

## “Bloody Issue” (1744)<sup>1</sup>

[cf. Baker list, #22]

### Editorial Introduction:

In July 1744 John Wesley published the fourth extract of his *Journal*. The extract covered the dates of November 1, 1739 through September 3, 1741. This was the period when the debate raged between the Wesley brothers and the English Moravians over the use of “means of grace.” Since the period included the time when Charles Wesley had published *Means of Grace* (1740), John chose to append a copy of this defense of the means of grace to his extract (pp. 115–17). He also appended a new poem titled “The Bloody Issue,” which defended the means of grace as God’s chosen way to heal our sin-diseased nature.

While the author of the second poem is not identified in the *Journal*, Charles Wesley claimed it as his by including it in *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1749), 1:168–71.

### Editions:

[Charles Wesley.] “The Bloody Issue.” In John Wesley’s *Extract of Wesley’s Journal* [No. 4], 118–20. London: Strahan, 1744.

2<sup>nd</sup> Bristol: Farley, 1749. [pp. 117–19]

[not included with *Journal* in *Works* edn.]

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<sup>1</sup>This document was produced by the Duke Center for Studies in the Wesleyan Tradition under the editorial direction of Randy L. Maddox, with the diligent assistance of Aileen F. Maddox. Last updated: Dec. 3, 2007.

**THE BLOODY ISSUE.**

- 1     How shall a sinner come to God?  
      A fountain of polluted blood  
          For years my plague hath been;  
      From Adam the infection came,  
      My nature is with his the same,  
          The same with his my sin.
  
- 2     In me the stubborn evil reigns,  
      The poison spreads throughout my veins;  
          A loathsome sore disease  
      Makes all my soul, and life unclean,  
      My every word, work, thought is sin,  
          And desp'rate wickedness.
  
- 3     Long have I lived in grief and pain,  
      And suffered many things in vain,  
          And all physicians tried;  
      Nor men nor means my soul can heal,  
      The plague is still incurable,  
          The fountain is undried.
  
- 4     No help can I from these receive,  
      Nor men nor means can e'er relieve,  
          Or give my spirit ease;  
      Still worse and worse my case I find;  
      Here then I cast them all behind,  
          From all my works I cease.
  
- 5     I use, but *trust* in means no more,  
      Give my self-saving labours o'er,  
          Th' unequal task forbear;  
      My strength is spent, my strife is past,  
      Hardly I give up all at last,  
          And yield to self-despair.

- 6 I find brought in a better hope,  
Succour there is for me laid up,  
For every helpless soul;  
Salvation is in Jesu's name,  
Could I but touch his garment's hem,  
Ev'n I should be made whole.
- 7 His body doth the cure dispense,  
His garment is the ordinance  
In which he deigns t' appear;  
The word, the prayer, the broken bread,  
Virtue from him doth here proceed,  
And I shall find him here.
- 8 I followed with the thoughtless throng,  
And pressed, and crowded him too long,  
And weighed him down with sin;  
But him I did not hope to touch,  
I never used the means as such,  
Or looked to be made clean.
- 9 The spirit of an healthful mind  
I waited not in them to find,  
The bread that comes from heaven;  
Beyond my form I did not go,  
The power of godliness to know,  
And feel my sins forgiven.
- 10 But now I seek to touch my Lord,  
To hear his whisper in the word,  
To feel his Spirit blow;  
To catch the love of which I read,  
To taste him in the mystic bread,  
And all his sweetness know.
- 11 'Tis here, in hope my God to find,  
With humble awe I come behind,  
And wait his grace to prove;  
Before his face I dare not stand,  
But faith puts forth a trembling hand,  
To apprehend his love.

- 12 Surely his healing power is nigh;  
I touch him now! By faith ev'n I,  
    My Lord, lay hold on thee:  
Thy power is present now to heal,  
I feel, through all my soul I feel  
    That Jesus died for me.
- 13 Issues from thee a purer flood,  
The poisoned fountain of my blood  
    Is in a moment dried;  
The sovereign antidote takes place,  
And I am freely saved by grace,  
    And I am justified.
- 14 I glory in redemption found:  
Jesus, my Lord, and God, look round,  
    The conscious sinner see;  
'Tis I have touched thy cloths, and own  
The miracle thy grace hath done,  
    On such a worm as me.
- 15 Behold me prostrate at thy feet,  
And hear me thankfully repeat  
    The mercies of my God;  
I felt from thee the med'cine flow,  
I tell thee all the truth, and show  
    The virtue of thy blood.
- 16 With lowly reverential fear  
I testify, that thou art near  
    To all who seek thy love;  
Saviour of all I thee proclaim;  
The world may know thy healing name,  
    And all its wonders prove.
- 17 Speak then once more, and tell my soul,  
Sinner, thy faith hath made thee whole,  
    Thy plague of sin is o'er;  
Be perfected in holiness,  
Depart in everlasting peace,  
    Depart, and sin no more.