

John Wesley's Use of the Printed Word on the *Simmonds*

Geordan Hammond

November 2006

Stable URL: <http://www.mwrc.ac.uk/scholarly-papers/>

Your use of the MWRC archive indicates your acceptance of MWRC's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.mwrc.ac.uk/terms-and-conditions/>.

Please contact the author regarding any further use of this work. Author contact information may be obtained at <http://www.mwrc.ac.uk/current-fellows/>

For more information regarding MWRC, please contact ghammond@nazarene.ac.uk.

This paper was presented at the Methodist Missionary Society conference on 'Methodist Missions and the Printed Word' in November 2006. The essay can also be accessed on the MMS website at <<http://www2.div.ed.ac.uk/other/mms/mmpapers.htm>>.

John Wesley's Use of the Printed Word on the *Simmonds*¹

The aim of this paper is to analyze a selection of works that influenced Wesley and were utilized by him on the voyage to Georgia. The two missionary biographies read by Wesley will be examined as a means to discover the way he utilized these works to as sources of support for his missionary calling and models for his missionary practice. The second half of the paper consists of a consideration of two devotional treatises he used in his public ministry. Therefore, one of the purposes of this essay is to present the way in which Wesley sought to balance his reading between private and public devotional practice.

Introduction to Wesley's Reading on the *Simmonds*

In the four and a half month journey before settlement in Savannah, John Wesley recorded reading in the region of forty-five books. What follows is an attempt to categorize these works which can be classified in various ways. Of four books by non-juring authors, three deal with liturgy and one is a companion to church festivals and fasts;² five other ecclesiastically oriented books were read, three on communion, one on baptism and one on the catechism.³ The largest portion of books numbering sixteen can broadly be labeled as devotional/pastoral works most of which could broadly be described as works of mystical divinity; closely related to these are three books of devotional biography.⁴ Two books about the Moravians, their newly published hymn book and a German grammar were read due to Wesley's interactions with them.⁵ The remaining works include two books of history; one or possibly two anti-Catholic works; a

¹ This paper was presented at the Methodist Missionary Society conference on 'Methodist Missions and the Printed Word' in November 2006. The essay can also be accessed on the MMS website at <<http://www2.div.ed.ac.uk/other/mms/mmspapers.htm>>.

² Hickee, Collier, Deacon, Nelson.

³ Brevint, Johnson, Partick; Wall; Whiston.

⁴ Boehme, Bourignon, *The Country Parson's Advice*, Francke's, *Nicodemus* and *Pietas Hallensis*, Gother, á Kempis, Law's, *Christian Perfection* and *Serious Call*, Lawrence, Ludolf, Norris, Quesnel, Sault, Scougal, Tauler; Bouhours, *The History of the Life of the Sublime and Illuminated Divine, Dr. Joh. Tauler*, Losa.

⁵ "Account of the children in Herrnhut," *Das Gesang-Buch, Primitive Church Government*.

work on medicine; a book of sermons; a journal; the Greek New Testament; and five miscellaneous titles.⁶

I. Wesley's Private Use of the Printed Word

Missionary Models: Francis Xavier and Gregory Lopez

In preparation for his arrival in Georgia, Wesley read two missionary biographies. Given that there had been little by way of Protestant missions since the Reformation, it is not completely surprising that Wesley chose to read accounts of Roman Catholic missionaries. His willingness to seriously consider the lives of these missionaries shows something of his openness to learning from Catholics. This not only shows his open-mindedness, but his intellectual independence from the two primary sources for his reading material at this time: his non-juror friends and the SPCK.⁷ The importance of these biographies as part of Wesley's "Georgia reading" is enhanced by the fact that they were not SPCK books and were, therefore, deliberately selected reading material.⁸ In the context of his recent exposure to the SPCK's anti-Catholic campaign, one can see Wesley's independent-mindedness in his decision to open up Dominick Bouhours's *The Life of Francis Xavier* before the *Simmonds* sailed from Gravesend.⁹

⁶ Clarendon, Pufendorf; Comber and "Tract Against Popery" if this is a reference to a work other than Comber; Drake; Nalson; von Reck; Georgia Charter, "Letter on education," "Prayers," Wesley, "Whitfield's Case."

