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Introduction 3
S T Kimbrough, Jr.

A Tribute to Oliver A. Beckerlegge: 1913–2003 5
S T Kimbrough, Jr.

2003

The Christ-Mysticism of Charles Wesley 11
Francis Frost

Charles Wesley and the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England ... 27
J. R. Watson

Song in the Service of Faith 39
David H. Tripp

“The Old Ship” 55
Peter S. Forsaith

2004

Preliminary Explorations of Charles Wesley and Worship 67
Paul W. Chilcote

Charles Wesley on Worship 83
Karen B. Westerfield Tucker

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Charles Wesley and the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England

J. R. Watson

There were two great eras of doctrinal formulation in the history of the church. The first was in the fourth and fifth centuries, with the Nicene Creed and the doctrinal decisions of the General Councils of the church; the second was in the sixteenth century. The Reformation brought with it a whole series of councils and “Confessions” designed to confute error (as each part of the church saw it) and to establish the Protestant church on a sound doctrinal base. In an age of conflict and controversy, it was important for the Church of England, established by Henry VIII, destroyed by Mary Tudor, and re-established in what became known as the “Elizabethan Settlement,” to be clear about its teaching. Accordingly, there were repeated attempts to define what was orthodox. There were the Ten Articles of 1536, the Forty-Two Articles of 1553, the Thirty-Eight Articles of 1563, and finally the Thirty-Nine Articles of 1571.

These Articles were at first designed as points of doctrine to which the clergy should assent. The importance of the Thirty-Nine Articles of 1571 was that they came immediately after the excommunication of Elizabeth I by the Pope, and Elizabeth felt that her position needed strengthening as head of the Church of England. She turned for support to Parliament, which passed an act requiring all clergy to subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles. In Canon Law, confirmed at the accession of James I in 1604, the clergy were compelled to subscribe to three things:

1. That the King’s Majesty, under God, is the only supreme governor of this realm, and of all other his Highness’s dominions and countries, as well in all spiritual or ecclesiastical things or causes, as temporal; . . .
2. That the Book of Common Prayer, and of ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, containeth in it nothing contrary to the word of God, and that it may lawfully so be used; . . .
3. That he alloweth the Book of Articles of Religion agreed upon by the archbishops and bishops of both provinces, and by the whole clergy in the Convocation holden at London in the year of our Lord God 1562; and that he acknowledgeth all and every the Articles therein contained, being in number nine and thirty, . . . to be agreeable to the word of God.

The clergy were required to say that they did “willingly and *ex animo* subscribe” to these three sections, and thus to the Thirty-Nine Articles.¹ This was a requirement that remained in force until the Royal Commission of 1865 permit-

¹Edgar C. S. Gibson, *The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, explained with an introduction* (London: Methuen, 1896), 59–60.

ted “assent” rather than “subscribe”; so that the Wesley brothers would have subscribed at their ordinations.

The Thirty-Nine Articles were not universally acceptable. The more Puritan clergy in particular took exception to the Episcopal system, and to the Ordering of Priests and Deacons, set out in Article XXXVI, and to such things as the wording of Article XVI. This Article, entitled “Of Sin after Baptism,” contained the sentence—“After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and by the grace of God we may arise again, and amend our lives”—as contrary to the doctrine of predestination and election. Subscription to the Articles, and the Articles themselves, fell into disuse during the time of the Commonwealth, in which the Presbyterian system of church government prevailed. With the Restoration of 1660, the supporters of the Thirty-Nine Articles and the Book of Common Prayer had their turn, with an unseemly vengeance.

