dance again! (22-23)

Hester destroys her fine clothing because she sees them as symbols of sin and as objects which distract her attention from spiritual matters. She cuts her hair to symbolize her humility and to show that she does not seek for outer beauty. Destroying her fine clothing and cutting her hair are also both actions of penance for her perceived wrongdoing of dancing. Dancing is also a metaphor for pleasure, so Hester repents of dancing and rejects pleasure in place of seeking spiritual enlightenment. These examples of Hester's responses to her practical knowledge about things of the world also help to build her *ethos* by demonstrating to her readers that she knows what she gave up to follow Christ.

Virtue. In Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, virtue [*arete*] means excellence in *civic* responsibility and citizenship (121). In a Christian sense, virtue means excellence in *spiritual* responsibility and citizenship. In her journal, Hester's spiritual virtue is seen in numerous accounts of her tireless efforts to minister to the sick and dying, in her frequent attendance at church, in her study of the Bible, in her work of leading class and band meetings, and in her urging others to accept God's gift of salvation. In regards to visiting the sick and dying, in five days Hester records making five separate visits to one dying man, including two visits on the same day. During several of these visits, Hester records asking the dying man about the state of his soul, and each time he assures her that he has confidence in eternal life (Rogers 58-61). Additionally, Hester regularly attended Methodist preaching services held at 5 o'clock in the morning; there are cases in which Hester records in her journal visiting the sick or attending church services in the evening and then attending the Methodist meeting early the next morning.

From early childhood, Hester read the Bible, and many passages in her journal show her tireless efforts to read and study the Bible throughout her life. For example, she writes, “Reading a portion of Scripture with prayer every day, is, and has been, a great blessing to my soul” (55), and “The word of God was sweeter than honey, or the honeycomb. I generally read it on my knees: ever receiving light, strength, and comfort to my hungry soul hereby” (33). In referring to the Bible as being sweeter than honey, Hester is setting its value as being most important and the highest priority in her life, and she is alluding to the biblical passage in Ps. 19:9-10, “The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.” In his tribute to Hester, James Rogers also notes that Hester read the Bible while kneeling. He tells, too, that when pain or sickness kept Hester from reading the Bible herself, she asked a servant to read to her, and she “often made remarks, and drew practical inferences as they went on” (Rogers 128). Rogers also confirms that the Bible was Hester’s “chief study, and in it she took uncommon delight” (Rogers 127).

In addition to her ministry of visitation to the sick and dying, Hester also ministered to others by leading the Methodist small-group meetings, and as a result, many of the persons who attended were guided to the experience of spiritual salvation. Hester tells of one class meeting where tireless efforts were sorely needed because of the activity going on outside the meeting room: “I had a very precious time in meeting my class. And although the poor sinners were baiting a bull by the window, I believe all, as well as myself, so felt the divine presence, as not to be disturbed by the rabble”

(111). Bull baiting was the brutal spectacle in which dogs were enticed to attack a bull confined in a ring. The bull would slide one of his horns "under the dog's belly, . . . and then throw him so high in the air that he may break his neck in the fall." If the dog survived the fall, the dog was likely to "fasten upon his enemy, and . . . [stick] to him like a leech. . . . In the end, either the dog tears out the piece he has laid on, and falls, or else remains fixed to [the bull] with an obstinacy that would never end, did they not pull him off" (Chambers). One can only imagine the difficulty Hester must have encountered in conducting a class meeting with such an uproar going on just outside.

Hester's orientation to action is significant as an element of building her *ethos* as a good Christian women known for her virtue and excellence. However, for Hester—and other early Methodist women—activities of teaching small-group classes and bands and caring for persons who were sick or disadvantaged were much more than just ways to build *ethos*; these activities were a significant part of her religious discipline. John Wesley and his followers believed and lived out the biblical admonition in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20) to "go ye therefore, and teach all nations, . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Doing whatever was necessary to disseminate the Christian message, so as to save souls, was a requirement which the women took seriously. Early Methodists lived out their faith through actions, and Hester's—and others'—busy days of ministry are examples of their devotion and service.

Goodwill. The third aspect of *ethos* is the goodwill [*eunois*] that the speaker feels toward the audience. In Hester's journal, her goodwill is directed both toward the audience of her journal and toward those to whom she is ministering and attempting to

persuade to salvation and sanctification. In many cases, evidence of Hester's goodwill is closely related to her ministry to the sick or dying.

Hester shows her goodwill by entreating God's blessings on the people to whom she is ministering: "Lord, remember this dear people with tenfold blessings! . . . O thou God of love, preserve these until we meet them all again, where pain and parting are no more!" (107). When James and Hester went to Dublin, Hester wrote of her goodwill toward the Irish people:

> My soul feels much nearness to the people, and a sweet assurance we shall be blessed among them, and made a blessing.—O! for a heart-reviving shower of grace, and pentecostal blessings! The Lord I know sent us here, and surely it is for the good of souls:—My God, let this be promoted, and thou shalt have the endless praise! (121)

Hester also shows her goodwill by praying for others. She writes, "I have been peculiarly drawn out in prayer for the conversion of souls: and notwithstanding the enemy has laboured by various means to hinder this, yet the Lord has given me to rejoice also herein" (108). In these and other examples, Hester demonstrates her goodwill and helps to construct her *ethos* of having a caring nature and a good character.

Earlier I discussed St. Augustine's concept of *ethos* as being created by doing Christian works and living an exemplary life. Hester constructs her *ethos* and moral authority in ways consistent with Augustine: she carries out Christian works, she reports them in her journal, and she demonstrates how her own life is exemplary and reflects the spiritual transformation she encourages her readers to seek. Hester does none of this pridefully, but in humility and with praise to God to whom she attributes the ability to live an exemplary Christian life.

In a general sense, one story effectively shows Hester's character and moral authority by telling of her life and relating the sacrifices she was willing to make for her faith. More specifically, this story demonstrates Hester's virtue and goodwill, and her excellence in spiritual thoughts and actions, and it shows how her life is a reflection of her moral character. By telling this story, Hester is helping to construct her *ethos* in ways that are consistent with both Aristotle and St. Augustine.

