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*Charles Wesley and the Language of Evangelical Experience:
The Poetical Hermeneutic Revisited*

Charles Wesley is well remembered as the “poet laureate” of Methodism, whose rousing hymns continue to adorn Christian worship. This article suggests that he was also a significant theologian; a theologian of the experimental variety, who used religious experience as a means for translating theological doctrine into the realm of Christian life. Religious experience played an important role in Wesley’s poetical approach to the Bible, and allowed him to unite human hearts and minds in biblical affirmations. In this sense, Charles’s hymns were aptly described (by John Wesley) as “practical divinity.” A close examination of Charles Wesley’s vocabulary of religious experience (through words like “feel,” “prove,” “to know,” and “taste”) indicates that his own creative synthesis of reason and experience produced a kind of “practical divinity” that still has potency for modern Christians.

Based on this assessment it is concluded that Charles Wesley was a creative theologian, who blended evangelical theology with religious experience to form his own brand of religious empiricism. Formed in the language of religious praise, Charles’s hymns are first-order theology. They are not merely words said *about* God, they are in fact, words said (or sung) *to* God. As such, Charles Wesley’s hymns actually play a role in inducing the experiences they describe.

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Charles Wesley (1707-1788) is well remembered among us as a composer of religious verse. He was the “poet laureate” of Methodism, whose rousing hymns continue to adorn Christian worship today. In recent decades, there has been some debate about Charles Wesley’s standing as a Methodist theologian. Generally, Charles was been overlooked as the co-founder of Methodism and as a formulator of Methodist theology. J. Earnest Rattenbury, who gave Charles’s theology its first sustained and original treatment, admitted that “ in the conventional use of the term, he was not a formal theologian. He cannot be classed as of the same caliber as Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, Calvin, or Schleiermacher.”¹ Rattenbury rightly argued that to diminish Charles Wesley’s role as a theologian on this basis, however, is to take the term “theologian” too narrowly. He concluded that Charles Wesley was indeed a theologian who created, crafted, and communicated theological doctrines – in a creative and more original medium than “formal theologians” do. In this regard, he considered Charles to be “an experimental theologian.” Rattenbury concluded, “the experimental theologian is not to be classed with Aquinas, Calvin, or [Wesley’s contemporary Joseph] Butler, but on the experimental side, with Paul, Augustine, and Luther . . .”² In a more recent article, Thomas Langford concluded that Charles Wesley was a communicator of Methodist doctrine but was not a “creative theologian.”³ Teresa Berger, in her *Theology in Hymns?* opined the opposite point of view, and demonstrated that Charles’s hymns are theological statements in the form of first order, doxological language. In Berger’s view, Charles Wesley’s theology and his role as a theologian are best viewed from the standpoint of theology as doxology.⁴ This means, in part, that theological affirmations (made in acts of praise) *to* God, are every bit as effective and theologically significant as are those more studied statements *about* God. In fact, as we shall see, this is a particularly apt approach for understanding Wesleyan theology.

Charles Wesley’s published journal gives some hints as to how he wrote hymns. One commentator has wryly called him an “evangelical centaur,” half man and half horse, who probably composed many of his hymns while traveling from one preaching post to another. For example, Charles wrote, “I crept on, singing or making hymns, till I got unawares to

Canterbury.”⁵ Making hymns had become so much a part of Charles’s daily ministry, that he was able to gauge the severity of an injury by its ability to interrupt that process. “Near Ripley,” he wrote, “my horse threw and fell upon me. My [traveling] companion thought I had broken my neck; but my leg was only bruised, my hand sprained, and my head stunned; *which spoiled my making of hymns*, or thinking at all, till the next day, when the Lord brought us to New Castle.”⁶ Charles was so “stunned” that he could not write a hymn for a whole day! Missing a day’s composition must not have happened very often for a man who wrote the equivalent of a hymn a day for most of his adult life.

Religious experience was an important part of the process that Charles Wesley used in his sermons and songs; it is particularly evident in the way he developed his poetical hermeneutic.⁷ The theological language of poetry is not the same as language of philosophical syllogism or theological diatribe, it is the language of experience, imagination, and adoration, but it is theological language none the less. Since Charles Wesley’s hymns unite the heart and mind, in this experiential affirmation, it is appropriate to say that Wesleyans sing, as well as say their creed. Indeed, there is a sense in which Wesleyan hymnody reaches to a dimension of the person that more formal theology does not address, or at least does not address so directly. Uniting the heart and the imagination, Wesley’s hymns cause the singer to participate in and to experience the gospel’s truths in a way that sterile theological definitions do not. Indeed, Charles Wesley wrote his hymns, as T.S. Gregory pointed out, “not only to express but to induce the experience they reveal.”⁸ In sermon and in song, Charles Wesley intended to communicate biblical teaching in a way that causes us to replicate the Bible’s Christian experiences. This “experimental” or experiential religion played an important role in the function of Charles Wesley’s theology. It was, more directly, an important dimension in what John Wesley termed the “experimental and practical divinity” which he saw embodied in the 1780 *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of The People Called Methodists*:

It is large enough to contain all the important truths of our most holy religion, whether speculative or practical; yea, to illustrate them all, and to prove them both by Scripture and reason. And this is done in a regular order. The hymns are not carelessly jumbled together, but carefully ranged under proper heads, according to the experience of real Christians, so that this book is in effect a little body of experimental and practical divinity.⁹

That religious reformers would dare to encapsulate their reform in something as mundane as a hymn book is one surprise; that they would be willing to call a collection of hymns a “body of experimental and practical divinity” is quite another. This tells us something explicit about Wesleyan

theology; it is “practical divinity.” Their emphasis upon the experiential dimension of human life demanded that Wesleyan theology was formed in the crucible of Christian living. It was formed and tested by lived human experiences.