The restored king had hoped for some religious compromise. In the Declaration of Breda, made before his return, he had promised Presbyterians a place in the established church. Back in England, he offered bishoprics to Baxter, Calamy, and Reynolds, three of the most notable and distinguished Puritan clergy. But Parliament, packed with newly-restored royalists would not allow it. With the breakdown of the Savoy Conference of 1661, they insisted on a complete return to the subscription of 1604. In the words of Adam Clarke, the early Methodist historian (who, of course, was writing his own version of history), the bishops

were determined to yield nothing, but carry every thing their own way: and the easy king, intent on nothing but his sinful pleasures, made no remonstrance, but permitted them to act as they pleased. The consequence was, the true pastors of the flock were expelled from the fold; and hirelings, who cared more for the fleece and the fat than for the sheep, climbed over the wall, and seized on flocks to which they had no right, either Divine or human; and the people of God were either starved or scattered.²

The result was the Act of Uniformity of 1662, in which the clergy were required, on Saint Bartholomew’s Day, 1662, to make a solemn declaration in their churches, repudiating the Presbyterian Solemn League and Covenant, assenting to the episcopal system as the only legitimate way of ordaining deacons and priests, and agreeing to the entire contents of the Book of Common Prayer. This was too much for many of them, and almost two thousand Puritan clergy were ejected from their livings because of their principled objection to these conditions, including such worthy people as Richard Baxter. Often they had the support of a good number of the people, who disliked the Book of Common Prayer,

²Adam Clarke, *Memoirs of the Wesley Family* (London, 1823), 8. Clarke’s narrative is evidence of how bitterly the events of 1662 were regarded in the Dissenting view of history.

calling it "Porridge." Samuel Pepys recorded "a disturbance in a church at Friday Street,"

a great many young people knotting together and crying out "Porridge!" often and seditiously in the Church, and they took the Common Prayer Book, they say, away; and, some say, did tear it . . .³

John Wesley's great-grandfather, Bartholomew Wesley, rector of Catherston in Dorset, was one of those ejected. So was his grandfather, John Wesley, vicar of Winterborn, Whitchurch, also in Dorset, where, according to Adam Clarke, he was imprisoned and interrogated before being allowed to preach his farewell sermon on the Sunday before Saint Bartholomew's Day "to a weeping audience."⁴ Also ejected was Samuel Annesley, the eminent Puritan divine, who had been vicar of St Giles' Cripplegate, and who was John Wesley's maternal grandfather. His youngest daughter Susanna, John Wesley's mother, was the greatest single influence on his life.

The reasons for recalling these ancient feuds and distresses are to remind us that in John and Charles Wesley's time these matters were recent and important history. They would have known the history of their parents' responses to such demands: how Samuel, their father, who had been educated at a Dissenting academy, changed his opinion, either as a result of trying to answer "some severe invectives" and deciding that they were right, or as a result of falling in with some coarse and profane Dissenting company, which disgusted him;⁵ and how Susanna, their mother, had reasoned herself into the Church of England after drawing up a table of contentious matters between that church and the Dissenters. Having done so, she became a non-juror in 1688: although she was obviously not ordained, she must have felt bound by the first of the Canon Law articles—"That the King's Majesty, under God, is the only supreme governor of this realm" Her refusal to say "Amen" to the prayer for the king was the cause of a major argument between Susanna and her husband, and although it occurred before John or Charles was born, it would certainly have been known to them as a piece of family history. According to Susanna, her husband "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 for not saying Amen to the prayer for the Kg."⁶

What I am suggesting, therefore, is that, for the Wesley brothers, the subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles at their ordinations was an act which was

³Quoted in Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England from Andrewes to Baxter and Fox, 1603–1690* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 438. Samuel Annesley had been the vicar of St John's in Friday Street, which perhaps accounts for the Puritan temper of the congregation.

⁴*Memoirs of the Wesley Family*, 41.

⁵Clarke gives both accounts. *Memoirs of the Wesley Family*, 60–1, 63–5.

