

## ***Intercession Hymns (1759)***<sup>1</sup>

[Baker list, #231]

### **Editorial Introduction:**

The Seven Year's War (1756–63) engulfed most of Europe, with Prussia joining Britain as allies against France, Russia, Austria, Sweden and others. While the British and Prussian forces enjoyed some initial encouraging victories, things took a negative turn in the first half of 1759. Frederick the Great and the Prussian forces suffered some severe defeats and there was growing fear of a French invasion of England.

In this context Charles Wesley published just before midyear a small pamphlet of four *Hymns of Intercession for the Kingdom of England*. Unlike the earlier *Intercession Hymns* (1758), which covered a wide range of concerns, these hymns all pleaded for God's intervention and protection of Britain in this dangerous hour. The hymns were clearly rushed into print, because when Charles incorporated them into a larger set of *Invasion Hymns* in July 1759, he revised them much more than was typical of his other collections.

### **Edition:**

[Charles Wesley.] *Hymns of Intercession for the Kingdom of England*. [np] 1759.

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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: 5 February 2010.

## Table of Contents

Part 1	2-3
Part 2	3-5
Part 3	5-7
Part 4	7-8

**Part 1.**<sup>2</sup>

- 1        Let God, the mighty God,  
          The Lord of hosts arise,  
With terror clad, with strength endued,  
          And rent, and bow the skies!  
          Called down by faithful prayer,  
          Saviour, appear below,  
Thy hand lift up, thine arm make bare,  
          And quell thy church's foe.  
          Our refuge in distress,  
          In danger's darkest hour,  
Appear as in the ancient days  
          With full redeeming power;  
          That thy redeemed may sing  
          In glad triumphant strains,  
The Lord is God, the Lord is King,  
          The Lord forever reigns.
  
- 2        We with our ears have heard,  
          Our fathers us have told  
The work that in their days appeared,  
          And in the times of old;  
          The mighty wonders wrought  
          By heaven in their defence,  
When Jacob's God for Britain fought,  
          And chased th' invaders hence.  
          Vainly invincible,  
          Their fleets the seas did hide,

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<sup>2</sup>A manuscript copy of this first hymn is present in the Methodist Archives and Research Centre of The John Ryland University Library (MA 1977/583/32, #6). It contains only one variant, that is noted below.

And doomed our sires to death and hell,  
And Israel's God defied:  
But with his wind he blew,  
But with his waves he rose,  
And dashed, and scattered, and o'erthrew,  
And swallowed up his foes.

3 Jesus, Jehovah, Lord,  
Thy wonted aid we claim;  
Not trusting in our bow or sword,  
But in thy saving name:  
Thy name the mighty tower,  
From whence our foes we see  
Ready our country to devour,  
Without a nod from thee.  
Thou wilt not give us up  
A prey unto their teeth,  
But blast their aim, confound their hope,  
Their league with hell and death;  
With *such* deliverance bless  
Whom thou hast chose for thine,  
That every Briton<sup>34</sup> may confess  
"The work is all divine!"

## Part 2.

1 God of unbounded power,  
God of unfathomed<sup>5</sup> love,  
Be present in our dangerous hour,  
The<sup>6</sup> danger to remove;  
To guard this<sup>7</sup> fav'rite land,  
So oft preserved by thee,

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<sup>3</sup>"Every Briton" changed to "we, and Europe" in *Invasion Hymns* (1759). The manuscript copy MA 1977/583/32, #6 reads "That Brittain's sons."

<sup>4</sup>"Every Briton" changed to "we, and Europe" in *Invasion Hymns* (1759).

<sup>5</sup>"Unfathomed" changed to "unwearied" in *Invasion Hymns* (1759).

<sup>6</sup>"The" changed to "Our" in *Invasion Hymns* (1759).

<sup>7</sup>"This" changed to "our" in *Invasion Hymns* (1759).

Come, Lord, and in the channel stand,  
Come, and block up the sea.  
Refuse them leave to pass,  
Forbid them to draw nigher;  
Surround us as a wall of brass,  
A battlement<sup>8</sup> of fire:  
Our lives, our threatened coast  
Beneath thy shadow take,  
And turn aside the alien host,  
And drive the ruffians back.

2 Or if thine awful will  
Admit our Romish foe,  
And force the sleeping crowd to feel  
The long-suspended blow;  
If justice stern hath past  
Th' irrevocable doom,  
And armed with Britain's crimes<sup>9</sup> at last  
The ravagers must come.  
Come first, thou Man in white,  
Thy Father's love reveal,  
His name on every mourner write,  
And every servant seal;  
Let their deliverance prove  
Thou canst preserve thine own,  
And all who trust thy guardian love  
Are safe in thee alone.

3 Come then, ye hostile bands,  
For one short moment come!

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<sup>8</sup>“A battlement” changed to “As battlements” in *Invasion Hymns* (1759).

<sup>9</sup>“Crimes” changed to “sins” in *Invasion Hymns* (1759).

The Man in white shall bind your hands,  
Ye murderers of Rome:  
If suffered from on high  
To reach our threatened shore,  
With bridles in your mouths draw nigh,  
And show your bounded power.  
Your power to him<sup>10</sup> submits;  
He keeps our faithful souls;  
Above the water floods he sits,  
And earth and hell controls:  
In dangers, deaths, and snares  
He lays the sacred line;  
Nor can ye touch a man that bears  
The<sup>11</sup> Saviour's bloody sign.

