*CHAPTER 3*

*THE EXPERIENCE OF ESCHATOLOGY*

The great popularizer of present spiritual experience within the soul also spent substantial effort speculating about the soul's experience of the spiritual world in the future. Wesley adorned his picture of death and the end times with intricate detail. The present chapter examines this material under the categories of eschatology in the present, death, the intermediate state, the day of the Lord (including the second coming, renovation of the worlds, and the last judgment), and the final state. This "internal" perspective compliments the "external" perspective of the previous chapter by demonstrating the copious and thoroughgoing detail which, when collected and organized, suggests conceptual completeness approaching a full system of eschatological thought.

*Eschatology in the Present*

Wesley put a great deal of emphasis on eschatological experience in the present. His emphases on holy living, the experiential aspects of salvation, the potential of Christian perfection, ecclesiastical structure, and social action have all contributed to this understanding. Perhaps the most sophisticated and interesting analysis along these lines has been J. Cyril Downes' argument that the eschatology of John and Charles Wesley was really a precursor of the realized eschatology of C. H. Dodd.[[1]](#footnote-0) Downes (correctly) argued that Dodd himself (*contra* some of his critics and modern followers) never promoted a fully realized eschatology. Consequently, Downes prefers the term "anticipated" to "realized." It is this moderate form of realized eschatology which Downes found prefigured in Wesley. Downes' evidence may be summarized under several headings: literary allusions, justification and regeneration, sanctification of perfect love, and the sacrament, or, communion.

Literary Allusions

In the hymns of Charles Wesley, Downes identified "at least one hundred and twenty five references to the life of heaven having become a present possibility for the believer" though not in fullness.[[2]](#footnote-1) The idea of realized eschatology is also reflected in the negative image of the present reality of hell in the soul of the unsaved:

But if there were no other hell, thou hast hell enough within thee. An awakened conscience is hell. Pride, envy, hatred, malice, revenge; what are these but hell upon earth? And how often art thou tormented in these flames!-flames of lust, envy, or proud wrath! Are not these to thy soul, when blown up to the height, as it were a lake of fire, burning with brimstone? Flee away, before the great gulf is fixed; escape, escape for thy life! If thou hast not strength, cry to God, and thou shalt receive power from on high; and He whose name is rightly8 called Jesus shall save thee from thy sins.[[3]](#footnote-2)

Describing human rebellion against God he says:

Canst thou be out of hell, while these are in the soul? While they are tearing it in pieces, and there is none to help thee? Indeed they are not fully let loose upon thee: And while thou seest the light of the sun, the things of the world that surround thee, or the pleasures of sense, divert thy thoughts from them. But when thou canst eat and drink no more, when the earth, with the works thereof, is burned up, when the sun is fallen from heaven, and thou are shut up in utter darkness, what a state wilt thou be in then! Mayest thou never try! Seek thou a better habitation, a house of God, eternal in the heavens.[[4]](#footnote-3)

These passages are notable not only for the passion of the presentness of the future state, but also for the manner in which that eschatology blends so smoothly into this world. It is an image of continuity between current existence and the future life which reappears frequently in Wesley's vision.

Justification and Regeneration

The crisis experience of justification and regeneration was crucial in early Methodist theology and life and in the personal experiences of John and Charles Wesley. The preoccupation with salvation, assurance, and the like have been well documented[[5]](#footnote-4) Susanna's nurture of John, his education at Charterhouse, his reading of à Kempis and Taylor, the Holy Club, the ill-fated but significant American adventure, Spangenberg and the Moravians, the depression on the return to England, and the strange warming at Aldersgate; all point to an almost obsessive concern with the burning questions of salvation and assurance. Charles' phrasing, therefore, was probably not accidental when he (apparently) celebrated John at conversion as one who "tastes anticipated heaven."[[6]](#footnote-5) So also John could proclaim "it is a present salvation. It is something attainable, yes, actually attained, on earth." And he went on to emphasize that "thus saith the Apostles to the believers at Ephesus, and in them to the believers of all ages, not, 'Ye *shall be*' (though that also is true), but, 'ye *are* saved through faith.'"[[7]](#footnote-6) The promise of salvation was not only of future deliverance but of present transformation: "By salvation I mean, not barely, according to the vulgar notion, deliverance from hell, or going to heaven; but a present deliverance from sin, a restoration of the soul to its primitive health, its original purity."[[8]](#footnote-7) Or again, in "A Farther Appeal:"

It [the nature of justification] sometimes means our acquittal at the last day. (Matt. xii.37). But this is altogether out of the present question; that justification whereof our Articles and Homilies speak, meaning present forgiveness, pardon of sins, and consequently, acceptance with God . . . . I know nothing material which has been objected as to the nature of justification; but many persons seem to be very confused in their thoughts concerning it, and speak as if they had never heard of any justification antecedent to that of the last day. To clear up this there needs only a closer inspection of our Articles and Homilies; wherein justification is always taken for the present remission of our sins.[[9]](#footnote-8)

He could speak of "heaven already opened in the soul"[[10]](#footnote-9) and could argue that the change which comes with salvation was not one which comes only with death or heaven. Rather, it was an experience, an eschatological experience, which characterized salvation, and the realization of that experience began in the present life. The change was partial, but it was also real.[[11]](#footnote-10) Thus Wesley argued:

In asserting salvation by faith, we mean this: (1) that pardon (salvation begun) is received by faith producing works. (2) That holiness (salvation continued is faith working by love). (3) That heaven (salvation finished is reward of this faith).[[12]](#footnote-11)

Hence, the experience of salvation is ultimately fulfilled in the next world but is tasted significantly in the present one.

Sanctification or Perfect Love

The process of sanctification or perfect love is the second motif in which Downes identified the theme of realized eschatology.[[13]](#footnote-12) Some five years before the traditional date of his conversion,[[14]](#footnote-13) Wesley defined the "Circumcision of the Heart" as:

That habitual disposition of the soul which, in the sacred writings, is termed holiness; and which directly implies, the being cleansed from sin, "from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit:" and, by consequence, the being endued with those virtues which were also in Christ Jesus; the being so "renewed in the spirit or our mind" as to be "perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect."[[15]](#footnote-14)

Such perfection was limited to a refraining from voluntary sin and growing in love. Even after perfection, the application of God's love, assistance, and forgiveness were still required.[[16]](#footnote-15) Yet, the experience of this state was otherworldly in some profound sense. It was a foretaste of heaven:

Thus doth Jesus "save His people from their sins;" and not only from outward sins, but also from the sins of their hearts; from evil thoughts and from evil tempers. "True" say some, "we shall thus be saved from our sins; but not till death, not in this world." But how are we to reconcile this with the express words of St. John?- "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world." The Apostle here, beyond all contradiction, speaks of himself and other living Christians, of whom (as though he had foreseen this very evasion, and set himself to overturn it from the foundation) he flatly affirms, that not only at or after death, but in this world they are as their Master.[[17]](#footnote-16)

The "Plain Account" emphasized the idea of fullness in the present life.

Prayer is especially wanting. Who continues instant therein? Who wrestles with God for this very thing? So, "ye have not, because ye ask not; or because ye ask amiss," namely, that you may be renewed before you die. *Before you die*! Will that content you? Nay, but ask that it may be done now; today, while it is called today. Do not call this "setting God a time." Certainly, today is His time as well as tomorrow. Make haste, man, make haste![[18]](#footnote-17)

An eschatological adumbration of perfect love can also be seen in the metaphor of death which Wesley used to describe Christian perfection:

A man may be dying for some time; yet he does not, properly speaking, die, till the instant the soul is separated from the body; and in that instant he lives the life of eternity. In like manner, he may be dying to sin for some time; yet he is not dead to sin, till sin is separated from his soul; and in that instant he lives the full life of love ... Yet he still grows in grace, in the knowledge of Christ, in the love and image of God'; and will do so, not only till death, but to all eternity.[[19]](#footnote-18)

For Wesley, then, perfection was a partial realization of the development of the Godly soul which was to continue in eternal completion in the next life. The need, importance, and the possibility of spiritual growth is as essential in the heavenly future as it is in the earthly present. The realized eschatology of Wesleyan perfectionism is best seen as an aspect of a larger picture, not as an isolated event of experience but part of a large mosaic.

The Sacrament or Communion

Downes also identified the regular participation in and emphasis of the sacrament, or communion, as being indicative of realized eschatology within Wesley's theology.[[20]](#footnote-19) The 1745 "Hymns on the Lord's Supper by John and Charles Wesley, Presbyters of the Church of England, With a Preface concerning the Christian Sacrament and Sacrifice, extracted from Dr. Brevint," illustrates Brevint's work with their hymns. Among the points emphasized by both Brevint and the Wesleys was the idea that the sacrament of holy communion was an "earnest" or a "pledge" of heaven:

Title to eternal bliss

Here His precious death we find,

This the pledge, the earnest this,

Of the purchased joys of behind:

Here He gives our souls a taste,

Heaven into our hearts He pours:

Still believe, and hold Him fast;

God and Christ and all in ours![[21]](#footnote-20)

Such was the power of the eucharistic event that its effects could provide the maximum of experience for the soul while still on earth:

Whither should our full souls aspire,

At this transporting feast?

They never can on earth be higher,

Or more completely blest.

Our cup of blessing from above

Delightfully runs o'er,

Till from these bodies they remove

Our souls can hold no more.[[22]](#footnote-21)

Yet it is still only a foretaste of the glory to come:

But wait to see out heavenly King;

To see the great Invisible

Without a sacramental veil,

With all His robes of glory on,

In rapturous joy and love and praise.

Him to behold with open face,

High on His everlasting throne![[23]](#footnote-22)

While there is clearly the idea of anticipation in these lines, the idea is also endued with a typical and powerful dose of Methodist experience. It was not just an enthusiastic looking forward to, but an excitement which seemed sufficient to transcend (if only in a temporary and weak manner when compared to the heavenly reality) temporal bonds. Rattenbury has caught something of this in his own perception of John and Charles realized eschatology and his comment that their "positively rollicking character" was an innovation in eucharistic liturgy.[[24]](#footnote-23)

The Supernatural

To these categories of Downes could be added the reality of the supernatural. For Wesley there was not only the proclamation of heaven present but also the clear plan of Scripture revealing the future. There was not only justification and regeneration but also real help from the other side by angels who would not only carry you at the end, but guide and protect you in the present. There was not only the process of sanctification of the heart increasing in love, but also visions that would help to make that a reality; and, there was not only the sacrament of communion but also the real communion with saints already gone to their reward, a real sharing between the future state and the present.

Summary

Although Wesley's focus is clearly on the future goal of salvation, that goal was already being realized in the present. It could be proclaimed in word, felt in justification and regeneration, participated in through sanctification, enjoyed in the sacraments, and experienced in the supernatural. This was no reduction of eschatology to metaphor, but a real invasion of the world of space-time by limitless eternity.

*Death*

While believers could begin to appreciate the joy of heaven in the present life, death was the first experience of eschatology common to all people. The present section is a brief consideration of death in relation to eschatology beginning with an examination of the present life, followed by aspects of death, and then analysis.

The Present Life

The present life, bounded at its far extreme by death, is an existence of "poor, transient shadows" and, in reality, a "dream of life" from which one day persons will be "quite awake."[[25]](#footnote-24) The world entered into at death is far more "*real* . . . permanent . . . eternal . . . [and] stable than the foundations of the earth; yea, than the pillars of that lower heaven."[[26]](#footnote-25) In the sermon, fittingly titled "On Worldly Folly," Wesley described life as an "unstable cloud" and a "fluctuating bubble on the water" which "fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay" (cf. Job 14:2). As a result, he suggested that it is wise "to 'live each day as if it were the last.'"[[27]](#footnote-26) The human in the present context was but a "creature of the day."[[28]](#footnote-27) For Wesley, this life, while infinitely important for determining eternal destiny, found its real value only eschatologically.

Aspects of Death

Against this backdrop of the present life a number of aspects or themes concerning death and eschatology may be displayed: death as the end of life, death as separation of body and soul, death as transition and destiny, death as blessing, death as spiritual and eternal death, death as power, death as a place, and an excursus on physical death and original sin. These are examined below, and are followed by discussion.

*Death as the End of Life*

Death, most obviously for Wesley, was the ending of the present physical life. In this connection he speculated with a surprisingly modern tone on the termination of physical life and the actual point of death. In *Remarks on the Limits of Human Knowledge* he reflected:

What is (*consanguineus somni*) death? When do we die? You say, "when the soul leaves the body." This cannot be denied. But my question is, when does the soul leave the body? When we cease to breathe, according to the maxim, *Nullus spiritus, nulla vita*? This will not hold; for many have revived after respiration was utterly ceased. When the circulation of the blood stops? Nay, neither will this hold; for many have recovered after the pulse was quite gone. When the vital warmth ceases, and the juices lose their fluidity? Even this is not a certain mark; for some have revived after the body was quite cold and stiff; a case not uncommon in Sweden. But what token then can we surely know? It seems, none such can be found. God knows when the spirit returns to Him; and the spirit itself; but none that dwells in a body.[[29]](#footnote-28)

Less technically, more positivistically, and almost contradictorily he also defined the moment of death as "the moment the breath of man goes forth he is an inhabitant of eternity.[[30]](#footnote-29) In all events, death or "falling asleep"[[31]](#footnote-30), the separation of soul from body, is the ending of the life of the present body until the resurrection[[32]](#footnote-31) but inherent in this idea is the realization that death is continuation as well as end.

*Death as Separation of Soul and Spirit*

At death the soul continues, separate from the body. It is this classical idea of the separation of soul and body which is the definition of death which "cannot be denied."[[33]](#footnote-32) Wesley used the biblical phrasings (Eccl. 12:6): "the silver cord" and the "wheel broken at the cistern"[[34]](#footnote-33) and interpreted them very particularly in his typically scientific fashion. The "silver cord" referred to the spinal column "which is white and bright, in a dead, much more in a living body" and "the *cistern* is the left ventricle of the heart, and the *wheel* seems to be the great artery, which is fitly so called, because it is the great instrument of this circulation."[[35]](#footnote-34) Wesley even saw the separation of soul and body as typified in the disassembly and transport of the tabernacle where special care is taken of the holy things while the outer structure is stored away.[[36]](#footnote-35)

*Death as Transition and Destiny*

Unlike the body, the separated soul had an active destiny. Whether washed in the blood or dead in sin it made the transition to the "*eternal world*," which "commences at death, the death of every individual person. The moment the breath of man goes forth he is an inhabitant of eternity. Just then time vanishes away, 'like as a dream when one awaketh'" (Ps. 73:19).[[37]](#footnote-36) Or again: when the soul "leaves the body it launches out into the great deep, to live and think and feel forever."[[38]](#footnote-37) The believer "will pass with joy unspeakable out of the body into all this fullness of God."[[39]](#footnote-38) "Thus from the very hour when we first appear on the stage of life we are travelling toward death: we are preparing, whether we will or no, to return to the dust from whence we came!"[[40]](#footnote-39) The idea of transition is found in Wesley's descriptions of his beloved mother's passing. His Journal entry of July 18, 1742 depicts her as "on the borders of eternity."[[41]](#footnote-40) Five days later on the twenty-third:

About three in the afternoon I went to my mother, and found her change was near. I sat down on the bed-side. She was quite sensible. Her look was calm and serene, and her eyes fixed upward, while we commended her soul to God. From three to four, the silver cord was loosing, and the wheel breaking at the cistern; and then, without any struggle, or sigh, or groan, the soul was set at liberty. We stood round the bed, and fulfilled her last request, uttered a little before she lost her speech: "Children, as soon as I am released, sing a psalm of praise to God."[[42]](#footnote-41)

And so they did. At the funeral he read from the "great white throne" passage of Revelation 20:11-12.[[43]](#footnote-42)

*Death as Blessing*

There is also in Wesley the theme of the death of believer as a great blessing.[[44]](#footnote-43) This is so not only because it leads to the presence of God, but also because it is a release from Satan's bondage[[45]](#footnote-44) and from any number of evils such as wicked persons, weaknesses, bodily pain, delusions of sense, sin, corruption, etc.[[46]](#footnote-45) These ideas may be echoed in Wesley's use of the terms "gone to rest," "finished her course,"[[47]](#footnote-46) and "release"[[48]](#footnote-47) as appropriate euphemisms for death. The situation is quite different for the unbeliever, however. Yet, those bound for damnation in Wesley's scheme of things and whose day of grace was past may have been so hardened as to not experience any fear and trembling as their time nears.[[49]](#footnote-48)

*Death as Spiritual and Eternal Death*

But death is more than physiological expiration or ontological separation, or even existential escape. Death is also the deadness of the spirit in this life, which, if left without the remedy of Christ, culminates in the eternal death of the next life. The very notion of escape from sin is escape from spiritual death, a death which can be traced to the fall:

And in that day [the Fall] he was condemned by the righteous judgment of God. Then also the sentence, whereof he was warned before, began to take place upon him. For the moment he tasted that fruit, he died. His soul died, was separated from God; separate from whom the soul has no more life than the body has when separated from the soul. His body, likewise, became corruptible and mortal; so that death then took hold on this also.[[50]](#footnote-49)

This theme is also found in the *Minutes of Some Late Conversations*, 1774:

In Adam all die; that is, (1.) Our bodies then became mortal. (2.) Our souls died; that is, were disunited from God. And hence, (3.) We are all born with a sinful, devilish nature. By reason whereof, (4.) We are children of wrath, liable to death eternal. (Rom. v.18; Eph. ii.3.)[[51]](#footnote-50)

Hence, death can be described by Wesley as "the devil's servant and serjeant,"[[52]](#footnote-51) "enemies,"[[53]](#footnote-52) and a "hellish poison."[[54]](#footnote-53) By way of contrast, in a figurative sense one may "die daily" (1 Cor. 15:32) by living regularly "in the very jaws of death," and living, "as it were, in a daily martyrdom."[[55]](#footnote-54)

*Death as Power*

Death is also a personal power. This is implicit in the idea of "escaping from it" already described. It is also found in the imagery of Christ's conquest of death: Christ has triumphed over Satan, sin, and death.[[56]](#footnote-55) Jesus is "the Lord of life and death,"[[57]](#footnote-56) and death itself will be plundered.[[58]](#footnote-57) Death is even part of God's plan: "The sea is an excellent figure of the fullness of God, and that of the blessed Spirit. For as the rivers all return into the sea; so the bodies, the souls, and the good works of the righteous, return into God, to live there in his eternal repose."[[59]](#footnote-58) And so death, the spiritual malignancy, is conquered by Christ in the eschaton.[[60]](#footnote-59) Yet, for Wesley death was a double sided mystery of contrasting themes. It is the result of sin but it also is in the plan of God. It is the ultimate enslavement but it also is the mechanism of escape from enslavement. These tensions were resolved in Christ: "*Who hath abolished death*-Taken away its sting and turned it into a blessing."[[61]](#footnote-60)

*Death as Place*

Death was also a place where the bodies of both the good and evil dead are stored until the resurrection. At the end, death will give "up all the bodies of men" and hades, "the separate souls" so the souls and their bodies may be "re-united."[[62]](#footnote-61)

*Excursus: Physical Death and Original Sin*

Downes, citing "The New Birth" (I.4), written in 1760, argued that Wesley retreated from the view that Genesis 2.17 refers to death in a sense sufficiently broad so as to include death of the body.[[63]](#footnote-62) This, however, is less than convincing. Certainly Wesley held to physical death as a result of the Fall in the 1730 sermon "The Image of God:"

Its first effect must have been on his body, which, being before prepared for immortality, had no seeds of corruption within itself, and adopted none from without. . . The fruit of that tree alone of whose deadly nature he was forewarned seems to have contained a juice, the particles of which were apt to cleave to whatever they touched. Some of these, being received into the human body, might adhere to the inner coats of the finer vessels; to which again other particles that before floated loose in the blood, continually joining would naturally lay a foundation for numberless disorders in all parts of the machine. For death in particular since, more foreign matter cleaving to the former every day, the solid parts of the body would every day lose something of their spring, and so be less able to contribute their necessary assistance to the circulation of the fluids. The smaller channels would gradually fill up, especially those that lie near the extremities, where the current, by reason of its distance from the fountain, was always more slow and languid. The whole tide, as the force that threw it forward abated, must [also] have abated its swiftness in proportion till at length that force utterly failing, it ceased to move, and rested in death.[[64]](#footnote-63)

A similar position was also expressed in his major 1756 treatise *The Doctrine of Original Sin*, in which he unambiguously states that physical death is the result of original sin.[[65]](#footnote-64) In a number of sermons from 1759 to 1790, however, he emphasized the spiritual aspects of the results of the fall without mentioning physical death.[[66]](#footnote-65) But this may not be the entire picture. Firstly, in the "The New Birth" there is also the idea that physical death is *a*, if not *the*, result of the fall:

If it be said, "Nay, but that threatening, 'In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die,' refers to temporal death, and that alone, to the death of the body only;" the answer is plain; to affirm this is flatly and palpably to make God a liar; to aver that the God of truth positively affirmed a thing contrary to truth. For it is evident Adam did not *die* in this sense, "in the day that he ate thereof." He lived, in the sense opposite to this death, above nine hundred years after. So that this cannot possibly be understood of the death of the body, without impeaching the veracity of God. It must therefore be understood of spiritual death, the loss of the life and image of God.[[67]](#footnote-66)

Wesley's argument here seems to be that it cannot be temporal death "alone" which is referred to, since this was not effected in the day in which the tree was eaten. Second, this is reaffirmed in the 1782 sermon "On the Fall of Man:" "'And unto dust thou shalt return,' How admirably well has the wise Creator secured the execution of this sentence on all the offspring of Adam."[[68]](#footnote-67) It seems then, that Wesley did not so much retreat from the position that physical death was a function of the Fall, but that he did not always emphasize it in that context.

Summary

In attempting to adhere to Scripture, Wesley saw death, like its relative sin, as both against and also submitted to God. The end of physical life resulted in the temporary fragmenting of the human into body and soul. While the physical body lay in a place called "death," the soul advanced to a new life anticipating either the joy of heaven or the horror of the lake of fire. The death of sin in this life would either be transformed in Christ in the present and for future as the blood of Christ vanquished the power of death, or the death of sin would mature into eternal death culminating in the lake of fire.

*The Intermediate State*

Immediately after death, the soul, separated from the body, enters the intermediate state. This aspect of Wesley's eschatology also displays motifs common to his entire system. Most notable is a fantastic, tangible, complex, and dynamic spiritual reality--far more real than present experience. He envisioned an order of existence at once higher than and distinct from this world, and yet a place which was a world almost antetypical of the present. Whereas the activities of good and evil angels, and the visits to and visitations from the other side opened momentary glimpses, the study of the intermediate state looked beyond the veil into a new and greater existence. It is here that the majority of the souls of the dead remain until the judgment.[[69]](#footnote-68) This place is called Hades, "the place where the souls of the righteous remain from death till the resurrection."[[70]](#footnote-69) While the soul is in the intermediate state, the bodies of the dead are kept in "death" until reunited with their soul at the resurrection.[[71]](#footnote-70) The present section will examine and discuss: the nature and reality of Hades and the experience of the intermediate state, the experiences of the good and the evil dead, and those doctrines of the intermediate state rejected by Wesley.

The Nature and Reality of Hades

For Wesley the intermediate state was a real place divided into two compartments, one for the good and the other for the evil dead. He understood Hades or Sheol as not simply the place of the damned, but also and "literally, *the invisible world*" which included places for both the souls of the damned and the saved, from death until the final judgment.[[72]](#footnote-71) Typically he styled the abode of the good dead as "paradise" and the abode of the evil dead as "hell." Wesley used a number of terms for Paradise: the "antechamber of heaven,"[[73]](#footnote-72) the "porch of heaven,"[[74]](#footnote-73) "the seat of happy spirits in their separate state, between death and the resurrection,"[[75]](#footnote-74) and "the place where the souls of the righteous remain from death till the resurrection."[[76]](#footnote-75) Referring to the Scriptural description in the Lazarus and Dives story (Luke 16:19-31), Wesley noted it is also called "Abraham's bosom" and that it was this term by which "the Jews styled paradise."[[77]](#footnote-76) Wesley understood Paul's statement that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord as demonstrating "that the happiness of the saints is not deferred till the resurrection."[[78]](#footnote-77) He distinguished paradise from the third heaven which is the particular abode of God.[[79]](#footnote-78) Yet he identified "the paradise of my God," mentioned in Revelation 2:7 with the final state and its numerous trees of life.[[80]](#footnote-79) The place of the evil dead he also called *tophet*[[81]](#footnote-80), and even employed the term "*Hell-fire*" with reference to the valley of Hinnom, "whence the word in the original is taken," as the place he associated with the tradition of fiery child sacrifices to Moloch.[[82]](#footnote-81) He concluded that "both as to its former [as a place where earthly offenders may have been burnt] and latter state, it was a fit emblem of hell."[[83]](#footnote-82)

Wesley was quite clear that Hades is not simply a subjective experience, but a substantive reality which "may be called a place, though who can define or describe the place of spirits?"[[84]](#footnote-83) In his letter to William Law he posited the obvious question for one with his view of Scripture, inquiring as to why the Bible would speak of it if it were not so. He concluded in exclamation: "No hell, no heaven, no revelation!"[[85]](#footnote-84) The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus had aspects of a real event for Wesley, although he admitted he could not account for an actual conversation between the abode of the damned and paradise.[[86]](#footnote-85) He did, however note that spirits, given their typical abilities, could traverse the "great gulf" but for the will of God preventing them.[[87]](#footnote-86) He also spoke of Lazarus as a real historical person, thus implying the reality of the paradisiacal section of Hades, and hence, all of Hades, as a matter of course.[[88]](#footnote-87) For Wesley, the ultimate state of damnation into which sinners were cast was real, with an existence which transcended subjective experience, and from this it was concluded that Hades must be equally real.[[89]](#footnote-88)

Sheol or Hades was essential for Wesley, since it served as a place for souls separated from their bodies between death and the last judgment at the end of time.[[90]](#footnote-89) Working from Hebrews 11:27, he argued that there is one death and one final judgment for which all people wait.[[91]](#footnote-90) Nonetheless, there are some exceptions among believers with regard to their intermediate sojourn. "It may be, Enoch and Elijah entered at once into glory, without first waiting in paradise."[[92]](#footnote-91) Wesley also gave credence to the tradition that St. John was miraculously taken up from the earth.[[93]](#footnote-92) There is also a select group of believers in Revelation 20.4, the participants in the first resurrection, who apparently have their time in paradise curtailed, to live and reign reunited in their bodies with Christ in heaven at the juncture between the two millennia.[[94]](#footnote-93) On the basis of Wesley's comment on Revelation 1.18, Arnett concluded that:

Hades is also a term used for the invisible world of departed spirits, and we are told again that the body abides in death in the intermediate state, the soul in Hades. Obviously, Wesley is not precise or clear at this particular point. However it should be noted that he follows Bengel entirely in the *Notes* on the book of Revelation from which the last observation is made.[[95]](#footnote-94)

Wesley held that in death, the body continues in an inanimate state until the resurrection, while the soul experiences an active life in hades.[[96]](#footnote-95) It must be remembered, however, that, even in the intermediate state prior to the resurrection, dead souls "will have some sort of ethereal vehicle, even before God clothes us 'with our nobler house of empyrean light.'"[[97]](#footnote-96) Finally, neither Hades nor death will endure forever, but only until their respective purposes are completed. After the judgment when all persons enter into their final states, Death and Hades shall be cast into the lake of fire where they are "abolished for ever," since they are no longer needed; "consequently, neither *Death* nor *Hades* could any more have a being."[[98]](#footnote-97)

The Experience of the Intermediate State

Wesley described the experience of the intermediate state in great detail. Some points are common to both the good and the evil dead, and it is these general consequences which will next be considered, followed by particular discussions of the evil and good dead.[[99]](#footnote-98)

*The General Characteristics*

All the inhabitants of Hades are subject to a number of conditions which are general characteristics of their state: Death brings the end of all possessions.[[100]](#footnote-99) So also is the soul's relationship with that most personal possession, the body, ended--at least while it is in temporary storage, later to be retrieved in the much modified form of the resurrection body (see below).[[101]](#footnote-100) Yet, persons will have some sort of form in the immediate world to come:

We cannot tell, indeed, how we shall then exist or what kind of organs we shall have: the soul will not be encumbered with flesh and blood; but probably it will have some sort of ethereal vehicle, even before God clothes us "with our nobler house of empyrean light."[[102]](#footnote-101)

Indeed, apart from God "all other spirits, even the highest angels, even cherubim and seraphim, ... dwell in material vehicles, though of an exceeding light and subtle substance."[[103]](#footnote-102) The spirit in this new intermediate vehicle will also have a special facility for locomotion.[[104]](#footnote-103)

Wesley, preferring a more moderate solution, argued vehemently against "ingenious men" who claimed that all sense perception, consciousness, etc. ended with death.[[105]](#footnote-104) He did believe, however that "talents of a mixed nature" ended with death. These included: strength, health, beauty, etc.[[106]](#footnote-105) Although the "lower" senses of feeling, smell, and taste end, Wesley considered it "probable" that some sort of sight and hearing "exist in a far greater degree, in a more eminent manner than now" inasmuch as these are functions of the soul. There is a connection here with the fact that "the soul see[s], in the clearest manner . . . in dreams."[[107]](#footnote-106) In addition to certain senses, souls retain "understanding . . . memory . . . will . . . all the affections . . . in . . . full vigour." In fact, the intensity of these faculties may be even greater "than while the soul was clogged with flesh and blood."[[108]](#footnote-107) Notably, "*Will*, including all the *affections*, will remain in its full vigor."[[109]](#footnote-108)

Knowledge

The issue of knowledge was dealt with in some detail by Wesley. Inhabitants hereafter shall know "directly and distinctly" in "a clear, full, comprehensive manner, in some measure like God, who penetrates to the center of every object, and sees at one glance through my soul and all things."[[110]](#footnote-109) Though out of the body persons will still be able to think, being "thoroughly awake"[[111]](#footnote-110) in a much heightened state of ability:

Our *memory*, our *understanding*, will be so far from being destroyed, yea, or impaired by the dissolution of the body, that, on the contrary, we have reason to believe, they will be inconceivably strengthened. Have we not the clearest reason to believe, that they will then be wholly freed from those defects which now naturally result from the union of the soul with the corruptible body? It is highly probable, that, from the time these are disunited, our memory will let nothing slip; yea, that it will faithfully exhibit everything to our view which was ever committed to it. It is true that the invisible world is, in Scripture, termed "the land of forgetfulness;" or as it is still more strongly expressed in the old translation, "the land where all things are forgotten." They are forgotten; but by whom? Not by the inhabitants of that land, but by the inhabitants of the earth. It is with regard to them that the unseen world is "the land of forgetfulness." All things therein are too frequently forgotten by these' but not by disembodied spirits. From the time they have put off the earthly tabernacle, we can hardly think they forget anything.[[112]](#footnote-111)

The soul "shall learn more concerning these in an hour than we could in an age during our stay in the body."[[113]](#footnote-112) While a degree of ignorance will remain, mistakes will be eliminated and memory will be unshackled from mortal frailty.

