“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:

  2nd [no copies known]
  3rd [no copies known]
  4th Bristol: Grabham, 1758.
  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).