One of these experiences was enshrined in the Wesleys’ doctrine of assurance, and the question of how a person could know whether or not he/she belonged to God. John Wesley addressed this matter in his two Standard Sermons (Nos. 9 and 10) on “The Witness of the Spirit.”¹⁰ Charles Wesley also addressed this question all across his literary corpus. In one of Charles’s hymns, which was published under the heading “Describing Inward Religion,” in the 1780 *Collection of Hymns for the Use of The People Called Methodists*, he asked: “How can a sinner know/ His sins on earth forgiven?”¹¹ The answer was not long in coming; Charles’s next verse invited the singer through the use of the pronoun “we” to join him in the experience of redemption, by knowing Christ “for us hath died” by feeling “his blood applied”:

We who in Christ believe
That he for us hath died
We all his unknown peace receive,
And feel his blood applied;
Exults our rising soul,
Disburdened of her load,
And swells unutterably full
Of glory and of God.¹²

The Wesleys lived in an age that has been aptly characterized as being made up of “Mystics, Rationalists, and Moralists.”¹³ In their own way, the Wesleys owed a debt to each of these formative forces, though actually belonged to none of them. Recent research, like that of historian Frederick Dreyer, has drawn attention to the parallels that emerge when John Wesley’s theological method is compared with the empirical emphases that emerged from the work of John Locke – who was one of Wesley’s contemporaries. Experience proved doctrine in a tacit way, but it did not create it. For the Wesleys, Christian doctrine was ordered and evaluated by the interactive reason of the Lockian age. An extensive study by J. Clifford Hindley locates John Wesley’s epistemology in the “general temper of the age in which Wesley lived;” Hindley characterized this “temper” as including British empiricism which had been “initiated by Locke and mediated to [John] Wesley through the writings of Peter Browne.”¹⁴

While they probably could be termed “enthusiasts,” by Locke’s definition of the term,¹⁵ they were reasonable enthusiasts whose understanding of the value of religious experience was moderated by the common sense of British empiricism. But the Wesleys were not “enthusiasts” in the popular

sense of the term; hence, John Wesley decried “enthusiasm” as “a species of madness.”¹⁶ Here, John’s famous statement, in his letter to Dr. Rutherford, dated March 28, 1768, stands as an example of many similar instances: “It is a fundamental principle with us,” he wrote, “that to renounce reason is to renounce religion, that religion and reason go hand and hand, and that all irrational religion is false religion.”¹⁷ Statements like this one caused Kenneth MacLean to exclaim, with some surprise, that John Wesley followed John Locke rather than contemporary evangelicals, like Isaac Watts, in asserting that “nothing contradictory to reason should be accepted as a matter of faith.”¹⁸

As they described religious experience, the Wesleys participated in the contemporary enlightenment epistemology. Frederick Dreyer made this point very soundly, in reference to John Wesley, but what he wrote of John could as easily have been written of Charles: “the question to be asked concerns not Wesley’s theology but his epistemology. We are dealing here with a man of the eighteenth century and not the sixteenth. His intellectual outlook is formed not by the Reformation but by the Enlightenment.”¹⁹ Looking at John Wesley’s religious epistemology, as it was demonstrated in his many apologetic writings, Dreyer concluded:

According to Wesley the Christian ‘is not to think well of his own state till he experiences something within himself which he has not yet experienced. That *something* is a living faith.’ Here we see the Wesley who is often mistaken for an enthusiast or ranter. Yet his argument reflects an epistemological concern that no enthusiast or ranter ever felt.”²⁰

Richard Brantley, in his *Locke, Wesley, and the Method of English Romanticism*, also examined the intellectual connections between those eighteenth century giants.²¹ Brantley pointed to that famous passage from John Wesley’s “The Scripture Way of Salvation,” in which Wesley followed Heb. 11:1, in describing the faith by which a person is saved, as one of the most representative examples of John Wesley’s synthesis of evangelicalism and empiricism.²² In that instance Wesley defined saving faith as: “an ‘evidence,’ a divine ‘evidence and conviction’ (the word [*Elenchos*] means both), ‘of things not seen’ not visible, not perceivable either by sight or by any other of the external senses. It implies both a supernatural *evidence* of God and of the things of God, a kind of supernatural *light* exhibited to the soul, and a supernatural *sight* or perception thereof.”²³ In this same way, Hindley reminds us, Wesley’s use of the term “assurance” “probably owes something to the philosophers as well as to the Moravians.”²⁴ This commitment to personal experience as a kind of “evidence” or means for verification is also found in Charles Wesley’s many works. In fact, personal experience, which was so important to the connection Hindley, Dreyer

and Brantley drew between John Wesley and John Locke, was even more crucial to a theologian who was also a writer of doxological hymns. In this sense, as we shall see below, Charles Wesley, was – as much as his elder brother John – a “Reasonable Enthusiast.”²⁵

Religious experience emerged as an important theme in Charles’s journal because it was a lock pin of the Wesleyan doctrine of assurance. In the early months of the Wesleyan revival (August 1738) the brothers John and Charles Wesley were summoned to an interview by the Bishop of London. The topic of that conversation revolved around the doctrine of assurance. Charles’s journal records their audience with the Bishop, on Oct. 21, 1738, in this fashion:

I waited with my brother on the Bishop of London, to answer the complaints he had heard against us, that we preached an absolute assurance of salvation. Some of his words were ‘If by ‘assurance’ you mean an inward persuasion, whereby a man is conscious in himself, after examining his life by the law of God, and weighing his own sincerity, that he is in a state of salvation, and acceptable to God; I don’t see how any good Christian can be without such an assurance.’ ‘This,’ we answered ‘is what we contend for: but we have been charged as Antinomians, for preaching justification by faith only.’²⁶

Charles Wesley’s recollection of the conversation with the Bishop of London made the matter of preaching justification by faith and the assurance of salvation the main points of dispute brought against the Wesleys. Upon further examination, however, it seemed that the Bishop and the Wesley brothers were in full agreement about these doctrinal matters.

The doctrine of assurance emerged as a persistent theme in Charles Wesley’s hymns, and (as we shall see below) it was expressed in a variety of ways. Generally, however, “assurance” meant that the singer could testify “I find the witness in my heart,/ That I am born of God.”²⁷ Assurance was likewise an important and persistent theme in his journal: “Eleanor Kitchnor, weak in faith before, received the full assurance last night.”²⁸ Assurance also resulted in a sense of relief or spiritual comfort; for this reason, then, “comfort” also emerged as an important experiential nexus in Charles Wesley’s theology.²⁹ In the sections that follow below the most important terms and connections which Wesley used to communicate and to induce assurance and Christian comfort will be examined.