⁶See John A. Newton, *Susanna Wesley and the Puritan Tradition in Methodism*, 2nd ed. (London: Epworth Press, 2002), 89.

filled with more than usual significance, because they would have been aware of all the accumulated arguments, ejections, sufferings, quarrels, and problems of the preceding half century. In subscribing to them, they were taking their place in an established church which had been intolerant of Dissent, which had rejected Roman Catholicism and embraced the tolerance of William III, but which had become split between jurors and non-jurors even as the Glorious Revolution of 1688 heralded a new toleration.⁷

It was precisely for the establishing of the Church of England on a firm footing that these Articles had been devised. They began at the beginning, describing “the Being of God” in Article I, “Of Faith in the Holy Trinity”:

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the Maker and Preserver of all things, both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

This was clearly designed to combat heresy of all kinds, such as Arianism and Socinianism. It is significant in this context that when the Wesley brothers were interviewed by Archbishop Potter in 1739, they declared, in the words of Charles’s journal, that “they would keep the doctrines of the Church,” and that they would “abide by the Church till her Articles and Homilies were repealed.”⁸

Article I was also fundamental to Charles Wesley’s hymnody, in a way which has not always been recognized. Most interpreters of his work would see the center of it as being the conversion experience and the evangelical call to sinners to repent and accept salvation:

Sent by my Lord, to you I call,
The invitation is to all.

But behind that invitation is the fundamental relationship between God, the Holy Trinity of Article I, and human beings. It is found in the hymn from *Hymns on the Lord’s Supper*, section 5:

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
One in Three, and Three in One,
As by the celestial host,
Let thy will on earth be done:
Praise by all to thee be given,
Glorious Lord of earth and heaven.

⁷It is significant in this respect that one of the books which John Wesley drew on for his first hymn book, and which he and Charles took with them to Georgia (and had probably used in the Holy Club) was George Hickes’s *Reformed Devotions*. Hickes had been a Fellow of Lincoln College, and was ejected from the Deanery of Worcester for refusing the oath of allegiance to William III. James II, in exile, created him titular Bishop of Thetford.

⁸*Journal* 1:143 (21 February 1739).

Vilest of the sinful race,
Lo, I answer to Thy call;
Meanest vessel of Thy grace,
(Grace divinely free for all,
Lo, I come to do Thy will,
All Thy counsel to fulfil.

If so poor a worm as I
May to thy great glory live,
All my actions sanctify,
All my words and thoughts receive;
Claim me for thy service, claim
All I have and all I am.

The contrast between stanza 1 and stanzas 2 and 3 is wonderfully engineered here: from the magnificent rhetoric of the first two lines, with the *epanalepsis* of line 2, the verse builds up through the celestial host to the final “Glorious Lord of earth and heaven,” and then—suddenly—the tone changes—“Vilest of the sinful race”—and then to the “I-worm” image.

The hymn was based, as we know, on Daniel Brevint’s *The Christian Sacrament and Sacrifice*, but the whole concept of sacrament and sacrifice in the Lord’s Supper depends on the meeting of God and the poor sinner. Now imagine a young and zealous ordinand, fresh from the Holy Club, thinking as he kneels in Christ Church Cathedral of the demands that are about to be placed upon him. As a frail human being, a poor worm, he contemplates Article I. We cannot know whether at this time he was *dimly* aware of the solemn and awe-ful relationship between himself and God, or whether he was *acutely* aware of it, as one who was about to subscribe. The only evidence we have is from his writings, the hymns and journals and sermons, and they suggest that, consciously or not, he was thereafter possessed with the idea of the glory of God and the distance between that glory and the human condition. The wonder of the conversion hymns is that the distance can be bridged: he can sing his great deliverer’s praise because he is, marvelously, “Blest with this antepast of heaven.” This is why he wants to share it in the “Conversion Hymn”:

Outcasts of men, to you I call,
Harlots, and publicans, and thieves!