Hester writes that when she was 18 years old, her mother forbade her to attend Methodist meetings and practically imprisoned her to prevent her from going. Hester offered to work as a servant in her mother's house and do all the domestic work if she would be allowed to freely attend Methodist meetings and practice her faith. After several months of this arrangement, Hester's mother became ill and required constant nursing, so Hester sat up with her mother at night and also did the housework. Only after the doctor realized that Hester was damaging her own health were proper servants engaged. "I was now freed from my happy toil," Hester writes, "but it was then nearly too late; my health had received such a wound, as it did not recover in many years" (35). During the time Hester labored in domestic work, her cousin, Robert Roe, came to visit. Hester writes:

> What most astonished him, was to find me, instead of being melancholy and dejected, always happy and rejoicing in God; resigned to sufferings and labours, which he well knew I could not once have submitted to. . . . In short, he saw me the reverse of all I had been before; and comparing my present conduct with the Scriptures, he was constrained to own the power of changing grace: was convinced by the Spirit of God that I was right, and of consequence, that he was not what he ought to be, and what he must be if ever he was saved. (33)

Hester encouraged Robert to hear the Methodists from whom, she writes, he found much comfort. Then only a few weeks before he went to Oxford to study to be a Church

of England clergyman Hester reports that "the Lord set his soul at liberty: and he rejoiced in the clear sense of his pardoning love" (34). In this example, Hester's cousin was persuaded, by Hester's virtue and goodwill in the midst of difficulties, to hear and follow the Methodists and to experience the "changing grace" of "the Spirit of God" that Hester had also experienced. Because of Hester's influence, Robert became a Methodist and she reports that he "boldly and publicly preached the gospel in and near Macclesfield and the Lord bore witness to his word, [by] awakening, converting, and saving souls" (Rogers 65-66). Hester writes that Robert's father disowned him and his two siblings "on account of hearing the Methodists;" nonetheless "my cousins R. and J. are steadfast and more happy in God than ever" (53). However, just before the death of her uncle (Robert's father), Hester writes that her uncle was reconciled to all his children and "calls much upon God" (62). Before his own death, Robert rejoices that "favour" with his father had been restored (Rogers 69). Interestingly, Hester was also disinherited by her wealthy godmother because of her Methodist beliefs (Rogers 27); there is no indication that her inheritance was restored.

In discussing what she considers Hester's "mystical narrative," Vicki Tolar Collins (Burton) provides the following statement that also summarizes the *ethos* Hester creates in her journal:

> The reader is led to identify with Hester as troubled, earthly daughter/martyr as well as saved child of God. The reader can implement her own justification by faith by attending to that of Hester Rogers. Hester models not only the moment of perfect union with God but also the abundant life of one who has been sanctified. Finally, just before her death she reaffirms her faith in God's faithfulness, her hope for reunion with him, and her singular love of her Lord. (*Perfecting* 106-07)

Thus, the stories Hester tells of her life and Christian works show her *ethos* to her readers: she was the daughter of a clergyman (moral character); she sought after God and sanctification (spiritual wisdom); she gave up the things of the world for Christ (practical wisdom); she was willing to make great sacrifices for her faith, for Methodism, and in service to others (virtue and goodwill); and these sacrifices provided spiritual joy (virtue) and affected the lives of others like her cousin Robert and those to whom she ministered (virtue and goodwill). Therefore, by telling the stories of her life on virtually every page of her journal, Hester establishes her authority to write of her faith and thereby persuade her readers to salvation and sanctification, and she also sets the stage for *pathos* and *logos* to further persuade the readers.

Pathos

As discussed earlier, from Aristotle we learn that *pathos* is "an appeal to those states of mind that have an emotional component" (Covino, *Elements* 8), and pathetic appeals raise the audience's or readers' emotions in ways that are favorable to the speaker or writer (Bizzell and Herzberg 171). In expanding the theory of *pathos*, Aristotle lists numerous states of mind in negative/positive pairs for the purpose of helping a rhetor arouse these emotions in the audience and accomplish persuasion (Kennedy, *On Rhetoric* 122).

Fear or confidence. Similar to the way *pathos* is exhibited in the New Testament, as "the promise of eternal life or threat of damnation" (Kennedy, *New Testament 15)* or as "miracles or signs promised" (Kinneavy 107-108), Hester's journal shows many examples in which the emotion of fear of death or damnation or the emotion of confidence in eternal life are aroused in the readers. Hester's examples come

from both her own experiences as well as from the stories of others, and she often expresses these examples in negative/positive pairs that are similar to the emotions Aristotle discusses as a component of *pathos*.

Hester writes about her own fear of damnation that "I felt myself indeed a lost, perishing, undone sinner . . . a condemned criminal by the law of God, and one who deserved to be sentenced to eternal pain!" (22). Another time, in a dream she saw all her wrongdoings and realized she had nothing to excuse her from the spiritual punishment she deserved; she feared her "doom would be everlasting darkness!" (10). She writes, "I had no plea whatever, no hope; for it seemed the justice of God must unavoidably sentence me to endless misery, which I felt to be my real desert" (10-11). In several cases, Hester's fear of damnation arises out of hearing sermons based on Scripture or feeling conviction that she attributes to the work of the Spirit of God. After hearing two such sermons, Hester feels "I must experience, that divine change, or perish" (20). After hearing another sermon, she realizes she "had broken my baptismal vow; my confirmation vow; my sacramental vows; and had no title to claim any mercy, any hope, any plea!" (22). This sermon so affected her that she says she unashamedly wept aloud in the church service and then went home and vowed to renounce her sinful activities (22). Hester's shame at her own sinfulness and her fear of damnation, as reported in her journal, functions to raise the same emotions in her readers; if Hester, who had mostly lived a good and religious life, was sinful and deserving of damnation, how much more deserving of damnation were the readers who may not have lived such exemplary lives?

In one powerful story, Hester appeals to the readers through the emotion of fear of death. Hester tells the story of a young woman who dreamed that she went to a dance

against the urgings of a minister. The young woman dreamed that she became ill at the dance, was carried home and died. Despite the warning of the dream, the young woman attended the dance, she became ill exactly as she dreamed, she was carried home, and she died in the same chair she had seen in her dream. Hester writes, "Awful warning! An awful event! O that it may deeply penetrate the hearts of all who are 'lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God!'" (156-57). Hester is quoting 2 Tim. 3:4: "Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." This verse is part of a long list of evil activities and beliefs that will occur in the "perilous times" of the "last days" (2 Tim. 3:1). The last days refers to the time of God's final judgment or the end of the world. By quoting this scripture, Hester reinforces that God's judgment may come unexpectedly and at any time, either for the entire world or for an individual at his or her death. This emotionally charged story could have been highly persuasive to Hester's readers who may have been vacillating between continuing the worldly pursuit of dancing and fully embracing the spiritual life taught by the early Methodists.

In the stories Hester tells, the emotion of fear of damnation usually arises when the person is dying, and it is usually followed by the emotion of confidence in eternal life before death occurs. This was the case in the life of Ann Shrigley, one of the dying people Hester visited and wrote about:

> [She] was crying for mercy in deep distress . . . she was seized with agony of spirit, and cried aloud, "Now I am lost for ever: shall go to hell; there is no mercy for me!" But she wrestled in prayer till she prevailed, and the Lord shed his forgiving love abroad in an abundant manner, and bore his witness with her heart that she was born of God. (Rogers 63-64)

A few days later Hester returned to find Ann "filled with praise, and on the verge of a glorious eternity," and Ann remained "in the same sweet frame of mind till her spirit

fled away" (Rogers 63-64). By telling this story of Ann's fear, her encounter with God and experience of spiritual salvation, and the peace and joy she felt just before death, Hester conveys to her readers that they can exchange their fear of damnation for confidence in eternal life.