1. “Feel” or “Felt”

A leading experiential word appearing in Charles Wesley’s writings is “feel” or “felt.” In his later hymns alone (those written after 1749) these terms were employed more than two hundred times. Generally, they were associated with “the blood” of Christ.³⁰ “Blood,” representing the

redemptive death of Jesus Christ, is “felt” in the forgiveness of one’s sins.³¹ The rhyme which Charles Wesley developed between “applied” and “justified” made that a frequent pairing and prominent theological connection: “And bid them feel Thy blood applied/ And add them to the justified.”³² It was frequently used to express justification by faith, through grace, as in Charles’s poetical “Elegy on the Death of Robert Jones, Esq.” “Thy mercies reach’d and saved my happy friend,/He felt the atoning blood by faith applied,/And freely was the sinner justified,/Saved by a miracle of grace Divine”³³ Teresa Berger rightly termed Charles’s phrase “blood applied” “a formula for salvation effected.”³⁴ The experience of feeling “the blood applied” was one which cleansed, and broke the human heart, and consequently healed and made a person whole:

5. Now apply the blood that cleanses
Every stain, once again
Blot out my offenses.
6. Bleeding love – I long to feel it!
Let the smart break my heart,
Break my heart and heal it.³⁵

Abraham Staples was one of the many humble people whom Charles Wesley’s journal described as having received the experience of forgiveness and renewal:

‘I felt,’ said he, ‘that my sins were forgiven, by a peace and warmth within me, which have continued ever since.’ ‘Then you know,’ said I [Charles Wesley], ‘that the Spirit of God is a Spirit of burning?’ ‘Yes,’ he answered, ‘and a spirit of shaking too; for he turns me upside down. I am full of joy and life, and could be always a praying: should be glad to die at this moment. What knowledge I have, I have been given me of God: for I am no scholar; I can neither write nor read.’³⁶

In Charles’s poetical commentary on Psalm 51:10, “make me a clean heart, O God” (Prayer Book version), feeling “Christ’s blood” is a redemption reference but it is also relationship language, it implies a cleansing transformation. The heart that “feels Thy blood” is also “an heart from sin set free!” It is “an heart resign’d, submissive, meek Where Jesus reigns alone:”

1. O For an heart to praise my God.
An heart from sin set free!
An heart that always feels Thy blood,
So freely spilt for me!
2. An heart resign’d, submissive, meek,
My dear Redeemer’s throne,
Where only Christ is heart to speak,

Where Jesus reigns alone.³⁷

On some occasions feeling Christ's blood applied became a kind of experiential evidence "That Jesus died for me." Commenting on the words of doubting Thomas, "Except I shall see in His hands the print, & etc.," Charles Wesley wrote:

No, I never will believe
 Unless my Lord I see,
 Proofs infallible receive
 That Jesus died for me;
 Meet Him risen from the dead,
 Thrust my hand into His side,
 Mark the prints the nails have made,
 And feel His blood applied.³⁸

In Charles Wesley's use of these "feeling" words one meets one of the epistemological bases of his theology. He, like his brother John, affirmed scripture, tradition, and reason, but perhaps even more than his brother, Charles' writings are also full of religious experience. They reveal the need to experience personally what we have learned from the joy, peace, and sense of inward renewal that accompanies forgiveness. And in a very real way, this experiential pole of Charles Wesley's thought was his way of breaking through religious uncertainty and doubt. He not only taught theological truths, his was a "visceral truth" that was both felt and known.³⁹ The following verse is typical of many which evidence the connection between redemption, feeling, and testimony:

I now in Christ redemption have,
 I feel it through the sprinkled blood,
 And testify His power to save,
 And claim Him for my Lord, my God.⁴⁰

2. "To Prove"

One of Charles Wesley's most prominent experience words was "prove." G.H. Findlay argued that it, along with "feel" was "of great importance" to an appropriate understanding of Wesley's hymns and theology, since "These two little verbs . . . point straight to the heart alike of [both] message and messenger."⁴¹ While the meaning intended by Charles Wesley's use of the word "feel" was quite clear, the same cannot be said of his application of "prove."

From the Latin word *probare*, the classical and foundational meaning of "prove" is "to test (a thing) as to its goodness, to try, approve; to make good, to prove, [or] demonstrate."⁴² A second prominent meaning, was to "make good, to establish" or "to establish (a thing) as true, to make certain; to demonstrate the truth of evidence or [an] argument."⁴³ "Prove" appeared more than a dozen times in Charles Wesley's early sermons,

generally in the sense of “to demonstrate” as in his sermon on Luke 16:16.⁴⁴ It was an extremely common term in Wesley’s hymns; occurring more than 105 times in the 525 hymns included in the 1780 *Collection of Hymns*.⁴⁵ George Findlay points to the frequency of occurrence as a sign of the important role these terms played in Charles’s theological constructs. “He used them,” Findlay wrote, “because they were vital to his message.”⁴⁶ The term also had such great currency in Charles’s hymns, in part, because it was almost always paired with “love” to form one of his favorite imperfect rhymes. This convenient pairing with “love” certainly increased the use of the word “prove” because “love” is an absolutely essential term for Wesleyan theology; indeed love can function as a systematic principle for organizing Wesleyan thought.⁴⁷ The love of God or the love of Jesus was the most prominent referent for “prove” in Charles Wesley’s hymns:

O Love divine, how sweet thou art!
 When shall I find my willing heart
 All take up by thee?
 I thirst, I faint, I die to prove
 The greatness of redeeming love,
 The love of Christ to me!⁴⁸

This “love” was described in various ways, frequently it was used as a synonym for “Perfect Love,” and on many occasions this connection was made explicit:

Ye whose loins are girt, stand forth!
 Whose lamps are bright,
 Worthy, in your Saviour’s worth,
 To walk with him in white;
 Jesus bids your hearts be clean;
 Bids you all his promises prove
 Jesus comes to cast out sin,
 And perfect you in love.⁴⁹

The invitation to receive Christ could be sounded in the prove-love nexus.⁵⁰ To “prove” God’s “name and nature” meant receiving Christ, having the image of God restored within, and being perfected in love:

Clothe me with thy holiness
 Thy meek humility,
 Put on me my glorious dress,
 Endue me soul with thee;
 Let thine image be restored
 Thy name and nature prove,
 With thy fullness fill me, Lord,
 And perfect me in love.⁵¹

Other obvious theological corollaries such as receiving holiness,⁵² having one’s heart cleansed,⁵³ having redemption through the removal of sin and

guilt,⁵⁴ receiving God's grace,⁵⁵ receiving forgiveness,⁵⁶ and God's mercy⁵⁷ were all described as events which one might or should "prove." Even the witness of the Holy Spirit was described as something which the singer of Wesleyan hymns hoped to "prove:"

We by his Spirit prove,
And know the things of God,
The things which freely of his love
He hath on us bestowed;
His Spirit to us he gave,
And dwells in us, we know,
The witness in ourselves we have,
And all its fruits we show.⁵⁸

In a related, but not identical way, Charles Wesley's hymns have us pray to have God "prove" or "test" our hearts,⁵⁹ This was probably not the meaning Wesley had in mind, however, when he hoped to be able to "prove" God's actions, promises, or will:

The task thy wisdom has assigned
O let me cheerfully fulfill,
In all my works thy presence find,
And prove thy acceptable will.⁶⁰

Verses like #315, in *The Collection of Hymns* (above), were shaped by the phraseology of Romans 12:2 in the *Authorized Version* (KJV) that predominated in Charles Wesley's day.⁶¹ The *dokimazein* that is translated "prove" in this passage, can be translated "put to the test," "to examine," and hence also "to be convinced of." A second meaning, and the one that is probably implied in Rom. 12:2, is to refer to the result of examination, and hence it can describe "to prove by testing" (like a precious metal), or to "accept as proved or to approve."⁶²

Charles Wesley's knowledge of classical languages and the Greek New Testament may have shaped his use of the word "prove," and given it a distinctive currency in his own day. This is borne out by one of the secondary meanings that the prestigious *Oxford English Dictionary* gives for "prove:" "to find out, to learn, or know by experience, to have experience of, to experience, to 'go through,' suffer . . ."⁶³ When the *O.E.D.* looked for an eighteenth century example of this distinctive use of "prove" it pointed to "1738, J. Wesley, Ps. II, xiii. 'they only shall his mercy prove.'"⁶⁴ This amounts to saying that the Wesleys used "prove" to mean "to experience," or "to go through," or "to feel" something. This was not a standard meaning of the term; it is one that is described as "archaic" in our day,⁶⁵ but it was a distinctive usage in Wesley's day. Charles's application of the word "prove" was further complicated by the fact that he used the two standard meanings of the term, e.g., "to try, to test," and "to make

certain, to demonstrate the truth of,” as well as the third — his most distinctive meaning — “to experience” or “know by experience.” He used these three meanings along side each other, often without any clear indication of which meaning he intended.

In some instances Charles clearly intended “prove” to be understood as “test” or “try.” This was obviously his intention for example, when he described the “grievous” judgment day which will come, like that of Sodom and Gomorrah, upon those who “cast our faith away:”

Less grievous will the judgment day
To Sodom and Gomorrah prove
Than us, who cast our faith away,
And trample on thy richer love.⁶⁶

This was the same basic meaning we met in the Rom. 12:2 passage, where it was connected with proving God’s will; it was an idea that continued in Charles Wesley’s use.⁶⁷ But even when Wesley was working from the phraseology of the biblical text, he was willing to add a broader meaning to it. In the one example he not only sought “to prove and do thy perfect will,” but to “feel, to hear, and keep they every word joyful from my own works to cease, Glad to fulfill all righteousness.”⁶⁸ In a similar way, when Wesley’s singer declared, “I wait thy faithfulness to prove” he/she intended to both “try” (or “test”) *and* “experience” God’s love.⁶⁹ Another stanza, also built on the phraseology borrowed from Rom. 12:2, Charles blended “prove” as “test” or “try,” with “prove” as “demonstrate” and “feel,” as the singer waited to “prove” God’s perfect will and to be “sanctified” by sinless love:

I wait thy will to do,
As angels do in heaven;
In Christ a creature new,
Eternally forgiven;
I wait thy perfect will to prove,
All sanctified by sinless love.⁷⁰

The second basic dictionary meaning of “prove” was “to demonstrate” and in that sense to “to show” or verify. Charles Wesley’s hymns offer ample examples of this usage as well:

Ready thou art the blood to apply,
And prove the record true;
And all thy wounds to sinner’s cry,
‘I suffered this for you.’⁷¹

The faithful singer of Wesley’s hymns prayed “Give me thy converting grace/ That I may obedient prove,/ Serve my Maker all my days,/ And my Redeemer love.”⁷² In this way, God’s love was “proved” or demonstrated in the Christian by the salvation which grace worked there:

O God, if thou art love indeed,
 Let it once more be proved in me,
 That I thy mercy's praise may spread,
 For every child of Adam free;
 O let me now the gift embrace!
 O let me now be saved by grace!⁷³

The work of The Holy Spirit, demonstrated the power of God in sanctification: "The truth of my religion prove/ by perfect purity and love."⁷⁴ In this, as in the previous meaning, Charles Wesley blended the standard meaning ("to demonstrate") with his more distinctive one "to experience" or "to feel" as he wrote:

O that with all thy saints I might
 By sweet experience prove,
 What is the length, breadth, and height,
 And depth of perfect love.⁷⁵

While the basic connotation of this application of "prove" was "test," "to demonstrate" or "to exhibit," Charles Wesley used it to point to the evidential results that stemmed from the religious experience that was "felt." It was in this sense that Charles wrote: "Give all thy saints to find Deity,/ His nature, life, and mind to prove/ In perfect holiness and love . . ."⁷⁶ The third, and most distinctive (but also the most characteristic) application that Charles Wesley gave the word "prove" was "to experience," "to feel." This usage was the most predominant, and it blends well with the empirical epistemological context in which Wesley found himself. It allowed him to say, poetically, that experience verifies Christian faith. Sometimes Charles set "prove" and "feel" in poetical parallelism, in which case there can be no doubt how he intended "to prove" to be interpreted:

How happy the people that dwell
 Secure in the city above!
 No pain in the inhabitants feel
 No sickness or sorrow shall prove!
 Physician of souls unto me
 Forgiveness and holiness give,
 And then from the body set free
 And then to the city receive⁷⁷

In other instances, "prove" seems to imply "feel" or "experience" but without any specific literary clues from Wesley:

Thy power I pant to prove
 Rooted and fixed in love;
 Strengthened by thy Spirit's might,
 Wise to fathom things divine,
 What the length, and breadth, and height,

What the depth of love like thine.⁷⁸

Charles Wesley used “prove” in conjunction with other important experience words. In some instances it appeared in poetical parallelism with “to know:”

As soon as in him we believe,
 By faith of his Spirit we take;
 And freely forgiven, receive
 The mercy for Jesus’ sake;
 We gain a pure drop of his love,
 The life of eternity *know*,
 Angelical happiness *prove*,
 And witness of heaven below.⁷⁹

His usage of “to know” will be treated momentarily, suffice it to say it is an important description of a full (“heart-head”) experience, which further clarifies Wesley’s use of “to prove.” Charles also brought “prove” into frequent contact with the “to taste” – which is another significant, biblically based experience word. In one example, it is by tasting God’s grace, than a person can “prove” (both “test” and “experience”) “sovereign everlasting love;”⁸⁰ in a second, instance to “taste” the liberty that the Son of God offers, through saving grace, allows one to “prove” the glory of “thy perfect love.”⁸¹ In a last example, Wesley wove “feel,” “know,” “taste” and “prove” into a veritable mosaic of evangelical experience:

Saviour on me the want bestow
 Which all that *feel* shall surely *know*
 Their sins on earth forgiven;
 Give me to *prove* the kingdom mine,
 And *taste*, in holiness divine
 The happiness of heaven.⁸²

3. To “Know”

Another important word indicating religious experience in Charles Wesley’s theology of redemption was “know.” It occurred nearly three hundred times in his later hymns and more than eighty-one times in his early sermons. His application of the term has its roots in the Hebrew scriptures, which communicate a full-orbed sense of knowing (*Yada*). “Knowing,” in this sense, is not mere mental cognition. It is a wholistic encounter, and the reality of living in relationship with that which is known.⁸³ Hence, the *Authorized Version* (KJV) of the Bible—which predominated in Wesley’s day—occasionally translated words which meant “know” in the original, biblical languages with “feel.”⁸⁴ It was this same wholistic sense of “knowing” that was at work when Adam “knew” his wife and she conceived (Gn. 4:11), when Israel was charged to “know” that YHWH is the Lord (Ex. 8:22), and when biblical characters “knew”

bitterness (2 Sam. 1:5) or wickedness (1Ki. 2:44). Psalm 46:10, “Be still and know that I am God,” was a formative verse for Charles Wesley’s poetical use of the term. Typically, it associated “know” with feeling, and Christian salvation:

‘Be still – and know that I am God!’
Tis all I live to know!
To feel the virtue of thy blood,
And spread its praise below.⁸⁵

A second biblical passage which affected Charles Wesley’s poetical use of “know” was 1 Corinthians 2:2, “For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” Once again, this was a relational, and participatory kind of knowledge that literally joined one to Christ, and replicated His mind within:

I shall nothing know beside
Jesus and him crucified;
I shall all to him be joined –
Jesu’s is a loving mind.⁸⁶

Often Charles Wesley joined “know” and “feel” to form a combination that clearly communicated a wholistic, “heart-mind” experience.⁸⁷ Here, in an important, representative verse, Charles described the relationship between “reason,” “know” and “feel:”

Reason’s glimmering light is vain,
Till thy Spirit I receive;
He thy language must explain,
He must give me to believe;
When the precious gift is mine,
Then I know the mystery,
Feel the power of love Divine
‘Stablishing its throne in me.⁸⁸

The “know-feel” nexus was a prominent one in Charles Wesley’s hymns, and it was used all across the hymnological corpus. In these instances “to know” took on connotations of “to feel” or “to experience;” it did not mean that feeling replaced knowledge, but rather it was demonstrated and invigorated by it. This passage, from a hymn about a person “Convinced of Backsliding,” describes how he/she knows and feels Christ’s forgiveness:

There for me the Saviour stands,
Shows his wounds, and spreads his hands!
God is love! I know, I feel.
Jesus weeps, and loves me still.⁸⁹

In a similar way, Wesley’s singer, “the chief” of sinners, knows and feels his/her sins forgiven because of an infusion of heavenly love:

With me, your chief, ye then shall know
 Shall feel your sins forgiven;
 Anticipate your heaven below,
 And own that love is heaven.⁹⁰

Because of the know-feel nexus, Wesley's located this kind of knowledge or understanding in the human heart.⁹¹ It was implanted there by an experience with the "all quickening fire" of the Holy Spirit:

Come, Holy Ghost, all quickening fire,
 Come and my hallowed heart inspire,
 Sprinkled with the atoning blood;
 Now to my soul thy self reveal,
 Thy mighty work let me feel,
 And know that I am born of God.⁹²

What is known in these instances is not some kind of fact or detail of information, it is knowing Jesus,⁹³ forgiveness,⁹⁴ salvation,⁹⁵ the witness of the Spirit,⁹⁶ or sanctification.⁹⁷

Jacob, wrestling with the angel of the Lord, was depicted as struggling for this sort of knowledge: "Wrestling I will not let Thee go/ Till I thy nature know"⁹⁸ Linking God's "name and nature" turned Jacob's struggle (Gen. 32) into one for Perfect Love and not simply a bare knowledge of God.⁹⁹ For Charles Wesley, this kind of "knowledge" of God's transforming love was neither sheer intellectualism, nor mere emotionalism; it was, rather, a encounter with God's grace via the work of the Holy Spirit — a work so transforming and a presence so palpable that one could not doubt one's relationship with God. Hence to "know" was sometimes joined to "prove" to create the connotation of knowing, "testing" and verifying "the things of God":

We by his Spirit prove
 And know the things of God;
 The things which freely of his love
 He hath on us bestowed;
 His Spirit to us he gave,
 And dwells in us we know;
 The witness in ourselves we have
 And all his fruits we show.¹⁰⁰

4. "Taste"

Charles Wesley had a treasure house full of experience words at his disposal. "Taste" became a synonym for receiving or experiencing God's grace or forgiveness. Like so many, this application was also based in the language of *The Authorized Version* of the Bible. It stemmed, no doubt, from the saying in Psalm 34:8, "O Taste and see that the Lord is good!" Some of these applications, like the one in Charles's *Short Hymns on Select*

Passages of Scripture (1762), are directly shaped by the language of the Psalm:

Taste Him in Christ, and see
The'abundance of His grace,
Experience God so good to me,
So good to all our race!
Celestial sweetness prove
Through Jesus' grace forgiven,
And then enjoy in perfect love
The largest taste of heaven.¹⁰¹

The “taste and see” nexus (drawn directly from Psalm 34:8) fits well with Charles’s broad use of experiential language; in the hymn above, for example “taste and see” is used in poetical parallel with “experience God,” indicating that the author (once again) combined verification (“see”) with experience (“taste”).¹⁰² Other scriptural references, such as Song of Solomon 2:3, “His fruit was sweet to my taste,” seemed to give “taste” a broader connotation simply as “experience:”

Happy beneath the Vine I sit,
And will not from His shade remove,
His fruit unto my taste is sweet,
The' experience of His dying love;
But sweeter far what I taste
Becomes in heaven my endless feast¹⁰³

The “taste” metaphor received extensive application in Charles Wesley hymns, and it meant (generally) “to experience.”¹⁰⁴ If one asks what is to be “tasted” or experienced, the list becomes long and varied: God’s goodness,¹⁰⁵ God’s love,¹⁰⁶ God’s grace,¹⁰⁷ salvation,¹⁰⁸ holiness,¹⁰⁹ the “heavenly treasure” (or feast),¹¹⁰ the cup of suffering,¹¹¹ or the “gospel liberty” which is perfect love.¹¹²