This is why, a few days later, he has to strike the note of amazement: “And can it be, that I should gain / An interest in the Saviour’s blood.” This is the “amazing love” that the hymn speaks of, and this is the import of stanza 5 of the hymn from *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1749), “God of almighty love”:

Spirit of grace inspire
 My consecrated heart;
 Fill me with pure, celestial fire,
 With all thou hast or art.
 My feeble mind transform,
 And, perfectly renewed,
 Into a saint exalt a worm,
 A worm exalt to God!

It is interesting that this hymn, which was entitled “An Hourly Act of Oblation,” is also based on the doctrine of the Unity of God in the Holy Trinity set out in Article I, as are many of Charles Wesley’s other hymns, such as “Father, in whom we live,” and “Hail! Holy, holy, holy Lord”:

One undivided Trinity
 With triumph we proclaim;
 The universe is full of thee,
 And speaks thy glorious name.

I have spent some time on Article I because I think that it is fundamental to Wesley’s consciousness as a priest of the Church of England. I do not propose to treat the other thirty-eight articles in detail, except to say that there are clear echoes of them in the hymns. However, those echoes might have come from anywhere, although they are certainly in keeping with the Articles. For example, Article II, “Of the Word or Son of God, which was made very Man,” begins as follows:

The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took Man’s nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance: so that two whole and perfect Natures, that is to say the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God, and very Man;

We find this in “Hark, how all the welkin rings”:

Christ, by highest heaven adored,
 Christ, the everlasting Lord,
 Late in time behold him come,
 Offspring of a virgin’s womb.
 Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!
 Hail the incarnate Deity!

We could say that the whole of the hymn beginning “Glory be to God on high” is a series of variations on the “two whole and perfect natures, that is to say the Godhead and Manhood”:

God the invisible appears:
God the blest, the great I AM,
Sojourns in this vale of tears,
And Jesus is his name. . . .

Emptied of his majesty,
Of his dazzling glories shorn,
Being's source begins to be,
And God himself is born!

There are no doubt many influences on these lines, and we should not seek to impose a direct filiation from the Thirty-Nine Articles; I merely wish to point out the direction of thought which those articles insist on. They continue with articles on the going down of Christ into Hell, on his Resurrection, on the Holy Ghost, and on "the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation," which lists the canonical books of the Bible and those of the Apocrypha. Article VII, "Of the Old Testament," begins "The Old Testament is not contrary to the New," a statement which justifies, and perhaps derives from, the practice of biblical typology. There is no space to discuss this in detail, but so many of Charles Wesley's hymns depend upon typology that we are not surprised to find Article VII congruent with the practice. So that, in the hymn entitled "The Promise of Sanctification," printed at the end of John Wesley's sermon on Christian Perfection, we find the beautiful verse:

O that I now, from sin released,
Thy word may to the utmost prove!
Enter into the promised rest,
The Canaan of thy perfect love!

or when we sing "Captain of Israel's host, and guide," we realize that Charles Wesley is rejoicing that the Old Testament is not contrary to the New. On the other hand, it is a wonderful source of imaginative transference, as the metaphor of deliverance is taken over from the account in Exodus and transferred to the human soul.

The Articles which follow deal with Original Sin, Free Will, Justification, Good Works, Works before Justification, and Sin after Baptism. Article XI, as Robin Leaver has suggested, was of particular importance. He notes that it referred to Cranmer's Homily "Of Salvation," and (following Albin and Beckerlegge) observes that Charles Wesley quoted from the Homilies on several occasions in his preaching of 1738 and 1739.⁹ Professor Kenneth Newport's magnificent new edition of the sermons has allowed us to see the full force of these quotations in context.¹⁰ Sermon 6, first preached on 21 January 1739,

⁹Robin A. Leaver, "Charles Wesley and Anglicanism," in *Charles Wesley, Poet and Theologian*, ed. S T Kimbrough, Jr. (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1992), 159–60.