Happily, there are many more examples in which Hester arouses the emotion of confidence in eternal life to show the readers that they too can attain eternal life as the result of faith in Christ. Several of these examples from her journal and "The Dying Bed" essay involve Hester's own confidence in eternal life, and several are related to Hester's ministry to the sick and dying; in many of these examples Hester alludes to or quotes from the Bible. Hester writes that she longs to "depart and be with Christ" (57), and she is anxious to receive "a crown of life" after she is "carried home" (169); these statements use common religious metaphors to describe the eternal reward in heaven Christians believe they will receive after death, and they allude to the Apostle Paul's words in Phil. 1:23, "Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ" and to Rev. 2:10, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Hester also mentions that she happily anticipates soon seeing Christ "as he is; not through a glass darkly, but face to face" (170) and "drinking the new wine in my Father's kingdom" (57). In mentioning the "glass darkly," Hester is referring to the belief that only a limited knowledge of God is revealed to Christians before death but that knowledge will be given once the believer is with Christ in heaven; this idea comes from the biblical passage in I Cor. 13:12, "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face." In naming the "new wine" and "my Father's kingdom," Hester is remembering the sacrament of Holy Communion in which wine symbolizes the blood Jesus lost at his

crucifixion and which Christians symbolically appropriate as the source of spiritual salvation; Hester is also reminding her readers of Jesus' promise of life in heaven, as stated in the Bible, when he told his followers that "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matt. 26:29).

In continuing to use negative/positive pairs—such as the fear of death and the confidence in eternal life—to arouse emotions in her readers, Hester's last entry in her journal, written just before her death, states, "At present I am sinking into the arms of love, and I do feel I am all the Lord's. . . . All temptations respecting conflicts with Satan in death are vanished. I know my Joshua will be with me in Jordan, and see me safe through" (76-77). Hester is alluding to the biblical story in Josh. 3 in which God divided the Jordan River so the children of Israel crossed the river on dry ground. The Israelites were led by Joshua, who is sometimes considered an archetype of Jesus. Crossing the Jordon River is used as a symbol of a Christian believer's transition at the time of death from life on earth to eternal life in heaven. In referring to "my Joshua (who) will be with me in Jordon," Hester is affirming her belief that Jesus will accompany her at the time of her death and take her to heaven. In each case in which Hester discusses the fear of death and the assurance of eternal life, she uses vivid imagery, religious symbolism, or scriptural allusions to add to their emotional quality and make them more memorable and persuasive to Hester's readers.

In her essay, "The Dying Bed of a Saint and Sinner Contrasted," Hester combines the emotion of the fear of damnation and the emotion of confidence in eternal

life in one sentence, and expands on these ideas, in ways that are consistent with Aristotle's pairs of negative/positive emotions. Hester writes:

> Dust we are, and unto dust we shall return. A few more rolling years; a few more months or weeks: nay, perhaps, a few more setting suns, or fleeting moments, and we are gone. Gone. [W]here? O! that awful, *dreadful, blissful* thought! Awful to all, dreadful to the unholy, to sinners, and blissful to the saints of God. (165; emphasis added)

In this example, Hester paraphrases the Scripture often used in burial services, "For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:19). She also combines the positive emotion of bliss with the negative emotion of dread; she relates bliss to the "saints of God," and she attributes dread to "unholy sinners." By doing so, Hester reminds her readers of their two choices: to follow God and experience eternal bliss and confidence in eternal life or to remain in their sinful state and experience dread and the fear of damnation.

Hester's belief that the saints of God have confidence in eternal life is also confirmed repeatedly in her journal. Virtually every account Hester gives of ministering to a dying person mentions their emotions of joy and confidence in eternal life. For example, when Hester called on a dying woman, she asked the woman, "Have you any doubts or fears of landing safe [in heaven]?" The woman answered, "O no! not one doubt." A few days later, Hester writes, "clapping her hands together in an ecstasy of joy, she took her flight to glory! Her last words were, 'My Lord and my God.'" (51). Hester reports that another woman told her that she "received the witness of being cleansed from all sin, so that now she is full of love and joy." As she was dying, she took hold of Hester's hand and said, "O what precious sights do I see! such glory, such glory, I cannot utter it!" (Rogers 53-54). In another story, Hester tells of visiting a "poor

old Pharisee" who earlier "would never listen to the calls of God, or be persuaded that she needed to be born again" (58). By using the term Pharisee, Hester is characterizing this woman as being self-righteous and lacking in concern for her spiritual state, much like Jesus characterized a Pharisee in his parable in Luke 18:9-14 of two men praying in the temple. Hester continues, "The Lord has laid his hand upon her soul," and the woman cried out, "Lord, I hope thou wilt soon forgive me! Lord, thou art forgiving me! nay, Lord, thou hast forgiven me!" (58). When Hester asked, "Is the Lord precious to your soul?" a dying man told her, "He is all love; I will soon be with him." Later the man told Hester, "Whether I die at this time or recover, my will is wholly resigned: but I know if he calls me now, I shall go to glory." Just before he died, the man said, "I have not the least doubt upon my mind but I shall reign with him in glory!" (Rogers 59-60). Hester's use of biblical language is significant in reporting these experiences of joy and confidence in eternal life because it heightens the emotional impact of the experiences.

When Hester's cousin, Robert Roe,[32] was dying, he received confidence in eternal life through the assurance of Scripture. Hester read to Robert the Scripture from Col. 3:3-4: "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." This comforted Robert, and Hester writes, "From this time he hastened toward his eternal home" (67). Finally, Hester's record of the death of John Wesley is filled with many allusions to Wesley's confidence in eternal life. Hester writes:

[32] As mentioned earlier, Robert studied to be a Church of England clergyman but through Hester's influence, became a Methodist who Hester says "boldly and publicly preached the gospel" (Rogers 34, 65-66).

> While he could hardly be said to be an inhabitant of earth, being now speechless, and his eyes fixed, victory and glory were written on his countenance, and quivering, as it were, on his dying lips! O could he then have spoken, me thinks it would have been nothing but victory! victory! grace! grace! glory! glory! No language can paint what appeared in that face! The more we gazed upon it, the more we saw of heaven unspeakable! Not the least sign of pain, but a weight of bliss. Thus he continued . . . till, without a struggle or a groan, he . . . fled to eternal life in the bosom of his faithful Lord. (73)

In all these examples, Hester repeatedly uses a strong appeal to the emotions of fear of damnation and confidence in eternal life to encourage her readers to follow the scriptural admonition from Isa. 55:6 to which she alludes when she asks them to "seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near," (166).

Emulation. In her journal, Hester arouses other emotions from Aristotle's list of states of mind; one of these is the appeal to emulation. In Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, emulation "corresponds with the desire to have something that another similar person possesses. We seek to emulate those who are of the same sort as ourselves and for whom we have a positive regard" (Covino, *Elements* 9). This desire to emulate those for whom we have a positive regard is the source of much of the persuasive power of Hester's journal. Repeatedly, the journal establishes and re-establishes Hester's *ethos* and creates the audience's positive regard towards her; doing so is vitally important so the readers will want to emulate Hester in her spiritual experiences and godly service.