From the time they [the dead] have put off the earthly tabernacle we can hardly think they forget anything . . . . Ignorance indeed belongs to every finite understanding (seeing there is none beside God that knoweth all things), but not mistake. When the body is laid aside, this also is laid aside for ever.[[114]](#footnote-113)

In fact, "real knowledge" exists only after death. "How far the knowledge or learning which we have gained by education will then remain, we cannot tell."[[115]](#footnote-114) Finally, the next world will complete the knowledge of spiritual things in which persons are now so deficient; thus comes the injunction for the present life with a future promise: "It is enough that we can love and obey *now*, and that we shall *know hereafter*."[[116]](#footnote-115)

Knowledge of Eternal Disposition

One overwhelmingly important piece of knowledge which is realized immediately upon entering the intermediate state is the sure and certain realization of one's ultimate destiny. "At the moment of death every man's final state is determined. But there is not a word in Scripture of a particular judgment immediately after death."[[117]](#footnote-116) Hence, "the soul at the moment . . . must be unspeakably happy or unspeakably miserable. And that misery will never end."[[118]](#footnote-117)

The moment a soul drops the body, and stands naked before God, it cannot but know what its portion will be to all eternity. It will have full in its view either everlasting joy, or everlasting torment; as it is no longer possible for us to be deceived in the judgment which we pass upon ourselves, but the Scripture gives us no reason to believe that God will then sit in judgment upon us. There is no passage in all the oracles of God which affirms any such thing. . . . The imagination, therefore, of one judgment at death, and another at the end of the world, can have no place with those who make the written Word of God the whole and sole standard of their faith.[[119]](#footnote-118)

In Hades the soul stands before God knowing "its portion" for all eternity because it will be "no longer possible for us to be deceived in the judgment which we pass upon ourselves."[[120]](#footnote-119) Wesley formed this concept into a powerful homiletical image:

3. And as he knows "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do," so he sees himself naked, stripped of all the fig-leaves which he had sewed together, of all his poor pretenses to religion or virtue, and his wretched excuses for sinning against God. He now sees himself like the ancient sacrifices, *tetraxelismenon*, "cleft in sunder," as it were, from the neck downward, so that all within him stands confessed. His heart is bare, and he sees it is all sin, "deceitful above all things, desperately wicked;" that it is altogether corrupt and abominable, more than it is possible for tongue to express; that there dwelleth there no good things, but unrighteousness and ungodliness only; every motion thereof, every temper and thought, being only evil continually.

4. And he not only sees, but feels in himself, by an emotion of souls which he cannot describe, that for the sins of his heart, were his life without blame (which yet it is not, and cannot be; seeing "an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit"), he deserves to be cast into "the fire that never shall be quenched." He feels that "the wages," the just reward, "of sin," of his sin above all, "is death;" even the second death, the death which dieth not, the destruction of the body and soul in hell.[[121]](#footnote-120)

At death the soul's eternal fate was decreed, and accordingly these souls were placed in the different parts of Hades--either to enjoy spiritual bliss and growth, or to suffer punishment and dark foreboding until the judgment.

Communication

Banishing any notion of a static existence, Wesley envisioned the intermediate state as being full of activity in which communication played an important part. Based on 1 Corinthians 13, "one language shall prevail among all the inhabitants of heaven, while the low, imperfect languages of earth are forgotten."[[122]](#footnote-121) Although the exact method of effecting this language could not be explained, Wesley concluded that the "*sonus exilis*, the low, shrill voice which the poet supposes to belong to a separate spirit, we cannot allow to have a real being; it is a mere flight of imagination."[[123]](#footnote-122) The language of paradise will even allow the good dead to have "fellowship with the holy angels."[[124]](#footnote-123) The evil dead presumably also have language as indicated by Wesley's treatment of Lazarus and Dives and the wickedness spoken by sinners to each other.[[125]](#footnote-124)

Communication will also be facilitated by the ability of people to recognize each other.[[126]](#footnote-125) On this last point Wesley was adamant:

Not know them! Nay, does not all that is in you recoil at that thought? Indeed skeptics may ask, "How do disembodied spirits know each other?" I answer plainly, I cannot tell, but I am certain that they do. This is as plainly proved from one passage of Scripture as it could be from a thousand. Did not Abraham and Lazarus know each other in Hades, even afar off [perhaps "Abraham and Dives" is intended; cf. vs. 23]? Even though they were fixed on different sides of the "great gulf?" Can we doubt then whether the souls that are together in paradise shall know one another? The Scripture therefore clearly decides this question. And so does the very reason of the thing. For we know every holy temper which we carry with us into paradise will remain in us for ever. But such is gratitude to our benefactors. This therefore will remain for ever. And this implies that the knowledge of our benefactors will remain, without which it cannot exist.[[127]](#footnote-126)

But not all current modes of communication will be replicated in future existence. Since Wesley rejected marriage as a relationship in the resurrection from the dead, it follows that he did hold to marriage in the intermediate state.[[128]](#footnote-127)

The Intermediate State of the Evil Dead

Wesley wrote in great detail about the abode of the evil dead.[[129]](#footnote-128) *Tophet* was prepared originally not for men but "'of old'" "'for the devil and his angels.'"[[130]](#footnote-129) Its more recent human inhabitants are entering it by "sin" which is "the gate of hell."[[131]](#footnote-130) They are conveyed to Hades by evil angels. Apparently, the devil will also be on hand to greet them.[[132]](#footnote-131)

Central to the idea of the evil state of the dead is the description of its torments. Into this place "no mercy can enter."[[133]](#footnote-132) It is characterized by all manner of positive and negative punishment of inconceivable duration (at least in the knowledge that it extends into the final state), magnitude, and seriousness that, for once, Wesley even censured Milton's speculations as well of those of other authors.[[134]](#footnote-133)

One difficulty which confronts the researcher in this regard is an apparent lack of precision in Wesley's writings. It is not always clear which statements relate to the intermediate state, which relate to the final state, and which relate to both. This is particularly true with respect to the sufferings of the evil dead as found in Sermon 73, "Of Hell." Here Wesley discussed "'the punishment of loss.' [which] . . . commences in that very moment wherein the soul is separated from the body."[[135]](#footnote-134) That he had the intermediate state in mind is indicated by his statement that the torments begin "in that very moment wherein the soul is separated from the body"[[136]](#footnote-135) and his allusion to paradise only a short time later.[[137]](#footnote-136) A number of descriptions immediately follow, however, which suggest he had the final state in view: the sentence passed on judgment day, the sentence passed on Adam and Eve, the never-ending torment of the fire and worm,[[138]](#footnote-137) and the evil dead being thrown into the lake of fire.[[139]](#footnote-138)  Again, in Sermon 115, "Dives and Lazarus," Dives, one of the evil dead, is described as being tormented by flame. This is clearly the intermediate state since the end of the world had not yet come.[[140]](#footnote-139) Further, in the Sermon 117, "The Discoveries of Faith," the evil dead who have just died are described as providing an infernal ministry to humanity requiring that the intermediate state is in view, yet "the worm that never dieth" is said to attend them. This worm is also associated with the fire of Mark 9:44 as described below.[[141]](#footnote-140) How may this apparently conflicting data be reconciled? The facts seem too obviously contradictory to simply ascribe it to too many hours on horseback and lack of careful editing.[[142]](#footnote-141) Rather, although it was nowhere found explicitly stated, the detailed torments of the intermediate state seem to extend over into the final state of the wicked dead. Thus, the intermediate state can be described as hell and the final state can also be described as hell. In both, punishments are suffered, but the intermediate state of the evil: has no resurrection bodies, allows some degree of communication between the good and evil dead, and is not the final permanent place of torment.[[143]](#footnote-142) Herein also is evidence for a high degree of continuity and interrelatedness in Wesley's view of reality. With this in mind, additional aspects of hell may be examined.

Wesley, drawing upon a long tradition, distinguished between two types of punishments: *poena damni*, "what they lose" and *poena sensus*, "what they feel."[[144]](#footnote-143) Among the *poena damni* of the evil state are the loss of enjoyment from eating and drinking, "the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, . . . the pride of life . . . . sensual enjoyments,"[[145]](#footnote-144) music and any pleasure dependent upon the outward senses.[[146]](#footnote-145) There is no honor, only "shame and everlasting contempt."[[147]](#footnote-146) All positive social interaction is lost: "There is no friendship in hell."[[148]](#footnote-147) Even pleasurable memories dependent on the outward senses are forgotten or remembered with pain because of their loss.[[149]](#footnote-148) In short, it is separation from all desirable things:[[150]](#footnote-149)

But they will then be sensible of a greater loss than that of all they enjoyed on earth. They have lost their place in Abraham's bosom, in the paradise of God. Hitherto indeed it hath not entered into their hearts to conceive what holy souls enjoy in the garden of God, in the society of angels, and of the wisest and best men that have lived from the beginning of the world (not to mention the immense increase of knowledge which they will then undoubtedly receive). But they will then fully understand the value of what they have vilely cast away.[[151]](#footnote-150)

Of this most special loss, more is said below.

The positive torments appear even worse. Hell is composed of "dreary regions" without beauty or light, except "that of livid flames"[[152]](#footnote-151) for the purpose of tormenting those imprisoned there.[[153]](#footnote-152) "There is nothing new but one unvaried scene of horror."[[154]](#footnote-153) The malignant inner evils of temporal existence are not separated from the unbeliever at death. "Pride, revenge, malice, envy, discontent" all add to his or her sufferings.[[155]](#footnote-154) Inwardly there will only be "shame and everlasting contempt."[[156]](#footnote-155) Not even thought will allow escape from the punitive conditions of the intermediate state. The sinner looking back to their time on earth will recall a wicked, empty, shameful life. Yet, looking forward [at the point of death] will reveal only "the devil and his angels" ready to carry the damned to a place where he or she shall be "bound with chains of darkness and reserved unto the judgment of the great day; or at best, he wanders up and down, seeking rest, but finding none." Thus, mental existence is reduced to "the fearful expectation of fiery indignation."[[157]](#footnote-156)

The intermediate state of the evil dead will be racked with "groans and shrieks; of weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth, of curses and blasphemies against God, or cutting reproaches of one another."[[158]](#footnote-157) Any breath of happy communication is destroyed[[159]](#footnote-158) by the company which will add to the torment. They will be worse than the worst criminals "emptied of every spark of good."[[160]](#footnote-159) And this company will not be of only a human sort, for the damned humans will cohabit hell with the evil angels which were cast down into it in chains of darkness to await the day of judgment.[[161]](#footnote-160)

Even in their torment the evil dead will not be allowed to be idle because this community of the wicked will be organized "by their bad master in advancing his infernal kingdom" so that they will work evil and in so doing inflict further evil upon themselves.[[162]](#footnote-161)

The souls of unholy men; seized the moment they depart from the quivering lips, but those ministers of vengeance, the evil angels, and dragged away to their own place. It is true, this is not the nethermost hell; they are not to be tormented there "before their time;" before the end of the world, when every one will receive his just recompense of reward. Till then will probably be employed by their bad master, in advancing his infernal kingdom, and in doing all the mischief that lies in their power, to the poor, feeble children of men. But still, wherever they seek rest, they will find none. They carry with them their own hell, in the worm that never dieth; in a consciousness of guilt, and of the wrath of God, which continually drinks up their spirits; in diabolical infernal tempers, which are essential misery; and in what they cannot shake off, no, not for an hour, any more than they cannot shake off their own being,-that "fearful looking for of fiery indignation," which will devour God's adversaries.[[163]](#footnote-162)

The thought is further expanded in the sermon "On Faith:"

Who knows how we shall be employed after we enter that invisible world? A little of it we may conceive, and that without any doubt, provided we keep to what God himself had revealed in his word, and what he works in the hearts of his children. Let us consider, First, what may be the employment of unholy spirits from death to the resurrection. We cannot doubt but the moment they leave the body, they find themselves surrounded by spirits of their own kind, probably human as well as diabolical. What power God may permit these to exercise over them, we do not distinctly know. But it is not improbable, he may suffer Satan to employ them, as he does his own angels, in inflicting death, or evils of various kinds, on the men that know not God: For this end they may raise storms by sea or by land; they may shoot meteors though the air; they may occasion earthquakes; and, in numberless ways, afflict those whom they are not suffered to destroy. Where they are not permitted to take away life, they may inflict various diseases; and many of these, which we judge to be natural, are undoubtedly diabolical. I believe this is frequently the case with lunatics. It is observable, that many of those mentioned in Scripture, who are called lunatics by one of the Evangelists, are termed demoniacs by another. One of the most eminent Physicians I ever knew, particularly in cases of insanity, the late Dr. Deacon, was clearly of opinion that his was the case with many if not with most, lunatics. And it is no valid objection to this, that these diseases are so often cured by natural means; for a wound inflicted by an evil spirit might be cured as any other, unless that spirit was permitted to repeat the blow.

9. May not some of these evil spirits be likewise employed, in conjunction with evil angels, in tempting wicked men to sin, and in procuring occasions for them? yea, and in tempting good men to sin, even after they have escaped the corruption that is in the world? Herein, doubtless, they put forth all their strength; and greatly glory if they conquer. A passage in an ancient author may greatly illustrate this: (Although I apprehend, he did not intend that we should take it literally:) "Satan summoned his powers, and examined what mischief each of them had done. One said, 'I have set a house on fire, and destroyed all its inhabitants.' Another said, 'I have raised a storm at sea, and sunk a ship; and all on board perished in the waters.' Satan answered, 'Perhaps those that were burned or drowned were saved.' A third said,'I have been forty years tempting a holy man to commit adultery; and I have left him asleep in his sin.['] Hearing this, Satan rose to do him honour; and said all hell resounded with his praise." Hear this, all ye that imagine you cannot fall from grace![[164]](#footnote-163)

Thus, the wicked behavior of evil persons does not end with this life nor does their wicked influence on this world.

To all of this misery Wesley added the very special torments he discovered under Jesus' figure of the undying worm and the unquenchable fire. The meaning of the worm he saw as having two aspects, as indicated by the use of "the worm" and "their worm."[[165]](#footnote-164) Wesley argued that this distinction of the possessive pronoun, which does not occur in connection with the fire, did not appear on Jesus' lips "by chance." It "seem[s]" "'the fire'" refers to general punishment given alike to all sinners, while "'their worm'" refers to a uniquely suited form of torment "infinitely varied according to the various kinds as well as degrees of wickedness."[[166]](#footnote-165) The torment of both body and soul is interpreted under the figure of the fire and the worm.[[167]](#footnote-166)

"The worm," includes: "a guilty conscience including self-condemnation, sorrow, shame, remorse, and a sense of the wrath of God;" "all unholy passions, fear, horror, rage, evil desire; desires that can never be satisfied;" "all unholy tempers; envy, jealously, malice, and revenge; all of which will incessantly gnaw the soul, as vulture was supposed to do to the liver of Tityus;" and "the hatred of God, and all his creatures."[[168]](#footnote-167) In the *Notes* Wesley expanded the list to include: "pride, self-will, desire, malice, envy, shame, sorrow, despair."[[169]](#footnote-168) The fire varies in intensity "according to their degree of guilt."[[170]](#footnote-169) Jesus spoke of the fire as real and thus the idea that the fire is "immaterial" is "absolute nonsense." This does not, however, mean that it may be equated it with the fire of everyday experience because "the present laws of nature are not immutable."[[171]](#footnote-170) Thus, in the note on Mark 9:44 he could say: that the fire could be "material or infinitely worse."[[172]](#footnote-171) Its torment is compounded by the fact that it will burn forever, apparently extending from the intermediate state into the final one. Here, modern science, if not being directly applicable, at least provided an analogy in the ever-burning substance "*Linum Asbestum*, the incombustible flax" which may be "thrown into the hottest fire, and when it is taken out again, it will be observed, upon the nicest experiment, not to have lost one grain of its weight."[[173]](#footnote-172)

Yet, all this will not even be the end of sorrows, for it is the separation from God which "will be the completion of their misery."[[174]](#footnote-173)

But as happy as the souls in paradise are, they are preparing for far greater happiness. For paradise is only the porch of heaven; and it is there the spirits of just men are made perfect. It is in heaven only that there is the fullness of joy, the pleasures that are at God's right hand for evermore. The loss of this by those unhappy spirits will be the completion of their misery. They will then know and feel that God alone is the centre of all created spirits; and consequently that a spirit made for God can have no rest out of him. It seems that the Apostle had this in his view when he spoke of those "who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." Banishment from the presence for the Lord is the very essence of destruction to a spirit that was made for God. And if that banishment lasts for ever, it is "everlasting destruction."[[175]](#footnote-174)

This will consist first in the eternal awareness of the loss of heaven.[[176]](#footnote-175) To this will be added the sure knowledge that the sinner has no more chances to be restored.[[177]](#footnote-176)

Specifically, this separation entails the loss of the "beatific vision" such that the greater the separation from God the greater the degree of torment. It is this which "seems to be the only punishment to which we can now conceive a pure spirit liable."[[178]](#footnote-177) This idea of degrees of punishment may also be found in a number of his other writings. In the *Notes* he saw "our Lord" as specifying three degrees of murder and attendant punishments from God.[[179]](#footnote-178) He also found levels of punishment implied in Matthew 25 and Luke 13:30.[[180]](#footnote-179) Levels were also seen in connection with the worm and fire (see above) where the intensity of the fire will be "according to their degree of guilt," as will the effects of "their" worm. His argument for levels of punishment is predicated on two points: First, from God's justice: if he rewards those in heaven according to their works so not also in hell? Second, from "the very nature of things," "they that bring most holiness to heaven will find most happiness there; so, on the other hand, it is not only true, that the more wickedness a man brings to hell the more misery he will find there."[[181]](#footnote-180)

The unending and uninterrupted nature of the torments of Hell are made repeatedly and with great emphasis. They are without limit in time apparently since they extend into the eternity of the final state (of which more below).[[182]](#footnote-181) They are also without limit with respect to intensity, at least potentially with respect to the various levels.[[183]](#footnote-182) There is no intermission in the torments.[[184]](#footnote-183) There are no distractions to alleviate the misery.[[185]](#footnote-184) One may not even faint to escape the torment.[[186]](#footnote-185) There is no hope of deliverance to which one may cling[[187]](#footnote-186) nor any hope of mercy.[[188]](#footnote-187) As a result, the "careless, thoughtless sinner," shall weep and "the proud and stubborn" sinner shall gnash his or her teeth.[[189]](#footnote-188)

Wesley defended the moral integrity of the eternity of the punishments on two points: Firstly, the eternity of the punishment befits the numerous warnings. Secondly, sinners are miserable in the next life due to a "necessity of nature." Therefore, sinners cannot change. In this regard, he cited Peter Browne's *Procedure (or Progress), Extent, and limits of Human Understanding*:

And the difficulty of that question, "What proportion endless torments can bear to momentary sins," is quite removed by considering that the punishments denounced are not sanctions entirely arbitrary, but are withal so many previous warnings or declarations of the natural tendency of sin itself. So that an unrepenting sinner must be miserable in another life by a necessity of nature. Therefore he is not capable of mercy; since there never can be an alteration of his condition, without such a charge of the whole man as would put the natural and settled order of the creation out of course.[[190]](#footnote-189)

The Intermediate State of the Good Dead

After death, the souls of the redeemed are separated from their bodies and spend the time until the judgment in that portion of

hades called paradise. Though not directly mentioning the intermediate state, Wesley understood Paul's statement concerning absence from the body and presence with the Lord as demonstrative of the fact "that happiness is not deferred till the resurrection."[[191]](#footnote-190) It is the place where "the spirits of just men are made perfect," while they await the resurrection.[[192]](#footnote-191)

The believer is introduced to paradise by angels who carry the spirit to the bosom of Abraham[[193]](#footnote-192) Preaching a funeral sermon for his friend's son, he parenthetically queried: "Let it suffice to have paid my last duty to him, (whether he is now hovering over these lower regions, or retired already to the mansions of eternal glory)."[[194]](#footnote-193) One is struck by the literal nature of these thoughts as well as the rest of the startling concreteness of his thought. Prior to His ascension, that Jesus was in paradise is evidenced by the content of His conversation with Mary in the garden:

It is indeed very generally supposed that the souls of good men, as soon as they are discharged from the body go directly to heaven; but this opinion has not the least foundation in the oracles of God: On the contrary, our Lord says to Mary after the resurrection, "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father" in heaven. But He had been in paradise, according to His promise to the penitent thief: "This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." Hence it is plain, that paradise is not heaven. It is indeed (if we may be allowed the expression) the ante-chamber of heaven, where the souls of the righteous remain till, after the general judgment, they are received into glory.[[195]](#footnote-194)

He will also be there to receive believing spirits in the same manner that the Father received His spirit.[[196]](#footnote-195)

Wesley gave graphic descriptions of paradise. He wove this image into a sermon at the end of his own life:

But how do you relish the company that surrounds you? Your old companions are gone, a great part of them probably separated from you never to return. Are your present companions angels of light? Ministering spirits that but now whispered, "Sister spirit, come away!," "We are sent to conduct thee over that gulf into Abraham's bosom." And what are those? Some of the souls of the righteous, whom thou didst formerly relieve with "the mammon of righteousness?" And who are now commissioned by your common Lord to "receive," to welcome you "into everlasting habitations?" The angels of darkness will quickly discern they have no part in you. So they must either hover at a distance, or flee away in despair. Are some of these happy spirits that take acquaintance with you the same that travelled with you below, and bore a part in your temptations? That together with you fought the good fight of faith, and laid hold on eternal life? As you then wept together you may rejoice together, you and your guardian angels, perhaps, in order to increase your thankfulness for being "delivered from so great a death." They may give you a view of the realms below-those

Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace

And rest can never dwell.

See, on the other hand, the mansions which were "prepared for you from the foundation of the world!" O what a difference between the dream that is past, and the real scene that is now present with thee! Look up! See,

No need of the sun in that day,

Which never is followed by night!

Where Jesus's beauties display

A pure and a permanent light.

Look down! What a prison is there,

'Twixt upper, and nether, and surrounding fire.

And what inhabitants! What horrid fearful shapes, emblems of the rage against God and man; the envy, fury, despair fixed within, causing them to gnash their teeth at him they so long despised! Meanwhile, does it comfort them to see, across the great gulf, the righteous in Abraham's bosom? What a place is that! What "a house of God, eternal in the heavens!" Earth is only his footstool; yea,

The spacious firmament on high,

And all the blue ethereal sky.

Well then may we say to its inhabitants:

Proclaim the glories of your Lord,

Dispersed through all the heav'nly street;

Whose boundless treasures can afford

So rich a pavement for his feet.

And yet how inconsiderable is the glory of that house compared to that of its great inhabitant! In view of whom all the first-born sons of light, angels, archangels, and all the company of heaven, full of light as they are full of love,

Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes.[[197]](#footnote-196)

One cannot but wonder, whether Wesley, as he wrote these lines within three years of death, saw his future in these images.

Once in paradise believers will be engaged in continual singing: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth!"[[198]](#footnote-197) and unending, joyous praise,[[199]](#footnote-198) emanating from eternally happy saints[[200]](#footnote-199) "united" in choirs with angels.[[201]](#footnote-200) Such worship is "the noblest employment."[[202]](#footnote-201) To those who would anticipate being bored in this context Wesley responded:

How strange must not only the manner of existence appear, and the place wherein you are (if it may be called "place," though who can define or describe the "place of spirits?"), but the inhabitants of that unknown region! Whether they are of the number of those unhappy spirits that kept not their first estate, or of those holy one that still minister to the heirs of salvation! How strange are the employments of those spirits with which you are now surrounded How bitter are they to the taste of those that are still dreaming upon hearth! "I have no relish," said one of these (a much-applauded wit, who has lately left the body), "for sitting upon a cloud all day long, and singing praise to God." We may easily believe him; and there is no danger of his being put to that trouble. Nevertheless this is no trouble to them who cease not day and night, but continually sin, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth!"[[203]](#footnote-202)

Amidst this praise, faith will cease from lack of need.

Faith will totally fail, it will be swallowed up in sight, in the everlasting vision of God.

. . . .

The angels, who from the moment of their creation beheld the face of their Father that is in heaven, had no occasion for faith in its general notion, as it is the evidence of things not seen. Neither had they need of faith in its more particular acceptation, faith in the blood of Jesus; for he took not upon him the nature of angels, but only the seed of Abraham.

. . . .

Nor is it certain (as ingeniously and plausibly as many have descanted upon this) that faith, even in the general sense of the word, had any place in paradise. It is highly probable, from that short and uncircumstantial account which we have in Holy Writ, that Adam, before he rebelled against God, walked with him by sight and not by faith.

. . . .

So shall you daily increasing holy love, till faith is swallowed up in sight, and the law of love established to all eternity.[[204]](#footnote-203)

The note on 1 Corinthians 13.13 is more succinct: "*Faith, hope, love*-Are the sum of perfection on earth; love alone is the sum of perfection in heaven."[[205]](#footnote-204)

It will be a place "'where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.'"[[206]](#footnote-205) They will be "delivered . . . also from all sin,"[[207]](#footnote-206) there will be "no . . . flesh lusting against the Spirit, . . . root of bitterness . . . pride . . . self-will."[[208]](#footnote-207) Rather, there will be only freedom from all "evils which are necessary in this world, either as the consequence of sin or from the cure of it." Even temporal memories of bodily pain will grow faint.[[209]](#footnote-208)

Freedom from "infirmities and follies from which they could not escape . . . delusions of sense, or the dreams of imagination . . . not hindered from seeing the noblest truths . . . nor do they ever loose sight . . . not entangled with prejudice . . . partial views . . . difference of opinions . . . [and] controversy."[[210]](#footnote-209)

Here, was finally hope for the reality of God, beyond the need for proofs and probabilities. Assurance would fade with sight.

True to his platonic and biblical images, Wesley saw the intermediate state as a place of light.[[211]](#footnote-210) While this often seems a quite literal description in his writings, he also discussed it in terms of "the figurative images of light and glory and a kingdom."[[212]](#footnote-211) There, bathed in whatever is the exact nature of that heavenly glow, the saints will "meet with 'the glorious dead of ancient days'"[[213]](#footnote-212) as well as family, friends, and other believers.[[214]](#footnote-213)

The sweet associations and social interactions begun on earth will continue. Table communion will exist, but will be of a different fashion than that enjoyed on earth. Certainly no "composition of earth and water, yea, though air and fire be added thereto . . . can feed those beings of a higher order" for they shall eat "manna."[[215]](#footnote-214) Yet, interestingly, the note on Matthew 26:29 seems to have Christ drinking real wine in the future state.[[216]](#footnote-215)

In yet another a mirror image of the situation of the evil dead, the thoughts of believers whether directed to the past or future were seen as a positive blessing. From the moment of death the believer can look backward and see "a life well spent" or look forward and see "a convoy of angels ready to carry him into Abraham's bosom" or a "pleasing . . . prospect" of future inheritance.[[217]](#footnote-216) One clearly gets the impression that the process described is similar to, but much more vivid than earthly memory and anticipation.

But these joys and blessing are not uniform. In a circumstance parallel to the damned, Wesley saw the righteous as reaping greater or lesser degrees of joy in the future state. Wesley based this on a rather creative interpretation of 1 Corinthians 15:41-42, such that each will be rewarded according to their labor in terms of suffering and obedience.[[218]](#footnote-217) The different blessings, like the varied torments of the damned, are mediated (at least in part) by a greater or lesser perspective of the "beatific vision" such that "according as all intelligent beings are at a lesser or greater distance from this fountain of all happiness, so they are necessarily more or less miserable or happy."[[219]](#footnote-218) In the letter to Mary Bishop, Wesley quotes the dying peasant of Frederica: "'To be sure heaven is a fine place, a very fine *place*; but I do not care for that: I want *to see God* and to *be with Him*."[[220]](#footnote-219)

As with the evil dead, there will be opportunity for earthly ministry. The deceased righteous, along with the angels, may intercede for those yet on earth. This is not, however, to be confused with the "invocation of saints," praying to them, etc.[[221]](#footnote-220) In addition to this intercession, departed souls may have the opportunity to actually intervene in earthly affairs:

And how much will that add to the happiness of those spirits who are already discharged from the body, that they are permitted to minister to those whom they have left behind! An indisputable proof of this we have in the twenty-second chapter of the Revelation. When the Apostle fell down to worship the glorious spirit, which he seems to have mistaken for Christ, he told him plainly, "I am of thy fellow-servants, the Prophets;" not God, not an angel, but a human spirit. And in how many ways may they "minister to the heirs of salvation!" Sometimes by counteracting wicked spirits whom we cannot resist, because we cannot see them; sometimes by preventing our being hurt by men, or beasts, or inanimate creatures. How often may it please God to answer the prayer of good Bishop Ken!-

O may thine angles, while I sleep, Around my bed their vigils keep; Their love angelical instil; Stop all the avenues of ill! May they celestial joys rehearse, And thought to thought with me converse; Or, in my stead, the whole night long, Sing to my God a grateful song!

And may not the Father of spirits allot this office jointly to angels, and human spirits waiting to be made perfect?

13. It may indeed be objected, that God has no need of any subordinate agents, of either angelical or human spirits, to guard his children in their waking or sleeping hours; seeing "he that keepeth Israel doth neither slumber nor sleep." And certainly, he is able to preserve them by his own immediate power, yea, and he is able by his own immediate power, without any instruments at all, to supply the wants of all his creatures, both in heaven and earth. But it is and ever was his pleasure not to work by his own immediate power only, but chiefly by subordinate means, from the beginning of the world. And how wonderfully is his wisdom displayed in adjusting all these to each other! So that we may well cry out, "O Lord, how manifold are they works! In wisdom hast thou made them all![[222]](#footnote-221)

For Wesley, good works continued into the future life.

