

“Additional Hymns for 1756”¹

[cf. Baker list, #182]

Editorial Introduction:

A series of skirmishes occurred between the English colonists in North America and French forces (with the support of several native American tribes) in 1754–55. This was part of growing conflict between England and France that broke into formal hostilities in May 1756, marking the beginning of the Seven Years War.

In January 1756 Charles Wesley published a new edition of *Earthquake Hymns*, Pt. II (1750), with two new hymns appended: “An Hymn for the English in America” and “A Hymn for the Year 1756” (on pp. 21–24, the only pages given below). The first of these new hymns voices Wesley’s concern for his compatriots across the Atlantic, longing for the millennial time of peace. The second new hymn reveals Wesley’s apocalyptic assumption that this millennial time will come through a decisive act of judgment, as God clears the world of sin and establishes the reign of justice. It also hints at his conviction that events like the Lisbon earthquake portend that this judgment day is imminent— cf. “Hymn on the Lisbon Earthquake” (1756).

While this tone pervades Charles’s publications for 1756, it did not endure through his life. An example of his more reserved eschatological stance in later years can be found in hymn 16, sts. 5–6, in *Hymns for the Nation* (1781).

Edition:

[Charles Wesley.] *Hymns occasioned by the Earthquake, March 8, 1750, Pt. II; to which are added an Hymn for the English in America, and another for the Year 1756*. 2nd edn. Bristol: Farley, 1756. [this was the last edition of this collection]

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**A Hymn for the English in America,
Written in January, 1756.**

- [1] Saviour of life, and Prince of Peace,
Behold our brethren in distress,
 Whose growing load we bear,
Victims of every sex and age,
Abandoned to the murderer's rage,
 And all the waste of war.
- 2 The hour of their temptation's come,
The ruthless savages of Rome
 With fire and sword assail,
Our friends they rend as slaughtered sheep,
Resolved their league with death to keep,
 Their covenant with hell.
- 3 But wilt thou let the leopards tear
The men, who armed with faith and prayer,
 All human help disown;
Nor dare their violent foes withstand,
The meek and quiet in the land,
 Who trust on thee alone?
- 4 The simple men of hearts sincere,
Who more than death thine anger fear,
 Regard their helplessness,
Their tender dread to disobey,
Which *antedates* the gospel-day
 Of universal peace.
- 5 Now, Lord, in their defence arise,
Now, Saviour, in the heathen's eyes
 Thy glorious arm make bare,

²Ori., "20".

And all who tremble at thy word,
Save from the peril of the sword,
The grievousness of war.

6 Far off from them the woe remove:
The woe which soon our own may prove,
(If so our sins require,)
We soon more deeply may bemoan
Our country spoiled, our land o'erthrown,
Our cities burnt with fire.

7 But O! Prevent the misery,
The ills we tremble to foresee,
In mercy, Lord, avert,
Our foes, when ready to devour,
Disarm; and chase the lust of power
From every human heart.

8 Hasten the long-expected day,
When all shall own thy gracious sway,
Of thy meek Spirit born,
Accomplishing thy faithful words,
When all shall break their useless swords,
Or into plowshares turn.

9 Now let us give our fightings o'er,
And learn destructive war no more,
And only strive to prove
The blessings of thy peaceful reign,
In love to every soul of man,
In pure millennial love.

A Hymn for the Year 1756.

[1] O for the saving fear
That moved in Noah's breast,
The solemn sense of judgments near,
By love divine impressed,

The dread of ills to come,
Which may an ark prepare,
And arm us 'gainst our threat'ning doom,
With all the powers of prayer!

2 The last vindictive times
 In pangs all nature owns,
Under the weight of human crimes
 The whole creation groans,
 The elements all conspire
 To scourge a faithless seed,
And woes, and snares, and storms of fire,
 Are bursting on their head.

3 Our sin-avenging Lord
 Is risen from his place,
To plead his cause by fire and sword,
 With the apostate race;
 To sweep his foes away,
 His gathered plague he pours:
And thousands rue the slaughtering day,
 And feels the falling towers.

4 His hand is lifted up,
 And shakes the sounding rod,
The desolated nations droop
 Beneath the curse of God;
 His judgments undermine,
 The earth on which we dwell:
It staggers with the stroke divine,
 And opens into hell.

5 He speaks the powerful word,
 Which shakes both earth and skies,
And lo! The great abyss is stirred,
 The treasured waters rise!
 With strange expansive swell,
 They flow, and ebb, and flow,
Fly up to heaven, o'er earth prevail,
 And deluge all below.

- 6 What ails thee O thou sea,
 To start out of thy bed?
Doth nature's God, displeased at thee,
 Impress the sudden dread?
 Ye hills, and mountains why
 So swift to shift your place?
The Lord descends, the judge is nigh,
 And frowns on human race.
- 7 Who may abide his frown,
 Or in his sight appear,
When God with dreadful pomp comes down
 T' erect his kingdom here,
 The wicked to destroy,
 The wickedness remove,
And deck his saints with glorious joy,
 And crown with endless love!
- 8 Eternal judge of all,
 Thy people's Advocate,
In faith we for thy coming call,
 And for thy kingdom wait:
 Assume thy royal power,
 And bear our souls away
To sing, and triumph, and adore
 Through one eternal day.