Although Hester writes little about others emulating her, it is clear from Thomas Coke's funeral sermon, and from the tributes written by James Rogers and others, that many to whom Hester ministered did emulate her, and many were persuaded by her example to receive salvation and sanctification. From the popularity of the journal after Hester's death, and from reports in the writings of others, it is also clear that many

readers sought to emulate her. She does mention in the journal that her cousin was "convinced by the Spirit of God" (33) after seeing the spiritual change in Hester. She also rejoices in the growth of the society in which she and her husband labored: "In three years the society increased from about five hundred to eleven hundred and upward; and we had good cause to believe above four hundred were converted to God" (71). Certainly some of these incidents of salvation or the growth in numbers can be attributed to society members who emulated Hester in her life and service.

Miracles and signs. According to James Kinneavy, another form of *pathos* often used in the New Testament is "miracles or signs promised to the audience or the reader" (107-108). While miracles or signs, as a form of *pathos*, are not directly Aristotelian, they nonetheless fit the general category of *pathos* and operate to arouse emotions in the audience. By Hester's telling of miracles, the readers are enabled to have confidence in God's power for themselves. One of the miracles Hester reports is the healing of her daughter from a "malignant fever" (105); this story serves several purposes, including arousing the Aristotelian emotion of pity in her readers:

> My child was quite delirious, and very ill indeed . . . About nine in the evening, her piercing cries, through agonizing pain in her head, were very pitiable; and I entreated the Lord, in the prayer of faith, to give her ease. He heard—he answered! The pain was instantaneously removed, and she fell into a slumber; but it soon appeared to be the sleep of death! Her feet, legs, and hands were cold, her nails blue, and she was motionless till a little past four in the morning. Just then . . . signs of life appeared; by degrees warmth returned to her arms, hands, and feet; then motion, and lastly speech. After this, a mighty change appeared: her fever was gone, and the next day she sat up some hours, and continued to recover in a most wonderful manner. (105-06)

Hester concludes this miracle story by asking the readers, "What cannot the Lord do?" and praising God for the work of his "outstretch'd arm" (106). In this usage, Hester is

using biblical language to describe God's power to which she attributes the miraculous recovery of her daughter; her language is similar to the Scripture in Deut. 26:8, "And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders." In addition to arousing the emotion of pity, by telling this story Hester is making her readers aware that they can experience miracles, just as she experienced this miracle, and she is also awakening in her readers the emotion of confidence in God.

In creating *pathos*, Hester continues to establish the readers' positive regard for her, and she awakens her readers' emotions by telling stories of miracles and of those who exchanged fear of death or damnation for confidence in eternal life. In doing so, Hester prepares the readers for the last artistic proof—*logos*—to further persuade them.

Logos

In classical rhetoric, *logos* refers to "proofs available in the words, arguments, or logic of a speech" (Herrick 86), and it occurs when rhetors "show the truth or the apparent truth from whatever is persuasive in each case" (Aristotle 39). To the early Methodists, like Hester, what is most persuasive is the truth—or proofs—from familiar Scripture that they regard as authoritative and "divinely revealed" (Kennedy, *New Testament* 16-17). In religious texts, Scripture can be quoted, alluded to, or used in other ways—all of which advance the rhetor's logical argument. Additionally, as already discussed, Scripture is often used—and is often useful—in developing *ethos* and *pathos,* also; we have already seen numerous instances when Hester uses Scripture for these purposes, and now we will examine ways Hester uses Scripture to form and support logical arguments.

In one example in which Hester uses Scripture to form a logical argument, she describes an experience in which she had "strong conflicts with Satan" and felt she had "sinned beyond hope" (28). She was in deep despair "when suddenly the Lord spake those words to my heart, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.'"[33] (29). Later Hester reported that she "felt a thousand . . . scriptures to confirm my evidence;—such as, 'He that believeth shall be saved; shall not perish: is not condemned: hath everlasting life: is passed from death unto life: shall never die' . . . I longed to depart and be with Jesus" (31). Remembering a "thousand scriptures" may be an exaggeration, but in one short passage, Hester paraphrases, alludes to, and quotes copiously from several Bible verses including John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John 5:24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life," and Phil. 1:23, "Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ." This example shows Hester's use of *logos* coming from the arguments of Scripture that she recognizes as being divinely revealed to her. This passage also shows Hester's use of *pathos* coming from the promise of eternal life that she believes the Scriptures offered to her. In both ways, Hester's use of Scripture, which her readers believed to be the truth, provided the basis for logical and emotional appeals.

In Hester's 74-page published journal, there are more than 65 instances in which she quotes Scripture, uses scriptural allusions, or in which her language is biblical.

[33] Hester is quoting verbatim from Acts 16:31.

These three ways of using Scripture all serve to support the details about which Hester is writing, to show the readers that what she writes is rational, to support her arguments, and to justify decision making. Using biblical language also serves to advance Hester's logical appeals to her readers; they see statements that are similar in language and syntax to biblical passages. Based on the audience's recognition of biblical language in Hester's journal entries, and based on their belief in the validity of the Bible, they consciously or subconsciously interpret Hester's statements to be true and right and believable. As the result of Hester's rhetorical strategies—and similar to Susanna Wesley's strategy in using biblical allusions—scripture becomes the authority for Hester's audience to logically believe and act upon what she writes in her journal. Since space does not allow me to examine all 65 instances of Scripture in the journal, I will discuss a few significant passages that exemplify Hester's use of the Bible to create logical appeals.

One passage in the journal shows all three approaches to using Scripture: Hester's language is biblical, she alludes to two Bible stories, and she quotes Scripture nearly verbatim. During the time James and Hester ministered in Dublin, a woman asked Hester to pray that her husband would cancel a trip to France that he was intent on taking. Using copious Scripture and scriptural allusions, Hester counseled the woman:

> Put the whole into the Lord's hand, and you are safe. Trust in God, and make it a matter of prayer; and if the journey be not for your good, though it come to the last hour, [God] will prevent it. . . . Did he not suffer the three Hebrew children to be cast into the furnace? Yet the fire had no power to consume. Daniel was cast into the den; but the God you are called to trust, shut the lions' jaws. . . . This God, who is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever, will prevent this journey if you trust in him; or he will make it a blessing to your soul. (139)

In the first two sentences in this passage, Hester uses biblical language in referring to the Lord's hand, trusting in God, and prayer. Next, Hester references the biblical story of the fiery furnace in Daniel 3 and the biblical story of Daniel in the lions' den in Daniel 6. In the biblical story of the fiery furnace, three young Hebrew men living in Babylon refused to give homage to an idol constructed by the pagan king. As punishment, the king ordered that the three men be thrown into the "burning fiery furnace" (Dan. 3:21). The men were unhurt, and the king saw a fourth man also in the fire, "and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God" (Dan. 3:25). In the biblical story of Daniel in the lions' den, Daniel is a young Hebrew man also living in Babylon. He refuses to stop praying to his God despite the king's decree that anyone who prays will be "cast into the den of lions" (Dan. 6:7). Daniel is put into the lions' den, and after spending the night there, he is removed unharmed. Daniel said to the king, "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me." (Dan. 6:22). Hester refers to these two Bible stories for the purpose of reinforcing to the woman she counseled, and to her readers, that God will provide the help and care they need just as he protected and cared for Daniel and the three young Hebrew men.