One of the dominant themes in Wesley's thought about both the intermediate and the final states of the good dead is that they would be places where "the spirits of just men are made perfect."[[223]](#footnote-222)  The quest of Christian holiness did not terminate with the achievement of perfection in temporal existence or with the achievement of heaven in the future. In the "Plain Account" he declared: "'The heaven of heaven is love' . . . . You can go no higher than this, till you are carried into Abraham's bosom."[[224]](#footnote-223) In paradise believers "will learn more in an hour than in a life time."[[225]](#footnote-224) This continuance of perfection is also found in the late sermon "On Faith, Hebrews 11:1" (1791) in which he described saints in the intermediate state as being "perpetually holier and happier, till they are received into the 'kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.'"[[226]](#footnote-225) The potential of this perfection is so great, even in its initial stages, that Wesley concluded that St. Paul denied his own perfection in Philippians 3:12 in comparison.[[227]](#footnote-226) Interestingly the idea is only hinted at in the *Notes upon the New Testament*.[[228]](#footnote-227) Although they do indicate levels of holiness:

Multitudes are afterwards described, and still higher degrees of glory which they attain after a sharp fight and magnificent victory, Rev. xiv.1; xv.2; xix.1; xx.4. There is an inconceivable variety in the degrees of reward in the other world. Let not any slothful one say, "If I get to heaven at all, I will be content:" such an one may let heaven go altogether. In worldly things, men are ambitious to get as high as they can. Christians have a far more noble ambition. The difference between the very highest and the lowest state in the world is nothing to the smallest difference between the degrees of glory. But who has time to think of this? Who is at all concerned about it?[[229]](#footnote-228)

This conception appears consonant with Wesley's observation that the state of perfection is often not reached until just before death, if at all in this world.[[230]](#footnote-229) In a manner parallel to the ever increasing perfection of His followers, Christ engages in a continuous ministry of intercession for them.[[231]](#footnote-230) Thus, even after the guaranteed instantaneous sanctification of death, Wesley envisioned spiritual growth in holiness as a continuing process.[[232]](#footnote-231)

Rejected Doctrines of the Intermediate State

Wesley also rejected a number of doctrines associated with the intermediate state.

*The Descent into Hell*

The much debated "descent into hell" was rejected by Wesley. Although in the Thirty-nine Articles of the Anglican tradition, it was omitted from Wesley's Twenty-five Articles.[[233]](#footnote-232) His comment on Acts 2:27 was unambiguous: "it doth not appear that ever our Lord went into hell."[[234]](#footnote-233) In Ephesians 4:9 he identifies *the lower parts of the earth* as "the womb . . ., Psalm cxxxix.15; the grave, Psalm lxiii.9, "not hell.[[235]](#footnote-234) In 1 Peter 3:19-21 he held that Christ's preaching to the spirits in prison was "through the ministry of Noah."[[236]](#footnote-235) During the great intermission of Good Friday to Easter Sunday Wesley placed Christ's soul in paradise.[[237]](#footnote-236) Following this lead the American Methodist Conference of 1786 deleted it from the Apostles Creed. Behind these moves lay a long history of controversy which had brought tumult to Elizabethan England.[[238]](#footnote-237)

*Purgatory*

Wesley rejected purgatory with a singular vehemence.[[239]](#footnote-238) This may have some connection with his general anti-Catholic disposition. Such a position is consistent with his firm stand against indulgences as found in his analysis of a Roman Catechism[[240]](#footnote-239) and the doctrine of Rome on this point in general.[[241]](#footnote-240) In typical fashion, he developed at least nine separate arguments against the position: (1) It is fundamentally a Roman resuscitation of a heathen idea.[[242]](#footnote-241) (2) Support for the doctrine cannot be found in the tradition, in fact, the likes of Cyprian, Gregory of Nazianzus, Jerome, and Austin all testify against it.[[243]](#footnote-242) (3) It is contrary to grace.[[244]](#footnote-243) (4) Purgatory is an inadequate substitute for the biblical doctrine of hell.[[245]](#footnote-244) (5) The thief on the cross would surely have had to go to purgatory and yet it is undeniable that he went immediately to paradise.[[246]](#footnote-245) (6) The keys of Death and Hades belong to Christ (Rev. 1:18) and, hence, "How comes then his supposed successor at Rome by the keys of purgatory?"[[247]](#footnote-246) (7) The argument that purgatory is found in the fire of 1 Corinthians 3:13 cannot stand because the fire described there is the fire of judgment day. This would require purgatory to be after the last judgment, a position which "utterly overthrows" the idea.[[248]](#footnote-247) (8) The descriptions of paradise in Scripture have "no resemblance at all to the Popish purgatory, wherein wicked men are supposed to be tormented in purging fire till they are sufficiently purified to have a place in heaven."[[249]](#footnote-248) (9) He concludes on the basis of Revelation 14.13: "*For they rest* - No pain, no purgatory follows; but pure unmixed happiness."[[250]](#footnote-249) In short, the "Romish Doctrine" of purgatory is "repugnant."[[251]](#footnote-250) In addition to purgatory, Wesley also took to task the conception of the "middle state" common to eastern Christianity, in which a somewhat repentant Dives might yet be saved. While far milder than its Roman counterpart, Wesley still found such a conception unreconcilable with the "'great gulf'" of Luke 16.[[252]](#footnote-251)

*Immediate Judgment*

Wesley sees no Scriptural evidence for a judgment "immediately after death."[[253]](#footnote-252) He was certain that there was not "a word in Scripture of a particular judgment immediately after death."[[254]](#footnote-253) This idea should be seen as complimentary to his understanding that the soul knows its eternal destiny upon entering death (see above).[[255]](#footnote-254)

*Prayers for the Sinful Dead*

Wesley, consistent with his Anglican tradition, defended his general praying for the faithful dead as distinguished from the Roman practice of interceding for those who have died in their sins: "That we, with all those who are departed in thy faith and fear, may have our perfect consummation of bliss, both in body and soul"[[256]](#footnote-255) He gave three reasons for his position: "earliest antiquity," the Church of England, and the Lord's prayer.[[257]](#footnote-256) It is appropriate to note here that angels may intercede for us with God but we are not to pray to them.[[258]](#footnote-257) Note especially Wesley's balanced position:

We honour the holy angels, as they are God's ministers, and are "sent forth to minister unto them that shall be heirs of salvation." (Heb. i.14.) But, to worship or pray to them, we dare not, as it is what they themselves refuse and abhor (Rev. xix.10), and the Scripture doth condemn as "a sign of a fleshy mind, vainly intruding into those things which we have not seen." (Col. ii.18.) Theodore, upon this text, saith, that the practice of worshipping angels continued a long time in Phrygia and Pisidia; wherefore the Synod of Laodicea doth forbid praying to angels: "For Christians ought not to forsake the Church of God,and depart aside and invocate angels, which are things forbidden." [*Conc. Laoc., Can. 35*.][[259]](#footnote-258)

He also developed a biting critique based on Dives and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31): "It cannot be denied, but here is one precedent in Scripture of praying to the departed saints: but who is it that prays, and with what success? Will any, who considers this, be fond of copying after him?"[[260]](#footnote-259)

*Supererogation and Indulgences*

Wesley argued vigorously against "works of supererogation" on the basis "that we can never do more than our duty; seeing that all we have is not our own, but God's, all we can do is due to him."[[261]](#footnote-260) In this connection, Wesley also vigorously rejected "the invocation of departed saints" and the veneration of images.[[262]](#footnote-261) In a similar fashion he believed that no help may be rendered to the unbeliever after death through indulgences. In favor of his position he pointed to Luke 16:26 and the fathers.[[263]](#footnote-262)

*Soul Sleep*

Wesley also rejected the doctrine of "soul sleep" or psychopannychy.[[264]](#footnote-263) In addition to these arguments, noted are his detailed descriptions of the very awake realm of Hades in relation to both the good and evil dead. Interestingly, he seemed to endorse the position in the case of the Old Testament saints in his comment on Job 3:17,[[265]](#footnote-264) but uses an allusion from this very same passage in describing Lazarus.[[266]](#footnote-265)

*The Great Day of the Lord*

Death, the intermediate state, and the present world come to a climactic end in the "great day of the Lord." Under this heading a number of related concepts may be addressed: terminology, the events immediately preceding and including the coming of the Lord in glory, the rapture and resurrection of the saints, the final judgment, and the transition of the worlds. Many of the events are so closely intermingled as to make an exact sequencing of every detail difficult.

Terminology

Wesley identified a number of Scriptural terms for the climactic event of history: "the great day,"[[267]](#footnote-266) "the last day,"[[268]](#footnote-267) "that day," "the day of Jesus Christ," "the day of the Lord," "the great and terrible day,"[[269]](#footnote-268) and "the day of vengeance."[[270]](#footnote-269) These terms are in contrast to "*His day*" and "*the days of the son of Man*" which refer to the earthly sojourn of Jesus.[[271]](#footnote-270) They are also in contrast to "The day of the sons of men," which refers to the period from creation to judgment and "our day," which refers to the current time (apparently beginning after the ascension, perhaps at the time the New Testament was written).[[272]](#footnote-271) Sugden, however, says that

Wesley identifies without discussion the Day of Jehovah of the Old Testament prophets and the Jewish Apocalyptic writers with the Day of our Lord's second coming, the general resurrection and the last judgement of the New Testament documents; and he uses indiscriminately passages from all these sources to give detail and picturesqueness to his picture"[[273]](#footnote-272)

While there is some truth to this, it may be a function of his hermeneutic which allowed the "telescoping" of prophetic perception.[[274]](#footnote-273)

The Reality of the Consummation

The reality and unavoidability of the final day and its ultimate judgment at the end of the world were fundamental truths for Wesley.[[275]](#footnote-274) Denial of the second coming was the wresting of the Scripture described by Peter (2 Pet. 3:16).[[276]](#footnote-275) Commenting on 1 Kings 13:22, he noted that "Certainly there must be a judgment to come, when these things shall be called over again, and when those who sinned most and suffered least in this world will receive according to their works."[[277]](#footnote-276) Wesley saw the day of the Lord and the judgment as prophetically depicted in Joel 2-3.[[278]](#footnote-277) Judgment was also a recurring theme in the sermons.[[279]](#footnote-278)

Yet these quite specific views of judgment must be placed in a broader theological context. The great spiritual battle of God against Satan continues with a particular earnestness and finality from the crucifixion / resurrection event[[280]](#footnote-279) and so the forces of evil in spiritual realms live in trembling fear as they appreciate their inevitable fate.[[281]](#footnote-280) Thus, although the battle rages on earth, the great victory of the war is sure and it is this eschatological triumph which is foreshadowed in the uncounted daily skirmishes which both precede and prefigure the final conquering of the final judgment.[[282]](#footnote-281)

The Events Preceding the Return

The return of the Lord will be presaged by great civil disturbance consistent with the descriptions of the end of the second millennium in Wesley's general eschatology.[[283]](#footnote-282) Following these will come a crescendo of events which wrack the very nature of the universe. Wesley apparently saw the transition of the old to the new universe as a two stage process, although at times his descriptions seem to be conflated.[[284]](#footnote-283) The first stage will be a great disordering of the original universe "which will precede our standing before the judgment seat of Christ."[[285]](#footnote-284) It is at this time that the earth will quake and stars will fall while humanity will try to hide themselves in fear of the awful event.[[286]](#footnote-285) Then Christ will return and execute the judgment. As the day of the Lord draws to an end, the second phase will come when the heavens finally flee away and the new heavens and earth descend.[[287]](#footnote-286) It therefore seems that the judgment will take place on and above an obliterated earth and under a heaven with the stars "thrown out of their orbits."[[288]](#footnote-287)

Wesley, perhaps reflecting his keen scientific interests, engaged in considerable speculation on the processes which accompany the great day. His description of the events is dramatic, detailed, and accords with a relatively literal interpretation of the Scriptural account. There will be atmospheric storms and smoke on the surface of the earth.[[289]](#footnote-288) These cataclysms may be compounded by terrible earthquakes[[290]](#footnote-289) which will occur "in all places,"[[291]](#footnote-290) even shaking the "heavens."[[292]](#footnote-291) The effects will be staggering as islands and mountains disappear.[[293]](#footnote-292) There will also be watery disturbances.[[294]](#footnote-293) There will be great signs in the heavens.[[295]](#footnote-294) "The stars shall withdraw their shining."[[296]](#footnote-295) The "wandering stars" of Jude 13 are "literally, *planets*, . . . and will be soon cast into outer darkness."[[297]](#footnote-296) The stars themselves will finally fall to earth.[[298]](#footnote-297) In the midst of this chaos Christ returns.

The Return of the Lord

When the Lord comes "the abruptness of the sentence surrounds us with a sudden light" and Christ shall appear "in the clouds of heaven."[[299]](#footnote-298) The sign of the Son of Man shall appear (probably the cross).[[300]](#footnote-299) He will both send his angels, and descend with his host.[[301]](#footnote-300) This appears to be connected to God descending from heaven on the Great White Throne of Revelation 20:11 when heaven and earth "flee."[[302]](#footnote-301) All people will see Jesus return, but with different responses as a result of their different spiritual states.[[303]](#footnote-302) As the Lord returns, the bodies of dead believers are resurrected, arising from the graves and the sea while believers who are alive at the time of His coming are caught up in the air to meet Him. In both cases their bodies are transformed into resurrection bodies fit for meeting the Lord and spending eternity with Him in heaven.[[304]](#footnote-303) The believers ascend and meet the Lord in the air.[[305]](#footnote-304) The evil dead also seem to be resurrected although they do not meet Christ in the air.[[306]](#footnote-305) The nations are gathered (Matt. 25:33)[[307]](#footnote-306) The great judgment unfolds.[[308]](#footnote-307)

The Resurrection and Rapture

The resurrection and rapture formation represented a profound transformation for Wesley. It was the definitive "reuniting" of the restored individual body to their souls,[[309]](#footnote-308) as well as a transformation which was part of the ongoing process of perfection.[[310]](#footnote-309) The resurrection was of such import that Wesley discovered references to it in the Old Testament. Commenting on Hosea 13:24 he said:

He conquered the grave, and will at the great day of the resurrection open those prison-doors, and bring us out in glory. *From death*-From the curse of the first death, and from the second death, which shall have no power over us. *Thy plagues*-Thus I will destroy death. I will pull down those prison-walls, and bring our all that are confined therein, the bad of whom I will remove into other prisons, the good I will restore to glorious liberty.[[311]](#footnote-310)

Wesley made it clear that the resurrection is not simply an event in which the righteous "'shall revive,' (as naturally as they die,) but *shall be made alive*, by a power not their own."[[312]](#footnote-311)

When we are weaned from the guilt of our sins, and cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, then we shall long to be dissolved, and to be with our exalted Saviour; we shall always be ready to take wing for the other world, where we shall at last have a body suited to our spiritual appetites.[[313]](#footnote-312)

The resurrection, then is a fundamental transition of nature.

The great evidence of resurrection is Christ's own rising from the dead.[[314]](#footnote-313) Beyond this, the fact that the promise of a kingdom to Christ was not realized prior to His death is further assurance of the believer's resurrection (cf. 2 Sam. 7:13).[[315]](#footnote-314) Our resurrection is also implied in the "God of the living" discourse of Jesus in Luke 20:38.[[316]](#footnote-315) The resurrection is in fact implicit in God's very relationship with humanity:

Since he [God] cannot be said . . . to be the God of human persons, such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, consisting of souls and bodies, if their bodies were to abide in everlasting death; there must needs be a future state of blessedness, and a resurrection of the body to share with the soul in it.[[317]](#footnote-316)

Although Wesley was not found to use the term rapture, the term is used here to denote the events most specifically described in 1 Corinthians 15:50-52 and Thessalonians 4:13-18.[[318]](#footnote-317) The rapture apparently occurs at the event of the general resurrection and judgment.[[319]](#footnote-318) The Lord will descend with the shout (1 Thess. 4:16) which will "probably" be "a proclamation made to a great multitude," above which will be "the voice of the archangel" and "above both, *the trumpet of God*; the voice of God, somewhat analogous to the sound of a trumpet."[[320]](#footnote-319) The "we who are left" of 1 Thessalonians 4:15 "intimates the fewness of those who will be then alive compared to the multitude of the dead."[[321]](#footnote-320) It is the resurrection body with which believers "shall meet the Lord in the air when he comes to judgement, and mount up with him into the highest heaven."[[322]](#footnote-321) Thus, the righteous will be gathered together "in the clouds"[[323]](#footnote-322) and "the wicked will remain beneath, while the righteous, being absolved, shall be assessors with their Lord in judgment."[[324]](#footnote-323)

The Final Judgment

The final judgment is a grand and culminating event for Wesley.[[325]](#footnote-324) An awe inspiring overview of the judgment is given in Wesley's "Advice to a Soldier:"

And are you to be judged? How is this to be? Why, the Son of God shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him; "and then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before Him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them from one another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. Behold, he cometh with clouds! And every eye shall see Him which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty! And I saw" (wilt thou also say) "a great white throne, and Him that sat thereon, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and they were judged, every man according to his works."[[326]](#footnote-325)

Of this scene Wesley remarked:

With what majesty and grandeur does our Lord here speak of himself! giving us one of the noblest instances of the true sublime. Indeed not many descriptions in the sacred writings themselves seem to equal this. Methinks we can hardly read it, without imagining ourselves before the awful tribunal it describes.[[327]](#footnote-326)

It was perhaps Wesley's reaction to these biblical depictions which inspired his faculty of dramatic description to the heights found in his elaborations on the process of judgment. Each detail is expounded with a concreteness and specificity creating a nearly tangible and palpable image of the great event.[[328]](#footnote-327)

*The Judge*

The Son is the person "by whom God will judge the world."[[329]](#footnote-328) Yet there is clearly a Trinitarian aspect to His identity.[[330]](#footnote-329) "The Lord" is also described by Wesley as "The Judge, the Rewarder, the Avenger."[[331]](#footnote-330) Christ "is appointed judge because he was made man"[[332]](#footnote-331) and it is the raising of Jesus which demonstrates to all "that he was to be the glorious judge of all."[[333]](#footnote-332) Christ's position as judge will inspire awe and dread in those judged.[[334]](#footnote-333)

Wesley also concluded that God will have helpers in the day

of judgment. In this connection he noted that the authority which is granted to the servants in Mark 14:34 is for "the services that are to be performed by all his servants, in the day of judgment; but may be applied to all men, and to the time of death."[[335]](#footnote-334) Considering Matthew 19:28 he said "in the beginning of the judgment" the Apostles "shall stand, 2 Cor. v.10" and "then being absolved, they shall sit with the Judge, 1 Cor. vi.2."[[336]](#footnote-335) In a similar fashion (commenting on I Corinthians 6:2) "*The saints*-after having been judged themselves *shall judge the world*-shall be assessors with Christ in the judgment wherein He shall condemn all the wicked, as well angels as men."[[337]](#footnote-336)

*The Place of the Judgment*

Although Wesley acknowledged that there is "no explicit account in Scripture" regarding the place of the judgment, he was not undeterred in his quest for precise detail. He referred to "an eminent writer" and others who suggested it will occur on earth and that God will use angels "to smooth and lengthen out the boundless space, and spread an area for all human race." As a better alternative, Wesley suggested that somewhere "above the earth, if not 'twice planetary height,'" is closer to the Lord's account and 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17: "so that it seems most probable, the great white throne will be high above the earth."[[338]](#footnote-337) The wicked dead, however, will remain on the earth.[[339]](#footnote-338)

*The Extent of the Those Judged*

The extent of those judged was also considered by Wesley. Those present at the judgment will include all the evil angels, devils, good angels, good and evil people, and God (cf. Heb 12:22).[[340]](#footnote-339) It is "a great multitude, which no man can number." Everyone will be in attendance: "every man, every woman, every infant of days that ever breathed the vital air, . . . all of every age, sex, or degree, all that ever lived or died, or underwent such change as will be equivalent with death." This assessment was, however, unsatisfyingly imprecise and in his typically empirical manner he estimated the then current population of the earth to number at least four hundred million and the earth to have existed for seven-thousand years.[[341]](#footnote-340) On the basis of Revelation 5:11, he speculated that the saved to number at least 202,000,000.[[342]](#footnote-341) The categories of saved and unsaved human beings, while distinct and clear from the viewpoint of eternity, were not fully knowable from the perspective of earth: "Nor do I conceive that any man living has a right to sentence all the heathen and Mahometan world to damnation."[[343]](#footnote-342) On the other hand, Wesley's belief that most people had always been irreligious suggested that many will be among the damned.[[344]](#footnote-343)

*The Length of the Judgment*

The scriptural day of the Lord, the day of judgment, etc. did not necessarily mean for Wesley a literal twenty-four hour day. He cited three arguments in support of this: (1) Second Peter 3:8 equates a single day to a thousand years (cf. Ps. 90.4). (2) Many of the "ancient fathers" took the day of judgment to be a great period of time. (3) The vast numbers of people to be judged require a long period of time. From these Wesley concluded that the fathers "did not go far beyond the truth; nay probably they did not come up to it. . . . so that it may not improbably comprise several thousand years. But God shall reveal this also in its season." [[345]](#footnote-344)

*The Process of the Judgment*

The occurrences of the final judgment follow "the strict process of that day."[[346]](#footnote-345) The scene opens with the dead standing before the judge.[[347]](#footnote-346) With Jesus will stand the twelve Apostles, with the exception of Judas. At first "they shall stand . . . then being absolved they shall sit" on the twelve thrones promised by Jesus.[[348]](#footnote-347) As "'the dead, small, and great' . . . 'stand before God,'" the Judge acts. "The books" are "opened" (Matt. 13:15; Rev. 20:12):

the Book of Scripture, to them who were entrusted therewith, the Book of Conscience to all mankind. The "Book of Remembrance" likewise (to use another scriptural expression), which had been writing "from the foundation of the world," will then be laid open to the view of all the children of men. Before all these, even the whole human race, before the devil and his angels, before an innumerable company of holy angles, and before God the Judge of all . . . without any shelter or covering, without any possibility of disguise, to give a particular account of the manner wherein thou hast employed all thy Lord's goods.[[349]](#footnote-348)

God's supernatural knowledge in the judgment was a recurrent theme.[[350]](#footnote-349) The material for what would appear to be the "Book of Remembrance" apparently had been collected supernaturally as Divinity listened in on the conversations of mortals in a direct manner.[[351]](#footnote-350) The book of God will also contain the actions and sufferings of the good.[[352]](#footnote-351) The "account" that will be given is described in Matthew 25 and although the answers of the righteous and the wicked are not exact statements of what will be said, they do convey the fact "that neither of them have the same estimation of their own works as the Judge hath."[[353]](#footnote-352) The judgment it seems is not only a revelation of the thoughts and intents of persons, but of the righteousness and vindication of God.

*The Judgment of the Good*

The good are judged prior to the evil dead.[[354]](#footnote-353) Christ will judge the "tempers . . . words . . . actions . . . to prove whether you was a true believer or not."[[355]](#footnote-354) So also are "the most secret springs of actions, the principles and intentions of every heart" evaluated:[[356]](#footnote-355)

Every inward working of every human soul; every appetite, passion, inclination, affection, with the various combinations of them, with every temper and disposition that institute the whole complex character of each individual. So shall it be clearly and infallibly seen, who was righteous, and who unrighteous; and in what degree every action, or person, or character, was either good or evil.[[357]](#footnote-356)

Questions are then posed to the assembled individuals; questions concerning stewardship are asked according to a number of categories: the soul with its faculties, thoughts, and affections; the body (the tongue, sight, hearing, "hands and feet and various *members*"); worldly goods; and "talents of a mixed nature" (health, strength, beauty, etc):[[358]](#footnote-357)

Didst thou fear and hate nothing but sin? Did the whole stream of thy affection flow back to the ocean from whence they came? Were thy thoughts employed according to my will? Not in ranging to the ends of the earth, not in folly, or sin; but on "whatsoever things were pure, whatsoever things were holy," on whatsoever was conducive to my "glory," and to "peace and goodwill among men?"[[359]](#footnote-358)

As to worldly goods Wesley suggested God's criteria involved sacrificial giving within the context of:

First supplying thy own reasonable wants, together with those of thy family; then restoring the remainder to me, through the poor, whom I had appointed to receive it; looking upon thyself as only one of that number of poor, whose wants were to be supplied out of that part of my substance which I had placed in thy hands for this purpose; leaving thee the right of being supplied first, and the blessedness of giving rather than receiving.[[360]](#footnote-359)

Each will be asked to "give an account of his own works."[[361]](#footnote-360) "For every idle word which men shall speak, they shall give account of on the day of judgment."[[362]](#footnote-361) All, of course will comply with this, and they will comply in the awareness of God's omniscience. The Great Judge will bring to light every detail and extenuating circumstance, for good or ill.[[363]](#footnote-362) In addition to all this, each person's doctrine will also be tried.[[364]](#footnote-363)

The failings of the righteous will be mentioned for a number of reasons: (1) "for the clear and perfect manifestation of his wisdom, justice, power, and mercy, toward the heirs of salvation;" (2) so "it would appear out of what a depth of sin and misery the grace of God had delivered them;" (3) "to justify the ways of God to man;" and (4) to fulfill the declaration of Matthew 10:26 that nothing will be left uncovered. Yet, this recounting of sins will not cause the believers suffering nor be to their disadvantage, for in this manifestation of "divine perfection the righteous will have special joy, far from feeling pain."[[365]](#footnote-364)

A unique feature of this assize is that the judge will also serve as the council for the defense.

If thou art my Advocate,

Jesus what have I to fear?[[366]](#footnote-365)

Unusually, this theme was not found outside the poetical material.[[367]](#footnote-366)

Believers will then be divided into three main classes: "*His servants the prophets*," "*his saints*, to them who were eminently holy," and "*them that fear his name*: these are the lowest class."[[368]](#footnote-367) These classes seem to be connected to the apparently eternal distinctions among the good dead in the final state.

*The Judgment of the Wicked*

After the righteous are judged, God will turn to the unrighteous on His left.[[369]](#footnote-368) At this point Christ and the apostles are joined by the vindicated saints in the adjudication of the unrepentant.[[370]](#footnote-369) It is a scene far different from that prior. Even at this late date and in this august and terrifying venue, their hardened hearts still rebel. "The endeavor to justify themselves will remain with the wicked even to that day!"[[371]](#footnote-370) In "Advice to a Soldier" Wesley described the judgment which would occur:

And shalt thou also be judged according to they works? all thy works, whether they be good or evil? Yea, and for every idle word which thou shalt speak, thou shalt give an account in the day of judgment. But this is not all: The Lord, the Judge, searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins. He understands all thy thoughts; and for all these likewise he shall bring thee into judgment. Supposest thou it is enough to be outwardly good? What! though thy inward parts are very wickedness? And are they not? Is not thy soul fallen short of the glory (the glorious image of God)? Look into thy breast. Art thou not a fallen spirit?[[372]](#footnote-371)

In the same tract he commented on the story of one Captain Uratz, who, when asked "if he had made his peace with God" replied as he departed "I hope God will deal with me like a gentleman." Wesley then produced God's response: "Thou fool! I will deal with thee as with all mankind. There is no respect of persons with me. I reward every man according to his works."[[373]](#footnote-372) There then follows a list of sins which Wesley directed to his advisee for the purpose of emphasizing his need.

*The Pronouncing of the Sentences*

Then the two sentences are pronounced, one for those on the right and one for those on the left.[[374]](#footnote-373) It is this for which the believers will wait. It is (at least in part) "our acquittal on the last day."[[375]](#footnote-374) It is then that Christ will confess his human siblings before the angels.

The Judge will speak first to the righteous in the audience of the wicked. The wicked shall then [after their judgment] go away into everlasting fire in the view of the righteous. Thus the damned shall see nothing of the everlasting life: but the just will see the punishment of the ungodly.[[376]](#footnote-375)

One may take from this that the relatively close communication between the saved and the damned in the intermediate state as exemplified in Lazarus and Dives will no longer exist in the future final state.

At this point also, the great antagonists of the universe will be committed to their final abode. Wesley understood Paul's phrase "the last enemy that is destroyed is death," (1 Cor. 15:26) to mean that Satan (Heb. 2:14), then sin (1 Cor. 15:56), and finally death are destroyed. The order in which they are destroyed reflects the order in which "they prevailed:" "Satan brought in sin, and sin brought in death." The same order also is found in Christ's victory on the cross where He initially conquered Satan, and then sin in his death, and then death in his resurrection. This is also the same order in which he delivered His people from them.[[377]](#footnote-376) Satan, death, and Hades are destroyed by being cast into the lake of fire.[[378]](#footnote-377) This is the great negative hope of the Christian:

Let us also endeavor, by cultivating holiness in all its branches, to maintain this hope [cf. 1 Cor. 15:58] in its full energy; longing for that glorious day, when, in the utmost extent of the expression, *death shall be* swallowed up for ever, and millions of voices, after the long silence of the grave, shall burst out at once into that triumphant song, *O death, where is thy sting? O Hades, where is thy victory?*[[379]](#footnote-378)

Finally glory is "assigned" to the righteous as they "inherit the kingdom"[[380]](#footnote-379) of the new earth "wherein dwelleth righteousness."[[381]](#footnote-380)

*Final Justification*

Although most properly a topic for soteriology, Wesley's doctrine of final justification must be mentioned here briefly. It speaks of the believer at the last judgment being "acquitted" before God[[382]](#footnote-381) in contrast to the justification one experiences at the moment of salvation. Both Wesley's writings[[383]](#footnote-382) on the subject and the ensuing debate are substantial.[[384]](#footnote-383)

In light of Wesley's eschatological formation, the essential points seem to be: (1) That final justification is the formal pronouncement (in a forensic sense) of the irrevocable disposition (known, but not determined, from eternity) of the believer's final state. (2) The believer's works are judged in light of Christ's sacrifice for the them inasmuch as the believer has continued on in Christ, utilizing the gift "which begets works."[[385]](#footnote-384) (3) This seems to be the true end of original sin in the believer in an ontological sense, since Christ "will not put an end to" original sin in the believer, "before the end of the world."[[386]](#footnote-385) The guilt of original sin was removed in present justification[[387]](#footnote-386) and was "gradually killed" in the process of sanctification.[[388]](#footnote-387) (4) There appears to be some empirical effect on the life to come of this justification / judgment given the implicit connection with eternally persisting levels in the final state. This may be hinted at in the infamous "Minutes" of 1770: "We are rewarded according to our works, yea, because of our works."[[389]](#footnote-388) All in all, final justification seems to be the last mountain in the soteriological struggle against sin, after which remains only an uninterrupted vista of sanctification stretching into eternity, unencumbered by evil.