Even more characteristic of Wesley’s poetic, theological method was the way in which he wove several biblical metaphors together to create a theological tapestry of his own making. Generally, “taste” took on the same combination of verification and experience that we met in Charles’s other experience words (most notably when used with “prove”).¹¹³ The stanza below, in which “taste” is joined to “feel,” “know,” and “prove,” epitomized the way in which Wesley’s experience words blended the assurance of one’s salvation (the forgiveness of sins) with the experience of holiness – as a kind of evidence:

Jesus, on me the want bestow,
Which all who *feel* shall surely *know*
Their sins on earth forgiven;
Give me to *prove* the kingdom mine,
And *taste* in holiness Divine

The happiness of heaven.¹¹⁴

Summary/Conclusion

Experience, most especially the experience of salvation and its accompanying sense of inner assurance was a vital theme in Charles Wesley's theology. And while experience was never the controlling element in his theology, it was also clear that Charles believed that valid theology produced vital religious experience. The gospel he proclaimed brought with it joy, love and peace. Each of these elements was experienced by the believer through the work of the Holy Spirit. Experience ratified Charles Wesley's theology, but it never created theology – in a primary sort of way. Religious experience, for both Wesleys, was something that verified Christian doctrine in the inner person. Hence, it was typical of John Wesley, upon having heard one's doctrine and the rationale for it, to also ask "Has anyone experienced it?"¹¹⁵ Experience was blended with their evangelical theology to form the Wesleys's own brand of religious empiricism. Thus, the Wesleys should be seen as catholic men, who were bent upon conserving the best of the teachings of the Scripture, as mediated through the Christian church and tradition, and yet they were also Enlightenment men forming their views against a rational, empiricist background. Indeed, it was their own brand religious empiricism that moved the Wesleys beyond religion in theory or in the mind, to "practical divinity" which was embodied in practical Christian experience.

Charles Wesley hymns, viewed as doxological theological expressions, were prime examples of the distinctive Wesleyan theology of experience. In his hymns (and other works) Charles Wesley used religious experience as first order theological language; it was used to address God, so that his theology was not merely something said *about* God, but more importantly it was something said *to* God. As Teresa Berger wrote: "In the hymns that address this complex of questions, the terms used most often to describe the personal experience of salvation include the verse 'to feel,' 'to know' and 'to prove.' They frequently occurs in some combination together linking emotional experience to knowledge ('to feel-to know') or emotional experience to assurance ('to feel-to prove') or knowledge to assurance ('to know-to prove')."¹¹⁶ In studying roots of Wesley's application of words like "know," "prove," and "taste," we have further, noted that Charles Wesley built his vocabulary of Christian experience out of biblical words and phrases. Yet he was willing to extend the meaning of those biblical words and phrases to serve the task of his own theology. Finally, Charles Wesley's role as theologian did not end with developing hymns that described vital Christian experience; as a theologian he was also a hymnological evangelist who wrote hymns that were designed to induce

the very experience he was describing.

Notes

1. J. Ernest Rattenbury, *The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns* (London: Epworth, 1941), p. 62.
2. Rattenbury, *Evangelical Doctrines*, p. 87
3. Thomas Langford, "Charles Wesley as Theologian," in *Charles Wesley: Poet and Theologian*, edited by S.T. Kimbrough, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), pp. 98-102.
4. Teresa Berger, *Theology in Hymns? A study of the relationship of doxology and theology according to the Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodist (1780)*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995). The book was translated from the original German by Timothy E. Kimbrough. The concept of viewing theology as an expression of Christian doxology was pioneered by Geoffrey Wainwright in *Doxology: the Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine and Life, A Systematic Theology* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).
5. Thomas Mason, ed. *The Journal of Charles Wesley, AM*, 2 Vol. (London: John Mason, 1849), II: 214.
6. *Ibid.*, I:313. Emphasis added.
7. See my article in an earlier edition of this journal. "The Transfiguration of Scripture: Charles Wesley's Poetic Hermeneutic," *Asbury Theological Journal* (Fall 1992), 17-41.
8. T.S. Gregory, "Charles Wesley's Hymns and Poems," *The London Quarterly and Holborn Review*, 182 (October, 1957), pp. 253-62.
9. Franz Hilberband, and Oliver A. Beckerlegge, with James Dale, *The Works of John Wesley* Vol. VII, *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of The People Called Methodists* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1983), pp. 73-74.
10. See Albert Outler, ed. *The Works of John Wesley, Vol. I: Sermons I* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), pp. 267-99.
11. Franz Hillerbrandt and Oliver A. Beckerlegge, eds. *The Works of John Wesley Vol. 7: A Collection of Hymns for the Use of The People Called Methodists*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), #93, p. 195. Here after M.H.B. , and etc.
12. M.H.B. , p. 196.
13. E. Gordon Rupp, *Religion in England 1688-1791* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), pp. 207-85.
14. J. Clifford Hindley, "The Philosophy of Enthusiasm," *London Quarterly and Holborn Review*, Vol. 182 (1957), pp. 99-109, pp. 199-201, for a thorough treatment of enlightenment context and John Wesley's participation in this philosophical milieu. The quote is from p. 209.
15. John Locke, in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), described "enthusiasm," in this way: "The question here is, how I know that God is the revealer of this to me; that this impression is made upon my mind by his Holy Spirit, and that therefore I ought to obey it? If I know not this, how great soever the assurance is that I am possessed with, it is groundless; whatever light I pretend to, it is but enthusiasm." *Essay*, IV, xix, 10, cited in Hindley, "Philosophy of Enthusiasm," p. 199.
16. Outler, *Sermons of JW*, II:50. John wrote: "Enthusiasm in general may then

be described in some such manner as this: a religious madness arising from some falsely imagined influence or inspiration of God; at least from imputing something to God which ought not to be imputed to him, or expecting something from God which ought not to be expected from him." *Ibid.*

17. John Telford, ed. *The Letters of John Wesley, A.M.* 8 Vol. (London: Epworth Press, 1931), V:364. The bicentennial edition of this section of John Wesley's letters is not yet completed.

18. Kenneth MacLean, *John Locke and English Literature of the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), p. 154, reports, with some surprise, that John Wesley followed John Locke, instead of his evangelical contemporary Isaac Watts, in asserting that "nothing contradictory to reason should be accepted as a matter of faith."

