

Means of Grace (1740)

[Baker list, #17]

Editorial Introduction:

In early 1740 tensions grew at the Fetter Lane society (a center of the emerging revival in London) between the Wesley brothers and Philip Molther over the value of participation in public worship, holy communion, and other means of grace for evoking true Christian faith. Things came to a head in April, while John was in Bristol, leaving Charles to take the lead in resisting Molter's "quietist" teaching. In addition to his preaching, Charles sought to counter Molther by publishing as a pamphlet a 23-stanza hymn titled *The Means of Grace*. The hymn was likely printed in mid-April. Charles notes in his *MS Journal* that he distributed it in one of the London societies on April 22. Unfortunately, no copies of this first printing appear to survive. There is also no mention of it in the ledgers of William Strahan, though he would have been the most likely printer.

On his return to London, John Wesley endorsed Charles's efforts and incorporated this hymn into *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1740), which was published in July.

The ledger of William Strahan records that Charles Wesley reprinted the hymn as a small tract in October 1742, but again no copies of this edition appear to survive.

As the debate in London continued, John Wesley next appended this hymn to the 4th extract of his *Journal* (London: Strahan, 1744). Eventually John extracted two shorter hymns from the longer text and included them in the *Collection of Hymns* (1780).

Editions:

[Charles Wesley.] *The Means of Grace*. London: Strahan, 1740. [no copies extant]
2nd London: Strahan, 1742. [no copies extant]

Text:

For the text of this hymn, see *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1740), 35–39.