The Transfer of the Kingdom

The Son will then deliver up his mediatorial kingdom to the Father commencing the immediate reign of the Father with the Son. The Son will retain His eternal glory (John 17:5, Heb. 1:8) and continue to be a king even in His human nature (Luke 1:33). The reign of Father and Son is everlasting. This is indicated not only by their divinity, and the fact that "it is written,"[[390]](#footnote-389) but also by the observation that "if the citizens of the 'new Jerusalem' shall 'reign for ever,' (Rev. xxii.5,) how much more shall he [Christ]?"[[391]](#footnote-390) And so the saints will reign forever with Christ.[[392]](#footnote-391)

The Transition of the Worlds

At the end of the great and final judgment, the last remnants of the universe as it is now known will come to an end. The heavens will literally be "rolled up as a scroll"[[393]](#footnote-392) with a great noise.[[394]](#footnote-393) The universe as it is now constituted will end in an enormous conflagration. It will be dissolved by fire and all "the works of them shall be burned up." "The enormous works of nature . . . will sink down in fiery ruin," as well as "all art and human understanding."[[395]](#footnote-394) Lightnings, which "give shine to the world," may then be redirected contributing to the great change.[[396]](#footnote-395) Volcanos, those "huge reservoirs of liquid fire[,] are from age to age contained in the bowels of the earth," may also play a part.[[397]](#footnote-396) The heavens will depart and the entire universe will pass away" and be "dissolved."[[398]](#footnote-397) Wesley also looked for the traditional harbinger of cosmic doom, the comet returning from the sun, which is in normal times "some thousand times hotter than a red hot cannon ball" to burn the earth.[[399]](#footnote-398) He commented on D. Halley's speculation on possible danger from a comet and, while affirming the potential he added that from the Christian perspective the time is not yet "for the prophecies are not yet fulfilled."[[400]](#footnote-399) Closer to earth, since "it is most certain (as a thousand experiments prove, beyond all possibility of denial) that we ourselves, our whole bodies, are full of fire, as well as every thing round about us;" the electricity which permeates all forms of matter could infuse the universal pyre.[[401]](#footnote-400) Already rent into disorder by the events preceding the judgment, creation will still be more radically recast, down to the ontological level, to bring forth a truly new order of reality. "All the elements (taking that word in the common sense for the principles of which all natural beings are compounded) will be new indeed; entirely changed as to their qualities, although not as to their nature."[[402]](#footnote-401) There seems to be an implicit parallel here to the resurrection body which is at once the same body as the believer had in temporal life, but is yet wholly new in the eternal world (see below). This transition is the grand climactic event of history:

Then the heavens will be shrivelled up "as a parchment scroll" [Rev. 6:14], and "pass away with a great noise" [2 Pet. 3:10]; they will "flee from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and there will be found no place for them" [Rev. 20:11]. The very manner of their passing away is disclosed to us by the Apostle Peter: "In the day of God, the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved" [2 Pet. 3:12]. The whole beautiful fabric will be overthrown by that raging element, the connection of all its parts destroyed, and every atom torn asunder from the others. By the same, "the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up" [2 Pet 3:10]. The enormous works of nature, the everlasting hills [Gen. 49:26], mountains that have defied the rage of time, and stood unmoved so many thousand years, will sink down in fiery ruin. How much less will the works of art, though of the most durable kind, the utmost efforts of human industry-tombs, pillars, triumphal arches, castles, pyramids-be able to withstand the flaming conqueror! All, all will die, perish, vanish away, like a dream when one awaketh![[403]](#footnote-402)

Or again:

*The elements* seem to mean, the sun, moon, and stars; not the four, commonly so called; for air and water cannot melt, and the earth is mentioned immediately after. *The earth and* all *the works*-Whether of nature of art. *That are therein shall be burned up*-And has not God already abundantly provided for this? 1. By the stores of subterranean fire which are so frequently bursting out at Aetna, Vesuvius, Hecla, and many other burning mountains. 2. By the ethereal (vulgarly called electrical) fire, diffused through the whole globe; which, if the secret chain that now binds it up were loosed, would immediately dissolve the whole frame of nature. 3. By comets, one of which, if it touch the earth in its course toward the sun, must needs strike it into that abyss of fire; if in its return from the sun, when it is heated, as a great man computes, two thousand times hotter than red-hot cannonball, it must destroy all vegetables and animals long before their contact, and soon after burn it up.[[404]](#footnote-403)

These descriptions should be seen as more than homiletical flights and aggregations of verses. Rather, they represent a synthesis of Scripture, science, and naturalistic observation with a keen literary sense reflecting an integrated world view.

The change is so profound that like the divine word which brought existence into being, a special act of God may be required to speak things out of creation.[[405]](#footnote-404) Perhaps, connected with this is the remarkable theme in these materials of the "loosing" of the "great chain."[[406]](#footnote-405) Although generally connected with the force which holds the planets in their courses and is as such found first in the disordering before the judgment, it is also linked to a more profound and fundamental level of reality:

Needs there then any more than for God to unloose that secret chain, whereby this irresistible agent [ethereal fire or electricity] is now bound down, and less quiescent in every particle of matter? And how soon would it tear the universal frame in pieces, and involve all in one common ruin![[407]](#footnote-406)

This appears to be yet another elaboration of the "great chain of being," which further indicates its ubiquity in Wesley's world.

Against the objections that these things will not happen, Wesley advanced two arguments in addition to the testimony of Scripture: (1) Since both "heathens" and "free thinkers" hold a similar view, the truth of the proposition is indicated by its universality. (2) The events described in the Bible concerning the end were quite consistent with science (see below).[[408]](#footnote-407) He did recognize the problems such as that of stars falling to earth given their size as postulated by some scientists. In this case he pleaded for the superiority of Scripture saying "let astronomers fix their magnitude as they please."[[409]](#footnote-408) This is a fine example of the superiority of Scripture in the quadrilateral.

The end of the present world is most significantly also the beginning of the new. "This is the introduction to a far nobler state of things, such as it has not yet entered into the heart of men to conceive-the universal restoration which is to succeed the universal destruction."[[410]](#footnote-409)

*Then*-After the resurrection and the general judgment. *Cometh the end*-Of the world; the grand period of all those wonderful scenes that have appeared for so many succeeding generations. *When he shall have delivered up the kingdom to the Father, and he* (the Father) *shall have abolished all* adverse *rule, authority, and power*-Not that the Father will then begin to reign without the Son, nor will the son then cease to reign. For the divine reign both of the Father and Son is from everlasting to everlasting. But this is spoken of the Son's mediatorial kingdom, which will then be delivered up, and of the immediate kingdom or reign of the Father, which will then commence. Till then the Son transacts the business which the Father hath given him, for those who are his, and by them as well as by the angels, with the Father, and against their enemies. So far as the Father gave the kingdom to the Son, the Son shall deliver it up to the Father, John xiii.3. Nor does the Father cease to reign, when he gives it to the Son; neither the son, when he delivers it to the Father: but the glory which he had before the world began (John xvii.5; Heb. i.8) will remain even after this is delivered up. Nor will he cease to be a king even in his human nature, Luke i.33. If the citizens of the "new Jerusalem" shall "reign for ever," (Rev. xxii.5,) how much more shall he?[[411]](#footnote-410)

Then, "the righteous shall shine as the sun."[[412]](#footnote-411) Thus ends the great day of the Lord. It is, however, not followed by night, but by the everlasting day of the final state.

*The Final State*

After the judgment, all humanity enters the final state in one of its two forms. Building on many of the characteristics described under the previous discussion of the intermediate state, Wesley drew a detailed picture of the ultimate disposition of humanity to good or ill. His images may be divided into two broad categories, the final state of the evil and the final state of the good dead.[[413]](#footnote-412)

The Final State of the Evil Dead

The final state of the wicked was not a matter of metaphors and symbols to Wesley, but, like the joyous heaven, was a real and tangible existence of literal terror and suffering. As with Hades, it is so real that it transcends subjective experience. Its profundity can be understood only through revelation,[[414]](#footnote-413) and its reality is indicated by the fact that it is described more literally in Scripture than the final state of the good dead.[[415]](#footnote-414) In fact, consequences of denying its reality are staggering: "No hell, no heaven, no revelation!."[[416]](#footnote-415) Wesley's understanding of the biblical term "hinnom," probably extended beyond the intermediate to include the final state of the damned.[[417]](#footnote-416) It is the ultimate place of the damned, a "'lake of fire burning with brimstone,"'[[418]](#footnote-417) which burns for eternity.[[419]](#footnote-418)

*General Characteristics*

The central figure of Hell is, of course, the Devil, the "Serpent,"[[420]](#footnote-419) "Satan,"[[421]](#footnote-420) or "Belial."[[422]](#footnote-421) Under his control, hell is absolute punishment for the body and soul.[[423]](#footnote-422) It is a state in which unredeemed humanity is "'punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of the his power'"[[424]](#footnote-423) The withholding of the beatific vision of Hades is continued in the final state. It alone is "unspeakable punishment" even "supposing nothing more were implied."[[425]](#footnote-424) Thus "banishment from the presence of the Lord is the very essence of destruction to a spirit that was made for God. And if that banishment lasts for ever, it is 'everlasting punishment.'"[[426]](#footnote-425) The idea of the separation is also brought together with the idea of the eternal fire and worm. In his description of the prospects of evil persons to William Law, Wesley spoke of how it consists of everlasting destruction separated from the presence of God and the

"glory of His power," "cast into that furnace of fire . . . . [that] lake of fire burning with brimstone, the worm gnawing their soul, "dieth not, and the fire," tormenting their body, "is not quenched." So that "they have no rest day or night; but the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever."[[427]](#footnote-426)

After the idea of separation, the torment of being "cast into the lake of fire burning with brimstone" "originally" prepared for the Devil and his angels" is the most important description of eternal suffering described by Wesley.[[428]](#footnote-427) The sinners condemned to its torments are "intruders" into a fate not originally prepared for them.[[429]](#footnote-428) The "unquestionably material"[[430]](#footnote-429) fire shall not be "'quenched.'" and hell's inhabitants shall "'dwell with everlasting burnings'" where the smoke "'ascendeth up' 'day and night for ever and ever.'"[[431]](#footnote-430) It is an "eternal intermissionless torment in the lake of fire with a great gulf fixed."[[432]](#footnote-431) The sufferings which result are graphically represented by Wesley in echoes of Biblical rhetoric. Unbelievers

Gnaw their tongues for anguish and pain, they will curse God and look upwards. There the dogs of hell, pride, malice, revenge, rage, horror, despair, continually devour them. There "They have no rest, day or night, but the smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever! For their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."[[433]](#footnote-432)

Since the joys of heaven are described under "the figurative images of light and glory and a kingdom" which are beyond conception, so shall the torments of the damned be beyond conception.[[434]](#footnote-433) Wesley rejected, however, speculative additions to the description of these torments.

Many writers have spoken of other bodily torments added to the being cast into the lake of fire. One of these, even pious Kempis, supposes that misers, for instance, have melted gold poured down their throats; and he supposes many other particular torments to be suited to men's particular sins. Nay, our great poet himself supposes the inhabitants of hell to undergo a variety of tortures; not to continue always in the lake of fire, but to be frequently "by harpy-footed furies haled" into regions of ice, and then back again through "extremes by change more fierce." But I find no word, no tittle of this, not the least hint of it, in all the Bible. And surely this is too awful a subject to admit of such play of imagination. Let us keep to the written Word. It is torment enough to dwell with everlasting burnings.[[435]](#footnote-434)

In the end, the biblical descriptions of the final, everlasting horror even exhausted Wesley's desire for speculation.

Within these torments, as within the blessings of the good, there appear to be levels. Those who have "sinned most and suffered least in this world" will be judged according to their works.[[436]](#footnote-435) Those who have rejected the more clear presentation of the Gospel suffer more than those who have not had such a clear opportunity.[[437]](#footnote-436) Those who have known Christ and then fallen back into their evil life will be in the greatest torment.[[438]](#footnote-437)

The Eternity of the Punishments

The punishment was unquestionably eternal for Wesley.[[439]](#footnote-438) "Now, these words, *immortal* and *incorruptible*, not only signify that we shall die no more, (for in that sense the damned are immortal and incorruptible)."[[440]](#footnote-439) Significantly, the original title of the sermon generally known as "Of Hell" was "The Eternity of Hell Torments."[[441]](#footnote-440) Of the eternity of the punishment Wesley noted that "as there can be no end of their sins, (the same enmity against God continuing,) so neither of their punishment; sin and its punishment running parallel throughout eternity itself."[[442]](#footnote-441) Thus, in Sermon 7, "The Way to the Kingdom," Wesley declared sinners will

"Be punished" with never-ending death, "with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." Knowest thou not that every sinner *enoxos esti te geenne tou puros*, not only properly "is in danger of hell-fire"-that expression is far too weak-but rather, "is under the sentence of hell-fire;" doomed already.[[443]](#footnote-442)

The most dramatic and emphatic declaration of the eternity of the torments is found in the sermon "Of Hell:"

2. Consider, secondly, that all these torments of body and soul are without intermission. They have no respite from pain; but "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up day and night" [cf. Rev. 14:11]. Day and night! That is speaking according to the constitution of the present world, wherein God has wisely and graciously ordained that day and night should succeed each other, so that in every four and twenty hours there comes a

Daily sabbath, made to rest

Toiling man and weary beast.

Hence we seldom undergo much labour, or suffer much pain, before

Tired nature's kind restorer, balmy sleep,

steals upon us by incomprehensible degrees, and brings an interval of ease. But although the damned have uninterrupted night, it brings no interruption of their pain. No sleep accompanies that darkness; whatever either ancient or modern poets, either Homer or Milton, dream, there is no sleep either in hell or heaven. And be their suffering ever so extreme, be their pain ever so intense, there is no possibility of their fainting away-no, not for a moment.

Again. The inhabitants of earth are frequently diverted from attending to what is afflictive by the cheerful light of the sun, the vicissitudes of the seasons, "the busy hum of men," and a thousand objects that roll around them with endless variety. But the inhabitants of hell have nothing to divert them from their torments even for a moment:

Total eclipse: no sun, no moon!-

no change of seasons or of companions. There is no business but one uninterrupted scene of horror, to which they must be all attention. They have no interval of inattention or stupidity: they are all eye, all ear, all sense. Every instant of their duration it may be said of their whole frame that they are

. . . tremblingly alive all o'er,

And smart and agonize at every pore.

3. And of this duration *there is no end!* What thought is this. Nothing but eternity is the term of their torment! And who can count the drops of rain, or the sands of the sea, or the days of eternity? Every suffering is softened if there is any hope, though distant, of deliverance from it. But here,

Hope never comes, that comes to all

the inhabitants of the upper world! What, sufferings never do end!

Never! Where sinks the soul at that dread Sound!

Into a gulf how dark, and how profound!

Suppose millions of days, of years, of ages elapsed; still we are only on the threshold of eternity! Neither the pain of body nor of soul is any nearer at an end than it was millions of ages ago. When they are once cast into *to pur to asbeston* [Mark 9:423] (how emphatical), "the fire, the unquenchable," all is concluded: "their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched!"[[444]](#footnote-443)

This is the dreaded "second death," the endless death, the final death, of Revelation: the lake of fire.[[445]](#footnote-444)

*The Vindication of God's Righteousness*

Wesley also sought to deal with the venerable and vexing problem of the justice of the eternal punishment of the damned. The problem had practical aspects for the great evangelist. Wesley's loving God, who through so many of Wesley's sermons was calling sinners to repentance, in the final analysis was also condemning the unrepentant to eternal damnation without hope of reprieve or even intermission. Though never producing a fully integrated picture, several themes emerged from his pen with which to defend the justice of God. (1) Purgatory offers no solution for avoiding eternal punishment.[[446]](#footnote-445) (2) Practically speaking, it is probable that God made hell to discourage people from sinning.[[447]](#footnote-446) (3) The judgment is just because God and His law are just and righteous.[[448]](#footnote-447) (4) The judgments are eternal because they resemble the Judge.[[449]](#footnote-448) (5) Sinners will continue to sin eternally because of their nature[[450]](#footnote-449) and "must of necessity, therefore, be cut off from all good, and all possibility of it."[[451]](#footnote-450) (6) The rejection of God's infinite grace requires infinite punishment.[[452]](#footnote-451) (7) Eternal punishment is appropriate as it fulfills the natural order. Wesley supported this argument with a number of Scripture references: Hebrews 10:26-31; 2 Peter 2:4-9; Daniel 12:2; Romans 2:5, 8-9; Matthew 25:30, 41; Thessalonians 1:9.[[453]](#footnote-452) (8) The fate of the evil damned "is the just reward of . . . inward and outward wickedness."[[454]](#footnote-453) Wesley characterized the process by the terms: "punishment," "justice," "vindictive justice," "wrath," "righteous wrath," "anger,"[[455]](#footnote-454) and "vengeance."[[456]](#footnote-455) In fact, there was "no objection to using the words *wrath* (or *anger*) and *justice* as nearly synonymous."[[457]](#footnote-456) The theme of eschatological vengeance is brought out in his interpretation of the "*Anathema Maran-atha*" of 1 Corinthians 16:22: "'the Lord Cometh;' namely, to execute vengeance" upon the accursed.[[458]](#footnote-457) In fact, "the Lord shall manifest his glory, in taking vengeance of his adversaries."[[459]](#footnote-458) Adumbrations of such justice are found in the temporal judgments which are executed throughout history prior to the end.[[460]](#footnote-459) For Wesley's God, eternal punishment was a rigorous necessity.

The Final State of the Good Dead

Although Wesley seems to have preached less about heaven than hell, he by no means ignored the more pleasant, if less gripping, destiny of the saints. After the resurrection, general judgment, renovation of the world, and the delivering up by the Son of his mediatorial kingdom to the Father; the reign of the Father with the Son commences and continues on into eternity. Wesley is quite specific that the new heavens and the new earth do not relate: "to the present state of things," or "to the flourishing state of the church, which commenced after heathen persecutions" or to the "riches and honors" "poured" upon Christians" by Constantine, but rather to "the things that will come to pass when the world is no more."[[461]](#footnote-460)

*Christ the Eternal Focus*

Wesley was not adverse to following "some writers" in making the "distinction" of "essential" and "accessory parts."[[462]](#footnote-461) This essential and true focus of heaven is nothing else or less than God. "The true knowledge of the Messiah . . . is the key of both the present and future kingdom of heaven; the kingdom of grace and glory."[[463]](#footnote-462) Thus, Christ is "the author, object, and ground, of all our hope."[[464]](#footnote-463) He is manifested in the glory to come[[465]](#footnote-464) where "He fills the new heaven and the new earth" and "surrounds the city and sanctifies it, and all that are therein."[[466]](#footnote-465) The fundamental happiness of the saints in the final state is the beholding of God's glory.[[467]](#footnote-466) "We shall then know both His nature, and His works of creation, of providence, and of redemption."[[468]](#footnote-467) This was most eloquently formulated for Wesley in his memory of a peasant in Frederica, Georgia, who described heaven as a "very fine *place*," but nothing in comparison with seeing God.[[469]](#footnote-468)

The final state of the good is so glorious, so transcendent that "even an inspired apostle can see nothing beyond: 'My God, and my all.'"[[470]](#footnote-469) No description can capture this "holiest" place where God sits on the throne, surrounded by the four living creatures, and the twenty four elders, and the innumerable multitude of angels "whom God has constituted in a wonderful order."[[471]](#footnote-470) Yet, the Book of Revelation does provide the best description available to us.[[472]](#footnote-471)

*General Characteristics*

The conditions of this new earth and its inhabitants were explored in considerable detail by Wesley. In general, "all the earth shall then be a more beautiful paradise than Adam ever saw."[[473]](#footnote-472) "All . . . entirely changed as to their qualities, although not as to their nature."[[474]](#footnote-473) The descriptions which follow seem to cover all the important aspects of this transformed universe.

*The New Jerusalem*

"The new heaven, the new earth, and the new Jerusalem, are closely connected."[[475]](#footnote-474) Wesley emphasized that the new Jerusalem is "wholly new, not belonging to this world, not to the millennium, but to eternity" as is indicated by the structure of "the vision, the magnificence of the description, and the opposition of this city to the second death."[[476]](#footnote-475) "It is the *place* wherein God more immediately dwells with those saints who are in a glorified *state*."[[477]](#footnote-476) It is a very real place with objective, "real and determinate" dimensions. Ezekiel's prophetic description of Jerusalem (Ezek. 40-48) is "quite different" from the biblical city in any of its historical periods. Yet, his description both concurs and is different from John's. Wesley resolved the dilemma by saying Ezekiel described Jerusalem as it was "soon after the destruction of the beast," whereas John is describing "the same city" in its ultimate eternal incarnation.[[478]](#footnote-477) Although Wesley did not elucidate, the apparent discrepancy between John's "wholly new" city and Ezekiel's city (which would have been the late eighteenth century Jerusalem suitably rebuilt) is probably explained by analogy to the transformation of the old universe into the new (see above) and the earthly body into the resurrection (see below).

The great size of the new holy city is required in order to accommodate "both the holy angels, and your predecessors in the faith, and all that now believe, and a great multitude which no man can number."[[479]](#footnote-478) The historical, earthly, cities of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Nineveh, and Babylon are "inconsiderable villages" in comparison to the New Jerusalem which will measure "*twelve thousand furlongs*" on each side.[[480]](#footnote-479)

By this measure is understood the greatness of the city, with the exact order and just proportion of every part of it; to show, figuratively, that this city was prepared for a great number of inhabitants, how small soever the number of real Christians may sometimes appear to be; and that everything relating to the happiness of that state was prepared with the greatest order and exactness.

The city is *twelve thousand furlongs* high; the wall, *an hundred and forty-four reeds*. This is exactly the same height, only expressed in a different manner. The twelve thousand furlongs, being spoken absolutely, without any explanation, are common, human furlongs: the hundred forty-four reeds are not of common human length, but of angelic, abundantly larger than human. It is said, *the measure of a man, that is, of an angel*, because St. John saw the measuring angel in an human shape. The reed therefore was as great as was the stature of that human form in which the angel appeared. In treating all of these things, a deep reverence is necessary; and so is a measure of spiritual wisdom; that we may neither understand them too literally and grossly, nor go too far from the natural force of the words. The gold, the pearls, the precious stones, the walls, foundations, gates, are all undoubtedly figurative expressions; seeing the city itself is in glory, and the inhabitants of it have spiritual bodies: yet these spiritual bodies are also real bodies, and the city is an abode distinct from its inhabitants, and proportioned to them who take up a finite and a determinate space. The measures, therefore, above mentioned are real and determinate.[[481]](#footnote-480)

He also described its bejeweled details and presence of God.[[482]](#footnote-481) He speculated on its pavement in light of Homer's vision of a place "'*paved with brass*,'" and Milton who made "'*heavens pavement beaten gold*'" and "in another place . . . defines it more sublimely 'the house of God, *star-paved*.'"[[483]](#footnote-482) In the city the "*river of the water of life*-The ever fresh and fruitful effluence of the Holy Ghost[[484]](#footnote-483) goes forth to water

*the tree of life*-Not one tree only, but many *Every month*-That is, in inexpressible abundance. The variety, likewise, a well as the abundance of the fruits of the Spirit, may be intimated thereby. *And the leaves are for the healing of the nations*-For the continuing of their health, not the restoring of it; for no sickness is there.[[485]](#footnote-484)

In spite of the disclaimers about taking the text in too literal a manner, Wesley's description is strikingly substantial. And so, "*The Lord God and the Lamb are the temple of it*-He fills the new heaven and the new earth."[[486]](#footnote-485)

*Environmental Conditions*

The glory of the heavenly city is complemented by its heavenly surroundings. Nature herself will be renewed beyond any prior perfection. The heavens, the surface conditions, natural forces, and even plants and animals will emerge in an extraordinary state fit for the presence of God and his children.

Astronomical and atmospheric conditions

Following Scripture, Wesley distinguished between the "starry heaven" and the "lower heaven" or "the region of the air." These are analogous to the present astronomical heaven and the atmospheric heavens respectively.[[487]](#footnote-486) These conceptions give us a dramatic insight into the literal precision with which Wesley understood the future. Wesley's interest in astronomy is displayed in his eschatological gazing. "Pernicious or terrifying meteors will have no more place" in the future skies:[[488]](#footnote-487)

There will be no blazing stars, no comets there. Whether those horrid, eccentric orbs are half formed planets, in a chaotic state (I speak on the supposition of a plurality of worlds) or such as have undergone their general conflagration, they will certainly have no place in the new heaven, where all will be in exact order and harmony.

The heavens may also reveal other differences, but as yet, they are beyond our knowing.[[489]](#footnote-488)

The "region of the air" or the atmospheric heaven will also be a suitable environment for its new inhabitants. There will be no more rain (cf. Gen. 2:5-6) and "no more clouds or fogs; but one bright, refulgent day." There will be no "poisonous damps or pestilential blasts;" "no sirocco in Italy; no parching or suffocating winds in Arabia; no keen north-east winds in our own country." Rather, there will be "only pleasing, healthful breezes."[[490]](#footnote-489) The atmosphere will be "no more torn by hurricanes, or agitated by furious stormy or destructive tempests."[[491]](#footnote-490) There will be no "inclemency of seasons."[[492]](#footnote-491) Rather, "All will be light, fair, serene-a lively picture of eternal day."[[493]](#footnote-492)

Surface conditions

The surface of the earth will take on the aspect of a garden. There will remain no "deserts and barren sands."[[494]](#footnote-493) The "impassable morasses or unfaithful bogs" will be a thing of the past.[[495]](#footnote-494) "Horrid rocks and frightful precipices" will be gone.[[496]](#footnote-495) Instead, the countryside will be a gentle beautiful landscape.[[497]](#footnote-496) Attending these lovely gardens and pathways will be ever convenient supplies of water. It will be "clean and limpid, pure from all unpleasing or unhealthful mixtures; rising here and there in crystal fountains to refresh and adorn the earth 'with liquid lapse of murmuring stream.'"[[498]](#footnote-497) This would be a truly paradisiacal picture for the ever practical and ever traveling Wesley!

The forces of nature

The forces of nature also came within Wesley's energetic interpretive grasp. There will be "no more lightning or thunder."[[499]](#footnote-498) In heaven there will be no "painful *heat*."[[500]](#footnote-499) There will be no more temperature extremes of any kind which God currently uses as a punishment.[[501]](#footnote-500) Even fire will cease to be destructive. It will

Be as harmless in the new heavens and earth as it is now in the bodies of men and other animals, and the substance of trees and flowers; in all which (as late experiments show) large quantities of ethereal fire are lodged-if it be not rather as essential component part of every material being under the sun. But it will probably retain its vivifying power, though divested of its power to destroy.[[502]](#footnote-501)

Even those great reservoirs of fire, volcanos, and their companions, earthquakes, will cease under the irenic hand of Deity.[[503]](#footnote-502)

Plants and animals

The plant and animal kingdoms will benefit from the renascence of creation.[[504]](#footnote-503) Originally, all the plants and animals enjoyed a far more abundant life than they have had since the fall. Humanity "was the great channel of communication between the Creator and the whole brute creation."[[505]](#footnote-504) As God's "vicegerent" upon the earth humanity was to God as the "brutes" were to humanity.[[506]](#footnote-505)

II.1. As all the blessings of God in paradise flowed through man to the inferior creatures; as man was the great channel of communication between the Creator and the whole brute creation; so when man made himself incapable of transmitting those blessings, that communication was necessarily cut off. The intercourse between God and the inferior creatures being stopped, those blessings could not longer flow in upon them. And then it was that "the creature," every creature, "was subject to vanity" [Rom. 8:20], to sorrow, to pain of every kind, to all manner of evils. "Not" indeed "willingly;" not by its own choice, not by any act or deed of its own; "but by reason of him that subjected it" [Rom. 8:20]; by the wise permission of God, determining to draw eternal good out of this temporary evil.[[507]](#footnote-506)

The animals in their original, edenic state "undoubtedly . . . bore a near resemblance to the state of man himself."[[508]](#footnote-507) Humanity then

conveyed . . . an innate principle of *self-motion*; . . . a degree of *understanding*. . . a *will*, including various passions, . . . *liberty*, a power of choice. . . their understanding too was in the beginning perfect in its kind. Their passions and affections were regular, and their choice always guided by their understanding. . . . . . . they had some shadowy resemblance of even *moral goodness* . . . . . they had gratitude to man for benefits received, and a reverence for him. They had likewise a kind of benevolence to each other, unmixed with any contrary temper. How *beautiful* many of them were we may conjecture from that which still remains; and that not only in the noblest creatures, but in those of the lowest order. And they were all surrounded not only with plenteous food, but with everything that could give them pleasure; pleasure unmixed with pain; for pain was not yet-it had not entered into paradise. And they too were immortal. For "God make not death: neither hath he pleasure in the death of any living."[[509]](#footnote-508)

Thus was the idyllic setting at creation. Yet because of this very arrangement, when humanity fell in Adam, the animal creation also fell, and to the present time the whole creation "groaneth together."[[510]](#footnote-509) In a manner similar to the idea of federalism, the fall of humanity caused the abilities of the animals to be lessened, their faculties distorted, and even their appearance to suffer.[[511]](#footnote-510) Wesley's detailed description of the effects of the fall upon them is fascinating:

What did the meaner creatures suffer when man rebelled against God? It is probable they sustained much loss in their lower faculties, their vigour, strength, and swiftness. But undoubtedly they suffered far more in their understanding, more than we can easily conceive. Perhaps insects and worms had then as much understanding as the most intelligent brutes have now; whereas millions of creatures have at present little more understanding than the earth on which they crawl or the rock to which they adhere. They suffered still more in their will, in their passions, which were then variously distorted, and frequently set in flat opposition to the little understanding that was left them. Their liberty likewise was greatly impaired, yea, in many cases totally destroyed. They are still utterly enslaved to irrational appetites which have the full dominion over them. The very foundations of their nature are out of course, are turned upside down. As man is deprived of *his* perfection, his loving obedience to God, so brutes are deprived of *their* perfection, their loving obedience to man. The far greater part of them flee from him, studiously avoid his hated presence. The most of the rest set him at open defiance, yea, destroy him if it be in their power. A few only, those we commonly term domestic animals, retain more or less of their original disposition, and (through the mercy of God) love him still and pay obedience to him.[[512]](#footnote-511)

Happily, however, the brute creation awaits the "final manifestation of the sons of God," and its own deliverance. Wesley was quite specific that this deliverance of the animals is not annihilation, for this would be no deliverance at all.[[513]](#footnote-512) "All animated nature," greatly affected by Adam's Fall, also will be restored and transformed in the new earth. No more will creatures be in a "horrid state" needing to destroy others to survive. "The scorpion will have no poisonous sting, the adder no venomous teeth. The lion will have no claws to tear the lamb, no teeth to grind its flesh and bones."[[514]](#footnote-513) Positively, the characteristics which the animals enjoyed in abundance in Eden will be not only restored but they will be given "to a far higher degree . . . than they ever enjoyed."[[515]](#footnote-514) Wesley even permitted himself to "conjecture," wondering "if it should then please the all-wise, all-gracious Creator to raise them higher in the scale of beings?" "What, if it should please him, when he makes us 'equal to angels,' to make them what we are now,-creatures capable of God; capable of knowing and loving and enjoying the Author of their being?"[[516]](#footnote-515) There is even evidence that the animals may speak: (1) They may be elevated on the chain to the place where humanity currently is. (2) "One language shall prevail among all the inhabitants of heaven."[[517]](#footnote-516) (3) "It is not improbable, that reason and speech were then [in Eden] the known properties of the serpent," suggesting some connection between speech and animals.[[518]](#footnote-517) (4) Wesley spoke of Balaam's ass as having "conferred upon her the power of speech and reason for that time," clearly indicating the possibility at other times.[[519]](#footnote-518) What is remarkable here is that the blessings the animals receive in the final state are also seen by Wesley as a sort of recompense of God's justice for the sufferings they endured in the fallen world.[[520]](#footnote-519) Even the vegetable creation will be profoundly affected.