¹⁰*The Sermons of Charles Wesley*, ed. Kenneth G. C. Newport (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

defending justification by faith and not by works, sets the argument in relation to the Thirty-Nine Articles. It roundly condemns those who “subscribe the Articles in [their] own sense,” a practice described as “an infamous evasion.”¹¹ In other words, Newport’s edition allows us to see that the Articles were among Charles Wesley’s intellectual and spiritual guidelines, and that he insisted on a rigorous interpretation of them, with no evasion or individual hermeneutics.

Among the most difficult of them was Article XVII, “Of Predestination and Election”:

Predestination to Life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Wherefore, they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God be called according to God’s purpose by his Spirit working in due season: they through Grace obey the calling: they be justified freely: they be made sons of God by adoption: they be made like the image of his only- begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God’s mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity.

This was an Article which worried John Wesley. Adam Clarke quotes a letter from his mother on the topic, saying that John “appears to have been not a little puzzled” by it.

It was wrestling with the problems of justification and election, and which were the subject of fierce debate in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. We may be sure that Charles Wesley was familiar with the arguments: he would have known of the disagreements between Whitefield and his brother, and discussed them in detail. The letter from Susanna to John, to which I referred earlier, sets out the matter with great force. It is dated 18 July 1725, after John had graduated but before he became a Fellow of Lincoln, and we may imagine him reading this letter as an earnest post-graduate student in Oxford pursuing his own agenda of self-discovery. It begins with a warning to an impressionable young man; and with what might today be found an amusing reference to the superiority of her husband, who was to be deferred to as the rector of Epworth:

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

¹¹*Sermons*, 178.

Susanna was being very sensible here: it would be better, especially for young people, to spend time usefully, working out their own salvation, than puzzling over controversies. But in order to respond to John's anxiety, she went on with an admirable directness:

The doctrine of *Predestination*, as maintained by rigid Calvinists, is very shocking; and ought utterly to be abhorred, because it charges the most Holy God with being the Author of sin . . . for it is certainly inconsistent with the justice and goodness of God to lay any man under either a physical or moral necessity of committing sin, and then punish him for doing it. Far be this from the Lord!—Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?

She then went on to refer to the text which most clearly set out the doctrine of predestination, Romans 8:29–30: “Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son: Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” Her interpretation was robust and forthright, and in it, if one were so disposed, one could find the germ of the whole of Methodist theology:

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

There is no sense here of the Calvinistic doctrine of Reprobation. Election remains important, but only in a particular sense of “predestinate.” Susanna uses it in the general sense of “chosen,” or “fated”: some are destined (in the general sense of that being their “lot”) to live good lives, and others are not. God calls to himself and adopts as his children those who repent and believe in the Lord Jesus. These are they who “make a right use of their powers, and accept of offered mercy.” Susanna anticipated the “Free Grace” of “And can it be, that I should gain,” even using the same phrase in her next paragraph. She argued that her solution of the predestination problem was “agreeable to the analogy of faith”:

Since it does in no wise derogate from the glory of God's free grace, nor impair the liberty of man.

She finishes with an argument which disposes of the problem with a logical flourish:

Nor can it with more reason be supposed that the prescience of God is the cause that so many finally perish, than that our knowing the sun will rise to-morrow is the cause of its rising.¹²

In other words, people make their own choices, to repent and live as children of God, or to continue in sin.

Out of Article XVII has come a piece of maternal advice that is fit to stand at the head of Charles Wesley's hymns, not only in their recognition of free grace, but in their rejection of the Calvinist position. Charles Wesley invariably condemns that position, the "HORRIBLE DECREE," as Horton Davies and other have shown.¹³ An example is in "Father, whose everlasting love," from *Hymns on God's Everlasting Love* (1741), where verse 16 is:

And shall the HELLISH DOCTRINE stand,
 And Thee for its dire author claim?
 No: let it sink at Thy command
 Down to the pit from whence it came.
 Arise, O God, maintain Thy cause!
 The fullness of the Gentiles call:
 Lift up the standard of Thy cross,
 And all shall own Thou diedst for all.