⁷ Of course, since the source of Wesley's interest in these works (if he had one) is unknown, we cannot be certain that they were not recommended by a non-juror friend or SPCK member.

⁸ Judging from a search of existing copies of these two works, *The Life of Francis Xavier* was fairly widespread while the biography of Lopez was scarce in the eighteenth century.

⁹ Although Wesley simply denotes his reading as "Xavier" in his diary, it can be maintained with a fair amount of confidence that this was the title he read due to the fact that it was the only widespread biography of Xavier available in English at the time. For some reason, Richard Heitzenrater has not listed this title in his bibliography of works cited in Wesley's Journals and Diaries in volume twenty-four of the *Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley*. Bouhours work was translated into English from the French by the well-known literary figure John Dryden under the title, *The Life of Francis Xavier, of the Society of Jesus, Apostle of the Indies, and of Japan* (1688). I have used the facsimile reprint of this edition from *The Works of John Dryden. Prose: The Life of Francis Xavier* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979). Eamon Duffy has stated that it was "an edition in four volumes of the letters of St Francis Xavier" that Wesley read in Georgia; however, the only evidence for these four volumes comes from a c.1768 letter (Duffy, "Wesley and the Counter-Reformation, 6; JW to Dr. Brown [1768], Letters, 5.121). In 1742, Wesley read a biography of Xavier's friend and founder of the Jesuit order, Ignatius Loyola, and commented that he was "surely one of the greatest men that ever was engaged in the support of so bad a cause! I wonder any man should judge him to be an enthusiast. No; but he knew the people with whom he had to do. And setting out (like Count Z[inzendorf]) with a full persuasion that he might *use guile* to promote the glory of God or (which he thought the same thing) the interest of his church, he acts in all

That Wesley was captivated with this biography of the great Jesuit missionary is clearly illustrated by the fact that he read it in the space of three days, devoting approximately seven and a half hours to this activity on the first few busy days onboard the *Simmonds*. In print, Wesley scarcely mentions Xavier (1506-1552) later in life, but his deliberate reading of Xavier at this stage still deserves analysis. A 1772 letter to Hannah Ball might allow a window into what attracted Wesley to Xavier. Wesley recounted, “I was never more struck than with a picture of a man lying upon straw with this inscription, ‘The true effigy of Francis Xavier, the apostle to the Indies, forsaken of all men, and dying in a cottage.’ Here was a martyrdom, I had almost said, more glorious than that of St. Paul or St. Peter!”¹⁰

Due to the fact that Wesley never published comments on *The Life of Francis Xavier*, we cannot gauge his reaction to the book with any certainty, however, a summary of its contents may still be useful in elucidating the type of literature Wesley elected to read. This will provide an avenue to discern and analyze themes in the book that were likely to have resonated with Wesley. Wesley would have known of Xavier’s reputation as the “Apostle to the East Indies,” which may have prompted his decision to study an account his life in order to discover what inspiration he might provide for one who was headed as a missionary to the “West Indies.” Given Wesley’s interest in the primitive church and individuals that embodied primitive practice, one can see why Xavier’s reputation an “Apostolical Man” would have appealed to him. One of the key themes of Bouhours biography is his argument that Xavier embodied the spirit of the primitive church and effectively renewed the apostolic era in his own age. This reoccurring theme is made explicit from the beginning of book one where Bouhours states, “I have undertaken to write the Life of a Saint, who renew’d in the last Age, the greatest Wonders which were wrought in the infancy of the Church; and who was himself a living proof of

things consistent with his principles” (JWJ (16 August 1742), 19:292). This may have been Pedro de Ribadeneira, *A Life of B. Father Ignatius of Loyola*, translated in 1616 and 1622.

¹⁰ Letter of 30 May 1772, *Letters*, 5.320. On another occasion, Wesley called Xavier the “East Indian Apostle” and the most religious Jesuit there ever was while going on to criticize him not teaching the “religion of the heart” (JW to Dr. Brown [1768], *Letters*, 5.121). While Wesley never reprinted *The Life of Francis Xavier*, one of his preachers, James Morgan, published an abridged version in 1764.