And what will the general produce of the earth be? Not thorns, briers or thistles; not any useless or fetid weed; not any poisonous, hurtful or unpleasant plan; but every one that can be conducive in any wise, either to our use or pleasure. How far beyond all that the most lively imagination is now able to conceive! We shall no more regret the loss of the terrestrial paradise . . . . For all the earth shall then be a more beautiful paradise than Adam ever saw.[[521]](#footnote-520)

Thus plants and animals are brought into the new kingdom not merely as decoration, but as a real effect of salvation.

In response to the objection that they will serve no purpose, Wesley wondered that use they are now, and pressed home the point by indicating our ignorance of the present creation. In short we know too little of God's designs to pose such an objection.[[522]](#footnote-521) Thus Wesley built his eschatological understanding by emulating Paul's teleological theodicy of Romans 8:19-22 which is reflected quite clearly in his *Notes* upon this passage.[[523]](#footnote-522) So then, the great chain of being is not only repaired, but enriched as it stretches into the final state.

*Persons and Society*

All the wonderful conditions of the final state described above are intended to provide a suitable home for God's highest creation, humanity. Wesley's understanding on the final state of good persons may be conveniently categorized into discussions of the general aspects of persons, the resurrection body, social conditions, and levels within the final state.

General characteristics

The general conditions of the intermediate state are heightened and expanded in the final state. Negatively, there will be no death, sin, or wickedness.[[524]](#footnote-523) Thus, death will be destroyed "that it shall be no more; sin and Satan, so that they shall no more hurt his people."[[525]](#footnote-524) "We shall be perfectly free from all the bodily evils which sin brought into the world; that our bodies shall not be subject to sickness, or pain, or any other inconveniences we are daily exposed to."[[526]](#footnote-525)

Positively "'the righteous' . . . 'shall drink of those rivers of pleasure.'"[[527]](#footnote-526) There will be freedom from guilt.[[528]](#footnote-527) There will be no more tears (Rev. 21:4).[[529]](#footnote-528) There will be no more curse, and believers shall see God's face. They will have "the nearest access to, and thence the highest resemblance of him." With God's name upon their foreheads "each of them shall be openly acknowledged as God's own property, and his glorious nature most visibly shine forth in them."[[530]](#footnote-529) Contrary to Hell, "there shall be no night there" (Rev. 22:3-5),[[531]](#footnote-530) Nor will there be sleep in heaven (although there was in Eden before the fall) for heaven will always be light as hell will always be dark, unlike the mixture of this present world.[[532]](#footnote-531)

While love alone has superseded both faith and hope in the next world[[533]](#footnote-532) the foundations of the new holy city with its twelve foundations bearing the names of the twelve apostles "figuratively" memorialize "that the inhabitants of the city had built only on that faith which the apostles had once delivered to the saints."[[534]](#footnote-533) They have "an unmixed state of holiness and happiness far superior to that which Adam enjoyed in paradise."[[535]](#footnote-534) In a manner similar to "the precious stones on the high priest's breastplate . . . the like ornaments on the foundations of the walls" of the new Jerusalem "may express the prefect glory and happiness of all the inhabitants."[[536]](#footnote-535)

The resurrection body

Wesley's perpetually latest model of "ethereal vehicle" was the resurrection or spiritual body of the final state,[[537]](#footnote-536) "our nobler house of empyrean light."[[538]](#footnote-537) He saw it as a wonderful creation, fundamental to the reality of salvation. It is Christ Who not only effects salvation in a spiritual sense but

*Who will transform our vile body*--Into the most perfect state and the most beauteous form. It will then be purer than the unspotted firmament, brighter than the lustre of the stars; and, which exceeds all parallel, which comprehends all perfection, *like unto his glorious body*--Like that wonderfully glorious body which He wears in His heavenly kingdom, and on His triumphant throne.[[539]](#footnote-538)

Thus the resurrection body is centered on and has as its predicate the idea of Christ's resurrection which Wesley emphasized was a literal and local transposition of a real human nature and body.[[540]](#footnote-539) The idea of being made like Christ was also seen by Wesley in the Old Testament where he likened the processes of death and resurrection to the taking down and building up of the tabernacle.

The immortal soul, like the *most holy things*, is first covered and taken away, carried by angels unseen, and care is taken also of the body, *the skin and flesh*, which are as the *curtains*, the bones and sinews, which are as the *bars* and *pillars*. None of these shall be lost. Commandment is given concerning the bones, a covenant made with the dust. They are in safe custody, and shall be produced in the great day, when this tabernacle shall be set up again, and these *vile bodies made like the glorious body* of Jesus Christ[[541]](#footnote-540)

The exact process, however, of this change will be a miraculous one. Death was both a mysterious but also reasonable mechanism of transformation. Thus Wesley understood Paul to argue under the "similitude" of sowing (1 Cor. 15:36-42) that death, with its "dissolution," was not only not an impediment to the resurrection body but even a necessary prerequisite for eternal life.[[542]](#footnote-541) As if to guard himself from inconsistency (in light of the rapture described in 1 Cor. 15:51-52), after stating that death is necessary he also says that the momentary change is an "amazing work of omnipotence!"[[543]](#footnote-542) Thus, although "we cannot tell exactly the manner how it shall be done, yet this ought not in the least to weaken our belief of this important article of faith."[[544]](#footnote-543)

Wesley was adamant about the identity of the resurrection body. The resurrection body will be the same body as had been the earthly habitation of the soul.

The plain notion of a resurrection requires, that the self-same body that died should rise again. Nothing can be said to be raised again, but that very body that died. If God gives to our souls at the last day a new body, this cannot be called the resurrection body; because that word plainly implies the fresh production of what was before.[[545]](#footnote-544)

He also found Ezekiel's description of the dry bones coming to life applicable to the resurrection and restoration of specific individual bodies:

*A noise*-A rattling of the bones in their motion. *A shaking*-A trembling or commotion among the bones, enough to manifest a divine presence, working among them. *Came together*-Glided nearer and nearer, 'till each met the bone to which it was to be joined. Of all the bones of all those numerous slain, not one was missing not one missed its way not one missed its place, but each knew and found its fellow. Thus in the resurrection of the dead, the scattered atoms shall be ranged in their proper place and order, and every bone *come to his bone*, by the same wisdom and power by which they were first formed in the womb of her that is with child.[[546]](#footnote-545)

He was adamant that God can both "distinguish and keep unmixed from all other bodies the particular dust into which our several bodies are dissolved, and can gather it together and join it again, how far soever dispersed asunder" for, he asked, "is it at all incredible, that He should distinctly know the several particles of dust into which the bodies of men are moldered, and plainly discern to whom they belong, and the various changes they have undergone?"[[547]](#footnote-546)

To those who objected to the notion of the resurrection of the original body on the ground that the substance of people eaten by animals or cannibals became irreversibly mixed, Wesley replied that "a very small part of what is eaten turns to nourishment, the far greater part goes away according to the order of nature."[[548]](#footnote-547) He further responded that Adam's body was made from dust, therefore God "may as easily remake it;" an activity no more wonderful than making a body in the womb.[[549]](#footnote-548) As evidence that God can reinstate the same soul in the body, Wesley cited the example of Christ being reunited with His self-same body.[[550]](#footnote-549) For Wesley then, the resurrection body was not only a real body but also of the same individual essence as the original earthly body.

The exact process, however, of this change will be a miraculous one. Death was both a mysterious and also a reasonable mechanism of transformation. Thus Wesley understood Paul to argue under the "similitude" of sowing (1 Cor. 15:36-42) that death, with its "dissolution," was not only not an impediment to the resurrection body but even a necessary prerequisite for eternal life.[[551]](#footnote-550) As if to guard himself from inconsistency (in light of the rapture described in 1 Cor. 15:51-52), after stating that death is necessary he also says that the momentary change is an "amazing work of omnipotence!"[[552]](#footnote-551) Thus, although "we cannot tell exactly the manner how it shall be done, yet this ought not in the least to weaken our belief of this important article of faith."[[553]](#footnote-552)

Although the resurrection body is identical in essence with the original, earthly body; it was not identical in its attributes.[[554]](#footnote-553) Our bodies "shall be raised in glory"[[555]](#footnote-554) in order to be fit for the wholly spiritual kingdom in which they will be employed.[[556]](#footnote-555) Wesley's note on 1 Corinthians 15.42-44 provides a good summary:

*So also is the resurrection of the dead*-So great is the difference between the body which fell, and that which rises. *It is sown*-a beautiful word; committed, as seed, to the ground. *In corruption*- just ready to putrefy, and, by various degrees of corruption and decay, to return to the dust from whence it came. *It is raised in incorruption*-utterly incapable of either dissolution or decay. Verse 43. *It is sown in dishonor*-shocking those who loved it best. Human nature in disgrace! *It is raised in glory*-Clothed with robes of light, fit for those whom the King of Heaven delights to honour. *It is sown in weakness*-deprived even of that feeble strength which it once enjoyed. *It is raised in power*-endued with vigour, strength and activity, such as we cannot now conceive.

Verse 44. *It is sown* in this world *a* merely *animal body*-maintained by food, sleep, and air, like the bodies of brutes: but *it is raised* of a more refined contexture, needing none of these animal refreshments, and endued with qualities of a spiritual nature, like the angels of God.[[557]](#footnote-556)

He was dramatically clear that saved humanity would not again be burdened with the same limitations of body as had been the case in terrestrial existence:

Were we to receive them again, subject to all the frailties and miseries which we are forced to wrestle with, I much doubt whether a wise man, were he left to his choice, would willingly take his again;-whether he would not choose to let his still [body?] lie rotting in the grave, rather than to be again chained to such a cumbersome clod of earth.[[558]](#footnote-557)

And again:

O when shall we arrive at that happy land where no complaints were ever heard, where we shall all enjoy uninterrupted health both of body and mind, and never more be exposed to any of those inconveniences that disturb our present pilgrimage! When we shall have once passed from death unto life, we shall be eased of all the troublesome care of our bodies, which now take up so much of our time and thoughts. We shall be set free from all those mean and tiresome labours which we must now undergo to support our lives.[[559]](#footnote-558)

The specific characteristics of the spiritual body will be remarkable. "These spiritual bodies are also real bodies." They will exist in a city which is "distinct from its inhabitants, and proportioned to them who take up a finite and a determinate space. The measures, therefore . . . are real and determinate."[[560]](#footnote-559) "Instead of flesh and blood, which cannot enter heaven, the rising body will be clothed or covered with what is analogous thereto, but incorruptible and immortal."[[561]](#footnote-560) Thus accoutered they will be well suited to the "spiritual state . . . invisible world . . . the life of angels."[[562]](#footnote-561)

The new spiritual bodies of believers shall serve their souls instead of the reverse.[[563]](#footnote-562) These new bodies will be "spiritualized, purified, and refined from earthly grossness." They will be unburdened by the lusts and appetites of that "most dangerous enemy," the flesh.[[564]](#footnote-563) The very words of the Apostolic promise that believers shall be raised

*immortal* and *incorruptible*, not only signify that we shall die no more, (for in that sense the damned are immortal and incorruptible) but that we shall be perfectly free from all the bodily evils which sin brought into the world; that our bodies shall not be subject to sickness, or pain, or any other inconveniences we are daily exposed to.[[565]](#footnote-564)

In fact, Wesley identified this freedom from sin-induced suffering and limitation as the essence of the biblical concept of the "redemption of our bodies."[[566]](#footnote-565)

The bodies of the final state will be "utterly incapable of either dissolution or decay."[[567]](#footnote-566) Further, they will no longer need the physical support common to the current body for they will be of a "more refined contexture, needing none of these animal refreshments, and endued with qualities of a spiritual nature, like the angels of God."[[568]](#footnote-567) Hence, there will be freedom from the daily toil of providing for the body.[[569]](#footnote-568) So also will these bodies be free of the physiological effects of psychological burdens which can oppress them in the present world.[[570]](#footnote-569) The nature of the resurrection body is also connected to the absence of marriage in heaven.[[571]](#footnote-570) The new bodies will be "endued with vigour, strength, and activity, such as we cannot now conceive."[[572]](#footnote-571) That "they shall be raised in power," (1 Cor. 15:42) "expresses the spriteliness of our heavenly bodies, the nimbleness of their motion, by which they shall be obedient and able instruments of the soul." Present bodies "are no better than clogs and fetters, which confine the freedom of the soul." Resurrection bodies, however, will be like a "'spark,' . . . . as fire; as active and as nimble as our thoughts are."[[573]](#footnote-572)

The resurrection body was often associated with light in Wesley's thought. "A resemblance of" the glory with which Paul said it will be raised was found "in the lustre of Moses' face, as well as Stephen's face when it shown as an angel, in Peter's vision of Christ, and in the transfiguration."[[574]](#footnote-573) Arguing from Solomon's aphorism that "A man's wisdom makes his face shine," (Eccl. 8:1) Wesley reasoned that the excellency of our heavenly bodies will arise in large measure from the condition of our souls.[[575]](#footnote-574) They shall be "clothed with robes of light, fit for whom the King of Heaven delights to honour."[[576]](#footnote-575) The resurrected will be "heavenly," will "receive a divine principle," and will have "*the image of the heavenly*-Holiness and glory," as opposed to "the image of the *earthly*".[[577]](#footnote-576) In glory the "unspeakable joy that we then shall feel will break through our bodies, and shine forth in our countenances."[[578]](#footnote-577)

The interest in the resurrection body should not merely be something of theological speculation, however. Rather, it is of meaningful import and demands practical application in the present life. The resurrection body requires the present preparation of our soul or else it will be "uneasy" when clothed in it.[[579]](#footnote-578) The transformation of the present bodies without spiritual preparation would be "like clothing a beggar in the robes of a king."[[580]](#footnote-579) On this line of thought Wesley suggested that those who,

by a constant diligence in well doing, have attained a higher measure of purity than others shall shine more bright than others. They shall appear as more glorious stars. It is certain that the most heavenly bodies will be given to the most heavenly souls; so that this is no little encouragement to us to make the greatest progress we possibly can in the knowledge and love of God, since the more we are weaned from the things of the earth now, the more glorious will our own bodies be at the resurrection."[[581]](#footnote-580)

Thus, "the best way of preparing ourselves to live in those heavenly bodies [is] by cleansing ourselves more and more from all earthly affections, and weaning ourselves from this body, and all the pleasures that are peculiar to it."[[582]](#footnote-581) From these and other references, it may also be concluded that, for Wesley, the resurrection bodies also will reflect the varying degrees of holiness among the saints in the final state (see below).[[583]](#footnote-582)

Social aspects

In a real sense the essence of the final state of the good dead is social, not individual. This is not only because the good dead know and relate to each other, but most importantly, because the great end of the final state, as in the earthly and paradisiacal states, is relationship with God. The essence of heaven is to see and know God. God is at its center, dwelling with a wholly righteous humanity (Rev. 21:1, 3).[[584]](#footnote-583) Crowning all, will be a deep, intimate, and uninterrupted union with God; a constant communion with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, through the Spirit; a continual enjoyment of the Three-One God, and of all the creatures in him![[585]](#footnote-584) He shall nurture the righteous "with eternal peace and joy."[[586]](#footnote-585) They shall enjoy eternally the love which is the essential nature of heaven.[[587]](#footnote-586) The inhabitants will be *isanggloi*, "like the angels" (Luke 20:36), in Wesley's translation: "equal to angels," being able go from one side of the earth to the other at will.[[588]](#footnote-587) Also like the angles, as it was in the intermediate state, there is no marriage for humanity even in the final state.[[589]](#footnote-588) Concerning the worship of the creatures of heaven in Revelation, Wesley concluded: "The heavenly ceremonial has its fixed order and measure."[[590]](#footnote-589)

Growth and Levels within the Final State

Wesley's belief in continuing growth in the final state (as also in Eden, the present life, and paradise)[[591]](#footnote-590) stood in tension with his belief that there will be distinct levels among believers in the final state. Adam and Eve, although created perfect in the Garden, were still capable of growth because "entire holiness does not exclude growth."[[592]](#footnote-591) This proposition would seem to hold true also in heaven, especially since the saints have "an unmixed state of holiness and happiness far superior to that which Adam enjoyed in paradise [Eden]."[[593]](#footnote-592) Wesley repeatedly emphasized this extension of the sanctification / perfection process.[[594]](#footnote-593)

Heaven, however, was characterized not only by growth but also by diversity. Believers will be as the stars, but they will differ as do the stars of St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 (the exegetical connection here seems tenuous) because of different levels of holiness achieved and suffering endured while on earth. These differences will be "everlasting."[[595]](#footnote-594) Thus one should take seriously the eternal implications of their Christian walk.[[596]](#footnote-595) In this regard, Wesley distinguished the new Jerusalem from the new earth in more than location. The inhabitants of the new earth are those who had not "when on earth excelled in virtue, and those comparatively slothful and unprofitable servants, who were just saved as by fire."[[597]](#footnote-596) The inhabitants of the new Jerusalem are "it seems, a select part of each nation; that is, all which can contribute to make this city honourable and glorious shall be found in it; as if all that was rich and precious throughout the world was brought into one city."[[598]](#footnote-597) It is these superior saints of the new Jerusalem who shall reign over the less faithful saints on the new earth.[[599]](#footnote-598)

Here, in the picture of the culminating joy of the universe, resides a grand tension of practical import. The saints are divided, everlastingly, into classes based on the quality of their faithfulness in the temporal world. This is the great encouragement to "work while it is day." Yet, in the midst of this hierarchical yet completely joyous new society, all still go on to greater degrees of perfection and happiness in whichever level one finds oneself. It is perhaps this final idea by which Wesley seeks to illumine the shadow of eternal distinction in the world which would be otherwise only light.

Summary

Such then is the ultimate joy or the ultimate horror to which all humanity is bound. Beyond this, even Wesley's speculative eye could see only endless torment or ever increasing joy and perfection. This was no static vision of an eternal future, but one which had grown beyond even his sight, when aided by Scripture.

Rejected Concepts of the Final State

Wesley rejected a number of concepts of the final state: restorationism and universalism, annihilationism, or that it would be a world completely of glass.

*A World of Glass*

Wesley speculated that the ultimate effect of the great cosmic conflagration may be the production of the sea of glass from the present universe.[[600]](#footnote-599) He did not agree, however, with Jacob Behmen that the earth and its inhabitants will be as glass. His reasons included: (1) Revelation 4:6 is insufficient proof. (2) It would not be more beautiful than now (a recurrent theme), transparent skin being most unaesthetic. (3) The visible human face is "'the human face divine' . . . undoubtedly one of the beautiful objects that can be found under heaven." One could not imagine loosing this beauty in transparency.[[601]](#footnote-600)

*Restorationism and Universalism*

Burwash is correct in stating that there is "no room" for either restorationism or universalism in Wesley.[[602]](#footnote-601) In fact, universalism was one of the evil's which eventuated the break with the Moravians:

Contrary to Scripture and matter of fact . . . those three grand errors run through almost all those books, viz., *Universalism Salvation*, *Antinomianism*, and a kind of new-reformed *Quietism*.

1. Can Universal Salvation be more explicitly asserted than it is in these words:

"By this his name *all* can and *shall* obtain life and salvation" [*Sixteen Discourses*, 30]. This *must* include all *men*, at least; and *may* include all *devils* too.

Again, "The name of the wicked will not be so much as mentioned on the great day." And if they are not so much as *mentioned*, they cannot be *condemned*.[[603]](#footnote-602)

Wesley also took Swedenborg to task for a form of universalism as well as other errant eschatological views.[[604]](#footnote-603)

While the data for a belief in eternal damnation in Wesley is overwhelming, Downes has identified three occasions when Wesley "seems to embrace universalism, and suggested that in the end Christ's victory will be complete."[[605]](#footnote-604) They are as follows:

(1) The sermon "Scriptural Christianity," III.1:

But shall we not see greater things than these? Yea, greater than have been yet from the beginning of the world. Can Satan cause the truth of God to fail, or His promises to be of none effect? If not, the time will come when Christianity will prevail over all, and cover the earth.[[606]](#footnote-605)

(2) The sermon "The General Spread of the Gospel," 27:

All unprejudiced persons may see with their eye that he is already renewing the face of the earth. And we have strong reason to hope that the work he hath begun he will carry on unto the day of his Lord Jesus; That he will never intermit this blessed work of his Spirit until he has fulfilled all his promises; until he hath put a period to sin and misery, and infirmity, and death; and re-established universal holiness and happiness, and caused all the inhabitants of the earth to sing together, "Hallelujah! The Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and honour, and power, and might be unto our God for ever and ever!"[[607]](#footnote-606)

(3) The sixth discourse from "The Sermon on the Mount" series, III.8:

When therefore God shall "give his Son the heathen for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession;" when "all kingdoms shall bow before him, and all nations shall do him service;" when "the mountain of the Lord's house," the church of Christ, "shall be established in the top of the mountains;" when "the fullness of the Gentiles shall come in, and all Israel shall be saved"-then shall it be seen that "the Lord is King, and hath put on glorious apparel," appearing to every soul of man as King of kings, and Lord of lords. And it is meet for all those who "love his appearing" to pray that he would hasten the time; that this his kingdom, the kingdom of grace, may come quickly, and swallow up all the kingdoms of the earth; that all mankind receiving him for their king, truly believing in his name, may be filled with righteousness and peace and joy, with holiness and happiness, till they are removed hence into his heavenly kingdom, there to reign with him for ever and ever.

For this also we pray in those words, "Thy kingdom come." We pray for the coming of his everlasting kingdom, the kingdom of glory in heaven, which is the continuation and perfection of the kingdom of grace on earth. Consequently this, as well as the preceding petition, is offered up for the whole intelligent creation, who are all interested in this grand event, the final renovation of all things by God's putting an end to misery and sin, to infirmity and death, taking all things into his own hands, and setting up the kingdom which endureth throughout all ages.[[608]](#footnote-607)

If these passages support universalism then they also support a Wesley who is wildly inconsistent. It is perhaps better to interpret them in light of the eschatological context of his first millennium which allowed for such expansive visions of Christianity without contradicting a real hell, which goes on for eternity, and from which there is no escape.[[609]](#footnote-608) Although both "Scriptural Christianity" (1744) and the "Sermon on the Mount, VI" (1748) are prior to the *Notes on the New Testament*, it seems Wesley had long been aware of the positive prophesies concerning the end.[[610]](#footnote-609)

*Annihilationism*

Wesley unequivocally rejected annihilationism in the case of the damned and even animals. He argued vehemently against "ingenious men" who claimed that all sense perception, consciousness, etc. end.[[611]](#footnote-610) As has been demonstrated, he absolutely believed the torment of the final state continues eternally. The "damned are immortal and incorruptible" in the sense that they "shall die no more."[[612]](#footnote-611) Wesley's position against annihilationism was further reinforced by his statements on the redemption of the animal creation.[[613]](#footnote-612)

*Discussion*

Three issues present themselves for discussion with respect to the more personal side of Wesley's eschatology: comparisons and sources; C. H. Dodd and realized eschatology; and the great chain of being, the fall, theodicy, and eschatology.

Comparisons and Sources

An examination of the selected contemporary writings of Spangenberg and Gill together with Whiston's translation of a fragment from Josephus revealed that Wesley contributed little of novelty to the experience of eschatology. Spangenberg, like Wesley, emphasized the identity of the resurrection body: "all souls shall return . . . into their own body . . . to appear before the judgment seat of Christ."[[614]](#footnote-613) "After the Resurrection will be the *General Judgment*" which "will be very glorious," then the current universe will pass away.[[615]](#footnote-614) He, also like Wesley, was concerned with the detail of events of the judgment.[[616]](#footnote-615) Although "the greatest part" of the doctrine of "the everlasting torments" "remains obscure" they did include the eternal presence of their natural vices, "the worm," alienation from God, etc.[[617]](#footnote-616) The good dead will enjoy freedom from sin internally and externally, isolation from the wicked, glorious bodies, freedom from want and suffering, and the presence of the Lord.[[618]](#footnote-617) Like Wesley, he believed in degrees of glory based on earthly suffering and obedience.[[619]](#footnote-618)

Gill displayed a number of differences relative to Wesley: Paradise is identified with the third heaven.[[620]](#footnote-619) There is a particular judgment immediately after death.[[621]](#footnote-620) The eschaton has no place for animals.[[622]](#footnote-621) The final judgment occurs on, not above, the earth.[[623]](#footnote-622) There are probably no degrees in heaven and there is uncertainty concerning the issue of continued development, "a question moved by some."[[624]](#footnote-623)

Also significant are the great similarities to Wesley. Death is the removal of the soul from the "clog" of a sinful body.[[625]](#footnote-624) There is an intermediate state, illustrated by Lazarus and Dives, which is called "hell" for the evil dead and "the bosom of Abraham" for the good dead.[[626]](#footnote-625) This intermediate state is one of activity where knowledge increases[[627]](#footnote-626) (although they are ignorant of the temporal world), memory and personal identity is retained, and communication between souls occurs.[[628]](#footnote-627) Both the good and evil dead will be raised in resurrection bodies which do not have "a difference of substance, but of qualities" with their temporal body. Both divine power and "chymistry" demonstrate the possibility of this. They will be no longer "gross," but "greatly refined and spiritualized."[[629]](#footnote-628) The renovation of the world is literal. Meteors, comets, sun, stars, thunder, lightening, and volcanoes may all be employed in the great change. Many of the volcanoes named are the same ones mentioned by Wesley.[[630]](#footnote-629) The new Jerusalem is a literal city in an earth restored to a paradisiacal state with an atmosphere like Eden.[[631]](#footnote-630) The final day of judgment is "long," perhaps taking a thousand years. It is based on the books of "divine omniscience," "creatures or creation," and "conscience;" which judge "works . . . actions . . . speech . . . thought . . . secrets." The blessing and penalties are eternal.[[632]](#footnote-631) The final state of the damned includes the *poena damni* and *sensus*, the fire and worm, "*asbestos*," various levels, and even a Wesley-like reference to "Rhadamanthus."[[633]](#footnote-632) The final state of the just, is a glorious state of "social worship" with Christ in perfect holiness and utter bliss.[[634]](#footnote-633) In the cases of both the evil and good dead the names of the intermediate and final states seem to be somewhat conflated.[[635]](#footnote-634)

As the comparisons above demonstrate, Wesley's ideas were not strikingly original. As a reading of Outler's excellent notes to the sermons also demonstrates, he adapted his material from an encyclopedic range of sources. Among these are considerable rabbinic citations.[[636]](#footnote-635) In this connection there is a remarkable resemblance between Wesley's view of the intermediate and final states and "An Excerpt form Josephus' Discourse to the Greeks Concerning Hades," translated by the Arminian deist and admirer of primitive Christianity, William Whiston.[[637]](#footnote-636) Although "Hades" is "*subterraneous*,"[[638]](#footnote-637) it was the place of "*Temporary punishments*" of the damned and also the place of the good. In the place of the damned there was "*a lake of unquenchable fire*," which will be the eternal place of torment.[[639]](#footnote-638) This coincidence of place may be one explanation for Wesley's apparent conflating of the intermediate and final states of the damned.[[640]](#footnote-639) The dead were conducted to Hades by what appear to be guardian angels and were also greeted there by angels. The good dead lived in a "region of *light*" called the "*Bosom of Abraham*" anticipating future joys while waiting with "*fathers*."[[641]](#footnote-640) The chamber of the evil dead was on "the *left hand*." A significant portion of their torment was their separation from the place of the good dead.[[642]](#footnote-641) Both the good and evil dead will remain disembodied in Hades until the resurrection. The unjust will receive their bodies unchanged complete with all the faults which attended them in temporal existence. The bodies of the good dead are likened to seed which is sown to "be raised in a *clothed* and *glorious* condition so as to be an apt place for the soul."[[643]](#footnote-642) After the judgment before Christ the evil dead will be condemned to "*unquenchable fire,*" and a "fiery *worm never dying*" with no hope of annihilation, comfort, intermission, or the prayers of others. Believers, however, will live in a place with no burning sun or extremes of nature, with lovely plants and animals, no fear of "wandering stars," singing hymns with "angels and spirits" to God.[[644]](#footnote-643) Josephus (or his editors or pseudepigraphers) employed his description in an evangelistic fashion encouraging the Gentiles to faith and holy living.[[645]](#footnote-644) While modern scholars would tend to reject this as authentic, Whiston defended it vigorously.[[646]](#footnote-645) Wesley certainly knew of Whiston[[647]](#footnote-646) and clearly would have shared his interest in primitive Christianity.[[648]](#footnote-647) Although there is insufficient data to establish either the work attributed to Josephus or Whiston's translation of it as a source, it is certainly clear that Wesley's general ideas concerning the intermediate and final state were not of Wesley's own making.

C. H. Dodd and Realized Eschatology

Downes' hypothesis concerning Wesley, Dodd, and realized eschatology must also be addressed. Downes' seems correct when he said

The Wesleys did preach-and sing-about the bliss and peace of heaven, but not to the exclusion of a word about this world. Theirs was no gospel concerned exclusively with heaven. They had something to offer men and women here and now; justification, forgiveness, rebirth, Christian perfection, a holy feast, "and all other benefits of His passion."[[649]](#footnote-648)

But Sugden's assessment that the Wesley's placed far more emphasis on future judgment than on present judgment also seems correct.[[650]](#footnote-649) In the final analysis, it appears, Wesley placed emphasis on both; but his eye was ultimately on the marriage supper in heaven and not the foretaste of it on earth.

