

*Invasion Hymns (1759)*¹

[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 revised²) 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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²The 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 I.

- 1 Let God, the mighty God,
 The Lord of hosts arise,
With terror clad, with strength endued,
 And rent, and bow the skies!
 Call'd 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 antient days
 With full redeeming power;
 That thy redeem'd may sing
 In glad triumphant strains,
The Lord is God, the Lord is King,
 The Lord for ever reigns!
- 2 We with our ears have heard,
 Our fathers us have told
The work that in their days appear'd,
 And in the times of old;

The mighty wonders wrought
By heaven in their defence,
When Jacob's God for Britain fought,
And chas'd th' invaders hence.

Vainly INVINCIBLE
Their fleets the seas did hide,
And doom'd our sires to death and hell,
And Israel's God defied:
But with his wind he blew,
But with his waves he rose,
And dash'd, and scatter'd, and o'erthrew,
And swallow'd 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 II.

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 preserv'd 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 threaten'd 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 arm'd 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 murtherers of Rome:
 If suffered from on high
 To reach our threatned shore,
With bridles in your mouths draw nigh,
 And shew your bounded power.

 Your power to God submits;
 He keeps our faithful souls;
Above the water-floods he sits,
 And earth and hell controuls:
 In dangers, deaths, and snares
 He lays the sacred line;
Nor can ye touch a man that bears
 His Saviour's bloody sign.

Hymn III.

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 restor'd?
What means thy Spirit's strife,
While thousands by his powerful word
Are pass'd 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 prepar'd 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 intreat
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'erul'd by thee,
Shall turn to good at last.

Hymn IV.

- 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 numbred 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 turn'd us to the skies:
Who walk'd in darkest night,
In death's dread shadow lay,
Shew us the great the glorious light,
The dawn of gospel-day.

Escap'd 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 for ever last.

Hymn V.
Jerem[iah] xlvi. 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,
Tho' drunk with seas of human blood,
The glutton thirsts for more.

3 Have we not dragg'd the judgment down,
Undaunted at th' Almighty's frown,
Unsoften'd 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:
Secur'd 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 Urg'd to the last extremity,
So save us, Lord, that all may see
 The work is wholly thine,
That knowing him, thro' whom we live,
Our lives we may to Jesus give,
 A sacrifice divine.

Hymn VI.

- 1 Is this the guilty nation, Lord,
 (Permit us to inquire)
Now to be visited by sword,
 And purify'd by fire?
No longer can thy wrath delay
 An harden'd 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 shewn,
 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 arm'd with heaven's avenging word,
The ready murtherers stand,
Revoke their charge, nor let the sword
Go thro' 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 threatnings 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 VII.

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 deferr'd 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 Preserv'd 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 VIII.
Revel[ation] xix. 11, &c.

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 ransom'd 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 bestow'd,
Meanly cloath'd in human nature,
Thee we call the Word of God;
Flesh thy vesture,
Dipt in thy own sacred blood.
- 5 Follow'd 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,
Quench'd the fiercest wrath of God,
Take the kingdom,
Claim the purchase of thy blood.
- 7 On thy thigh and vesture written,
Shew 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 for ever live!