

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

[Baker list, #233]

### 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 threat of a French invasion of England.

In this context Charles Wesley initially rushed into print a set of four hymns pleading for God to intervene and defend Britain in this dangerous hour—see *Intercession Hymns* (1759). In July he published a larger set of *Hymns on the Expected Invasion*, which incorporated the four earlier hymns (much revised<sup>2</sup>) and added three additional pieces in the same vein. He capped the collection with one further hymn that raised the contrasting apocalyptic suggestion that Wesley looked not for Britain's rescue but for the return of Christ to conquer all nations and create true justice on the earth—an echo of "Hymns for the 1745."

The hymns praying for God's rescue of Britain were the ones answered. On the night of November 20, 1759, Admiral Edward Hawke led the British fleet in charge of protecting the Channel against a French fleet attempting to mount the invasion. Hawke won a decisive victory, effectively terminating the power of the French navy as an offensive threat. Charles Wesley celebrated this victory with his *Thanksgiving Hymns* (1759).

While the French alone were no longer a major threat, they could buttress the power of allies. In June 1779, Spain declared war on Britain and planned a naval invasion with support from the French. In this context, some twenty years after its initial publication, Charles Wesley reprinted (without revision) the *Invasion Hymns*, now dated "1779" in the title. Once again, from the perspective of the British, the prayer for protection in the hymns appeared to be effective.

### Editions:

[Charles Wesley.] *Hymns on the Expected Invasion*, 1759. [London: Strahan, 1759.]

[Bristol: Farley, 1759.]

np, 1779 [with title: *Hymns on the Expected Invasion*, MDCCLXXIX].

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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: June 16, 2008.

<sup>2</sup>The alterations are noted in *Intercessory Hymns* (1759). The four hymns are presented in this collection as revised.

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**HYMNS  
ON THE  
EXPECTED INVASION 1759.**

**Hymn 1.**

- 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,  
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 we, and Europe, may confess  
The work is all divine!

### Hymn 2.

1 God of unbounded power,  
God of unwearied love,

Be present in our dangerous hour,  
Our danger to remove;  
To guard our fav'rite land,  
So oft preserved by thee,  
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,  
As battlements 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 sins 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:  
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 God 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  
          His Saviour's bloody sign.

### Hymn 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 obdurate crowd,  
And let the Romish wolf 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,

O spare a nation in their blood,  
Nor let the wicked die.

2 Drawn down by public crimes,  
If vengeance 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 a land entreat  
Where thou art truly known:  
We wrestle for the throng  
Who dead in sins abide,  
Because the judgment lingers long  
Who all thy threats deride.

What canst thou do to save  
The souls insensible,  
Who madly their destruction brave,  
And laugh at death and hell?

They ask the scourge to see,  
They bid thy day make haste,  
But public ill, o'erruled by thee,  
Shall turn to good at last.

**Hymn 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,  
And, till the judgment comes, we pray  
          That it may never come:
- May never come *alone*,  
          But guided by thy grace

Our vain self confidence o'erturn,  
And all our pride abase:  
Who will not see thy hand,  
Thy truth and love adore,  
Compel us, Lord, to understand  
The thunder of thy power.

3 Out of our slumber woke,  
Bid all our nation rise,  
And bless the providential stroke,  
That turned us to the skies:  
Who walked in darkest night,  
In death's dread shadow lay,  
Show us the great the glorious light,  
The dawn of gospel-day.

Escaped the hostile sword,  
O may we fly to thee,  
And find in our redeeming Lord  
Our life and liberty;  
Our strength and righteousness,  
O let us hold thee fast,  
With confidence divine, and peace  
That shall forever last.

**Hymn 5.**  
**Jerem[iah] 47:6-7.**

1 How long, thou weapon of the Lord,  
Jehovah's controversial sword,  
Before thy slaughters cease?  
Put up thyself into thy sheath,  
Be still, thou minister of death,  
And sleep in endless peace.

2 How can it sleep, when hostile heaven  
A charge hath to his servant given,

Against the British shore?  
Appointed by an angry God,  
Though drunk with seas of human blood,  
The glutton thirsts for more.

3 Have we not dragged the judgment down,  
Undaunted at th' Almighty's frown,  
Unsoftened by his grace?  
And still we madly close our eyes,  
Thy mercy spurn, thy wrath despise,  
And mock thee to thy face.

4 We dare the evil day to come,  
"The plots and powers of feeble Rome  
Can never here prevail:  
Secured by rocks our island stands,  
By counsels wise, and valiant bands,  
And fleets invincible."

5 "Confiding in our fleshly arm,  
Shall Gallic armaments alarm,  
Or break our firm repose?"  
Thy judgments soar beyond our sight  
And therefore with presumptuous slight  
We puff at all our foes.

6 Supinely negligent and proud,  
The noble and ignoble crowd  
In deadly slumber sleep:  
The nation sleeps, of conquest sure,  
Stands on a precipice secure,  
Nor dreads the yawning deep.