This is not to underestimate the importance of the experience of the Kingdom in the present. It is probable that this bringing of the miraculous and sense of overcoming into the lives of the downtrodden[[651]](#footnote-650) helped to facilitate the great Methodist revival.[[652]](#footnote-651) The revival became, and was a revival because of an experience which was an eschaton partially realized in the meeting houses and class meetings. Clearly, Wesley with his great interest in the supernatural and belief in its close connection and even interpenetration with the common existence of the everyday saw religion partially as heaven come to earth. The categories of literary allusions, justification and regeneration, sanctification of perfect love, and the sacrament or communion illustrate this well. Wesley would have agreed with Dodd that "the supernatural has manifestly entered history" with the coming of Jesus. There would even be partial agreement that "this open manifestation of the power of God is the overthrow of the power of evil." Nor would Wesley have differed from Dodd in believing that the Christian possesses eternal life in the present.[[653]](#footnote-652) Yet, the question remains as whether Wesley and Dodd, even in his most moderate phase, were saying the same thing.

It seems that Downes has overestimated the similarities between Wesley and Dodd. It is true that Dodd moderated his position in his later work,[[654]](#footnote-653) but even there it is a far different perspective on the Biblical text than is found in Wesley. Several crucial distinctions may be observed. (1) Wesley's perception of the presentness of the Kingdom was the result of a literal hermeneutic which was fundamentally antithetical to Dodd. For Dodd, "it would be intolerable to take" the Olivet Discourse "with prosaic literalness."[[655]](#footnote-654) (2) Wesley would also have disagreed with Dodd that the "Day of the Lord" was fulfilled in the incarnation.[[656]](#footnote-655) That Day was still starkly future from Wesley's viewpoint. (3) Wesley would have assigned the judgment of the world to a yet unrealized future whereas Dodd would say that it had already come in the person of Jesus.[[657]](#footnote-656) (4) Wesley would also have disagreed vigorously with Dodd that the essential fulfillment came two thousand years ago in Israel such that "the meaning of history is now summed up."[[658]](#footnote-657) (5) The future realization of eternal life with its quite real resurrection body would also have been a point of distinction between Wesley and Dodd. (6) Finally, there was a fundamental philosophical difference between the Wesleyan experience of God's presence and power in the here and now which also anticipated future fulfillment in real time and space and Dodd's understanding that

There is no coming of the Son of Man in history "after" His coming in Galilee and Jerusalem, whether soon or late, for there is no before and after in the eternal order. The Kingdom of God in its full reality is not something which will happen after other things have happened. It is that to which men awake when this order of time and space no longer limits their vision, when they "sit at meat in the Kingdom of God" with all the blessed dead, and drink with Christ the "new wine" of eternally felicity. "The Day of the Son of Man" stands for the timeless fact. So far as history can contain it, it is embodied in the historic crisis which the coming of Jesus brought about. But the spirit of man, though dwelling in history, belongs to the eternal order, and the full meaning of the Day of the Son of Man, or of the Kingdom of God, he can experience only in that eternal order. That which cannot be experienced in history is symbolized by the picture of a coming event, and its timeless quality is expressed as pure simultaneity in time-"as the lightening flashes."[[659]](#footnote-658)

Wesley would have had none of this. Again and again Wesley portrayed the eschaton as contiguous with real history and not unconnected with "this order of time and space," but it was also more real perhaps and profoundly different. Wesley's lightening was real lightening.

While there are points of similarity between the eschatological vision of John Wesley and the realized eschatology of C. H. Dodd, they appear to be more external coincidence than essential harmony. There is a great gulf fixed between the two. Wesley spoke of a literal, even palpable, supernatural reality invading and, at a definite point in history, concluding the present penumbra of current space time. Dodd, on the other hand, alluded to the timeless realization of an ethical and mystical awareness which suprahistorically enshrouded history. It seems that the tendency to reduce Wesleyan enthusiasm (even in the most literal sense of the word) to an acceptable modernism is not dissimilar to Dodd's inappropriate forcing of futurist sayings in the Gospels into his existential categories to make his point.[[660]](#footnote-659) Clearly, there are connections between the present experience and life-changing power of God in Wesleyan Methodism, yet, and just as clearly, Wesley would have preached with vigor against anyone whose fundamental hermeneutic was so antithetical as to preclude a real and future coming. Ironically, their differences are the result of their greatest similarity: they are both children of particular points in history. Yet, there seems to be an important philosophical difference between the Wesleyan experience of God's presence and power in the present and Dodd's understanding that "the eschaton has moved from the future to the present, from the sphere of expectation into that of realized experience."[[661]](#footnote-660)

Eden and Heaven

Although he did not develop the idea in detail, Wesley intimated a conceptual connection between the final state of the good dead and the edenic paradise of Adam and Eve. "It is certain that there is some truth in the supposition [of a biblical golden age]; seeing it is certain, the days which Adam and Eve spent in paradise were far better than any which have been spent by their descendants, or ever will be, till Christ returns to reign upon earth."[[662]](#footnote-661) Both Adam and Eve in the Garden and believers in the resurrection were considered whole, holy, and capable of growth.[[663]](#footnote-662) The similarities in Wesley's descriptions between Eden and the glorious state described above are striking: the conditions, trees, rivers, sense of order, and presence of God in Eden are all emphasized.[[664]](#footnote-663) Yet, the new world not only recapitulated the old, but surpassed it.

Theodicy

There also seems to be a connection between the ideas of the golden chain, Eden in relation to the future state of believers, and theodicy. Clearly, the fall in Eden was a downward movement on the chain. So too, the end of salvation in heaven will be a dramatic movement upward and one of even greater magnitude. This may be connected to Wesley's invocation of the *felix culpa*, the happy fall, to explain the origin and purpose of evil.

Yet, when we consider all the evils introduced into the creation may work together for our good-yea, may work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory [2 Cor. 4:17]-we may well praise God for permitting these temporary evils in order to [provide?] our eternal good. Yea, we may well cry out: "O the depth both of the wisdom and of the goodness of God [cf. Rom. 11:33]![[665]](#footnote-664)

Or even more directly:

Mankind in general have gained by the fall of Adam a capacity of attaining more holiness and happiness on earth than it would have been possible for them to attain if Adam had not fallen. For if Adam had not fallen Christ had not died. Nothing can be more clear than this; nothing more undeniable. The more thoroughly we consider the point, the more deeply shall we be convinced of it.[[666]](#footnote-665)

He then went on to enumerate the benefits of the fall: Christ taking on human nature so humanity could be made alive, the proclamation of God's love and the thankfulness of His creatures, the possibility of faith, the "extravagance" of love resulting from Christ's sacrifice, the possibility of people being conformed into the image of Christ's sacrifice, true potential for love of neighbor, the blessing of pain and suffering in creating godly character, the opportunity of doing good, and the avoidance of the covenant of works.[[667]](#footnote-666) The fall brought "unspeakable advantage,"[[668]](#footnote-667) an advantage of moving closer to God, higher on the chain of being, by it "we may gain infinitely more than we lost."[[669]](#footnote-668)

One final element must be added to this construct. The whole of this theodicy is connected to Wesley's fundamental idea of human freedom. Through Adam's fall God gave humanity, "opportunity" for greater holiness, "occasions" for "good works," and "power to suffer for God;"[[670]](#footnote-669) but "did not take away the liberty he had given him."[[671]](#footnote-670) Wesley's idea of human freedom ran directly counter to the decree to damnation, "none ever was or can be a loser but by his own choice."[[672]](#footnote-671) Thus, the great chain of being, the Eden / fall / heaven motif, the preservation of Arminian freedom in soteriology, and eschatology seem to be connected in Wesley's thought. It is not simply the existence of eschatology which is important but it is its character relationship to the original creation which is crucial. The new world can only come into being with the rending of the chain and its re creation.[[673]](#footnote-672) (The need to rend the chain again indicates it centrality in Wesley's thought and, as a corollary, tightly integrates his eschatological formation with the rest of his theology.)

This interesting theodicy does not come without difficulties, however. Wesley's underlying intent was to protect God's holiness and justice on the one hand by holding that He did not make a necessarian decree to damnation[[674]](#footnote-673) and to protect His holiness and sovereignty on the other by holding that evil was not a necessary concomitant of existence.[[675]](#footnote-674) But, while so doing he made God's highest expression of love contingent on the existence of evil. As a result of this, another problem emerges: the way seems left open for either the annihilation of evil or, more probably, a future resurgence of it. Does the evil of hell continue to move down the ethical dimension of the chain increasing in wickedness until it again threatens the universe? Wesley's solution, while not perfectly satisfying, does seem at least preferable to many of the alternatives. The "happy fall" theory here articulated by Wesley was, of course, not original, but it was, to his credit, integrated into the larger theory in a unique fashion.

*Summary and Conclusion*

Wesley adapted a complex collection of ideas which gave depth and substance to the basic events of eschatology. The eschatological experience began in the present life with salvation (although not the realized eschatology of Dodd) and moved through a series of well defined personal and historical events including the intermediate state, return of Christ, judgment, and final states of the just and the unjust. The ultimate disposition of humanity included either levels of unremitting eternal torment of levels of blessed, ever-increasing growth. This combination of eternal levels and eternal growth in the final state of the good appears to be an unresolved tension. His sources were diverse and to them he offered little original with the exception of a particular combination of elements in the final state and possibly an interesting theodicy.

1. Downes, J. Cyril, "Eschatological Doctrines in the Writings of John and Charles Wesley" (Ph.D. diss., University of Edinburgh, 1960). Downes emphasis on Charles requires that his work be given a much fuller treatment in this chapter than elsewhere. See also Colin W. Williams, *John Wesley's Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960), 194: "There is a sense in which Wesley stressed realized eschatology more then any other leading western theologian."

   On C. H. Dodd see: *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments* (Keny, England: Hodder and Stoughton, 1939); *The Coming of Christ* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951); *Parables of the Kingdom*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961).

   See also Clarence L. Bence, "Progressive Eschatology: A Wesleyan Alternative," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 14 (Spr. 1979): 45-59; Howard A. Snyder, *The Radical Wesley and Patterns for Church Renewal* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980), 84. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. Downes, "Eschatological Doctrines," 16. His references include: *PW*, 1:353; 5:32; 7:334; 8:374; 9:330; 12:49. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. "Advice to a Soldier," 9 (*WW* 11:202). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
4. "Advice to a Soldier," 4 (*WW* 11:199-200). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
5. Randy L. Maddox, ed., *Aldersgate Reconsidered* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1990); Downes, "Eschatological Doctrines," 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
6. "Congratulations to a Friend, upon Believing in Christ," 6 (*PW* 1:181). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
7. Ser. 1, "Salvation by Faith," I.4 (*WJW* 1.121) and Downes, "Eschatological Doctrines," 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
8. "A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, Part I," I.3 (*WJW* 11:106). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
9. "A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, Part I," I.1; II.1 (*WJW* 11:105, 108). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
10. Ser. 21, "Upon our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, I," I.11 (*WJW* 1:481). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
11. Ser. 37, "Satan's Devices," II.6-8 (*WJW* 2:143-144). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
12. "Minutes of Some Late Conversations," Conversation III, Tuesday, Ten O'Clock, que. 3 (*WW* 8:290); cf. "A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, Part I" I.3 (*WJW* 11:106). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
13. Downes, "Eschatological Doctrines," ch. 3, esp. p. 42. The topic of sanctification in Wesley has been much discussed. See also the classic work: Harald Lindström, *Wesley and Sanctification, A Study in the Doctrine of Salvation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, Francis Asbury Press, 1980). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
14. For comment on his conversion, see Richard P. Heitzenrater, "Great Expectations: Aldersgate and the Evidences of Genuine Christianity," in *Aldersgate Reconsidered*, Maddox, ed., 84, n. 177. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
15. Ser. 17, "The Circumcision of the Heart," I.1 (*WJW* 1:402-403). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
16. See for example: "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection" 19 (*WW* 11:396). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
17. Ser. 40, "Christian Perfection," II.27 (*WJW* 2:119-120). The reference to St. John is 1 John 4:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
18. "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection," 19 (*WW* 11:403). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
19. "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection," 19 (*WW* 11:402). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
20. Williams (*John Wesley's Theology Today*, 165) also notes that, for Wesley, the Lord's supper is a pledge of the glory to come. This position of course comes out of the words of institution recorded by the Apostle Paul. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
21. *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*, the extract from Dr. Brevint's "The Christian Sacrament" 5.1 (*PW* 3:199). Brevint apparently distinguishes between "earnest" and "pledge": "an *earnest* may be allowed upon *account*, for part of that payment which is promised, whereas *pledges* are taken back." The Wesley seemed to have ignored this distinction as in the lines cited. See the discussion in Downes, "Eschatological Doctrines," 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
22. *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*, Hymn XCIX, 1-2 (*PW* 3:289). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
23. *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* III. "The Sacrament a Pledge of Heaven," Hymn XCII.1-2 (*PW* 3:283-4). [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
24. J. E. Rattenbury, *The Eucharist Hymns of John and Charles Wesley, to which is appended Wesley's Preface extracted from Brevint's "Christian Sacrament and Sacrifice" together with "Hymns on the Lord's Supper* (London: Epworth Press, 1948), 68, 63. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
25. Ser. 124, "Human Life a Dream," 7, 13 (*WJW* 4:112, 117). [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
26. Ser 121, "Human Life a Dream" (*WJW* 4:112), emphasis in original. See also Ser. 116, "What Is Man?" 14 (*WJW* 4:26); Ser. 117, "On the Discoveries of Faith," 8 (*WJW* 4:32-33). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
27. Ser. 126, "On Worldly Folly," II.6 (*WJW* 4:136). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
28. *Sermons on Several Occasions*, Preface, 5 (*WJW* 1:104-105) and Ser. 126, "On Worldly Folly," II.4 (*WJW* 4:136); cf. *Hymns for New-Year's-Day*, II (*PW* 6:10):

    Ye worms of earth, arise,

    Ye creatures of a day. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
29. "Remarks on the Limits of Human Knowledge" (*WW* 13:498). The juxtaposition of empirical and revealed data is of interest inasmuch as it identifies the physical phenomena associated with death, but ultimately rests on a revealed answer, albeit one which is not amenable to empirical verification. In this connection, note again his view of empirical science from *SGW*:

    I endeavor throughout, not to *account for* things; but only to *describe* them. I undertake barely to set down what appears in nature, not the cause of those appearances. The facts lie within the reach of our senses and understanding: the causes are more remote. That things are so, we know with certainty: but why they are so, we know not. Many cases we cannot know; and the more we inquire, the more we are perplexed and entangled. God "hath so done his works," that we may admire and adore: but "we cannot search them out to perfection" (*SGW* I:v). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
30. Ser. 117, "The Discoveries of Faith," 8 (*WJW* 4:32-33). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
31. *Jrn.*, Dec. 28, 1764 (*WJW* 21:497); see also: *Jrn.*, Jan. 14, 1775 (*WW* 4:38); *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:18. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
32. Ser 51, "The Good Steward," II.3 (*WJW* 2:287). [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
33. "Remarks on the Limits of Human Knowledge" (*WW* 13:498). See also: Ser. 116, "What Is Man?" 12 (*WJW* 4:25); Ser. 117, "The Discoveries of Faith," 8 (*WJW* 4:32-33); *NOT*, Num. 4:32; *NNT*, 1 Kings 17:32; *Jrn.*, Dec. 15, 1765 (*WJW* 22:27); "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection," 19, 25. que. 38, A (1.) (*WW* 11:402, 435). [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
34. Ser. 109, "The Trouble and Rest of Good Men," II.6 (*WJW* 3:540). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
35. *NOT*, Eccl. 12:6. The spellings "cistern" and "cistern" reflect the documents as cited. The entire extraordinarily lengthy comment on 12:6 is fascinating in this regard: "And so *Solomon* here describes the chief organs appointed for the production, distribution, and circulation of the blood." The brain is also mentioned! [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
36. *NOT*, Num. 4:32. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
37. Ser. 117, "The Discoveries of Faith," 8 (*WJW* 4:32-33). cf. Ser. 116 "What is Man," 12 (*WJW* 4:25). [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
38. "A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion II," II.17 (*WJW* 11:230). See also: Ser. 109, "What Is Man?" 8, 10; *NNT*, Matt.22.32; cf. Luke 20.38; 1 Cor. 15.18. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
39. "A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, II," III.23 (*WJW* 11:270); See also "A Farther appeal to Men of Reason and Religion III," I.5 (*WJW* 11:275). The biblical quote is from 1 Pet. 1:8 and the verse from John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Poems*, 1742, p. 128 (*WJW* 11:275, n. 2). [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
40. Ser. 54, "On the Fall of Man," II.5 (*WJW* 2:408). [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
41. *Jrn.*, Jul. 18, 1742 (*WJW* 19:282). [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
42. *Jrn.*, Jul. 30, 1742 (*WJW* 19:282-283). Note the use of "change." [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
43. *Jrn.*, Aug. 1, 1742 (*WJW* 19:283). For another fine os separation of soul and body described example:

    It cannot be long before we shall both drop this house of earth, and stand naked before God; no, nor before we shall "see the great white throne coming down from heaven, and him that sitteth thereon." On his left hand shall be those who are shortly to dwell in "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." In that number will be all who died in their sins. And among the rest; those whom you *preserved* from repentance.

    See also: "To the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of London," 22 (*WJW* 11:350). The quotations are from Rev. 20:11 and Matt. 25:41. See also: "covering of earth" in "A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion III," I.5 (*WJW* 11:275); "A Letter to the Right Reverend Bishop of Gloucester," III.14 (*WJW* 11:531); *Jrn.*, Jan. 21, 1742 (*WJW* 19:246); Dec. 15, 1765 (*WJW* 22:27); Feb. 23, 1766 (*WJW* 22:31-32); Nov. 31, 1766 (*WW* 3:268); Mar. 19, 1769 (*WW* 3:355-356); Mar. 26, 1790 (*WW* 4:483). [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
44. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:26-56; 2 Cor. 5:1-8; Phil. 1:23; 2 Tim. 1:10; Heb. 2:14. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
45. *NNT*, John 12:31; Rom. 8:3; 1 Cor. 15:26. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
46. Ser. 109, "The Trouble and Rest of Good Men," II.1-5 (*WJW* 3:537-540). There is an interesting note in the Jackson edition:

    The sentiment which is here again expressed, that it is death which destroys sin in the human heart, though couched in the language of the Apostle, is a branch of that philosophical Mysticism which Mr. Wesley entertained at this early period of his life [1735], and which he afterwards renounced for the scriptural doctrine of salvation by faith. According to the New Testament, every believer is already delivered from the dominion of sin; and the Bible never represents the entire sanctification of our nature as effected by death. It is the work of the Holy Spirit; and is not suspended upon the dissolution of the body, but upon the exercise of steadfast faith in the almighty Saviour - Edit. (*WW* 7:371).

    While Jackson is probably correct in the basic assertion it clearly seems from the references in *NNT* (above) that there is a consistent and quite reasonable belief in Wesley that death places one beyond reach of the Devil and the onslaught of sin. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
47. *Jrn.*, Jun. 18, 1742 (*WJW* 19:279). [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
48. *Jrn.*, Jul. 30, 1742 (*WJW* 19:282-283). [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
49. "To Thomas Davenport," Jan. 19, 1782 (*LJW* 7:101-102). [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
50. Ser. 5, "Justification by Faith," I.5 (*WJW* I:185). [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
51. *Minutes of Some Late Conversations*, Conversation I, Jun. 25, 1774, que. 15 (*WW* 8:277). [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
52. *NNT*, Heb. 2:14. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
53. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:26. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
54. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:55. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
55. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:31. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
56. *NNT*, Eph. 4:8. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
57. *NNT*, John 11:41. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
58. *NOT*, Hos. 13:14. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
59. "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection," 25. Q 38, A (1.) (*WW* 11:435). See also 1 Cor. 15:36-42.

    In the interest of thoroughness, it should be noted that Wesley held Enoch, Elijah, and perhaps the Apostle John to have been translated and not died. Ser. 57, "On the Fall of Man," II.3 (*WJW* 2:406-407).

    In the same interest, concerning baptism for the dead:

    Perhaps baptized in hope of blessings to be received after they are numbered with the dead. Or, "baptized in the room of the dead" - Of them that are just fallen in the cause of Christ: like soldiers who advance in the room of their companio[n] that fell just before their face.

    *NNT*, 1 Cor 15:29. "Companio" is apparently a typographical error in my edition. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
60. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:54. Death, however, is not the greatest enemy in one sense, for "death yields to the power of Christ sooner than infidelity" (*NNT*, John 11:47). [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
61. *NNT*, 2 Tim. 1:10. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
62. *NNT*, Rev. 1:13; see also: *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:55; Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13-14. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
63. Downes, "Eschatological Doctrines," 102. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
64. Ser. 141, "The Image of God," II.1 (*WJW* 4:296-297). [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
65. Eg. Part II, I, 3, 5 (*WW* 9:240-241, 242-243). [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
66. Ser. 44 "Original Sin," I.3; II.9 (1759) (*WJW* 2:175, 179-180); Ser. 130, "On Living without God," 11 (1760) (*WJW* 4:173); Ser. 60, "The General Deliverance," I.6-II.2 (1781) (*WJW* 2:441-443); Ser. 57, "On the Fall of Man," on physical death in this sermon, see below (1782) (*WJW* 2: 400-412); Ser. 95, "On the Education of Children," 5 (1783) (*WJW* 3:350); Ser. 69, "The Imperfection of Human knowledge," 3, (1784) (*WJW* 2:583-584); Ser. 76, "On Perfection," I.1-2 (1784) (*WJW* 3:72-73); Ser. 129, "Heavenly Treasure in Earthen Vessels," II.2 (1790) (*WJW* 4:166). [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
67. Ser. 45, "The New Birth," I.3 (*WJW* 2:190). [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
68. Ser. 57, "On the Fall of Man," II.3 (*WJW* 2:406). [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
69. A few souls, like Enoch and perhaps St. John, are specially translated, and a special group is resurrected at the end of the first millennium, see below. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
70. *NNT*, Luke 16.22; 23:43. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
71. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:55. See also: Rev. 1:18: "the invisible world. In the intermediate state, the body abides in death, the soul in hades;" see also 6:8; 20:13-14. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
72. Ser. 115, "Dives and Lazarus," I.5 (*WJW* 4:8). See also: Ser. 110, "On the Discoveries of Faith," 10 (*WJW* 32-33); *NNT*, Luke 20:35; 23:43; Acts 2:27; 1 Cor. 15:55 (cf. Rev. 6:8); 2 Cor. 5:8; 12:4; 2 Pet. 2:4; Rev. 1:8; 2:7; 6:8; "To John Smith," Mar. 22, 1748 (*LJW* 5:133);No attempt, of course, has been made here to give a complete listing. See also: Colin W. Williams, *John Wesley's Theology Today*, 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
73. Ser. 115, "Dives and Lazarus" 3 (*WJW* 4:7). [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
74. Ser 73, "Of Hell," I.4 (*WJW* 3:35). [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
75. *NNT*, 2 Cor. 12:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
76. *NNT*, Luke 23:43. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
77. *NNT*, Luke 16.22; see also: Ser. 117, "On the Discoveries of Faith," 8 (*WJW* 4:33); Ser. 115, "The Rich Man and Lazarus," I.3; III.6, 7 (*WJW* 4:7, 18). [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
78. *NNT*, 2 Cor. 5:8. See also Ser. 115, "Dives and Lazarus," I.3 (*WJW* 4:6-7); Ser. 117, "On the Discoveries of Faith," 8 (*WJW* 4:32-33). [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
79. *NNT*, 2 Cor. 12:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
80. *NNT*, Rev. 2:7; cf. *NNT*, Rev. 22:1-2, 14, 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
81. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," 4 (*WJW* 3:33); citing Isa. 30:33. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
82. *NNT*, Matt. 5:22. See also Ser. 22, "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, II," I.9 (*WJW* 1:492-493) where Wesley described the highest offenders of the human race as being burnt in Hinnom; an exegetical conclusion to which Sugden takes exception: Edward H. Sugden, *Wesley's Standard Sermons*, 2 vols. (London: Epworth Press, 1955), 1:339-340, n. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
83. *NNT*, Matt. 5:22. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
84. Ser. 124, "Human Life Dream," 8 (*WJW* 4:113). [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
85. "To William Law," Jan. 6, 1756, II.7 (*LJW* 3:368-370). [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
86. Ser. 115, "The Rich Man and Lazarus," 2 (*WJW* 4:5-6); *NNT*, Luke 16:29. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
87. Ser 115, "The Rich Man and Lazarus," I.9 (*WJW* 4:10). [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
88. *NNT*, Luke 16.20; see also Ser. 115, "The Rich Man and Lazarus," 2 (*WJW* 4:5-6). [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
89. "To the Rev. Mr. Law," Jan. 6, 1756, II.7 (*LJW* 3:368-369). [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
90. *NNT*, 2 Cor. 5:8. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
91. Ser 51, "The Good Steward," III.1 (*WJW* 2:392-393). [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
92. *NNT*, Rev. 19:20. A similar theme is picked up in his Old Testament comment upon Elijah, he "was translated, body and soul, to heaven, only undergoing such a change, as was necessary to qualify him for being an inhabitant in that world of Spirits," (*NOT*, 2 Kings 2.1). [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
93. Ser. 57, "On the Fall of Man," (1782) II.3 (*WJW* 2:406-407); Ser. 68, "The Wisdom of God's Counsels," (1784) 8 (*WJW* 2:555); Ser. 104, "On Attending the Church Service," (1787) 1 (*WJW* 3:465). The story consists in an expansion of chapter 115 in some late manuscripts. See Edgar Hennecke and K. Schaferdiek, "The Acts of John," in Wilhelm Schneemelcher, ed. *New Testament Apocrypha*, 2 vols. R. McL. Wilson, trans. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, (1959) 1963; 2:188-259, see esp. 258-259 and 259 n. 2. In the Notes (*NNT*, John 21:22) Wesley pleads ignorance: "And who can tell how or when he died." Since the *Notes* are 1754, it seems he may have clarified his thinking by the time the three sermons mentioned above are concerned. Quite possibly this was the result of Wesley's reading Ephraim. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
94. *NNT*, Rev. 20:4-7; see also *NNT*, Rev. 4:4 and Matt. 27:52. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
95. William M. Arnett, "John Wesley -- Man of One Book" (Ph.D. diss., Madison, New Jersey: Drew University, 1954), 235; cf. *NNT*, Introduction and the note on Rev. 1:18. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
96. *NNT*, Rev. 1:18. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
97. "To Mary Bishop," Apr. 17, 1776 (*LJW* 6:214). [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
98. *NNT*, Rev. 20:14. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
99. Much of it also foreshadows the final state. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
100. Ser. 51, "The Good Steward," II.2 (*WJW* 2:287). [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
101. Ser. 51, "The Good Steward," II.3 (*WJW* 2:287). [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
102. "To Mary Bishop," Apr. 17, 1776 (*LJW* 6:213-214). [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
103. Ser. 114, "The Unity of the Divine Being," 8 (*WJW* 4:63). [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
104. Ser. 115, "Dives and Lazarus," I.9 (*WJW* 4:10). [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
105. Ser. 51, "The Good Steward," II.10 (*WJW* 2:290-291). [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
106. Ser. 51, "The Good Steward," II.4 (*WJW* 2:287). [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
107. Ser. 51, "The Good Steward," II.6 (*WJW* 2:288-289). [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
108. Ser. 51, "The Good Steward," II.11 (*WJW* 2:291); see also II.7 (*WJW* 2:289); see also "Elizabeth Ritchie's Account of Wesley's Last Days" (*JJW* 8:132). [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
109. Ser 51, "The Good Steward," II.11 (*WJW* 2:290), emphasis in original. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
110. "A Letter to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Gloucester," II.9 (*WJW* 11:508). Note this also in relation to Wesley's description of ghostly communication and the idea of a spiritual sense. Donald A. D. Thorsen, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral: Scripture, Tradition, Reason and Experience as a Model of Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Harper Collins Publishers, Zondervan, Francis Asbury Press, 1990), 182-187; treats other aspects of the topic. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
111. Ser. 124, "Human Life Dream," 7 (*WJW* 4:113). [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
112. Ser. 51, "The Good Steward," II, 8 (*WJW* 2:290). According to Sugden (*Standard Sermons*, 2:472, n. 8) Wesley's "old translation" is the "Prayer-Book Version." He disputes Wesley's interpretation with some justification. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
113. "To Mary Bishop," Apr. 1, 1776 (*LJW* 6:213-214). [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
114. Ser. 51, "The Good Steward," II.8-10 (*WJW* 2:290-291). [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
115. Ser. 51, "The Good Steward," II.7 (*WJW* 2:289). A similar sentiment is found in *NOT*, Eccl. 9:10: "Thou canst neither design nor act any thing there tending to thy own comfort or advantage."