She supports her argument regarding God's care by paraphrasing the Scripture passage from Heb. 13:8, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever," and she applies this Scripture directly to the specific circumstance in her story. Hester's audience had at least some familiarity with these biblical stories, and they could easily extrapolate from these stories the idea that God is the same, and acts the same, as was true at the time the stories in Daniel occurred. Because he is the same, Hester indicates, God will care for the reader too. Taken together, this example demonstrates Hester's

use of Scripture and biblical language to support details (God can prevent the journey, just as he prevented the fire and the lions from hurting the Hebrew men and Daniel) and to give the appearance of reason (when you trust in God, he will take care of you).

Many other times Hester quotes Scripture to support details and to justify decisions. In one example, Hester is dismayed by the lack of belief that prevents her from receiving the fullness of sanctification. She notes that she read from 1 Thess. 5:24: "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it," and she realizes that "St. Paul . . . believed that [the early church] should be both sanctified and preserved blameless" (42-43). This realization, about the faithful character of God, reassured Hester, and a few days later she reports that she experienced sanctification for herself. Shortly after her sanctification experience, Hester was too ill to attend church, but she notes that "the Lord was with me, and gave me fresh discoveries" and she remembered the Scripture from John 15:3: "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (48). In this case, divinely revealed Scripture confirmed to Hester the decision to receive sanctification that she had made a few days earlier.

Another time, divinely revealed Scripture reassured Hester and helped her make and justify the decision to continue following the Methodists despite her mother's objections. Hester tells the story:

> I knew if I persisted in hearing the Methodists, I must literally give up all. My mother had already threatened, if she knew me ever to hear them she would disown me. . . . I had no acquaintance . . . to take me in; nor knew any refuge to fly to but my God. I used much prayer, and entreated [God] to show me his will; when those words were powerfully applied, "Did ever any trust in the Lord, and was confounded?" (25)

In recalling this story and the Scripture which came to mind, Hester reminds herself, and her readers, of the biblical promise in Ps. 22:4-5, "Our fathers trusted in thee: they

trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded." In response to these words from God, Hester answered, "No, Lord, and I will trust thee! . . . Only show me thy will, and here I am." Here Hester seems to be using biblical language similar to Isa. 6:8, "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me." Hester continues by quoting verbatim from Matt. 16:24, "It was then applied, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me'" (25). Upon hearing these biblical words, Hester cried, "Lord, I will forsake all, and follow thee: I will joyfully bear thy cross; only give me thyself!" Based on these Scriptures, Hester decided to attend the Methodist meetings "at all hazards," and they were "a great comfort" to her (Rogers 26).

Soon after her spiritual experience of sanctification, Hester uses Scripture to support details and give the appearance of reason, and by so doing, she confirms the validity of her spiritual experience to her readers. She writes, "I was greatly comforted this morning in spreading open the word of God on my knees, and praying for a conformity to it. I opened on 1 Thess. [5:16-22]. I see what is there required, in the very salvation my soul needs" (42-43). 1 Thess. 5:16-22 is a list of exemplary activities the Apostle Paul exhorts Christian believers to follow: "Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil." Hester concludes her account of her spiritual experience by explaining how the Bible provided her with spiritual knowledge, and she quotes 1 Thess. 5:23. "I see what is there required, in the very

salvation my soul needs. O how is it summed up in that prayer of the apostle: 'Now the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ'" (42-43). Quoting this Scripture explains the peace and blamelessness Hester received as a result of her spiritual experiences.

When Hester experiences sanctification, she paraphrases 1 Thess. 5:16-18, "Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" to give the reason for her rejoicing: "I now walked in the unclouded light of his countenance; 'rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in every thing giving thanks'" (46-47). When "Satan assaulted her" and tried to make her believe she would lose the blessings of sanctification, she indicates that divinely revealed Scripture helped to confirm her spiritual experience, and she uses Scripture to support details and provide the appearance of reason to confirm her spiritual experience. Hester writes, "Instantly that Scripture was given me, 'He that keepeth Israel neither slumbereth nor sleepeth. the Lord himself is thy keeper! It is even he that shall preserve thy soul: the Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth and for evermore'" (46); in this context, Hester is selectively paraphrasing Ps. 121:4-8 which states in part "Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is thy keeper: . . . The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore."

As most of these examples have shown, Hester uses Scripture or scriptural allusions most copiously and expressively before, during, and immediately after her

spiritual experiences of salvation and sanctification. However, much later in her life, Hester continues to use Scripture and biblical language to express her intense spiritual desires. For example, she alludes to Gal. 2:20 when she writes, “I desire to be crucified with Christ, and that he should live alone in me! I feel he now does; but I long for a yet larger measure of his mind, more of every grace, and deeper communion” (76). Taken together, then, Hester’s references to Scripture form a crucial component of the logical appeals in her journal.

In addition to using Scripture to express her spiritual desires, support details, give the appearance of reason, or justify decisions, Hester also often constructs logical appeals that help her readers see the truth from Scripture applied to everyday spiritual concerns such as praying, giving thanks, living a holy life, following Christ, and more. For example, Scripture brings peace to Hester’s soul: “Mightily God spoke to the troubled ocean, ‘Peace, be still!’” she writes, “and there followed a great calm throughout my soul” (43); here she seems to be alluding to the biblical story in Mark 4 in which Jesus calmed a wind storm on the Sea of Galilee by speaking the words, “Peace, be still” (Mark 4:39). In another passage, Hester uses a biblical allusion and a Scripture verse to tell of her confirmation of salvation: “I fall a leper at thy feet. I believe the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin” (42); in this passage, she is alluding to the biblical story in Mark 1 in which Jesus healed a leper, and to 1 John 1:7, “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” Scripture assures Hester that she can expect answers to prayer. She introduces the verse and then quotes John

15:7 verbatim, “I also feel that gracious promise mine: ‘If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you,’” (48).

On other occasions, Hester exhorts her readers and those to whom she ministered personally to follow Christ; in doing so, she uses biblical language and alludes to Scripture when she writes “Go on in the strength of the Lord. Be careful for nothing. Live today. So will you still be a comfort to yours affectionately” (55), and “Continue ‘steadfast and immoveable, always I abounding in the work of the Lord:’ for, I can testify *to* his glory, ‘your labour shall not be in vain’”[34] (169). Finally, after Hester and her husband survived a dangerous trip across the stormy sea on their way back to England from Ireland, she again uses Scripture to praise God: “The Lord preserved us from all evil; and we landed safe in Cork. . . . May I never forget his love to me this day!” (155). She concludes her story and her praise to God by paraphrasing a psalm: “Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!” (155). [35] All of these examples show that Scripture provides the logical arguments that add significant credibility to Hester’s statements on a variety of spiritual issues.