7 Tremendous God, to whom alone  
Thy strange destructive works are known,  
Thy properest works of grace,  
If prayers and tears may yet prevail,  
Let mercy turn the hovering scale  
For our devoted race.

- 8 Urged to the last extremity,  
So save us, Lord, that all may see  
    The work is wholly thine,  
That knowing him, through whom we live,  
Our lives we may to Jesus give,  
    A sacrifice divine.

**Hymn 6.**

- 1 Is this the guilty nation, Lord,  
    (Permit us to inquire)  
Now to be visited by sword,  
    And purified by fire?  
No longer can thy wrath delay  
    An hardened people's doom,  
And must we see the evil day,  
    And must the spoiler come!
- 2 Thou wilt not hide the thing decreed,  
    From those thou call'st thine own,  
From Abraham's faithful praying seed,  
    Who trust in thee alone.  
Ev'n now thine angry rod we hear,  
    Thy Spirit's warning cry,  
And feel the visitation near,  
    And to the mountain fly.
- 3 Thou hast to us thy secret shown,  
    Who tremble at thy name,  
And sigh, and pray, and wrestle on  
    For our Jerusalem;  
To deprecate the fatal hour,  
    We on our faces fall:  
Ah! Let not, Lord, thy wrath devour,  
    Thy curse o'erwhelm us all.
- 4 If now, on such a land as this,  
    Thou must avenged be,

Yet snatch us from the dark abyss  
Of endless misery:  
Whome'er thy will appoints to die,  
To them repentance give,  
And let them with their closing eye  
Behold thy cross, and live.

5 If now the alien hosts break in,  
To spoil our wasted shore,  
Let mercy interpose between,  
And circumscribe their power;  
While armed with heaven's avenging word,  
The ready murderers stand,  
Revoke their charge, nor let the sword  
Go through our sinful land.

6 Thou canst the meditated blow  
By ways unseen divert,  
With terror strike the fiercest foe,  
And quell the proudest heart:  
Thou, whom the winds and seas obey,  
Look; and a frown of thine  
Shall chase the hornets far away,  
And blast their dire design.

7 This is our confidence of hope,  
Thou dost their threat'nings see,  
And wilt not give thy people up  
To Popish cruelty:  
Whate'er thy justice doth below,  
Thou shalt thy church defend,  
For Christ is in our hearts, we know,  
And heaven in our end.

### Hymn 7.

1 Join all, whom God in Jesus spares,  
And mingle praises with your prayers,

Sing to the Lord a solemn song,  
Whose mercy respites us so long.

2 Mercy alone deferred our doom,  
And would not let the judgment come:  
Thy mercy we with reverence praise,  
And wonder at thy patient grace.

3 Saviour, thy unexhausted love  
Did still th' approaching woe remove,  
With famine, war, and earthquake near,  
It rescued us from year to year.

4 A bush unburnt amidst the flame,  
Jesus, we magnify thy name,  
Our strange deliverances admire,  
And give thee glory in the fire.

5 Preserved so oft, we cannot doubt,  
Thy mighty arm shall bear us out,  
Our suffering souls like gold refine,  
And whiten us in blood divine.

6 And if the sword a few destroys,  
The rest shall tremble, and rejoice,  
Repent, and know their sins forgiven,  
And glorify the God of heaven.

**Hymn 8.**  
**Revel[ation] 19:11ff.**

1 Come, thou Conqueror of the nations,  
On thy great white horse appear!  
Earthquakes, dearths, and desolations,  
Signify thy kingdom near:  
True and faithful,  
'Stablish thy dominion here.

2 Thine the kingdom, power and glory,  
Thine the ransomed nations are:  
Let the heathen fall before thee,  
Let the isles thy power declare;  
Judge, and conquer  
All mankind in righteous war.

- 3     Thee let all mankind admire,  
        Object of *our* joy and dread!  
Flame thine eyes with heavenly fire,  
        Many crowns adorn thy head—  
        But thine essence,  
        None, except thyself, can read.
- 4     Yet we know our Mediator,  
        By the Father's grace bestowed,  
Meanly clothed in human nature,  
        Thee we call the Word of God;  
        Flesh thy vesture,  
        Dipped in thy own sacred blood.
- 5     Followed by the hosts of heaven,  
        (White their robes, their coursers white)  
Come, and let the word be given,  
        Let thy sword the nations smite;  
        With thy judgments,  
        With thine iron sceptre fight.
- 6     Captain, God of our salvation,  
        Thou who hast the wine-press trod,  
Borne th' Almighty's indignation,  
        Quenched the fiercest wrath of God,  
        Take the kingdom,  
        Claim the purchase of thy blood.
- 7     On thy thigh and vesture written,  
        Show the world thy heavenly name,  
That with loving wonder smitten,  
        All may glorify the Lamb,  
        All adore thee,  
        All the LORD of LORDS proclaim.
- 8     Honour, glory, and salvation,  
        To the LORD our God we give,  
Power and endless adoration,  
        Thou art worthy to receive;  
        Reign triumphant,  
        KING of KINGS forever live!