



Who was Susan Allibone?

Excerpt taken from the introduction of
*Psalm CXIX, Amplified and Illustrated by
other Scriptures*

The diminutive volume the reader has now in hand possesses no inconsiderable measure of the interest to which we allude. It is simply a transcript from the Bible. The one hundred and nineteenth Psalm suggests the topics of meditation, and parallel or illustrative texts are selected from various parts of the sacred volume, to impress and enforce them.

This useful and delightful task was self-imposed by the late Miss Susan Allibone, a lady of such rare attainments in the Christian life, and especially of such exemplary submission to the will of God through a long period of weakness and suffering, that we cannot but regard with a sort of reverence such a memento of her spiritual taste and judgment.

To encourage that most laudable and edifying practice of committing Scripture to memory, it may be mentioned that the portions of sacred truth which are cited in the following pages were brought from the storehouse of the author's memory, without the aid of a concordance or parallel text-book. Her recollection of the words, as well as of the chapter and verse, was verified by others, and was rarely found at fault. Such a thorough knowledge of the teachings of the inspired volume is a treasure as invaluable as it is rare.

And it may add to the interest, if not the usefulness of the volume, to accompany it with a brief sketch of the author's character, drawn chiefly from the testimony of those who knew her most intimately.

Miss Allibone was a Christian of the deepest spirituality. One more heavenly minded is scarcely to be found. Her walk was that of Enoch; her anointing was that of Aaron. It was impossible to be in her chamber many moments without the consciousness that one was in the presence of a believer of extraordinary attainments in holiness. might it be said of her, she was "full of faith and of the Holy Spirit". -a monument of divine grace-a vessel of honour, that had been fitted to her Master's use.

the unearthly elevation of her thoughts-her waiting posture for the expected summons-her glowing love to the Redeemer, and her perfect assurance of entering into the joy of her Lord, made an impression upon my mind too deeply graven for time to obliterate. I will not attempt to describe that death. She died magnifying Jesus, and at about twelve o'clock on Friday noon, the twenty-second of September, (1854,) her ransomed soul 'passed through glory's morning gate, and walked in paradise.'"

felt that at length the time of her going home had come, and each passing hour gave evidence of the increasing brilliancy of her hope, and the growing strength of her faith.

To recount the hundred jeweled thoughts which she uttered, and which her many friends will ever retain in memory, would be impossible. Next to prayer, her chief delight was to repeat, and hear repeated, texts of Scripture. Her soul hungered and thirsted after this bread of life and water of life; and she fed upon God's word with an avidity which showed the insatiable cravings of her heart. To one of her cousins, she said:

"I cannot desire, with Archbishop Leighton, to die at an inn; I should love to leave for heaven, surrounded by my friends. If I did not know in whom I have believed, my dying pillow would be thorny. I feel no anxiety, no doubt. I am perfectly safe in Christ. I have a certain confidence, though I constantly ask to be kept from presumption. How Christ is dishonoured by doubts and fears!"

To one of her aunts, who stood watching her intense suffering, she remarked:

"I am very happy; I feel that Jesus is with me. I have no strength, no energy; he is my all and in all."

When allusion was made to her expected dissolution, she replied:

"I have not yet received permission to pass over Jordan. I am just waiting, you know, until it comes; but," she added, with loving emphasis, "my friends want to want to accompany me as far as possible into the stream."

"Never shall I forget (says her pastor) my last interview with her in that chamber of death. Her radiant smile-her calm, yet heavenly joy-her words of peace and comfort-her felicitous quotations from the Bible-

She was more than a polished stone-she was a pillar in the temple of God, adorned and enriched with all the graces of the Spirit, showing forth the praises of Him who had blessed her with all spiritual blessings.

She was wont to express the comfort she felt in having the merits of the Redeemer to depend on--his blood to cleanse, his righteousness to justify. She had evidently taken her station at the foot of the cross, and rested her hopes of acceptance and of eternal life on the finished work of the Redeemer. She seemed to believe unhesitatingly whatever God had said in his word. There was a directness in the going out of her mind to God's truth. She took hold of it as a child would take hold of the words of a faithful parent. She rested upon it; it formed her whole character.