Logical arguments from examples and parables

Another way that logical appeals are often shown in the New Testament is by “examples or parables or as miracles or signs reported” (Kinneavy 108); Hester uses

[34] Hester is using biblical language similar to Ps. 71:16 which states, “I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.” She is alluding to Phil. 4:6 which reads, “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God,” and to 1 Cor. 15:58 which states, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

[35] Hester paraphrases Ps. 121:7, “The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul,” and quotes from Ps. 103:1 which reads, “Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.”

both parables and examples to persuade her readers. One of the most powerful examples is the story discussed earlier of the girl who attended a dance after being warned in a dream that she would die if she went to the dance. Additionally, in her essay, "The Dying Bed of a Saint and Sinner Contrasted," Hester writes of a man who is "ignorant of God through life; immersed in pleasure, lost in pride; careless, secure, surrounded and beloved by his carnal friends, and possessed of a moderate share of wealth" (165-66). When this man is dying, he bemoans that he rejected God and "neglected that salvation which was long offered to me" (Rogers 167), an allusion to Hebrews 2:3 which states in part "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord." In his despair, Hester reports that the dying man cries:

> I must endure [God's] indignation: I must suffer the vengeance of eternal fire! My damnation is sealed! Who can dwell with devouring fire? Who can endure everlasting burnings? Take warning, O my careless friends! A gaping hell awaits me! My soul is going! Fiends are waiting to receive it; they encircle me round; O horror, and eternity! (Rogers 167)

According to Hester, the man recovered briefly but did not repent, and a few months later he "died in raging despair" (167). Hester then provides a "pleasing contrast" between this unrepentant man and a dying saint who "longs to reach his Father's house." For the saint, "the welcome news that he shall soon be [in heaven] elevates his soul with rapturous joy: he has a foretaste of those pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore" (Rogers 167); the last statement alludes to Ps. 16:11, "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." By using parables or examples, Hester encourages her readers to heed the spiritual meaning of each story, she reminds them that history can be

repeated, and she encourages them to repent lest they experience the same disastrous fate as those about whom she writes.

Both of the preceding stories meet the criteria of a parable: "a (usually realistic) story or narrative told to convey a moral or spiritual lesson" ("Parable"). Seemingly, the first story about the girl who died after attending the dance actually occurred (it was reported to Hester in a letter), but the second story is couched in language that may indicate it is fictitious or possibly based on fact. In any event, both stories seem reminiscent of Jesus' parables: the former of the foolish virgins in Matt. 25:1-13 and the latter of the wealthy farmer in Luke 12:16-21.

To persuade her readers logically, Hester frequently quotes Scriptures, alludes to scriptural passages, or writes in biblical language. Additionally, Hester also develops logical appeals through the use of examples and parables that are easily understandable to her audience. Taken together, then, Hester uses many methods to rationally and logically extend the ethical and emotional appeals of *ethos* and *pathos*, and by so doing, she further persuades her readers to seek the spiritual experiences of salvation and sanctification.

According to Thomas O. Sloane, "It is the speaker's character (*ethos*) more than the speech (*logos*) or our own emotions (*pathos*) which persuades us" (172). This is clearly the case in Hester's journal. Much of the persuasive quality of Hester's journal comes from the moral character and authority that Hester presents, especially the *ethos* that is based on her intimate relationship with God. However, Hester's character alone is not enough to seal the persuasion; Hester arouses many emotions in her readers, and she uses scriptural truth to further persuade the readers logically. But even that is not

all. In spiritual rhetoric, such as Hester's journal, there is yet another persuasive factor that Hester employs; this factor is proclamation, the act of preaching (or writing) God's message and relying on God to accomplish the persuasion.

Proclamation and Additional Proofs

As discussed earlier, George Kennedy points out that preaching is "not persuasion but proclamation" because it relies on God's power to accomplish persuasion. However, I suggested that spiritual rhetoric, as constructed by the writer or speaker, shows the rhetor's belief that their texts combine the work of the Spirit of God and Christian faith with traditional attributes of persuasive rhetoric. Therefore, the rhetor understands that spiritual rhetoric does not rely only upon God to supply the words and accomplish the persuasion, spiritual rhetoric also requires his or her carefully crafted appeals to persuade the audience. From the first page of the journal, there is evidence that Hester and John Wesley considered her journal to be proclamation because the title page includes the Scripture from Ps. 66:16: "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul." In declaring what God has done for her soul, Hester asserts the message she believes God has given her to communicate, and she does so using the medium of her journal. However, Hester's journal is more than proclamation because she also meticulously creates numerous artistic appeals to persuade her readers, and in so doing, her journal meets the criteria of spiritual rhetoric.

One story written in her journal dramatically shows Hester using rhetorical appeals combined with her reliance on God: an earthquake struck while Hester and many others were in church. Amidst the chaos and terror, Hester was calm and exhorted

others to be still and to "look unto the God of grace for salvation, which they had too long neglected." Hester reports that her proclamation led many to be "deeply awakened by this awful providence; and [they] never found rest afterward, till they found it in the pardoning love of a blessed Redeemer" (Rogers 57). In another example, Hester tells of simply praying for a dying woman. After the prayer, the woman exclaimed, "I shall soon rejoice in Him: he will forgive my sins!" (58). In both cases, Hester proclaimed God's message, and she reports that persuasion followed. Additionally, however, in both cases, Hester also uses rhetorical appeals to convey her message. In the case of the earthquake, she used her own personal *ethos* and the emotional appeal to calmness to persuade the hearers. In the case of the dying woman, likely part of what persuaded the woman to believe God would forgive her was Hester's own personal *ethos* that had been established during Hester's earlier visits. While we do not know specifically what Hester said in her prayer, Hester also likely used logical or emotional appeals that helped persuade the woman to believe.

Despite George Kennedy's firm statement that Christian preaching is not persuasion but proclamation, he too allows that Christian rhetoric may include something more: "Jesus' message was essentially proclaimed, not argued. . . . Very often . . . something is added which seems to give a reason why the proclamation should be received and thus appeals, at least in part to human rationality" (*New Testament* 6-7). Kennedy also explains that three forms of proof used in the New Testament are quoting Scripture, showing miracles, and naming witnesses (*New Testament* 14). These forms of proof are also common in Hester's journal and help to make the journal persuasive. We have already seen numerous examples in which Hester quotes Scripture and shows

miracles in her journal, but we have not yet looked at examples of naming witnesses. Once again, this form of proof is related to Hester's ministry to the sick and dying. Repeatedly, Hester is witness to the miracle of seeing a person receive salvation, hearing them tell of that salvation, and then watching them die happily and peacefully, and she records these incidents in her journal; in doing so, Hester functions both as the witness and as the one who disseminates the witness of the dying person to others through her journal.