In rejecting the Calvinistic interpretation of Article XVII, Charles Wesley preserves many of its positive benefits: deliverance from curse and damnation; bringing by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honor; being justified freely; being made sons of God by adoption; being made like the image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ; walking religiously in good works; and at length attaining to everlasting felicity. Many of these ideas and images occur in the hymns. Those such as "bringing by Christ to everlasting salvation" and "at length attaining to everlasting felicity" are so common as to need no exemplifying. So is "walking religiously in good works." But it is worth noting how frequently some of the actual words of the Article occur in the hymns—vessel, for example, from the hymn quoted above, "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," where the poet is "Meanest vessel of thy grace," or from the hymn "For the Society, Meeting" which begins "All praise to our redeeming Lord":

The grace through every vessel flows
 In purest streams of love.

According to the *English Poetry Database*, the word "vessel" occurs forty-three times in Wesley's poetry. The word "curse" appears no fewer than 114 times, for example in "O God of all grace":

He came from above
 Our curse to remove . . .

¹²Clarke, *Memoirs of the Wesley Family*, 271–2.

¹³Horton Davies, "Charles Wesley and the Calvinist Tradition," in *Charles Wesley, Poet and Theologian*, ed. Kimbrough, 186–204 (188).

While the suggestion that we are “made like the image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ” is the basis of one of the great lines from the Easter hymn, “Christ the Lord is risen today”:

Made like him, like him we rise,
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies . . .

And the image of being made sons of God by adoption is the climax of the hymn “Arise, my soul, arise”:

With confidence I now draw nigh,
And “Father, Abba, Father” cry.

There is no need to argue that the Thirty-Nine Articles were necessarily or exclusively the sources for some of Charles Wesley’s images or phrases. The last example could well have come from the Prayer Book in the Collect for Christmas Day (“being made thy children by adoption and grace”) or the Epistle (from Galatians 4) for The Sunday after Christmas Day. As I have suggested elsewhere,¹⁴ the matter of his borrowings and of the influences upon him is infinitely complex. His reading was copious and intelligent: it included poetry, theology, books of devotion, and above all the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer. But it is also clear that, as a young man who took his priesting seriously, Charles Wesley studied the Thirty-Nine Articles with some care before subscribing to them, and used them in his preaching. There, as we have seen, he condemned those who subscribed while retaining their own interpretation of them.

I have one final suggestion, which is pure speculation. In 1784, when John took those steps which would lead to the separation of the Methodist Societies from the Church of England, Charles, who had not known about them beforehand, immediately dissociated himself from them. He remained a priest of the Church of England, and was buried in the churchyard of his parish church, St Marylebone, rather than in the tomb prepared for him and John at the City Road chapel.¹⁵ As he said in one of his best known and most trenchant comparisons: “All the difference between my brother and me was that my brother’s first object was the Methodists and then the Church; mine was first the Church and then the Methodists.”¹⁶

There were doubtless many reasons why Charles took the stand that he did. But it is probable that one of them was a recollection of having seriously subscribed to the Thirty-Nine Articles. He regarded himself as bound by that sub-

¹⁴See J. Richard Watson, “Hymns on the Lord’s Supper, 1745, and Some Literary and Liturgical Sources,” *Proceedings of The Charles Wesley Society*, Volume 2 (1995), 17–33. See also the chapter, “Charles Wesley and His Art,” in J. R. Watson, *The English Hymn* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

¹⁵Leaver, “Charles Wesley and Anglicanism,” 163–4.

¹⁶*The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, ed. John Telford (London: Epworth Press, 1931), 8:267.

scription, even as Susanna, nearly a hundred years earlier, had regarded herself as bound by her loyalty to King James. Charles, it is evident, subscribed with dedication, seeing the Thirty-Nine Articles as fundamental statements of the belief in which he was ordained. It is easy to believe that they were one of the many cords of love which bound him to the church in which he had lived all his days.