     In this regard, Solomon is not to be understood literally when he said: "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave" (Eccl. 9:10). Rather, these words indicate that nothing will be of value to the unhappy spirit once he or she has entered eternity. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
116. *NNT*, John 13:7; see also 1 Cor. 13:10-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
117. *NNT*, Heb. 9:27; see also Ser. 51, "The Good Steward," III.1 (*WJW* 2:292); Ser. 54, "On Eternity," 15 (*WJW* 2:367); *NNT*, John 9:4; "A Roman Catechism, Faithfully Drawn Out of the Allowed Writings of the Church of Rome, With a Reply Thereto," ques. 16-19 (*WW* 10:96-98). [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
118. Ser. 54, "On Eternity," 15 (*WJW* 2:367). [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
119. Ser. 51, "The Good Steward," III.1 (*WJW* 2:292). [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
120. Ser. 51, "The Good Steward," III.1 (*WJW* 2:292). [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
121. Ser. 9 "The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption," II.3-4 (*WJW* 1:256). [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
122. "A Letter to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Gloucester," II.8 (*WJW* 11:507). [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
123. Ser. 51, "The Good Steward," II.4, 5 (*WJW* 2:288). See *WJW* (2:288, n. 29) for a good critique of the imprecision of Sugden's references for the *sonus exilis* (Sugden, *Standard Sermons*, 2:468-469, n. 9). The best option seems to be that it is Wesley's translation of Homer's *hoxeto tetrignia, Iliad*, xxiii.15. See below for the verbal communication enjoyed by spirits. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
124. "Letter to a Roman Catholic," 9 (*WW* 10:82); cf. *NNT*, Rev. 8:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
125. On the speech of the evil in hell see: Ser. 73, "Of Hell," I.1 (*WJW* 3:34). [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
126. Ser. 115, "The Rich Man and Lazarus," II.5 (*WJW* 4:14); Ser. 84, "The Important Question," II.4 (*WJW* 3:186-187); *NNT*, Luke 16:29. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
127. Ser. 132, "On Faith, Heb. 11:1," 11 (*WJW* 4:196-197); on the apparent discrepancy see Outler (*WJW* 4:197, n. 44); cf. Ser. 115, "Dives and Lazarus," II.5 (*WJW* 4:14). [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
128. *NNT*, Mark 12:25. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
129. Eg. see JW's interpretation of Dives and Lazarus in Luke 16; Ser. 115, "Dives and Lazarus," I.5 (*WJW* 4:8-9). [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
130. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," 4 (*WJW* 3:33). [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
131. Ser. 31, "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, XI," I.2 (*WJW* 1:665). [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
132. Ser. 84, "The Important Question," II.3-5 (*WJW* 3:185-187); Ser. 117, "On the Discoveries of Faith," 9 (*WJW* 4:33), here the term is "seized." [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
133. Ser. 115, "The Rich Man and Lazarus," I.7 (*WJW* 4:9). [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
134. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," II.7-8 (*WJW* 3:39-40). On Milton see *Paradise Lost* ii.596, 599. There is also a curious reference to Kempis which suggests the *Imitation* i.24 as found in Wesley's translation: *The Christians Pattern* 1735, pp. 56-61. See Outler (*WJW* 3:40, n. 36-38). [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
135. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," I.1 (*WJW* 3:31). [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
136. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," I.1 (*WJW* 3:33-34). [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
137. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," I.4 (*WJW* 4:384). [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
138. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," I.4; II.5 (*WJW* 3:33-34, 38). See also "To the Rev. Mr. Law," Jan. 6, 1756, II.7, commenting on Matt. 25:4 (*LJW* 3:369), where he relates the worm to the final state. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
139. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," II.6 (*WJW* 4:38-39). [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
140. Ser. 115, "Dives and Lazarus," II.6 (*WJW* 4:14). This position is also supported by the development of Ser. 117, "On the Discoveries of Faith," (*WJW* 4:29-38). [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
141. Ser. 117, "The Discoveries of Faith," 9 (*WJW* 4:33). [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
142. E.g. Ser. 132, "On Faith, Heb. 11:1," 11 (*WJW* 196-197 and n. 44). [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
143. This resolves the difficult described by Deschner, *Christology*, 147-148, nn. 13-16. Wesley was probably not so much being inaccurate and conflating when he described the "sinners" in "'hell'" as being "'reserved' until the last judgment, and from which Wesley doubts they will come out." See Ser. 17, "Sermon on the Mount, II," I.11 (*WJW* 1:493-494). [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
144. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," I.4 (*WJW* 3:33). This doctrine may be traced back to patristic sources. It is found in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologia*, Appendix 1, Que. 2, Article 1. Most immediately for Wesley the idea appears in "one of Wesley's favorite essays:" Thomas Boston's *Human Nature in its Fruitful State* (1720), State IV, Head VI. pp. 424-425. See Outler (*WJW* 3:33-34, n. 9). [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
145. "A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, II," III.18 (*WJW* 11:266). [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
146. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," I.1 (*WJW* 3:34). [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
147. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," I.1 (*WJW* 3:34). [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
148. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," I.2 (*WJW* 3:34-35). [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
149. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," I.1 (*WJW* 3:34). [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
150. Ser, 73, "Of Hell," I.1 (*WJW* 3:34). [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
151. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," I.3 (*WJW* 3:35). [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
152. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," I.1 (*WJW* 3:34). [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
153. Ser. 115, "Dives and Lazarus," I.7; II.6 (*WJW* 4:9, 14). See also "To the Rev. Mr. Law," Jan. 6, 1756, II.7 (*LJW* 3:368-370). [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
154. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," I.1 (*WJW* 3:34). [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
155. "A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, Part II," III.18 (*WJW* 11:266). [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
156. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," I.1 (*WJW* 3:34). [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
157. Ser. 84, "The Important Question," II.4-5 (*WJW* 3:186-187). See also Ser 117, "On the Discoveries of Faith," 9 (*WJW* 4:33). This is appears to be an a very elastic interpretation of Hebrews! [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
158. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," I.1 (*WJW* 3:34). [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
159. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," I.2 (*WJW* 3:34-35). [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
160. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," III.1 (*WJW* 3:40-41). [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
161. "To the Rev. Mr. Law," Jan. 6, 1756, II.7, commenting on 2 Pet. 2:4-9 (*LJW* 3:369). [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
162. Ser 117, "On the Discoveries of Faith," 9 (*WJW* 4:33). [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
163. Ser. 117 "The Discoveries of Faith" 9 (*WJW* 4:33, the odd phrasing of the last line is as the original). [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
164. Ser. 122, "On Faith," 8-9 (*WJW* 4:193-194). [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
165. This is strikingly similar to the manner in which Bengelius discerned two millennia in Rev. 20. He observed the definite article is used only some of the time in conjunction with the thousand years. On this basis he understood to distinct 1,000 years periods to be in view. Bengel does not make this distinction in Mark 9:44. [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
166. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," II.3 (*WJW* 3:37). See also Ser. 117, "On the Discoveries of Faith," 9 (*WJW* 4:33); *NNT*, Mark 9:44. [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
167. "To William Law," Jan. 6, 1756, II.7 (*LJW* 3:368). Here Wesley quoted Dr. Peter Browne. [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
168. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," II.2 (*WJW* 3:36-37); cf: Ser. 117, "On the Discoveries of Faith," 9 (*WJW* 4:33). [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
169. *NNT*, Mark 9:44. [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
170. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," II.3 (*WJW* 3:37). [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
171. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," II.3-5 (*WJW* 3:37-38). See also Ser. 7, "The Way to the Kingdom," II.4 (*WJW* 1:227-228); where phrases like "everlasting damnation" and "into the pit, into the fire that never shall be quenched," are used. [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
172. *NNT*, Mark 9:44. On the reality of the fire see also: "To William Law," Jan. 6, 1756, II.7 (*LJW* 3:368-370). Here Browne, who Wesley quotes, uses an analogy to the reality of the future glory and light to emphasize the reality of the fire. [↑](#footnote-ref-171)
173. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," II.3-5 (*WJW* 3:37-38). See also Ser. 7, "The Way to the Kingdom," II.4 (*WJW* 1:227-228). Again, where phrases like "everlasting damnation" and "into the pit, into the fire that never shall be quenched," are used, one must ask the question, "Is this hades or not?" cf. *NNT*, Mark 9:44. [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
174. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," I.4 (*WJW* 3:35). [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
175. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," I.4 (*WJW* 3:35). [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
176. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," I.3 (*WJW* 3:35). [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
177. "A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, II," III.18 (*WJW* 11:266). [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
178. "To William Law," Jan. 6, 1756, II.7 (*LJW* 3:368). Wesley here cited Dr. Peter Browne. [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
179. *NNT*, Matt. 5:22. [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
180. *NNT*, Matt. 25; Luke 13.30. [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
181. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," II.3 (*WJW* 3:37). See also Ser. 17, "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, II," I.9 (*WJW* 1:492-493) where Wesley described the highest offenders of the human race as being burnt in Hinnom. Sugden (*Standard Sermons*, 1:339, n. 9) takes exception to this conclusion. [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
182. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," III.2 (*WJW* 3:41-42). See also "To the Rev. Mr. Law," Jan. 6, 1756, II.7 (*WJW* 3:369-370). [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
183. Ser 73, "Of Hell," III.1 (*WJW* 3:40-41). See also "To the Rev. Mr. Law," Jan. 6, 1756, II.7 (*LJW* 3:368-370). Here Wesley says that since the joys of heaven are described under "the figurative images of light and glory and a kingdom," which is beyond conception, so shall the torments of the damned be beyond conception. [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
184. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," III.2 (*WJW* 3:41-42). See also "To William Law," Jan. 6, 1756, II.7 (*LJW* 3:368). [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
185. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," III.2 (*WJW* 3:41-42). [↑](#footnote-ref-184)
186. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," III.1 (*WJW* 3:40-41). See also "To the Rev. Mr. Law," Jan. 6, 1756, II.7 (*LJW* 3:368-370). [↑](#footnote-ref-185)
187. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," III.2 (*WJW* 3:42-43); see also: *NNT*, Rev 14:10-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-186)
188. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," III.2 (*WJW* 3:41-42); see also: *NNT*, Jas. 2:13; Rev. 14:10-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-187)
189. *NNT*, Matt. 25:30. [↑](#footnote-ref-188)
190. "To William Law," Jan. 6, 1756, II.7 (*WJW* 3:369). [↑](#footnote-ref-189)
191. *NNT*, 2 Cor. 5:8. [↑](#footnote-ref-190)
192. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," I.4 (*WJW* 3:35); see also *NNT*, 12:23. [↑](#footnote-ref-191)
193. Ser. 84, "The Important Question," II.3 (*WJW* 3:185-186); Ser. 117, "On the Discoveries of Faith," 8 (*WJW* 4:32-33); Sermon 115, "Dives and Lazarus," I.3; III.7 (*WJW* 4:7, 18); *NNT*, Luke 16:22. See also *NOT*, Num. 4:32. [↑](#footnote-ref-192)
194. Ser. 136, "On Mourning for the Dead," [15] (*WJW* 4:242). [↑](#footnote-ref-193)
195. Ser. 115, "The Rich Man and Lazarus," I.3 (*WJW* 4:7). See also "A Roman Catechism, Faithfully Drawn Out of the Allowed Writings of the Church of Rome, With a Reply Thereto," ques. 25-26 (*WW* 10:100-101). *NNT* on this passage in the Gospels is not particularly helpful on this issue. [↑](#footnote-ref-194)
196. *NNT*, Luke 23:46. [↑](#footnote-ref-195)
197. Ser. 124, "Human Life a Dream," 12 (*WJW* 4:115-117). The sources of the quotations are respectively (following Outler's notes, *WJW* 4:116-117): (1) Milton, *Paradise Lost*, i.65-66 (see also: Ser. 73, "Of Hell," III.3 [*WJW* 3:40-41]; Ser. 84, "The Important Question," II.7 [*WJW* 3:188]); (2) Charles Wesley, *Funeral Hymns* (1746), p. 12 (*PW* 6:198); (3) Milton, *Paradise Lost*, i.346; (4) Addison (On Ps. 19:1-6), in *The Spectator*, No. 465, Aug. 23, 1712; reprinted in Wesley's *A Collection of Psalms and Hymns* (1737), p. 59; (5) Milton, *Paradise Lost*, iii.382 (see also: Ser. 118, "On the Omnipresence of God," III.1 [*WJW* 4:45]; Ser. 123, "On Knowing Christ after the Flesh," 12 [*WJW* 4:104]). [↑](#footnote-ref-196)
198. Ser. 124, "Human Life Dream," 8 (*WJW* 4:113). This reference in Wesley in particular may well refer to heaven, but that it may also indicate paradise is suggested by the statement: "See the spirits of the righteous that are already praising God in a happy eternity;" Ser. 54, "On Eternity," 13 (*WJW* 2:366). [↑](#footnote-ref-197)
199. Ser. 54, "On Eternity," 13 (*WJW* 2:366). [↑](#footnote-ref-198)
200. Ser. 59, "God's Love to Fallen Man," [II,] 11 (*WJW* 2:431). [↑](#footnote-ref-199)
201. Ser. 105, "On Mourning for the Dead," 19 (*WJW* 4:243). [↑](#footnote-ref-200)
202. *NNT*, Rev. 22:3. This is said of the final state but surely also applies in the intermediate state. [↑](#footnote-ref-201)
203. Ser. 124, "Human Life a Dream," 8 (*WJW* 4:113). [↑](#footnote-ref-202)
204. Ser. 36, "The Law Established through Faith, II," II.1, 3, 4, III.6 (*WJW* 2:38, 39, 43). The thought is expressed again in Charles Wesley's hymn number 842:

     Where faith is sweetly lost in sight,

     And hope in full supreme delight,

     And everlasting love.

     Sugden's suggestion that Chrysostom first suggested that faith failed in heaven seems to ignore Paul's line of reasoning in 1 Cor. 13. Further his reference to John Wesley's hymn number 377 as an indication of the continuance of saving faith is less than convincing (Sugden, *Standard Sermons*, 2:77). [↑](#footnote-ref-203)
205. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 13:13; see also: Ser. 92, "On Zeal," III.6 (*WJW* 3:317-318); "A Letter to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Gloucester," II.9 (*WJW* 2:508). [↑](#footnote-ref-204)
206. Ser. 115, "Dives and Lazarus," I.3 (*WJW* 4:7). See also Ser. 109, "The Trouble and Rest of Good Men," II.[1] (*WJW* 3:537). [↑](#footnote-ref-205)
207. Ser. 109, "The Trouble and Rest of Good Men," II.4, (*WJW* 3:539); cf: Ser. 42, "Satan's Devices," II.5 (*WJW* 2:150). [↑](#footnote-ref-206)
208. Ser. 109, "The Trouble and Rest of Good Men," II.5 (*WJW* 3:539-540); see also section II.1 (*WJW* 3:537-538). [↑](#footnote-ref-207)
209. Ser. 109, "The Trouble and Rest of Good Men," II.1 (*WJW* 3:537-538). [↑](#footnote-ref-208)
210. Ser. 109, "The Trouble and Rest of Good Men," II.3 (*WJW* 3:538-539). [↑](#footnote-ref-209)
211. Ser. 117, "On the Discoveries of Faith," 8 (*WJW* 4:32-33). [↑](#footnote-ref-210)
212. "To the Rev. Mr. Law," II.7 (*LJW* 3:368). Wesley is quoting from Peter Browne's *Procedure*, 350-351. [↑](#footnote-ref-211)
213. Ser. 84, "The Important Question," II.4 (*WJW* 3:186-187). See also Ser. 117, "On the Discoveries of Faith," 9 (*WJW* 4:33); *NNT*, Luke 16:23. [↑](#footnote-ref-212)
214. Ser. 117, "On the Discoveries of Faith," 9 (*WJW* 4:33), *NNT*, Luke 16:23. [↑](#footnote-ref-213)
215. Ser. 126, "On Worldly Folly," II.6 (*WJW* 4:136-137). The reference to manna is from Charles Wesley's "The Twenty-fifth Chapter of Isaiah," in *Moral and Sacred Poems*, III.258 (as per Outler's n. 27). [↑](#footnote-ref-214)
216. *NNT*, Matt. 26:29. The parallel references are not useful in clarifying this situation. [↑](#footnote-ref-215)
217. Ser. 84, "The Important Question," II.3 (*WJW* 3:185-186). [↑](#footnote-ref-216)
218. Ser. 59, "God's Love to Fallen Man," [II,] 11 (*WJW* 2:431); see also: Ser. 73, "Of Hell," II.3 (*WJW* 3:37); *NNT*, Luke 13:30; 1 Cor. 3:14-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-217)
219. "To William Law," Jan. 6, 1756, II.7 (*LJW* 3:368). Here again Wesley quotes Browne's, *Procedure,* 350-351. Another application of the great chain of being? [↑](#footnote-ref-218)
220. "To Mary Bishop," Apr. 17, 1776 (*LJW* 6:213, see also 214). Italics are as in the original. See also *NNT*, Matt. 5:8; John 17:24. [↑](#footnote-ref-219)
221. "A Roman Catechism, Faithfully Drawn Out of the Allowed Writings of the Church of Rome, With a Reply Thereto," ques. 28-37, quote in 28 (*WW* 10:101-105, quote on p. 101). In support of this position, Wesley uses: 1 Tim. 2:5-6; Rom. 8:34; 1 Cor. 8:5; Col. 2:19; Origin, *C Cels*, lib 5, pp. 233, 239; lib 8, pp. 395, 402. [↑](#footnote-ref-220)
222. Ser. 132 "On Faith," 12-13 (*WJW* 4:197-198). [↑](#footnote-ref-221)
223. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," I.4 (*WJW* 3:35). That this material may not reflect the theologically mature Wesley, see Jackson's notes on Ser. 109, "The Trouble and Rest of Good Men" written in 1735 (*WW* 7:366, 371). [↑](#footnote-ref-222)
224. "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection," "A Farther Account," que. 33 (*WW* 11:430). This appears to be the reference cited by M. B. Wynkoop, "Hermeneutical Approach to John Wesley." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 6 (1971): 13-22, p. 21; citing "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection," XL, 432. [↑](#footnote-ref-223)
225. "To Mary Bishop," Apr. 17, 1776 (*LJW* 6:214). [↑](#footnote-ref-224)
226. Ser. 132, "On Faith, Heb. 11:1," 5 (*WJW* 4:191) citing Matt. 25:34. The *Notes* in this place are not helpful. [↑](#footnote-ref-225)
227. *NNT*, Heb. 12:23. *NNT*, Phil. 3:12-13 does not make the same point but emphasizes Paul's comment in light of the difficulty of attaining perfection and its contrast with "perfect holiness" which in light of vs. 11 (resurrection of the dead) may suggest some connection with the theme of Heb. 12:23. [↑](#footnote-ref-226)
228. John Deschner, *Wesley's Christology, an Interpretation* (Dallas, Southern Methodist U. Press, 1960, 1985), 136; identifies a number of passages in the notes where this "remarkable extension of the Wesleyan perfection motif" may be found. These, however, are altogether explicit: *NNT*: Matt. 19:30, a reference to the Jews being called first perhaps receiving a lower reward; Heb. 12:23, a reference to a higher degree of perfection on earth, but is not explicit about the idea of growth; Rev. 7:9, a reference to degrees of glory predicated on earthly obedience and sacrifice, although there is a hint of on ongoing sanctification. Ser. 132, "On Faith, Heb. 11:1," 4-5 (*WJW* 4:189-191) remains the best source of data. [↑](#footnote-ref-227)
229. *NNT*, Rev. 7:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-228)
230. "Minutes of Some Late Night Conversations," conversation V, Jun. 17, 1747 (*WW* 7:294). See also "Brief Thoughts on Christian Perfection" (*WW* 11:446). [↑](#footnote-ref-229)
231. *NNT*, Heb. 7:1, 24, 28; cf. *NOT*, Ps. 110. [↑](#footnote-ref-230)
232. See especially Harald Lindstrom, *Wesley and Sanctification*, 118-125. On the curious business of "degrees" of perfection (Lindstrom 118) see: "To William Dodd," Mar. 12, 1756 3 (*LJW* 3:168). See also Ser. 40, "Christian Perfection," I.9 (*WJW* 2:104-105; see also Edward H. Sugden, *Wesley's Standard Sermons* [London: Epworth Press 1921], 158, n. 1); Ser. 83, "On Patience," 10 (*WJW* 3:175); "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection," 19 (*WW* 11:402). See also "Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection" (1763) que. 29 (*WW* 11:426) which is contained within the "Plain Account." The idea of perfecting perfect beings is also found in his comment upon conditions before the fall: "The Doctrine of Original Sin," III. Regeneration (*WJW* 9:310). This concept will be further treated in the chapter on the final state. [↑](#footnote-ref-231)
233. For the tow compared see: Thomas C. Oden, *Doctrinal Standards in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1988), 112. [↑](#footnote-ref-232)
234. *NNT*, Acts 2:27. [↑](#footnote-ref-233)
235. *NNT*, Eph. 4:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-234)
236. *NNT*, 1 Pet. 3:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-235)
237. *NNT*, Luke 23:43; Acts 2:27. [↑](#footnote-ref-236)
238. Deschner, *Wesley's Christology*, 50-51 citing David Lerch, *Heil und Heilgung*. [↑](#footnote-ref-237)
239. Outler (*WJW* 3:7, n. 16) gives the following bibliography:

     Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," III.1 (*WJW* 1:366-367); Ser. 43, "The Scripture Way of Salvation," I.1 (*WJW* 2:155-156); Ser. 73, "Of Hell," I.4 (*WJW* 3:19); Ser. 84, "The Important Question," II.4, 7 (*WJW* 3:186-187, 188); Ser. 109, "The Trouble and Rest of Good Men," 1:3 (*WJW* 536-537); Ser. 115, "Dives and Lazarus," I.3 (*WJW* 4:7); Ser. 132, "On Faith, Heb. 11:1," 11 (*WJW* 4:195-197); *NNT*, Luke 23:42; 1 Cor. 3:13; Heb. 6:1 [a somewhat vague illusion]; "Popery Calmly Considered," II (*WW* 10:143-145); "Preface to a Treatise on Justification," 16 (*WW* 10:342-343); "Remarks on Mr. Hill's 'Review of All the Doctrines Taught by Mr. John Wesley," XXIII (*WW* 10:395); "Remarks on Mr. Hill's Farrago Double-Distilled," 44 (*WW* 10:439-440).

     To this may be added: Ser. 51, "The Good Steward," III.1 (*WJW* 2:292) where he appeals to Heb. 9:27 (surprisingly, in the *NNT*, he takes no opportunity in the vicinity of Heb. 9:27 to attack the doctrine.); Ser. 115, "Dives and Lazarus," I.5 (*WJW* 4:8); *NNT*, Rev. 14:13; Rev. 1:18; *Jrn*, Aug. 27, 1790 (*WJW* 3:491); "A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, Part II," III.18 (*WJW* 11:266); "A Roman Catechism, Faithfully Drawn Out of the Allowed Writings of the Church of Rome, With a Reply Thereto," que. 16-24 (*WW* 10:96-100, 120-121); "To Dr. Robertson," Sep. 24, 1753 (*WJW* 3:107); "To William Law," Jan. 6, 1756, II.7 (*WJW* 3:368-370); "To George Blackall," Feb. 25, 1783 (*LJW* 7:168); Article 14 of Wesley's revised Twenty-five Articles. [↑](#footnote-ref-238)
240. "A Roman Catechism, Faithfully Drawn Out of the Allowed Writings of the Church of Rome, With a Reply Thereto," que. 16-19 (*WJW* 10:96-98). [↑](#footnote-ref-239)
241. Ser. 51, "The Good Steward," III.1 (*WJW* 2:292) where he appeals to Heb. 9:27. Surprisingly, in the *NNT*, he takes no opportunity in the vicinity of Heb. 9:27 to attack the doctrine. [↑](#footnote-ref-240)
242. "A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, Part II," III.18 (*WJW* 2:266). The *heathen* poet is Virgil, whose *Aeneid* vi, 740-742, 745-747, which Wesley quotes is found in n. 2 of the reference in Wesley's own translation taken from the appendix to vol. 32 of the 1774 edition of his *Works* as follows:

     Some to the piercing winds are stretched abroad; Some plunged beneath the war'ry gulf" the fire In some burns out the deep imprinted stain, Till the long course of slowly-rolling years Has purged out every spot, and pure remains Th'ethereal spirit, and simple heavenly fire. [↑](#footnote-ref-241)
243. "A Roman Catechism, Faithfully Drawn Out of the Allowed Writings of the Church of Rome, With a Reply Thereto," ques. 19-24 and 68 (*WW* 10:98-100, 120-121). The specific references are Cyprian, *de Mortel.*, sec 2; Gregory, *Plag Grand*, Orat. 15; Jerome, *Com. in Galat*., c. 6; *In Joel*, c. 2; Austin, *Quaest. Evangel*., 1,2, c. 38. In this connection see also: "To George Blackall," Feb. 25, 1783 (*LJW* 7:168). [↑](#footnote-ref-242)
244. *Jrn*, Aug. 27, 1790 (*WJW* 3:491); see also: Ser. 112, "Dives and Lazarus," I.5 (*WJW* 4:8); "To William Law," Jan. 6, 1756, II.7 (*WJW* 3:368-370). [↑](#footnote-ref-243)
245. "To the Rev. Mr. Law," Jan. 6, 1756, II.7 (*LJW* 3:370). [↑](#footnote-ref-244)
246. "Popery Calmly Considered," II.5 (*WW* 10:144); cf. "A Roman Catechism, and Reply," que. 21 (*WW* 10:98-99). [↑](#footnote-ref-245)
247. *NNT*, Rev. 1:18. [↑](#footnote-ref-246)
248. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 3:13-14. [↑](#footnote-ref-247)
249. "To George Blackall," Feb. 25, 1783 (*LJW* 7:168). [↑](#footnote-ref-248)
250. *NNT*, Rev. 14:13. [↑](#footnote-ref-249)
251. The term occurs in both number 22 of the Thirty-nine Anglican articles and in the corresponding number fourteen of Wesley's Revision. For an excellent comparison see: Oden, *Doctrinal Standards*, 101, 119. [↑](#footnote-ref-250)
252. Ser. 132, "On Faith, Heb. 11:1," 4-5 (*WJW* 4:190-191 and n. 10, 11) where he takes to task "the honourable Mr. Campbell" "Bishop of Aberdeen (1721-24) for such an opinion. [↑](#footnote-ref-251)
253. *NNT*, Heb. 9:27. [↑](#footnote-ref-252)
254. *NNT*, Heb. 9.32. [↑](#footnote-ref-253)
255. Ser. 54, "On Eternity," 15 (*WJW* 2:367). See also Ser. 51, "The Good Steward," III.1 (*WJW* 2:292-293). See also *NNT*, John 9:4; Heb. 9:27. [↑](#footnote-ref-254)
256. See "A Second Letter to the Author of 'The Enthusiasm of the Methodists, etc.'" II.42; (*WJW* 11:423, n. 2). This prayer is taken from "A Collection of Forms of Prayers for Every Day of the Week, 1773, 5th edition, 1740. It contains a Saturday evening prayer from St. Mark's Liturgy, the traditional eucharistic liturgy of the Alexandrian Church, cf. "Prayers Private and Public." He defends the same practice in his second letter to Bishop Lavington, nd (*WJW* 11:423), where he credits it to "an ancient liturgy." [↑](#footnote-ref-255)
257. "A Second Letter to the Author of 'The Enthusiasm of the Methodists, etc.'" II.42 (*WJW* 11:423). [↑](#footnote-ref-256)
258. "A Roman Cathechism, Faithfully Drawn Out of the Allowed Writings of the Church of Rome, With a Reply Thereto," Question 33-37 (*WW* 10:102-105). In support of his position, Wesley cites Heb. 1:14; Rev. 19:10; Col. 2:8, 19; Origin, *C Cels*, lib 5, pp. 233, 239; lib. 8 pp. 395, 402. [↑](#footnote-ref-257)
259. "A Roman Cathechism, Faithfully Drawn Out of the Allowed Writings of the Church of Rome, With a Reply Thereto," que. 33 (*WW* 10:104). [↑](#footnote-ref-258)
260. *NNT*, Luke 16:24; the same sentiment is also found in Ser. 115, "Dives and Lazarus," II.6 (*WJW* 4:14). [↑](#footnote-ref-259)
261. Ser. 51, "The Good Steward," IV.3 (*WJW* 2:297). [↑](#footnote-ref-260)
262. *NNT*, Rev. 9:20. [↑](#footnote-ref-261)
263. "A Roman Catechism, Faithfully Drawn Out of the Allowed Writings of the Church of Rome, With a Reply Thereto," que. 23 (*WW* 10:99-100). Note his references to: Epiphanius, *Haer* (59), c Cathar; Jerome, *Com in Galat* (lib 3, c 6); *Com in Joel* (c 2). See also Ser. 115, "Dives and Lazarus," (*WJW* 4:5-18). Further, he argues, as might well be expected, against any "Invocation of saints." "A Roman Cathechism, Faithfully Drawn Out of the Allowed Writings of the Church of Rome, With a Reply Thereto", Question 28 (*WW* 10:101). [↑](#footnote-ref-262)
264. Ser. 51, "The Good Steward," II.10 (*WJW* 2:290-291). He was specifically reacting to Edmund Law (*WJW* 2:291, n. 42). On psychopannychy and John Calvin see also Albert C. Outler, "John Wesley, Folk Theologian," in *The Wesleyan Theological Heritage*, Edited by Thomas C. Oden and Leicester R. Longden (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Francis Asbury Press, 1991), 116, n. 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-263)
265. *NOT*, Job 3:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-264)
266. Ser. 115, "Dives and Lazarus," I.3 (*WJW* 3:7). [↑](#footnote-ref-265)
267. *NNT*, Heb. 9:27. [↑](#footnote-ref-266)
268. *NNT*, Luke 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-267)
269. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," II.2 (*WJW* 1:359). See also "To the Rev. Mr. Law," Jan. 6, 1756, II.7, commenting on 2 Pet. 2:4-9 (*LJW* 3:369); *NNT*, Mark 13.32. [↑](#footnote-ref-268)
270. *NOT*, Joel 3:14. [↑](#footnote-ref-269)
271. *NNT*, Luke 17:26. [↑](#footnote-ref-270)
272. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," II, 2 (*WJW* 1:358). See also "To the Rev. Mr. Law," Jan. 6, 1756, II.7, commenting on 2 Pet. 4-9 (*LJW* 3:369); *NNT*, Mark 13.32. [↑](#footnote-ref-271)
273. Edward H. Sugden, *Wesley's Standard Sermons* (London, Epworth Press, 1955), 2:399; commenting on the "The Great Assize." [↑](#footnote-ref-272)
274. *NNT*, Matt. 24:21; Luke 17:31; Acts 3:21. [↑](#footnote-ref-273)
275. *NNT*, Acts 10:34-35. [↑](#footnote-ref-274)
276. *NNT*, 2 Pet. 3:16. [↑](#footnote-ref-275)
277. *NOT*, 1 Kings 13:22; see also Job 12:6. [↑](#footnote-ref-276)
278. *NOT*, Joel 2-3 esp: 2:31; 3:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-277)
279. Among the general descriptions of these events are: Ser. 117, "On the Discoveries of Faith," 10-11 (*WJW* 4:33-34); Ser. 51, "The Good Steward," III.2-6 (*WJW* 2:293-6); and most especially Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," (*WJW* 1:355-375). [↑](#footnote-ref-278)
280. *NNT*, John 12:31; Luke 10:21; Mark 9:40; Rev. 6:9; 20:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-279)
281. *NNT*, Jas. 2:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-280)
282. Ser. 4, "Scriptural Christianity," I.2 (*WJW* 1:161-162); *NNT*, 1 John 3:8. See also the discussion on this in relation to Christology in Deschner, *Wesley's Christology*, 123-124, 132-135. [↑](#footnote-ref-281)
283. *NNT*, Matt. 24; Luke 21:5-28; Acts 2:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-282)
284. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 6-7 (*WJW* 2:502-3). The conflation may be understood in the context of seeing the transition from the old to the new heavens and earth as a single event in the context of the present sermon. This idea is further substantiated by the loosing of the chain with reference to the falling of the celestial bodies which occurs before the judgment and also references to the chain in the final renovation which occurs after the judgment. Compare also: Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," III.2, 4 (*WJW* 1:367, 370); *NNT*, 2 Pet. 3:10-11; Rev. 20:11-21:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-283)
285. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," I.1 and 1-2 (*WJW* 1:357 and 357-358); see also: *NNT*, Rev. 6:12-16; 20:11-21:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-284)
286. *NNT*, Rev. 6:15-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-285)
287. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," III.1 (*WJW* 1:366); *NNT*, Rev. 20:11-21:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-286)
288. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," I.1 (*WJW* 1:358); see also: *NNT*, Rev. 20:11. [↑](#footnote-ref-287)
289. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," I.1-2 (*WJW* 1:357-359); *NOT*, Joel 2:30-31; all of 2-3 seem to relate to the final judgment; *NNT*, Rev. 6:11-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-288)
290. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," I.1-2 (*WJW* 1:357-359); cf. Isa. 24:20. [↑](#footnote-ref-289)
291. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," I.1-2 (*WJW* 1:357-359). Here Wesley emphasized the *kata topos* of Luke 21:11 to drive home his point. See also: *NNT*, Rev. 17:18. [↑](#footnote-ref-290)
292. *NNT*, Luke 2:26; Rev. 6:12 (the Apostle is here seeing "God's judgment on the wicked departed . . . the end of the world"). [↑](#footnote-ref-291)
293. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," I.1 (*WJW* 1:357); *NNT*, Rev. 16:20. [↑](#footnote-ref-292)
294. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," I.1 (*WJW* 1:357); *NNT*, Luke 21:25. [↑](#footnote-ref-293)
295. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," I.1 (*WJW* 1:358); *NOT*, Joel 2:30-31; *NNT*, Matt. 24.29-30; *NNT*, Luke 21:25; Acts 2:19-20. [↑](#footnote-ref-294)
296. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," I.1 (*WJW* 1:358). [↑](#footnote-ref-295)
297. *NTT*, Jude 13; cf. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," I.1 (*WJW* 1:358). [↑](#footnote-ref-296)
298. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," I.1 (*WJW* 1:358); Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 6-7 (*WJW* 2:502-503; here Wesley drew on: 2 Pet. 3.10-12; Rev. 6:16; 20:11; Matt. 24:29; 2 Pet. 3:10); *NNT*, 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 6:13-15 (the Apostle John is seeing the future as a real historical event presented to the wicked departed as a "representation" at this point, cf. 6:12). [↑](#footnote-ref-297)
299. *NNT*, Col. 3:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-298)
300. *NNT*, Matt. 24:30. [↑](#footnote-ref-299)
301. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," I.1-2 (*WJW* 1:357-359); *NNT*, Matt. 25:31. [↑](#footnote-ref-300)
302. Ser. 51, "The Good Steward," III.2 (*WJW* 2:293). [↑](#footnote-ref-301)
303. *NNT*, Rev. 1:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-302)
304. The key passages here are: Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," I.1-2 (*WJW* 1:357-359); *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:48-55; 1 Thess. 4:13-16; Rev. 11:15. [↑](#footnote-ref-303)
305. On this topics see esp: Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," I.1-2 (*WJW* 1:357-359); Ser. 51, "The Good Steward," III.2 (*WJW* 2:293); *NNT*, 1 Thess. 4:13-10; Rev. 1:7; "Advice to a Soldier," 2 (*WW* 11:198). [↑](#footnote-ref-304)
306. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:23; Rev. 20:13-14. [↑](#footnote-ref-305)
307. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," I.1-2 (*WJW* 1:357-359); *NNT*, 1 Thess. 4:13-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-306)
308. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," I.1-2 (*WJW* 1:357-359). [↑](#footnote-ref-307)
309. *NNT*, Rev. 20:4, 7. Note also in this regard Wesley's abridgment of Bishop Beveridge's "Thoughts upon Religion," "Art. XI.-That our souls and bodies shall be united together again, in order to appear before the judgment-seat of CHRIST" (*CL*, 20:408-412). [↑](#footnote-ref-308)
310. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:23. [↑](#footnote-ref-309)
311. *NOT*, Hos. 13.14; see also Job 19:25. [↑](#footnote-ref-310)
312. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:22. [↑](#footnote-ref-311)
313. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," III.2-3 (*WW* 7:484). [↑](#footnote-ref-312)
314. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:20; *cf* Matt. 27.66; Luke 20:38; John 5:26. [↑](#footnote-ref-313)
315. *NNT*, Acts 2:32. [↑](#footnote-ref-314)
316. *NNT*, Luke 20:38. [↑](#footnote-ref-315)
317. *NNT*, Mark 12:27. [↑](#footnote-ref-316)
318. *NNT*, Cor. 15:50-52; Thess. 4:13-18; cf. Rev. 20:12. [↑](#footnote-ref-317)
319. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 5:15-17; Rev. 11:15; cf. Rev. 20:12. [↑](#footnote-ref-318)
320. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 5:15-17; Rev. 11:15; 20:12; see also Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," IV.5 (*WJW* 1:374). [↑](#footnote-ref-319)
321. *NNT*, 1 Thess. 4:15. The fewness spoken of here is consistent with the unfortunate spiritual state of the second thousand years. [↑](#footnote-ref-320)
322. Ser. [137], "On the Resurrection of the Dead," II.4 (*WW* 7:483). [↑](#footnote-ref-321)
323. *NNT*, 2 Thess. 2:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-322)
324. *NNT*, 1 Thess. 4:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-323)
325. On the issue of final justification, see the discussion in the last chapter. [↑](#footnote-ref-324)
326. "Advice to a Soldier" 2 (*WW* 11:198; the varied capitalization of the divine pronoun is as in the original). The entire document is worth reading for a detailed depiction of the judgment. [↑](#footnote-ref-325)
327. *NNT*, Matt. 25:31. [↑](#footnote-ref-326)
328. Note his abridgment of Seth Ward's "Sermon on the Final Judgment" or October 1066. Ward's topics included: "The Judgment to come," "The Universality and Partiuclarity of the Judgment," "The Majesty and Greatness of the Judge," "The Matter of the Judgment," "The Extent of the Judgment," "The Certainty of the Judgment" (*CL*, 14:321-354). Also note his abridgement of Matthew Hale's "The Great Audit." Hale's topics include: "*The Charte at the Day of Judgment*," "*The Steward's Account*," "*1. In general: as to all the blessings and talents wherewith he has been entrusted*," "*2. In Particular: concerning his senses*," "*3. As to his reason and understanding*," "*4. As to his memory*," "*5. As to his conscience*," "*6. As to the Works of Creation and Providence*," "*7. As to more special Providences*," "*8. As to his speeck*," "*9. As to his time of life*," "*10. As to his use of the creatures, and dominion over them*," "*11. As to his learning of natural causes and effects, and of arts and sciences*," "*12. As to his prudence in the management of affairs*," "*13. As to his gift of elocution*," "*14. AS to his body, and bodily endowments, health, strength, and beauty*," "*15. As to his wealth*," "*16. As to his eminence of place or power in this world*," "*As to his reputation*" (*CL*, 17:235-267). These same categories emerge from Wesley with great ease, cf. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize" (*WJW* 1:354-375).