Such was the case in the life of Mary Etchels who Hester reports was "a backslider in heart for some years; but in her long affliction has returned unto the Lord, with weeping, mourning, and supplication." Mary told Hester that "she has received the witness of being cleansed from all sin, so that now she is full of love and joy." After Hester prayed, Mary took Hester's hand and said, "O what precious sights do I see! such glory, such glory, I cannot utter it!" Soon afterward Mary died (Rogers 53-54). In just a few sentences, Mary's story, as Hester recorded it, contains all the elements necessary to overcome skepticism and appeal to human rationality. In another sense, Hester herself is the witness of why she believes the proclamation of God's message should be received and accepted by the readers. On page after page of her journal, Hester demonstrates her belief that she is the recipient of God's grace, salvation, and sanctification—all miracles—and as we have seen, she repeatedly witnesses to this in her writing. In fact, in many ways, Hester's entire journal shows miracles and names witnesses, and by so doing, she gives additional evidence of why she believes her proclamation of God's message should be received by the readers.

In this chapter, I looked at the spiritual rhetoric in Hester Rogers's journal, and I argued that Hester's journal remakes and exhibits Aristotelian *ethos, pathos,* and *logos* to create spiritual rhetoric that is highly effective to accomplish persuasion. I then showed examples of specific aspects of *ethos*, *pathos,* and *logos*, and of proclamation, at work in her journal. Throughout her journal, Hester Rogers establishes and maintains her *ethos* by repeatedly telling the stories of her life, she builds upon her *ethos* to make her emotional appeals understandable and persuasive, and she adds logical appeals to reveal what is most persuasive to her readers in each case. Taken as a whole, then, Hester Rogers's journal is a highly persuasive rhetorical document consistent with the Aristotelian and Jewish-Christian viewpoints of rhetoric.

Hester Rogers is an ordinary woman who conveys in her journal her belief that she has been empowered in extraordinary ways by her experience of God and by her spiritual experiences of salvation and sanctification. As a result, she is able to fulfill the first part of the stated rhetorical purpose of her journal by "declaring what the Lord had wrought" (Rogers 51). The spiritual empowerment she reports also provides the means by which she is able to fulfill the second stated rhetorical purpose to share the experience of her faith by "[letting] the light of what his grace hath bestowed shine on all around" (Rogers 129). Because Hester feels empowered, she seeks to use the rhetorical power of her journal to also empower her readers to have a personal experience of Christ and to receive salvation and sanctification.

Empowering the readers

Educating her readers about spiritual matters is consistent with the Methodists' reasons for writing journals, as mentioned earlier: "to share the liberating [empowering]

experience of new life in Christ with others" (Chilcote, *She* 50). Karlyn Kohrs Campbell notes that "'consciousness raising' is an attractive communication style" to use in persuading marginalized groups who have developed "passive personality traits" (13). When Hester tells her readers of her own spiritual experiences or when she explains spiritual matters to them, she is raising their consciousness about the experiences of spiritual salvation and sanctification and showing that they too can be empowered by Christ. Hester's readers, many of whom were from the disadvantaged and lower classes of eighteenth and nineteenth-century Britain and America, were attracted to Christianity and empowered by reading that an experience of Christ could provide them with wisdom, strength, love, blessing, power, and other desirable attributes. Thus, Hester's journal became a rhetorical device uniquely qualified to change the lives of her audience. By setting up her spiritual rhetoric to tell the stories of her life—using specific rhetorical appeals—Hester provides the way for her readers to seek from God the same empowerment she received.

Conclusion

"An activist tradition . . . that would continue to bear fruit"

The purpose of this study has been to reveal and analyze the rhetorical features of selected letters and journals composed by early Methodist women Susanna Wesley, Sarah Crosby, Mary Bosanquet Fletcher, and Hester Rogers. In my analysis of their texts, I discovered these women carefully craft their rhetorical appeals by drawing upon, using, and modifying many aspects of traditional religious, biblical, and Aristotelian rhetoric to create distinctive spiritual rhetoric that helps them achieve their religious goals. Much of the persuasive power in these texts is for the purpose of saving souls, empowering their audiences, and defending their right to carry on activities—such as preaching—that were considered off limits for women in that era. These early Methodist women all wrestled in some way with finding their proper roles in the church and with their right to follow the dictates of their conscience to speak, to defend their opinions and beliefs, and to make their voices heard. Finally, the women repeatedly challenge and transform the patriarchy and traditional male rhetorics of their time by constructing their spiritual rhetoric in their own ways. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell suggests that early feminist rhetors "rose to inventive heights" (9) and that they "used the full range of rhetorical possibilities" (190). This is exactly the spirit in which Susanna, Sarah, Mary, and Hester created their distinctive spiritual rhetoric.

Various scholars have suggested purposes for conducting feminist rhetorical criticism, such as I have done in this study. These purposes provide a framework by which to evaluate additional ways that this study contributes to the feminist project of remapping rhetorical history. "Contemporary feminists can learn much from early

rhetoric," Karlyn Kohrs Campbell writes, "not just about women's history, but about the issues that persist, the dilemmas women have faced through time, and the irreducible elements in a feminist program" (190). This study has illuminated some of the issues that persist to the present—such as the proper roles for women in the Christian church—by analyzing texts written more than 200 years ago. Other issues addressed either implicitly or explicitly in the texts, such as the expression of proto-feminist viewpoints and the beliefs Christian women should hold, also remain current. Additionally, what the Apostle Paul actually meant in writing about women and how those statements relate to women's roles—issues the early Methodist women faced more than 200 years ago—still remains a live topic and a dilemma women encounter in many religious circles.

The texts composed by Susanna, Sarah, Mary, and Hester also provide evidence of recurring and seemingly irreducible elements in a feminist program. Empowerment has always been one aspect of feminism, and these early Methodist women were strongly committed to empowering the people around them by encouraging them to experience spiritual salvation and sanctification. In working to save souls, these women found it necessary to preach or take on public roles that were outside their comfort zone and the standards of proper behavior in that era. They earned the authorization of John Wesley through their effective persuasive appeals that forged new spiritual rhetorics.

Opportunities for Further Study

In her doctoral dissertation, Vicki Tolar Collins (later Burton) writes, "United Methodism is in the process of recovering the lost female voices in its history. . . . My work on Hester Ann Rogers can serve as an invitation to detailed study of other women

of early Methodism, to new attention to the historic roles of women in the church" (*Perfecting* 260-261). This study of the spiritual rhetoric operating in the texts written by Susanna, Sarah, Mary, and Hester began early in my graduate school career when I studied Hester Rogers's spiritual experience journal as my response to Burton's invitation; from that beginning, I have expanded my work to now encompass this study of additional early Methodist women and texts. I hope my work can serve as an opening to future projects that will further illuminate these and other texts and textual strategies of early Methodist women.