It has often been remarked, that she was never long with others without saying a word for Christ, or showing her interest in their welfare. By word or by letter, by speaking or by writing, by sending a book or a tract, by one way or another, she appeared always employed in leading others to the Saviour.

Her love was not a mountain torrent, dependent for its supply upon the melting snows, or the uncertain rain; now brawling, and foaming, and dashing along with inundating force, and now dried up to a little streamlet, scarce threading its silvery way along the pebbly channel; but a calm, majestic river, fed by unfailing well-springs, flowing on in an ever-widening, ever-deepening current, with no boisterous rapids, no reflux eddies; giving verdure to all its banks, and ever reflecting heaven in its glassy bosom.

Her zeal, too, was a well-directed zeal. She was wonderfully taught by the Holy Spirit how to speak a word in due season. Her conversation was always gentle and willing, and at the same time indicated culture and elegance of mind. She had the faculty of making all her

acquirements, and the rich stores of information which she had derived from conversation with others, tend to the benefit of souls. Hence, she was prepared to meet every variety of character and every condition of spirituality.

The thoughtless, she warned; the tempted, she encouraged; the wavering, she strove to confirm; the inquiring sinner, she directed; the mourner in Zion and the bruised and sorrowful, she comforted. Oh, how many will have cause to bless God through eternity for her bright example, her ardent zeal, and earnest prayers! Her life was an active and useful life: it was a summer's sun, which shone early, brightly, beneficently.

For several years after she was confined to her room, she received a class of boys into her chamber every Tuesday for mental and religious instruction; on Thursday, she had a similar class for girls; and on Saturday afternoon, a crowd of children from every rank in life visited her room, repeated their previously-assigned verses or texts of Scripture, listened to the interesting narrative or instructive anecdote, and then kneeled, while she sought a blessing on their young hearts. One who knew her most intimately, says: "Few in the full tide of physical power would have more incessantly yielded to the demands upon her time and thought, than she felt constrained to do by the master-principle of her soul. A half finished letter, an attractive book, and (dearest and most prized of all) a season of quiet devotion, must be interrupted if a person, however uninteresting,—a little child even,—desired to see her about the state of their immortal souls. Thus has she been a living epistle, a daily reprover to the self-indulgent Christian, working while it was day, fearful that the night of death might cast its eternal shadow upon the unreconciled in heart."

She was pre-eminently a cheerful Christian. She was a constant witness

to all who saw her that it is a happiness, and not a burden, to serve God: that his "commandments are not grievous;" that the ways of religion are ways of pleasantness, and its paths, paths of peace. She was like a sunbeam-bright herself, and making others bright. Of her room the same friend observes:

"It was the brightest spot on earth. Blooming flowers and singing birds and rippling waters could not have produced upon the mind such impressions of softened delight as a visit to that chamber, which contained a Christian, so long afflicted with physical suffering, and yet in the midst of all so patient, so cheerful, so happy. Oh, how often have I stood lingering upon the threshold of that room after the parting word had been spoken reluctant to leave a scene over which even angels, on their errands of love, must have paused with admiring joy!"

When, at the incipient stage of her disease, her physician told her that she might have to suffer for several months before she would get relief, she replied: "I do not contemplate the future with dread or anxiety. If suffering and privation become conducive to my spiritual welfare, I should rather pray that they may be tenfold increased, than in the smallest degree mitigated."

To a friend she writes, "I come all the time to Jesus as a poor helpless sinner, and as one whom his mother comforteth, so he comforts me; I bring to him the pain and weariness of an almost exhausted frame, and realize that we have not an high-priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; and experience confirms my hope that he will never leave nor forsake me." And thus, all along her pathway until she entered the celestial city, we find her erecting these memorial pillars of God's mercy and her resignation.

When at the last she began to fail, she hailed each symptom of decay as a token of God's gracious intention to take her to himself in glory; she

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