19. Fredrick Dreyer, "Faith and Experience in the Thought of John Wesley," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 68, No. 1 (Feb. 1983), p. 29.

20. *Ibid.*

21. Richard Brantley, *Locke, Wesley, and the Method of English Romanticism*, (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1984), Brantley, in my opinion, goes too far with the similarities he finds in the thought in Locke and Wesley, and leaves out other important influences that shaped Wesley's religious epistemology — such as Scripture, classical Christian tradition, and the Pietists — but his point about the importance and distinctive quality of Wesley's use of a kind of religious empiricism is worth noting and is well taken.

22. Brantley, *Locke, Wesley*, pp. 86-89.

23. Outler, *Sermons*: II:160-61, the full paragraph under Wesley's section II:1 is pertinent to this discussion.

24. Hindley, "Philosophy of Enthusiasm," p. 199.

25. Henry D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989).

26. Jackson, *Journal of CW*, I:133.

27. George Osborn, *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, 13 Vol. (London: Wesleyan Conference, 1872) IX, #215, p. 68.

28. Jackson, *Journal of CW*, I:184.

29. *Ibid.*, II:126; *Poetical Works*, IX:285; 393; XI:406.

30. Jackson, *Journal of CW*, I:215; Ms. Miscellaneous Hymns, 197, 250. Osborn, *Poetical Works*, II:77; III:112; IV:188, 191; XI: 365, 423; XII:109, 248; XIII: 216.

31. Jackson, *Journal CW*, I:189-81; Osborn, *Poetical Works*, IX:26.

32. Ms. Miscellaneous Hymns, p. 173, and unpublished hymn "For the Awakened." Cf. Osborn, *Poetical Works*, III:112.

33. Osborn, *Poetical Works*, III, p. 112, "Elegy on the Death of Robert Jones, Esq."

34. Berger, *Theology in Hymns?*, p. 120.

35. Osborn, *Poetical Works*, VII: 384, "Preparation for Death."

36. Jackson, *Journal CW*, I:180-81.

37. Osborn, *Poetical Works*, II, p. 77

38. *Ibid.*, XII, p. 109. Comment on John 20:25.

39. Mark Noll, "Romanticism and the Hymns of Charles Wesley," *Evangelical Quarterly*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (April-June, 1974), p. 200.

40. Osborn, *Poetical Works*, VI:303, a "Funeral Hymn" for Dr. Middleton.

41. G.H. Findlay, *Christ's Standard Bearer* (London: Epworth Press, 1956), p. 40.

42. J. A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner, editors, *The Oxford English Dictionary* (second edition), 20 Vol. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), XII, p. 707 Here after *O.E.D.*

43. *O.E.D.* XII:708.

44. Kenneth G. C. Newport, *The Sermons of Charles Wesley* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 293.

45. *M.H.B.* This corpus of hymns must be used carefully as a resource for studying Charles Wesley's theology because it includes hymns composed by both Wesley brothers, without authorial identification. For the purposes of this study, I have ruled out all hymns (chiefly the translations and adaptations) which were probably made by John Wesley, and used only those which came from sources that were most likely produced by Charles.

46. *Ibid.*

47. Cf. Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1972).

48. *M.H.B.*, #147, verse 1, 258. Cf. #33, v. 5, 121; #77, v. 2, 176; #141, v. 1, 258; #153, v. 1, 252; #154, v. 5, 273; #157, v. 1, 276; #177, v. 6, 301; #177, v. 9, 302; #182, v. 6, 309; #197, v. 3, 328; #203, v. 4, 335; #204, v. 5, 336; #240, v. 4, 382; #298, v. 2, 453; #319, v. 2, 475; #340, v. 7, 501; #341, v. 4, 503; #355, v. 3, 523; #367, v. 4, 537; #370, v. 4, 541; #377, v. 4, 550; #421, v. 3, 597; #425, v. 4, 602; #452, v. 2, 632; #458, v. 6, 640; #469, v. 2, 652; #490, v. 9, 677; #499, v. 1, 688; #499, v. 3, 688; #522, v.7, 717

49. *M.B.H.*, #53, verse 3, 146. Cf. #132, v. 11, 245; #344, v. 6, 507; #354, v. 5, 522; #57, v.2, 526; #359, v.4, 528; #364, v.1, 533; #379, v.1, 552; #380, v.5, 553; #403, v.3, 579; #430, v.4, 607; #434, v. 2, 611; #496, v. 3, 685.

50. *M.H.B.*, #38, 127 Cf. #19, verse 5, 103; #39, v. 1, 127; #121, v. 1, 231; #135, v. 1-2, 249; #148, v. 4, 266; #161, v. 4, 283; #264, v. 3, 407; #327, v. 1, 483-84; #473, vs. 102, 657

51. *M.H.B.*, #105, verse 7, 213. Cf. #136, v. 12, 252; #511, v. 2, 703.

52. *M.H.B.*, 105, v. 7, 213; #295, v.1, 449; #408, v.2, 584.

53. *M.H.B.*, #53, v. 3, 146; #89, v.6, 190; #135, v. 4, 249; #508, v. 2, 699;

54. *M.H.B.*, #28, v. 2, 115; #269, v. 3, 414; #273, v. 1, 421; #281, v.6, 432.

55. *M.H.B.*, #162, v. 1, 286; #207, v.2, 338; #220, v.2., 356; #234, v.1, 375; #243, v. 4, 385; #366, v.1, 535; #369, v.4, 539.

56. *M.H.B.*, #34, v.8, 123, #68, v.3, 167

57. *M.H.B.*, #182, v.6, 309; #183, v. 10, 311; #226, v.1, 364; #243, v. 4, 385.

58. *M.H.B.*, #93, verse 4, 197 Cf. #26, v. 5, 113; #85, v. 1, 185; #93, v. 4, 198.

59. *M.H.B.*, #330, verse 1, 486; #332, v. 4, 489; #347, v. 6, 511.

60. *M.H.B.*, #315, v. 2, 470. Cf. #326, v. 2, 483; #347, v. 7, 512; #369, v. 3, 539; #381, v. 1, 554; #396, v. 3, 572; #401, v. 2, 577; #417, v. 1, 591; #420, v. 3, 596;

#513, v.1, 705.

61. “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” (A.V).

62. William Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), p. 201.

63. *O.E.D.* XII, Meaning I.e, p. 708.

64. *Ibid.*

65. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th edition, (Springfield, MA.: Merriam Webster Co., 2002), 937; William Morris, editor, *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967), 1053.