Christianity.” Bouhours goes so far as to call Xavier “this new Apostle, this second St. Paul.”¹¹

It might be useful at this stage to note some areas where Wesley’s behavior in Georgia paralleled that of Xavier’s. Considering the time and space divide along with the different Christian communions of the two successful evangelists, the number of commonly shared characteristics and convictions are remarkable. For both men, the goal of mission was the salvation of souls, particularly those who remained ignorant of the Gospel, although it might be said that Wesley (and to a lesser extent Xavier) was equally preoccupied with perfecting his own salvation.¹² A similar concern was shown for ministry to prisoners, debtors and the sick as those marginalized and shunned by society.¹³ A number of informative parallels can also be found by comparing their ascetical spirituality. Xavier and Wesley showed a predilection towards denial of the body with the belief that this would open up their spirit towards God. For example, they contented themselves with a very simple diet (rice and biscuit for Wesley and rice and salt fish for Xavier) and for periods adopted a vegetarian diet.¹⁴ In a letter to John Burton in which he justified his reasons for going to Georgia, Wesley wrote of his asceticism in terms of mortifying the body, Bouhours likewise described Xavier as practicing bodily mortification.¹⁵ They regularly fasted and neither neglected the ancient practice of penance although for Xavier personal penance was emphasized while for Wesley the communal penance of the primitive church was stressed.¹⁶ Willingness and indeed expectation that all true Christians must suffer for the sake of the Gospel and yet be thankful in the midst of hardship was a shared Biblical principle.¹⁷ Their emphasis on suffering and the primitive church led them to the conviction that they must be willing to join the early Christians in undergoing martyrdom for the sake of the Gospel of Christ; in fact, they both saw martyrdom as a glorious act of imitating Christ and expressed a desire

¹¹ Bouhours, 12, 443.

¹² Bouhours, 20-21; JWJ, 14 October 1735, 137.

¹³ Bouhours, 54, 212, 395-96; On Wesley’s concern for prisoners and debtors, see the preface to Wesley’s first *Journal*, 18:124-28 and chapter one, above; regarding his care for the sick, see references to this activity in this chapter.

¹⁴ Bouhours, 249, 428; JWJ, 20 October 1735, 137.

¹⁵ Bouhours, 427; JWJ, cf. Talifer, 42.

¹⁶ Bouhours, 20; JWJ, 131-32 and Talifer, 42.

¹⁷ Bouhours, 428; JWJ, John Burton.

(if it be God's will) to join the company of saintly martyrs.¹⁸ In short, we might say that Xavier and Wesley were both possessed with an apostolic-like single-minded fervor for their respective missions.

Although in some ways, similarity of conviction between Xavier and Wesley appears to outweigh their differences, genuine areas of contrast are present. While taking for granted the Catholic-Protestant divide, one might point to the extraordinary number of miracles Xavier was said to have preformed. Bouhours presents amazing stories involving Xavier's gift for healing people, his reception of the gift of tongues to speak in Indian and Chinese languages, and even several stories of his ability to raise people from the dead! But even in the field of miracles the two men are not without parallel. Bouhours recounts an account of a woman who "had been three days in the pains of Child-birth...*Xavier*, then read the Gospel to her, and Baptiz'd her: she was immediately deliever'd of her Child, and perfectly recovered." Wesley also witnessed and participated in miracles related to the reception of the sacraments. Anne Welch, while heavily pregnant, recovered from a serious illness after receiving the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and her newborn daughter Mary was likewise restored from ill health after being baptized by triune immersion.¹⁹ While not undermining significant differences between Xavier and Wesley, substantial areas of congruence may explain why Wesley chose to read *The Life of Francis Xavier* and, for comparison, they can provide some illuminating similarities of character and conviction.

The reason for Wesley's selection of the relatively obscure Spanish Catholic mystic Gregorio López (1542-1596) remains mysterious; nonetheless, he served as an important model for Wesley's missionary venture. Wesley was deeply moved by Francisco de Losa's (1536-1624) hagiographical biography entitled *The Holy Life, Pilgrimage, and Blessed Death of Gregory Lopez, a Spanish Hermit in the West Indies*, which he read together with his brother and Charles Dealmonde and later published in volume fifty of his *Christian Library*.²⁰ The nature of Lopez's early life remains a

¹⁸ Bouhours, 21, 418; JWJ,

¹⁹ Bouhours, 69; JWJ, 141, 150.