Studies which extend and expand my work illustrate the importance and far-reaching effects of the lives and texts of early Methodist women. Further study into the reception of these women's rhetorics could begin with Susanna Wesley and trace the impact of her beliefs and methods of persuasion upon her famous son, John Wesley. Starting with John Wesley's encouragement for women to report "what the Lord hath wrought" and his authorization of women preachers, the next trail of inquiry could trace the impact of Hester Rogers's journal and the effects of Sarah Crosby's and Mary Bosanquet Fletcher's preaching upon Methodist women who followed. Two of the women who were deeply and directly affected by Sarah's and Mary's defense and activity of preaching were nineteenth-century American Methodists Phoebe Palmer and Frances E. Willard who greatly influenced Wesleyan/holiness denominations and civic organizations in the nineteenth century.

Reception and influence studies such as these would be particularly fascinating to me. I graduated from a Church of the Nazarene university, one of the evangelical Wesleyan/holiness denominations that were established through the influence of Phoebe

Palmer (see Zikmund 220). My mother was an active member of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), and I attended many WCTU events as a child and teenager. Frances Willard was president of the national WCTU from 1879 to 1898 (Hardesty, Dayton, and Dayton 235). Her own writings indicate that she first desired to preach, but when this was denied in the Methodist church, she found in the WCTU a platform that authorized her to speak publicly (Hardesty, "Minister" 89). Phoebe Palmer was "helped toward sanctification" by reading Hester Rogers's journal (White 118), and Frances Willard was sanctified under the tutelage of Phoebe Palmer (Palmer 11). Thus, a direct line of influence can be traced from Susanna Wesley through John Wesley to Sarah Crosby, Mary Bosanquet Fletcher, and Hester Rogers, and from them through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to present-day organizations such as the Church of the Nazarene and the WCTU.

A brief personal anecdote further illuminates the impact and significance of these Methodist women. In chapter 4, I mentioned that I had not noticed the absence of women preachers in my life until a few years ago when I read Roxanne Mountford's observations on this issue. I have since realized that this oversight may be the result of my experiences as a child in attending Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) events where women preached frequently. I vividly remember many WCTU events of my childhood in which women gave articulate and powerful speeches that meet the criteria of sermons; the temperance speeches were based on biblical passages and the women's style of delivery was consistent with preaching. For example, I remember one of my mother's sermons at a WCTU convention in which she used the biblical story of Nehemiah rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem as the basis for her challenge to the women

to "[strengthen] their hands for this good work"[36] of the WCTU. I saw women preach in WCTU meetings in the 1960s and 70s, but not in conventional church services until the 1980s.

Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg characterize early Methodist women's public speaking as "an activist tradition" (988); the activism of these speakers is shown in their vigorous action in advocating for the freedom to preach and in demonstrating their commitment to saving souls. In that era, activism was often motivated and energized by the religious beliefs held by the early Methodist women. More than 100 years later, in America, Hallie Quinn Brown was one of the activist educators who taught and developed rhetorical curricula at institutions of higher education in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Brown was a member of the African Methodist Episcopal church, and her membership in the church "shaped her own activism as an educator and as a champion of black civil rights" (Kates, xi, 56).

In discussing Brown further, Susan Kates quotes from the mission statement of Wilberforce University to describe the activism of colleges and universities educating African Americans; Wilberforce was Brown's alma mater and where she served as professor of elocution. Wilberforce's mission statement asserts that the university "aim[s] is to make Christian scholars, not mere book-worms, but workers, *educated workers* with God for man" (56-57, 11); this mission statement further links activism with religious fervor and the belief that education is for the purpose of creating educated Christians who could work "with God" to help others. In addition to Brown's activities as a college professor and elocutionist, she also compiled and edited a collection of

[36] Nehemiah 2:18

sketches and short biographies of 55 black women. In writing about biographies of Methodist women, Kenneth Rowe, a leading Methodist scholar and archivist, calls Brown's book "one of the best early books on black women" (7). Bizzell, Herzberg, and Kates all make clear that practices and actions motivated by religious belief can legitimately be called activist.

The women I have studied were also activists. Susanna Wesley vigorously defended her right to her own political views, and she demonstrated her concern for the spiritual welfare of her neighbors by conducting the Sunday night meetings in her home. Sarah Crosby and Mary Bosanquet Fletcher dared to subvert the biblical Pauline prohibitions against women's preaching, and they defended to John Wesley their right to preach. Hester Rogers did not preach but the persuasive spiritual rhetoric in her spiritual experience journal was widely distributed and highly influential in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The activism of Susanna, Sarah, Mary, Hester, and many other early Methodist women has been passed down through the decades to women like Phoebe Palmer, Frances Willard, Hallie Quinn Brown, and into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries to women like my mother and her WCTU cohorts who carried out various other activist activities motivated by their religious and moral beliefs.[37]

William A. Covino and David A. Jolliffe summarize Patricia Bizzell's article "Opportunities for Feminist Research in the History of Rhetoric" by suggesting that

[37] I am quite certain that my mother would have been displeased to be called an activist and would have considered this a critical or negative representation. However, actions taken by her and the WCTU women can most certainly be considered activist. For example, when I was a child, she was the main on-air presenter for a monthly radio broadcast in which she gave devotional messages and spoke out against smoking and drinking; I often read poems or Bible verses on the broadcast. My mother also organized efforts to defeat various legislative proposals which would have made alcoholic beverages more accessible; these activities constitute activism.

feminist rhetorical criticism must include works of "women who do not fit into traditional categories" and must explore "women's ways of using language" in order "to discern women's styles of speaking and writing" (395). In several ways, my study of texts written by early Methodist women Susanna Wesley, Sarah Crosby, Mary Bosanquet Fletcher, and Hester Rogers accomplishes both Campbell's and Bizzell's purposes. As Campbell suggests, my study contributes to an understanding of women's rhetorical history—particularly women's rhetorical history in the Methodist religious movement of the eighteenth century. Following Patricia Bizzell's lead, my study also explores the style of writing and of using language in evidence in the writings of Susanna, Sarah, Mary, and Hester. Furthermore, by examining the spiritual rhetoric in the letters and journal of Susanna Wesley and the journal of Hester Rogers—women who did everything but preach—I studied the work of women who do not fit into the traditional category of preaching women who are most often studied. Finally, Vicki Tolar Collins notes that rhetorical criticism allows "Methodist women rhetors . . . [to] gain new audiences [and] new scholarly scrutinizers" with the end result of the rhetorical criticism being that "important rhetorical role[s emerge] from historical shadow" ("Walking" 352). My study has attempted to recover Susanna, Sarah, Mary, and Hester, rhetors who until the present were insufficiently studied rhetorically, and to establish their rightful place in the history of rhetoric. Truly, as Bizzell and Herzberg suggest about Methodist women's rhetoric, "an activist tradition had . . . been established that would continue to bear fruit" (988). In addition to women preachers and leaders in a variety of denominations, feminist scholars of rhetoric now harvest and are

nurtured by the fruit of the long-ago activism of early Methodist rhetors Susanna Wesley, Sarah Crosby, Mary Bosanquet Fletcher, and Hester Rogers.

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