

“Act of Devotion” (1745)¹

[cf. Baker list, #95]

Editorial Introduction:

As the Methodist movement began to spread it came under increasing scrutiny from various Anglican leaders. The concerns voiced by these leaders spanned a spectrum from charges of legalism and works-righteousness to the polar worry of possible antinomianism. John Wesley responded to a series of published cautions about the movement in *A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, published at the very end of 1744 (and dated 1745). He appended to the tract a short hymn titled “Act of Devotion.” While it is unsigned, Charles Wesley’s authorship is confirmed by its presence in MS Shent, 172b–173a; and its inclusion in *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1749), 1:206–7.

Editions:

[Charles Wesley.] “An Act of Devotion.” In John Wesley’s *A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, Pt. I*, 105. London: Strahan, 1745.

2nd [no copies known]

3rd [no copies known]

4th Bristol: Grabham, 1758.

Included in JW’s *Works* (Bristol: Pine, 1772), vol. 14 [hymn on pp. 330–31].

5th London: Hawes, 1778.

5th London: Paramore, 1786.

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An Act of Devotion.

- 1 Behold the servant of the Lord!
I wait thy guiding hand² to feel,
To hear, and keep thine every word,
To prove, and do thy perfect will.
Joyful from all my works to cease,
Glad to fulfil all righteousness.
- 2 Me if thy grace vouchsafe to use,
Meanest of all thy creatures me,
The deed, the time, the manner choose;
Let all my fruit be found of thee,
Let all my works in thee be wrought,
By thee to full perfection brought.
- 3 My every weak though good, design
O'errule, or change as seems thee meet,
Jesus, let all the work be thine;
Thy work, O Lord, is all-complete,
And pleasing in thy Father's sight;
Thou only hast done all things right.
- 4 Here then to thee thine own I leave.
Mould as thou wilt the passive clay:
But let me all thy stamp receive,
But let me all thy words obey,
Serve with a single heart and eye,
And to thy glory live, and die.

²“Hand” changed to “eye” in *HSP* (1749) and *All in All* (1761).