²⁰ This work was first printed by Wesley in volume fifty of his *Christian Library* (1755) and later serialised in the *Arminian Magazine* (1780). Losa lived with Lopez during the last seven years of his life. Here, I

mystery; rumors existed during his lifetime that he was Don Carlos, the son of Philip II, whether or not this was the case, he was of aristocratic lineage.²¹ Lopez traveled from his native Spain to Mexico in 1562 where he lived much of his life in a solitary state near the Chichimeca Indians. The book details Lopez's life as a hermit, spiritual director and a self-denying contemplative mystic. Indicating his desire to strive for Christian perfection Lopez wrote on his cell wall, "some sentences...exhorting [himself] to go on to perfection" one of which was "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."²² Although he lived all of his life as a hermit Lopez increasingly entertained visitors asking for prayer and spiritual advice during his later years. We are told "he imprinted on the spirit of all to whom he spake, an ardent desire of holiness. His words were all of fire, and inflamed the heart with the love of God." Rather than passively waiting for perfection, Lopez believed in the efficacy of actively striving for Christian perfection "wherein we labour with all our might to love God in the most perfect manner we can possibly."²³ Eamon Duffy has pointed out that a key aspect of Wesley's attraction to Lopez was his ability to cultivate "simplicity of soul" while striving for perfection making him an "exemplar of tranquility in the midst of activity."²⁴ Wesley would have agreed with Lopez's conviction that "Perfection does not consist in visions, revelations, ravishments, and ecstasies" but in "pure love."²⁵ Lopez's conception of perfection as perfect love parallels Wesley's mature thoughts on this doctrine as defined in his *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (1767).²⁶ While Wesley does not cite Lopez in his *Plain Account*, other references in his vast corpus of writings confirm that he was inspired by Lopez's

cite from the thirty-volume edition of the *Christian Library* mentioned above. For Wesley's reading of this biography, see the references in his Diary from October 28 through December 13, 1735. For his reading of Lopez to his brother and Charles Delamotte, see JWD, November 22, 1735, 323. Charles Wesley was familiar enough with Lopez for John Wesley to later use him as a paradigm to describe the experience of Ralph Mather who was "as deep in grace as G. Lopez was" (JW to CW (13 Jan. 1774), Telford, 6:67).

²¹ The fact that both Xavier and Lopez were of noble birth and yet renounced their status to serve as missionaries overseas may have been a factor in Wesley's admiration of them [look this up in regards to Xavier].

²² Matthew 6:10.

²³ Lopez, 392, 394, 417, 430.

²⁴ Eamon Duffy, "Wesley and the Counter-Reformation," in *Religion and Revival Since 1700: Essays for John Walsh*, ed. Jane Garnett and Colin Matthew (London: Hambledon Press, 1993) 16, 17.

²⁵ Lopez, 430.

²⁶ (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1966), 114.

single-minded desire for perfection which he evidently (in agreement with Losa) believed he attained.²⁷

Even though Lopez did not learn the Indian tongue or actively work to convert them, Wesley must have identified with him as a person who had lived the kind of ascetic life he expected to lead. Wesley recognized a type of ascetic-activism in Lopez that he valued although at least by the time he edited his *Christian Library*, he was troubled by Lopez's reclusive lifestyle and extreme forms of asceticism.²⁸ Despite his later opposition to Lopez's lifestyle, there is no indication he was repulsed by eremitic living or severe asceticism at this time. In fact, Wesley reflected many years later that the Oxford Methodists were tempted to follow a path parallel to Lopez's desert mysticism.²⁹ Leaving behind his life at Oxford where he had often thought of living out his days in a semi-solitary state, Wesley seems to have been encouraged by Lopez's ability to be both a mystic and missionary. Lopez was a model of the religion of the heart, holy living, and living a life in imitation of Christ; hence he embodied the essential characteristics of a true primitive Christian. The deep and lasting impact *The Life of Gregory Lopez* had on Wesley is made evident by his continued citation of Lopez as a model for the experience of "close, uninterrupted communion with" God; an essential experience on the path to Christian perfection.³⁰ In Wesley's subsequent remarks on Lopez the interesting fact emerges that every written exhortation he made to ordinary Methodists to seek the