### Part 3.

1 But will the gracious Lord,  
Who hides us in his breast,  
Redeem his servants from the sword,  
And give up all the rest?  
Wilt thou thy fury pour  
On the unthinking<sup>12</sup> crowd,  
And let the Romish wolves<sup>13</sup> devour  
The men that know not God?  
Bowels divine, forbid!  
Forbid it heavenly grace!  
And let the mourning praying seed  
Protect the sinful race:  
To Abraham's son and God  
With Abraham's faith we cry,

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<sup>10</sup>“Him” changed to “God” in *Invasion Hymns* (1759).

<sup>11</sup>“The” changed to “His” in *Invasion Hymns* (1759).

<sup>12</sup>“Unthinking” changed to “obdurate” in *Invasion Hymns* (1759).

<sup>13</sup>“Wolves” changed to “wolf” in *Invasion Hymns* (1759).

O spare a nation in their blood,  
Nor suffer them to<sup>14</sup> die.

2        Forced by the<sup>15</sup> public crimes,  
            If justice<sup>16</sup> must take place,  
Why, Lord, in our degenerate times  
            Hast thou remembered grace?  
            Thy kingdom why restored?  
            What means thy Spirit's strife,  
While thousands by his powerful word  
            Are passed from death to life?  
            The tokens of thy love  
            On every side we see,  
And crowds begotten from above  
            Stretch out their hands to thee:  
            Against this evil day  
            Ready prepared they stand,  
To turn thy vengeful wrath away,  
            And save a guilty land.

3        Ev'n now with them we meet  
            Around thy gracious throne,  
And mercy for the<sup>17</sup> land entreat  
            Where thou art truly known:  
            We wrestle for the thron  
            Who unconcerned<sup>18</sup> abide,  
(Because the judgment lingers long,  
            And<sup>19</sup> all thy threats deride.  
            What canst thou do to save  
            The souls insensible,

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<sup>14</sup>“Suffer them to” changed to “let the wicked” in *Invasion Hymns* (1759).

<sup>15</sup>“Forced by the” changed to “Drawn down by” in *Invasion Hymns* (1759).

<sup>16</sup>“Justice” changed to “vengeance” in *Invasion Hymns* (1759).

<sup>17</sup>“The” changed to “a” in *Invasion Hymns* (1759).

<sup>18</sup>“Unconcerned” changed to “dead in sins” in *Invasion Hymns* (1759).

<sup>19</sup>“And” changed to “Who” in *Invasion Hymns* (1759).

Who madly their destruction brave,  
And laugh at death and hell?  
They claim thy scourge from thee,<sup>20</sup>  
They bid thy day make haste,  
But public ill, o'erruled by thee,  
Shall turn to good at last.

**Part 4.**

- 1        Here then we calmly rest,  
          Whate'er thy will intend,  
It must be for thy people best,  
          It must in blessings end:  
          To those that love the Lord,  
          And feel thy sprinkled blood,  
Famine, and pestilence, and sword,  
          Shall jointly work for good.  
          Our lives are hid with thine,  
          Our hairs are numbered all,  
Nor can without the nod divine  
          One worthless sparrow fall:  
          And shall a nation bleed,  
          And shall a kingdom fail,  
While thou, O Christ, art Lord and Head  
          O'er heaven and earth and hell!
- 2        Beneath thy wings secure,  
          In patience we possess  
Our souls, and quietly endure  
          Whatever our God decrees:  
          Yet still (we cry) delay  
          The careless sinner's doom,

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<sup>20</sup>Line changed to "They ask the scourge to see" in *Invasion Hymns* (1759).



And, till the judgment comes, we pray  
That it may never come:  
May never come *alone*,  
But guided by thy grace  
Their<sup>21</sup> vain self confidence cast down,<sup>22</sup>  
And all their<sup>23</sup> pride abase:  
Who will not see thy hand,  
Thy truth and love adore,  
Compel them,<sup>24</sup> Lord, to understand  
The thunder of thy power.

3 Out of their<sup>25</sup> slumber woke,  
Bid all our nation rise,  
And bless the providential stroke,  
That turned them<sup>26</sup> to the skies:  
Who walked in darkest night,  
In death's dread shadow lay,  
Show them<sup>27</sup> the great and<sup>28</sup> glorious light,  
The dawn of gospel-day.  
Escaped the hostile sword,  
O may they<sup>29</sup> fly to thee,  
And find in our redeeming Lord  
Their<sup>30</sup> life and liberty;  
Their<sup>31</sup> strength and righteousness,  
O let them<sup>32</sup> hold thee fast,  
With confidence divine, and peace  
That shall forever last.

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<sup>21</sup>“Their” changed to “Our” in *Invasion Hymns* (1759).

<sup>22</sup>“Cast down” changed to “o’erturn” in *Invasion Hymns* (1759).

<sup>23</sup>“Their” changed to “our” in *Invasion Hymns* (1759).

<sup>24</sup>“Them” changed to “us” in *Invasion Hymns* (1759).

<sup>25</sup>“Their” changed to “our” in *Invasion Hymns* (1759).

<sup>26</sup>“Them” changed to “us” in *Invasion Hymns* (1759).

<sup>27</sup>“Them” changed to “us” in *Invasion Hymns* (1759).

<sup>28</sup>“And” changed to “the” in *Invasion Hymns* (1759).

<sup>29</sup>“They” changed to “we” in *Invasion Hymns* (1759).

<sup>30</sup>“Their” changed to “Our” in *Invasion Hymns* (1759).

<sup>31</sup>“Their” changed to “Our” in *Invasion Hymns* (1759).

<sup>32</sup>“Them” changed to “us” in *Invasion Hymns* (1759).