66. *M.H.B.*, #442, v. 8, 622. Cf. #367, v. 4, 537; #369, v. 4, 539; #380, v. 5, 553; #504, v. 6, 694.

67. *M.H.B.*, #315, verse 2, 470; #381, v. 1, 554; #396, v.3, 572; #513, v. 1, 705.

68. *M.H.B.*, #417, v. 1, 591.

69. *M.H.B.*, #420, v. 3, 596.

70. *M.H.B.*, #291, v. 5, 355.

71. *M.H.B.*, #34, v. 8, 123. Cf. #177, v. 9, 302; #203, v. 4, 335; #326, v. 2, 483; #497, v. 1, 686, #502, v. 2, 691.

72. *M.H.B.*, #234, v. 1, 375.

73. *M.H.B.*, #164, v. 1, 286. Cf. #177, v. 6, 301; #234, v. 1, 375; #298, v.2, 453.

74. *M.H.B.*, #354, v. 5, 522. Cf. #408, v. 2, 584, #463, v. 5, 646.

75. *M.H.B.*, #359, v. 4, 528.

76. Osborn, *Poetical Works*, VI:45-46.

77. *M.H.B.*, #68, v. 3, 167. Cf. #344, v. 6, 507; #475, v.4, 660; #508, v. 2, 699.

78. *M.H.B.*, #26, v. 5, 113. Cf. #147, v.1. 258; #340, v. 7, 501.

79. *M.H.B.*, #79, v. 2, 176. Cf. #93, v. 4, 197

80. *M.H.B.*, #32, c. 5, 121.

81. *M.H.B.*, (1780), #379, v.1, 552.

82. *M.H.B.*, #295, v. 1, 449. Emphasis added.

83. Otto Piper, “Knowledge,” in George Buttrick, ed. *The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible* 5 Vol. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), III:42-48; E.C. Blackman, “Known,” in Alan Richardson, ed. *Theological Word Book of the Bible*, (New York: Macmillian Press, 1950), pp. 121-22;

84. Cf. Job 20:20; Prov. 22:35; Eccl. 8:5; Mk. 5:29 for example.

85. *M.H.B.*, #89, 190.

86. *M.H.B.*, #345, v. 10, 507 Cf. #494, v. 7, 683; #520, v. 3, 713.

87. Osborn, *Poetical Works*, I:235; V:24; VI: 374-75; VII: 195; IX: 112; X:472; XII:16, 31, 56-57

88. Osborn, *Poetical Works*, X:472.

89. *M.H.B.*, #162, v. 8, 285.

90. *M.H.B.*, #1, v. 9, 81. Cf. #97, v.2, 202; #114, v. 3, 224; #124, v. 7, 236; #172, v. 2, 295; #197, v. 2, 328; #295, v. 1, 449; #341, v.1, 502; #351, v. 1, 517;

- #393, v. 5, 568; #418, v. 4, 593; #451, v. 2, 631; #473, v. 5, 657; #517, v. 3, 709.
91. *M.H.B.*, #118, v. 2, 228; #172, v. 2, 295; #268, v. 1, 402; #354, v. 1, 521; #393, v. 5, 568; #473, v. 5, 657; #508, v. 4, 700.
92. *M.H.B.*, #41, v. 1, 502. Cf. #83, v. 3, 183.
93. *M.H.B.*, #19, v.3, 103; #124, v. 7, 238; #162, v.8, 285; #197, v. 2, 328; #295, v. 1, 449.
94. *M.H.B.*, #1, v. 9; #29, v. 2, 116; #172, v. 2, 295.
95. *M.H.B.*, #83, v.3, 183; #89, v.3, 190; #341, v. 1, 502; #451, v. 2, 631.
96. *M.H.B.*, #93, v. 4, 197. Cf. #21, v. 4, 106; #77, v. 2, 176., #354, v. 1, 521.
97. *M.H.B.*, #488, v. 5, 676; #508, v. 4, 700.
98. *Ibid.*, II:174, “Wrestling Jacob.”
99. Osborn, *Poetical Works*, II, 173-76, or *M.H.B.*, #136, 238-40.
100. *M.H.B.*, #93, v. 4, 197. Cf. *M.H.B.* v. 2, 176.
101. Osborn, *Poetical Works*, IX, 290-91; 363. Cf.
102. See *M.H.B.*, #2, v. 4; #6, v. 4, 126; #297, 452 for other examples of this “taste and see” connection.
103. Osborn, *Poetical Works*, IX, #1032, 363. The “sweet fruit” or “vine” of S.S. 2:3 is also employed in other hymns — much to the same effect. Cf. *M.H.B.*, #476, v. 2, #476.
104. *M.H.B.*, #2, v. 4, 82; #4, v. 7, 8, 85; #19, v. 5, 103; #33, v. 5, 121; #36, v. 4, 126; #104, v.8, 212; #133, v. 6, 247; #182, v. 2, 308; #188, v.1, 317; #197, v. 3, 328; #220, v. 1, 356; #295, v.1, 499; #297, v. 1, 452; #303, v. 2, 459; #328, v. 3, 484; #335, v. 8, 494; #355, v. 2, 523; #373, v. 5, 7, 544; #379, v. 1, 552; #392, v. 1, 567; #407, v. 1, 583; #476, v. 2, 660-61; #486, v. 1, 673; #494, v. 8, 683.
105. *M.H.B.*, #2, v. 4, 82; #4, v. 7, 85; #297, v. 1, 452; #104, v. 8, 212.
106. *M.H.B.*, #4, v. 8, 85; #19, v. 5, 103; #335, v. 8, 494; #355, v. 2, 523; #373, 544.
107. *M.H.B.*, #32, 121; #36, v. 4, 126; #182, v. 2, 308; #220, v. 1, 356; #303, v. 2, 459.
108. *M.H.B.*, #188, v. 1, 317
109. *M.H.B.*, #295, v. 1, 449; #295, v. 1, 499.
110. *M.H.B.*, #133, v. 6, 247; #476, v. 2, 660-61; #486, v. 1, 673.
111. *M.H.B.*, #28, v. 3, 484.
112. *M.H.B.*, #379, v.1, 567; #392, v. 1, 567; #407, v. 1, 583; #494, v. 8, 683.
113. *M.H.B.*, #4, v. 8, 85; #19, v. 5, 103; #32, v. 5, 121; #295, v. 1, 449.
114. *Ibid.*, X:162. Emphasis upon experiential words added. Cf. *M.H.B.*, #295, v. 1, 449.
115. Telford, *JW Letters*, V, 20.
116. Berger, *Theology in Hymns?*, 125.