²⁷ See especially Wesley's sermon "On the Death of John Fletcher," JWS, 3:627 and his defense of Lopez's contention that sinless perfection is possible against the questioning of Losa (396; 1755); Lopez, 419: "We may pronounce Lopez a perfect man; for in the eighteen years that I have lived in the strictness intimacy with him, though I narrowly observed him, I never heard him speak one single word which could be reprov'd." The seventeenth-century Spanish mystic Juan Falconi greatly admired "That great man" Gregory Lopez who attained "so high a degree of faith." *Letter Written to a Spiritual Daughter* (Rome, 1673), quoted in E. Alison Peers, *Studies in the Spanish Mystics*, vol. 2 (London: The Sheldon Press, 1930), 360. One wonders whether the fact that we know comparatively little about Lopez was a factor in Wesley's admiration of him over other Catholic holy men save possibly De Renty, a man whom is likewise fairly unknown compared to other renowned Catholic saints.

²⁸ Regarding his monastic lifestyle, Wesley added footnotes with the comments: "It is absolutely certain, that this resolution is not to be justified on Scripture principles: And, consequently, Lopez is not to be imitated in this; however God might wink in times of ignorance" (391); God "permits *Satan* to buffet" those who live in solitude (beginning of ch. 3 p. 345 in 1755 ed.); and "what wonder" that Lopez was tempted "while he was out of God's Way" (p. 345, 1755). On his asceticism as displayed by rough sleeping and meagre diet, Wesley remarked, "Neither are these particular instances of self-denial, necessary for our imitation" (391).

²⁹ John Wesley to Mary Bishop (30 Nov. 1774), Telford, 6:128; cf. Wesley's letters to Miss March (10 Dec. 1777) and Ann Loxdale (21 Nov. 1783) for other criticisms of Lopez's desert mysticism (Telford, 6:292-93, 7:198).

³⁰ JW to Philothea Briggs (16 Oct. 1771), Telford, 5:283.

experience of Lopez was directed to female correspondents. All of his letters that make reference to Lopez were written after he had published his *Life* in the *Christian Library* and carry the assumption that his correspondents had read this work. Clearly there was an expectation that pious Methodists would read Lopez.³¹

II. Wesley's Public Use of the Printed Word

The Use of John Norris and August Hermann Francke for Public Devotional Reading

We'll now turn our attention to an analysis of two devotional treatises used by Wesley in his public ministry. The first, John Norris' *A Treatise Concerning Christian Prudence* served as reading material in one the four devotional reading groups Wesley established on the *Simmonds*. Norris' treatise represents one of eighteen different books used for this purpose. For thirteen of these titles there is only evidence of them being used one or twice; however, the other five volumes were used on a regular basis. In addition to Norris, these include William Law's *A Practical Treatise on Christian Perfection* (1726) and his *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* (1729); an Oxford Holy Club favorite: *The Country Parson's Advice to his Parishioners* (1680) and Simon Patrick's *The Christian Sacrifice: A treatise shewing the necessity, end, and manner of receiving the Holy Communion* (1671). The second devotional treatise to be examined, August Hermann Francke's *Nicodemus, or, a Treatise Against the Fear of Man* was employed as communal devotional reading by Wesley and his missionary colleagues. There is also record that the missionaries read together Francke's *Pietas Hallensis* and Law's *Christian Perfection*. There is not a particular justification for selecting these two works, although, I do think they are interesting to compare and contrast.

By the time the Georgia mission commenced, Wesley had been reading works of John Norris for over a decade. His Oxford diaries record the reading of fifteen books by Norris, including *A Treatise Concerning Christian Prudence* which provided study material for the Holy Club and was published by Wesley in abridged form in 1734.³²

³¹ On Wesley's use of Lopez's experience as a model for pious Methodists, see D. Dunn Wilson "John Wesley, Gregory Lopez and Marquis De Renty," *PWHS* 35 (December 1966): 181-184. For a broader account of Lopez's influence on Wesley, see Duffy, 12-19.

