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**Imagination and Struggle
Charles Wesley and Christian Practices
(1739–1749)**

**PAPERS PRESENTED
AT
THE NINETEENTH ANNUAL MEETING
OF
THE CHARLES WESLEY SOCIETY**
*October 17–19, 2008
Princeton Theological Seminary
Princeton, New Jersey*

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Proceedings of The Charles Wesley Society 2008

Published in the United States by
The Charles Wesley Society

Editor, S T Kimbrough, Jr.
Assistant Editor, Charles A. Green

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An Important New Resource for Study of Charles Wesley

Randy L. Maddox

The Center for Studies in the Wesleyan Tradition (CSWT) of Duke Divinity School has launched a major initiative to provide online research resources for studying the tradition. One of their initial projects will be of great interest to those interested in the works of Charles Wesley.

The CSWT has prepared and posted online a basic critical edition of all of Charles Wesley's poetry that was published during his lifetime. They are currently at work on a similar collection of all of the verse left in manuscript at Charles Wesley's death. Alongside these collections devoted to Charles Wesley, they are also in process of posting a complete set of the hymn and poetry collections that John Wesley edited and published during his lifetime.¹

The combined collections are offered as a long-needed improvement upon the current standard 13-volume collection of *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley* by George Osborn (1868–72). While Osborn's collection was a Herculean effort in its time and played a significant role in preserving access to the Wesleys' poetry and hymn publications, it is marked by several characteristics that limit its value as the standard source for scholarly study and citation of the Wesley brothers' poetical works. To mention just a few:

1. Osborn framed his collection to contain only those poems and hymns that he believed were *original* to John or Charles Wesley. This meant excluding John's first two published collections, *CPH* (1737) and *CPH* (1738) entirely, as well as major sections of similar material in other early collections.

2. Despite his intentions, Osborn included—unawares and without indication—some hymns or poems from the early collections that were not composed by John or Charles Wesley.

3. While the general flow of the text in Osborn's collection is chronological, moving from earlier works issued by the Wesley brothers to later works, he frequently alters the structure of the works included.

4. One of the most puzzling decisions that Osborn made was to mix items from published collections of Charles Wesley's verse with a portion of the items that Charles left in manuscript, without any indication he has done so.

5. For the items from published collections, Osborn usually prints the text of the *last* edition issued during John Wesley's life, and with no indication of variant readings in earlier editions.

¹ These items can be accessed at <http://www.divinity.duke.edu/wesleyan/texts/>.

6. On occasion the text printed by Osborn for a specific item departs from *all* earlier published versions. In most of these cases Osborn is opting to print *manuscript* corrections that John Wesley made in his personal copy of texts that Charles had published independent of John's editorial control. Since Osborn gives no indicator of these insertions, the original emphasis of Charles—and John's disagreement with it—is obscured.

7. Finally, Osborn provides very few introductions to enlighten the occasion and context of the works included in his collection.

The CSWT online collection is intended to provide a standard source for scholarly study and citation of the poetical works of John and Charles Wesley, available globally and at no charge. It has been developed under the following guidelines to maximize reliability and usefulness.

1. A comprehensive collection of verse published by John and Charles Wesley was compiled, drawing on Frank Baker's copious research into publishers' records and library holdings. Cf. Frank Baker. *A Union Catalogue of the Publications of John and Charles Wesley*. Second (revised) ed., Stone Mountain, GA: George Zimmermann, 1991.

2. The collection is organized in separate sections to allow study of John Wesley's editorial role in collecting verse from a number of sources while highlighting the verse that can reasonably be ascribed to Charles Wesley's hand.

3. The collection is presented in chronological order, with short introductions for each listing that identify its original setting and its textual history.

4. The first edition (or first available edition) of each work is used as the base text, with significant revisions or variant readings in later editions of that work identified in footnotes.

5. The pagination of the first edition is preserved to help standardize references.

6. When individual hymns or poems occur in more than one Wesley publication, the first occurrence is consistently footnoted in later settings.

7. John Wesley's occasional manuscript corrections of or comments on Charles's independent publications are indicated in footnotes as appropriate.

8. The text for John Wesley's collections of hymns and poems includes all items, with those appropriated from other authors identified in the footnotes.

9. The texts are given in both an "original" and "modern" version. The "original" version reproduces the spelling and punctuation used in the printed first edition, with minor exceptions. The "modern" version replaces archaic spellings, expands contractions where modern pronunciation would not change the meter of the line, replaces Roman numerals with Arabic, and adopts the modern form for

scripture citation. See the “guidelines” for the reproduction of the texts:
<http://www.divinity.duke.edu/wesleyan/texts/guidelines.html>

In addition to the texts, the CSWT website is adding other research materials that scholars of the poetical works of John and Charles Wesley will find of use.² Presently these include a comprehensive First-Line Index for all the published poetry collections and a Metrical Index for Charles Wesley’s 2-volume *Short Hymns on Select Passages of the Holy Scriptures* (1762). The latter was contributed by S T Kimbrough, and we encourage anyone who would like to contribute similar resources to be in touch. Similarly, if there are other materials that you would encourage us to consider making available in this online scholarly setting, please let us know.

² <http://www.divinity.duke.edu/wesleyan/research/wesley.html>