³² Heitzenrater, appendix IV; Baker, *Union Catalogue*.

Wesley's 1742 abridgement of Norris will serve as the basis for our analysis due to the evidence it provides regarding the portions of Norris' treatise that Wesley valued most. From the outset, Norris makes it quite clear that what he means by prudence is wisdom and wisdom for him is 'practical Knowledge' something which is available to all which we might call 'The Science of Life'.³³ For Norris, seeking after Christian prudence is a rational and rewarding pursuit. Since all happiness comes from God, fear of God and obedience in response to his commands leads to true happiness. Happiness is discovered in imitating Christ and becoming a partaker in his divine nature, but to realize this, one must be charitable and pure in heart.³⁴ To succinctly state his point, Norris declares "the more holiness the more happiness" that is, for the prudent Christian, holy living is the most pleasant life imaginable.³⁵ While Norris does elect to preface his treatise with this pleasing picture, he does not assume holy living is easily cultivated. He goes on to argue that it is utterly impossible to be an "almost Christian," indeed, this is a contradiction in terms since an almost Christian is really not Christian at all and is, in fact, more foolish than an 'atheist' or 'libertine.'³⁶ Therefore, since Christian prudence is categorically a "practical Design", there are definitive practices that the prudent Christian must observe. On a basic level these are the traditional Christian disciplines of prayer, Scripture reading, participation in communal worship and receiving the sacrament, an activity the prudent Christian "never omits" as it serves as "a channel to convey all the Blessings of God to us, and as a Pledge to assure us of them."³⁷ In the fourth chapter Norris proceeds to define "The Conduct of a Prudent Christian, with regard to the Government of himself." First of all, prudent Christians do not indulge their senses, they "mortify them", this means that instead of pleasure seeking they deny themselves pleasures that are technically speaking "lawful." Secondly, they improve their "understanding" by not

³³ Norris, 2nd ed. (London: 1742) 3, 28.

³⁴ The last three sentences are a summary of chapter one. On partaking in Christ's divine nature and regarding purity, Norris emphasizes the following passages: 2 Peter 1:4; Matthew 5:8; 1 John 3:3.

³⁵ For an example of Wesley's use of this motif, see *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion* in vol. 11 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley*, ed. Gerald R. Gragg (Nashville: Abingdon Press, [1743] 1989), 45-46. Albert Outler has pointed out that this theme finds a place "in no less than thirty of his sermons" (JWS, 1:35 n. 28).

³⁶ Cf. Francke, 23; Wesley, Christian Perfection; Law.

³⁷ Norris, 14, 19, 21-22. In a 1725 letter to his mother Wesley expressed a similar view that forgiveness of sins and assurance of salvation could be obtained by worthily receiving the sacrament (*Letters*, June 18, 1725, 25:170).

pursing knowledge except that which is verifiably practical, namely, knowledge that pertains to God and oneself. Thirdly, prudent Christians govern their corrupted “will and affections” and bend them into alignment with the will of God.³⁸

When one compares Norris with much of what Wesley was reading at this time it is immediately apparent that a central element from most of his reading is relatively absent in Norris, namely, any theology of suffering. Wesley clearly appreciated the work of a man highly influenced by the thought-world of the Cambridge Platonists, who tended to take a fairly optimistic view of human nature and sought to cultivate the practice of Christianity by reasoning from the basis that a holy life is a happy life.³⁹ It appears that Wesley was content to hold this pleasant vision in dialectical tension with authors such as Law and Francke who took a distinctly negative view of human nature and accentuated the view that suffering in imitation of Christ is the crown and glory of the Christian life. Although Norris’ thought unmistakably shares themes in common with Law, Francke and Wesley such as the deep-seated belief that true Christianity consists in practice and the need to strictly deny oneself worldly pleasures, the esteem Wesley gave to Norris shows a measure of diversity in his devotional reading at this stage in his life.

The general temper of August Hermann Francke’s (1663-1727) *Nicodemus* matches up well with the attitude of John Wesley and his colleagues in Georgia. Evidence supporting a profound influence of *Nicodemus* on Wesley is abundant, beginning with his reading of the treatise at Oxford and continuing with the Holy Club’s communal reading on the *Simmonds*.⁴⁰ In Georgia Wesley continued to return to this book in small group settings and he published an abridged version of it less than two years after his departure from Georgia. *Nicodemus* received the rare honor from Wesley of being published by him both independently and in his *Christian Library*. For the purposes of this study, Wesley’s abridged version allows insight into the sections of the work he found particularly inspiring.⁴¹

³⁸ Ibid., 24-26.

³⁹ For Wesley’s later appropriation of this approach, see his *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*.

⁴⁰ OD, November 1733; JWD, 18 November 1735, ff.

⁴¹ Wesley’s abridged version first published in Bristol in 1739 went through a total of seven editions during his lifetime. It was reprinted in the *Christian Library* 29.461-96 [ck. 50 v. ed.].

Francke clearly identifies his target audience by dedicating the book “to all ministers, and teachers.” To these readers he is determined to demonstrate his claim that the “Fear of man is become the Epidemical Distemper of our Teachers,” but more importantly to exhort them to apply divinely supplied antidotes to this disease. The fear of man is “a Kind of Idolatry” that may be caused by internal means such as “Want of Experience in the Ways of God” or external issues, for instance, “Too great Intimacy with the Children of this World.” Identifiable characteristics are displayed by fearful men including envy of those strong in faith, preaching against enthusiasm, and reluctance to reprove their neighbor. The end of submitting to these fears is that they eat “out the Vigour and Activity of the Life of Grace.” The disease spreads as the people imitate their minister.⁴²

Having detailed the gravity of the problem, Franke proceeds to name typical excuses made by ministers and teachers due to fear of their fellow men. To the concerns “But I shall be put to Charges and Trouble, nay perhaps be turned out of my Livelihood” and “we must not pull down Sufferings upon our own Heads, or willfully run into them” Franke responds, “Happy art Thou when Thou sufferest for Conscience-sake” and “Neither must Thou be afraid of Suffering.” In response to persons who absolve themselves due to their lay status, Franke answers forcefully: “But thou must, at the Peril of thy Salvation, follow the Example of Christ as well as they.” Eventually Francke deals with what he considers to be “the Grand Excuse”: “But we must have a Care of getting an Ill Name: For then we should do no Good at all.” He considers that this entire argument can be destroyed on the basis of Jesus’ words that persecution for his sake is a blessed state.⁴³

In the following chapter, Francke gives a number of antidotes to the fear of man: self-examination, self-denial, meditation on the “Nothingness of this World” and most especially “on the bitter Passion of our Lord.” Such meditation enables one to put on “the true Apostolical Mind” which emboldens the Christian to a willingness to suffer for Christ. Devotional reading of the primitive martyrs is another sure antidote, but the centre of Francke’s remedy is to “eye continually the Example and Image of Christ” to

⁴² Francke, iii-iv, 1-3, 5-8.

⁴³ Ibid., 11-14, 19; Luke 6:22-23.

consider his sufferings and to experimentally know that true happiness consists in partaking in the sufferings of Christ.⁴⁴ Wesley undoubtedly agreed with the way Franke jointly upheld Christ and the primitive Church as fully worthy of contemporary imitation. As Francke began his treatise with a commendation of the boldness of the primitive Christians, he ends with an exhortation to imitate the examples of the Apostles whose lives were a didactic illustration of how “to confess Christ before All Men without Fear, and bear his Cross, that we may partake of his Glory!”⁴⁵

In this essay, I have sought to give a selected view of several works that Wesley was not only influenced by, but used in private and public devotion. The missionary biographies of Xavier and Lopez provide insight into two men whom Wesley believed to be exemplary missionaries. Wesley’s utilization of the works of Norris and Franke for public devotional reading shows both the unity of theme (i.e. imitation of Christ) and diversity of emphasis (i.e. holiness leads to happiness versus holiness leads to suffering) in Wesley’s reading. Not only do these four treatises provide important insight into Wesley’s frame of mind as he embarked on the Georgia mission, all of them (with the possible exception of Xavier) were sources of continued inspiration for Wesley throughout his life.

⁴⁴ 1 Peter 4:13.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 23-27, iv, 40; 1 Peter 5:1.