     Note also *CL*, "Extract from Dr. Goodman's Winter Evening Converence," "Part II," concerning the judgment (20:87-150). [↑](#footnote-ref-327)
329. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," II.1; IV.4: (*WJW* 1:359, 372-373); cf. Acts 17:31; Rom 14:10. See also *NNT*, John 5:22-27; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Phil. 2:6-7; Heb. 1:3; cf. Rom. 14:10; Phil. 2:10-11; Jude 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-328)
330. *NNT*, John 5:22-23, 27; Acts 17:31. [↑](#footnote-ref-329)
331. *NNT*, Phil. 4:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-330)
332. *NNT*, John 5:27. See also Deschner, *Wesley's Christology*, 146-147, n. 18; on the discussion of these passages with a Christological emphasis. [↑](#footnote-ref-331)
333. *NNT*, Acts 17:31; cf. Phil. 2:10-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-332)
334. *NTT*, Matt. 25:31. [↑](#footnote-ref-333)
335. *NNT*, Mark 13:34. [↑](#footnote-ref-334)
336. *NNT*, Matt. 19:28; cf: 1 Cor. 6:2; 2 Cor. 5:10. [↑](#footnote-ref-335)
337. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 6:2; see also *NNT*, Matt. 19:28; Rev. 20:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-336)
338. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," II, 3 (*WJW* 1:260). The lines are from Young's "Last Day," the original runs: "th'unbounded space," *cf* Wesley, *Collection of Moral and Sacred Poems*, 1744, II, 76 (*WJW* 1:360). Is the "eminent writer" Bengelius? [↑](#footnote-ref-337)
339. *NNT*, 1 Thess. 4:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-338)
340. Ser. 51, "The Good Steward," III.2 (*WJW* 2:293); see also *NNT*, Acts 10:42; Rev. 20:12. Wesley expects to see "a great multitude" multitude beyond numbering in heaven: *NNT*, John 14:2; see also Rev. 21:15; yet laments "how few true believers will be found upon earth!" *NNT*, Luke 18:8. See Deschner, *Wesley's Christology*, 136; for a similar discussion. [↑](#footnote-ref-339)
341. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," II.4 (*WJW* 1:361-362); see also I.1. Wesley thought the "four hundred millions" population estimate "absurd." This "commonest supposition" was from Edward Brerewood's (1565?-1613) *Enquiries touching the Discoveries of Languages and Religions through the Chief Parts of the World*, 120-145 (cf. Ser. 63, "The General Spread of the Gospel," 1 [*WJW* 2:485-486]; Ser. 122, "Causes of the Inefficacy of Christianity," 3 [*WJW* 3:4:87-88]; *The Doctrine of Original Sin*, I.II.1 [*WJW* 1:361, Outler *WJW* 1:361, n. 36 omits the part number]; "To the Bishop of Gloucester," Nov. 26, 1762, II.[9] [*WJW* 11:508]) and was "repeated by Richard Price in a letter to Benjamin Franklin published in *Philosophical Transactions* (of the Royal Society) in 1786" (*WJW* 1:361, n. 36).

     Other references to JW's interest in population are listed by Outler as: Ser. 63, "The General Spread of the Gospel," 1 (*WJW* 2:485-486); Ser. 69, "The Imperfection of Human Knowledge," II.8 (*WJW* 2:581); Ser. 103, "What is Man? Ps 8:3-4," I.2: "four thousand millions" (*WJW* 3:456); Ser. 122, "Causes of the Inefficacy of Christianity," 3 (*WJW* 4:87-88); *The Doctrine of Original Sin*, I.II.1 (*WW* 9:208; *WJW* 21:361, n. 36 omits the part number); *Some Observations of Liberty*, 11-12 (*WW* 11:95-96); and *Jrn.*, Sep. 9, 1776 (*WJW* 4:86-87). The most significant is Ser. 103, "What is Man? Ps 8:3-4," I.2 where he concluded "the inhabitants of the whole terraqueous globe amount to four thousand millions" (*WJW* 3:456). [↑](#footnote-ref-340)
342. *NNT*, Rev. 5:11. [↑](#footnote-ref-341)
343. Ser. 130, "On Living Without God" 14, (*WJW* 4:174). On the possibility of heathen salvation see: Ser. 1, "Salvation by Faith," I.1-2 (*WJW* 1:119-120); Ser. 91, "On Charity," I.3 (*WJW* 3:295-296); "Ser. 99, "The Reward of Righteousness," I.4 (*WJW* 3:403-404); Ser. 106, "On Faith, Heb. 11:6," I.34 (*WJW* 3:494-495); *NOT*, Numb. 16:22; *NNT*, Acts 10:34-35; Rom. 2:11-16. Edward H. Sugden, emphasized that Wesley did not believe all heathen damned, *Wesley's Standard Sermons* (London: Epworth Press, 1955), 1:22. [↑](#footnote-ref-342)
344. Ser. 102, "Of Former Times," (*WJW* 3:442-453). Wesley estimated that about five sixths of the world "consists of Mahometans and pagans:" "A Letter to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Gloucester," II, 9 (*WJW* 11:508). The statistic is also cited in Ser. 63, "The General Spread of the Gospel" 1; Ser. 122, "The Causes of the Inefficacy of Christianity," 3; *The Doctrine of Original Sin*, II, 1. Cragg (*WJW* 11:508, n. 1) cites the source of Wesley's figure as Edward Brerewood's (1565?-1613) *Enquiries Touching the Diversities of Languages and Religions through the Chief Parts of the World*, published posthumously in 1614. Note also Wesley's abridgment of Henry Scougal's "SERMON III.-That there are but a small number saved" (*CL*, 23:398). [↑](#footnote-ref-343)
345. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," II.2 (*WJW* 1:359-360). See also "To the Rev. Mr. Law," Jan. 6, 1756, II.7, commenting on 2 Pet. 2:4-9 (*WJW* 3:369); *NNT*, Mark 13:32. [↑](#footnote-ref-344)
346. *NNT*, Rom. 2:16. Among the key sources for these events are Ser. 15, "The Great Assize;" *NNT*, Matt. 25.:1-46; Rev. 20:12-14. [↑](#footnote-ref-345)
347. Ser. 51, "The Good Steward," III.2 (*WJW* 2:293). See also *NNT*, Acts 10:42. [↑](#footnote-ref-346)
348. Matt. 29:28; Wesley gives cross-references to 2 Cor. 5:10 and 1 Cor. 6:3; but does not discuss this connection in the *NNT* on these passages. [↑](#footnote-ref-347)
349. Ser. 51, "The Good Steward," III.2 (*WJW* 2:293) citing Rev. 20:12-14. "Writing" should be written, see Outler (*WJW* 2:293, n. 50). See also Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," I.1-2 (*WJW* 1:357-359). [↑](#footnote-ref-348)
350. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," II.5, 7 (*WJW* 1:32-363); *NNT*, 1 Tim. 5:21. [↑](#footnote-ref-349)
351. *NNT*, 1 Tim. 5:21; Jas. 5:9. Deschner, *Wesley's Christology*, 1985, 133]; alters this comment on James to "behind every door" giving the incorrect impression the Christ and His angels are supernaturally "bugging" human dwelling places. While Wesley believed this and such an idea was probably in Wesley's mind the real essence of the comment here is that the Judge is at the door in a temporal sense, the judgment is near at hand. Preternatural detective work was being described but with chronological not a local emphasis. Note that this is also how Wesley's understanding of the passage in Ser. 6, "The Righteousness of Faith," III.4 (*WJW*1:215) and "To Mrs. Bennis," May 30, 1769 (*LJW* 5:137-138). See also the material in the chapter on Wesley's world view. [↑](#footnote-ref-350)
352. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," II.8 (*WJW* 1:363-364). [↑](#footnote-ref-351)
353. *NNT*, Matt. 25:37. [↑](#footnote-ref-352)
354. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," II.12 (*WJW* 1:366); *NNT*, 1 Pet. 4:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-353)
355. *NNT*, Matt. 12:37; see also 1 Pet. 1:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-354)
356. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 3:5 ??; see also Ser 15, "The Great Assize," II.5-12 (*WJW* 1:362-366). [↑](#footnote-ref-355)
357. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," II.7 (*WJW* 1:363). [↑](#footnote-ref-356)
358. Ser. 51, "The Good Steward," III.3-6 (*WJW* 2:293-296). [↑](#footnote-ref-357)
359. Ser. 51, "The Good Steward," II.3 (*WJW* 2:294). [↑](#footnote-ref-358)
360. Ser. 51, "The Good Steward," II.53 (*WJW* 2:295); cf. Ser. 50, "The Use of Money," III.1-2: "give all you can." [↑](#footnote-ref-359)
361. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," II.5 (*WJW* 1:362). [↑](#footnote-ref-360)
362. "A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, III," III.2 (*WJW* 11:291). [↑](#footnote-ref-361)
363. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," II.5 (*WJW* 1:362-363). [↑](#footnote-ref-362)
364. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 3:13. [↑](#footnote-ref-363)
365. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," II.10-11 (*WJW* 1:364-365). Wesley mentions several pertinent passages: Jer. 31:34; Ezek. 18:21-22; Heb. 8:12. [↑](#footnote-ref-364)
366. *Hymns and Sacred Poems, 1742*, I, no. -, "1 Timothy 1:15" (*PW*, 2:147); see also: *Hymns for Petition and Thanksgiving for the Promise of the Father*, no. 23, "John 16:13, 14, 15" (*PW* 4:192); *Hymns for Those that Seek and Those that Have Redemption in the Blood of Jesus Christ*, no. 13, "Te Deum" (*PW* 4:226); *Hymns on the Four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles*, "S. John," ch. 8, 1843, John 8:9 (*PW* 11:417). [↑](#footnote-ref-365)
367. Cf. *NNT*, 1 John 2:1 and Downes, "Eschatological Doctrines," 143. [↑](#footnote-ref-366)
368. *NNT*, Rev. 11:18. [↑](#footnote-ref-367)
369. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," II.12 (*WJW* 1:366). [↑](#footnote-ref-368)
370. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 6:2; 1 Thess. 4:17; 1 Pet. 4:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-369)
371. *NNT*, Matt. 25:44. [↑](#footnote-ref-370)
372. "Advice to a Soldier," 2 (*WW* 11:198-199). [↑](#footnote-ref-371)
373. "Advice to a Soldier," 7 (*WW* 11:210). [↑](#footnote-ref-372)
374. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," II.12 (*WJW* 1:366). [↑](#footnote-ref-373)
375. "A Farther Appeal to Men of reason and Religion," I, 2 (*WJW* 11:105-106). On this, Robert C. Monk, *John Wesley, His Puritan Heritage* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1966), 127 notes that Wesley agrees with (if not borrows from) Baxter that "final justification, or the culmination of the justification process, comes at the justification event." But see the discussion of final justification, below. [↑](#footnote-ref-374)
376. *NNT*, Matt. 25:46; Ser. 54, "On Eternity," 14 (*WJW* 2:366); see also Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," II.11-12 (*WJW* 1:365-366); *NNT*, Luke 12:8; 1 Thess 1:10; 2 Pet. 3:14. [↑](#footnote-ref-375)
377. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:26; see also *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:54-56; *NOT*, Hos. 13:14. [↑](#footnote-ref-376)
378. *NNT*, Rev. 20:10-14. [↑](#footnote-ref-377)
379. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:58. [↑](#footnote-ref-378)
380. *NNT*, 1 Pet. 1:7 and Matt. 25:34. [↑](#footnote-ref-379)
381. *NNT*, Matt. 5:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-380)
382. *NNT*, Matt. 12:37; cf. "A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," I.-.1 (*WJW* 11:105). [↑](#footnote-ref-381)
383. The more relevant documents in chronological order include: Ser. 17, "The Circumcision of the Heart," 1732-1733 (*WJW* 1:402-416); Ser. 1, "Salvation by Faith," 1738 (*WJW* 1:117-130); *Jour.*, Sep. 13, 1739 (*WJW* 19:96-97); *Jour.*, Dec. 13, 1739 (*WJW* 19:128); "Minutes of Some Late Conversations," I, Jun. 25, 1744 (*WW* 8:275-278); "An Answer to the Rev. Mr. Church's Remarks on the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Last Journal," Feb. 2, 1744/1745, esp. II.7-10 (*WJW* 11:81-122, esp. pp. 99-102) also found as: "To Thomas Church," Feb. 2, 1745, esp. II.7-10 (*LJW* 2:175-211, esp. pp. 191-193); II, Aug. 2, 1745 (*WW* 8:282-286); "A Second Dialogue between an Antinomian and His Friend," Aug. 24, 1745 (*WW* 10:278); "A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," Dec. 18, 1745, I.III.10 (*WJW* 11:130); Ser. 5. "Justification by Faith," 1746. esp. III.2 (*WJW* 1:182-199, esp. 191; see Outler's note 55 for an interesting list of sources); "Minutes of Some Late Conversations," May 13, 1746 (*WW* 8:286-291); "The Principles of a Methodist Farther Explained," 1746, esp. II.1-3 (*WJW* 11:161-237, esp. pp. 175-180) also found as: "To Thomas Church," Jun. 17, 1746 (*LJW* 2:212-276, esp. pp. 224-227); Ser. 35, "The Law Established through Faith, I," 1750 (*WJW* 2:20-32); Ser. 36, "The Law Established through Faith, II," 1750 (*WJW* 2:33-43); *NNT*, 1754, Matt. 12:37; Acts 10:4; 6:20; Rom. 2:11, 13; 5:14; Heb. 10:37; Jas. 2:12; Rev. 22:12; "To a Gentleman at Bristol," Jan. 6, 1758 (*LJW* 3:244-250); "Preface to a Treatise on Justification, Extracted from Mr. John Goodwin," 1764 (*WW* 10:316-346); Ser. 43, "The Scripture Way of Salvation," 1765 (*WJW* 2:155-169); Ser. 20, "The Lord Our Righteousness," late 1765 (*WJW* 1:449-465); Ser. 14, "Of Repentance in Believers," 1767 (*WJW* 1:335-352); "To James Creighton," May 24, 1773 (*LJW* 6:28); "To Mrs. Bennis," Mar. 1, 1774 (*LJW* 6:76-77); "To Dr. Rutherford," Mar. 28, 1786 (I) (*LJW* 5:358); "To Samuel Sparrow," Dec. 28, 1773 (*LJW* 6:61); "Minutes of Several Conversations" 1770, que. 77 (*WW* 8:337-338); Ser. 127, "On the Wedding Garment," 1790 (*WJW* 4:140-148). [↑](#footnote-ref-382)
384. Among the most interesting relevant materials are: Allan Coppedge, *John Wesley in Theological Debate* (Wilmore, KT: Wesley Heritage Press, 1987), 191-264; Deschner, *Wesley's Christology*, 177-181; Lindstrom, *Wesley and Sanctification*, 119-120, 198-218; Monk, *Puritan Heritage*, 132-150; Thomas C. Oden and Leicester R. Longden, *The Wesleyan Theological Heritage* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 63-67, 117-120; Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 392-395, 459-460; Williams, *Wesley's Theology*, 57-72. [↑](#footnote-ref-383)
385. *NNT*, Jas. 2:22; cf. 2:14. [↑](#footnote-ref-384)
386. "A Second Dialogue between an Antinomian and His Friend," (*WW* 10:278). [↑](#footnote-ref-385)
387. Ser. 1, "Salvation by Faith," II.2-3 (*WJW* 1:121-122); "Treatise on Baptism," II.1 (*WW* 10:190). [↑](#footnote-ref-386)
388. *NNT*, Rom. 6:6-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-387)
389. "Minutes of Several Conversations" 1770, que. 77 (*WW* 8:337-338); see also "Minutes of Some Late Conversations," May 13, 1746, que. 1 (*WW* 8:290). [↑](#footnote-ref-388)
390. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:25. [↑](#footnote-ref-389)
391. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:24; the Scripture references are Wesley's. The relationship between God in Christ in the final kingdom is also commented upon in 1 Cor. 15:28. One may note shades of rabbinic argument here! On the eternal reign see also: *NNT*, Luke 1:33; Heb. 1:8; Rev. 20:4-21:4; 22:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-390)
392. *NNT*, Matt. 6:10; 1 Cor. 15:25; cf. (as does Wesley) Rev. 22:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-391)
393. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," III.2 (*WJW* 1:367). See also: Sermon 64, "The New Creation," 6-7 (*WJW* 2:502-3). The Scripture citations are: 2 Pet. 3:10-12; Rev. 6:16; 20:11; Matt. 24:29; 2 Pet. 3:10. See also *NNT*, Rev. 21:1; cf. *NNT*, Rev. 20:11. [↑](#footnote-ref-392)
394. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," III.2 (*WJW* 1:367); Rev. 20:11. This "great noise" is apparently to be distinguished from the "universal shout of all the companies of heaven." I.1 (*WJW* 1:358). [↑](#footnote-ref-393)
395. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," III.2 (*WJW* 1:366-367); See also: Sermon 64, "The New Creation," 6-7 (*WJW* 2:502-503); *NNT*, Matt. 24:39 (apparently in the sense of a double reference, cf. *WJW* 2:503); 2 Pet. 3:10-12; Rev. 6:16; 20:11. [↑](#footnote-ref-394)
396. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," III.4 (*WJW* 1:369-370). Lightning also was a symbol of judgment for Wesley. [↑](#footnote-ref-395)
397. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," III.4 (*WJW* 1:369-370); *NNT*, 2 Pet. 3:10. [↑](#footnote-ref-396)
398. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," III.2 (*WJW* 1:366-367). See also: Sermon 64, "The New Creation," 6-7 (*WJW* 2:502-3); *NNT*, 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 6:13-15 (the Apostle John is seeing the future as a real historical event presented to the wicked departed as a "representation," cf. 6:12); 20:11. [↑](#footnote-ref-397)
399. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," III.4 (*WJW* 1:369-370). Comets were, of course, a classic harbinger and potential mechanism of destruction for Wesley. [↑](#footnote-ref-398)
400. "Remarks on Mr. Hill's Farrago double-Distilled," I.20 (*WW* 10:424-425). Halley's comet is named after Sir Edmund Halley, 1656-1742. See also: *NNT*, 2 Pet. 3:10. Note the similarity of language to his sermons and the scientific connections (in spite of the limited yet exaggerated understanding of comets). [↑](#footnote-ref-399)
401. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," III.4 (*WJW* 1:369-370). One can see the influence of Franklin's experiments on electricity here. See also: *NNT*, 2 Pet. 3:10. [↑](#footnote-ref-400)
402. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 10 (*WJW* 2:504); see also *NNT*, 2 Pet. 3:10-11; Rev. 20:11. [↑](#footnote-ref-401)
403. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," III.2 (*WJW* 1:367); cf. 2 Pet. 2:10-11; Rev. 20:11-21:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-402)
404. *NNT*, 2 Pet. 3:10. [↑](#footnote-ref-403)
405. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," III.3 (*WJW* 1:367-368). [↑](#footnote-ref-404)
406. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," III.2, 4 (*WJW* 1:367, 370); Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 7 (*WJW* 2:502-503); *NNT*, 2 Pet. 3:10. [↑](#footnote-ref-405)
407. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," III.4 (*WJW* 1:370). [↑](#footnote-ref-406)
408. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," III.4 (*WJW* 1:368-370). [↑](#footnote-ref-407)
409. *NNT*, Rev. 6:13. [↑](#footnote-ref-408)
410. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 7 (*WJW* 2:503). [↑](#footnote-ref-409)
411. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:24. [↑](#footnote-ref-410)
412. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," III.1 (*WJW* 1:366-367). [↑](#footnote-ref-411)
413. In this regard note Wesley's abridgment of Bishop Beveridge's "Thoughts upon Religion," Art. XII.-That there is a world of misery for unbelievers, and a world of glory for believers" (*CL*, 20:413-417); Richard Baxter's "The Saint's Everlasting Rest" (*CL*, 22:3-360). [↑](#footnote-ref-412)
414. "To William Law," January 6, 1756, II.7, (1), (3); (*LJW* 3:368). Here Wesley cited approvingly Dr. Peter Browne ("late Bishop of Cork"), *Procedure (or Progress), Extent, and Limits of Human Understanding*, 350-351. It appears at the end of *SWG*, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-413)
415. "To William Law," Jan. 6, 1756, II.7, (3); (*LJW* 3:368). Here again Wesley again cited approvingly Dr. Peter Browne ("late Bishop of Cork"), *Procedure (or Progress), Extent, and Limits of Human Understanding*, 350-351. See also *SWG* 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-414)
416. "To William Law," Jan. 6, 1756, II.7, (*LJW* 3:370). [↑](#footnote-ref-415)
417. *NNT*, Matt. 5:22. [↑](#footnote-ref-416)
418. Ser. 54: "On Eternity," 14 (*WJW* 2:366). See also: Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," III.1; "To John Smith," Mar. 22, 1748, 1, 11 (*WJW* 26:287, 291); "To William Dodd," Mar. 12, 1756 (*LJW* 3:167-173); *NNT*, Rev. 19:20; 22:10. [↑](#footnote-ref-417)
419. E.g: *Jrn*., Aug. 8, 1773 (*WW* 5:504). Wesley criticizes Mr. *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_* for agreeing with Stonehouse on the "non-eternity of Hell." [↑](#footnote-ref-418)
420. Ser. 57, "The Fall of Man," I.1 (*WJW* 2:401). [↑](#footnote-ref-419)
421. Ser. 117, "On the Discoveries of Faith," 6 (*WJW* 4:31). [↑](#footnote-ref-420)
422. "To Dr. Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester," Nov. 26, 1762, I.1 (*LJW* 4:340). [↑](#footnote-ref-421)
423. "To William Law," Jan. 6, 1756; 7 (*LJW* 3:368-369). [↑](#footnote-ref-422)
424. "A Farther Appeal" IV.2 (*WJW* 11:317). See also Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," III.1 (1:366); see also: "To William Law," Jan. 6, 1756 (*LJW* 3:332-370); *NNT*, 2 Thess. 1:9; *SWG*, 5:223.

     See also what was previously considered in the discussion of hades: (1) The separation from God "will be the completion of their misery," Ser. 73, "Of Hell," I.4 [*WJW* 3:35]). (2) Specifically, this separation entails the loss of the"beatific vision ("To William Law," II.7). Here Wesley is quoting Dr. Peter Browne. (3) In terms of degrees Wesley, again quoting Browne, indicates that the greater distance from the "beatific vision" accounts for the levels of torment and that this "seems to be the only punishment to which we can now conceive a pure spirit liable," ("To William Law," II.7). (a) The idea of degrees of punishment may also be found in his *NNT*, Matt. 5:22, where he describes "our Lord" as specifying three degrees of murder and attendant punishment from God. (b) Again it may also be implied in the *NNT*, Matt. 25; and Luke 13:30. (c) In connection with the worm and fire Wesley also discusses his understanding that there will be various levels of suffering. The intensity of the fire will be "according to their degree of guilt," as will the effects of "their" worm. This assessment is predicated on two points: Firstly, from God's justice: if He rewards those in heaven according to their works, so not also in hell? Secondly, from "the very nature of things:" "they that bring most holiness to heaven will find most happiness there; so, on the other hand, it is not only true, that the more wickedness a man brings to hell, the more misery he will find there" (Ser. 73, "Of Hell," II.3 [*WJW* 3:39-40] and Ser. 17, "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, II," I.9 [*WJW* 1:406-407]) where Wesley described the highest offenders of the human race as being burnt in Hinnom. [↑](#footnote-ref-423)
425. *NNT*, 2 Thess. 1:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-424)
426. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," I.4 (*WJW* 3:35). [↑](#footnote-ref-425)
427. "To the Rev. Mr. Law," Jan. 6, 1756, II.7; in reference to 1 Thess. 1:9 (*LJW* 3:369). [↑](#footnote-ref-426)
428. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," III.1 (*WJW* 1:366-367). See also *NNT*, Matt. 25.41; "To William Law," Jan. 6, 1756 (*LJW* III:332-370). [↑](#footnote-ref-427)
429. *NTT*, Matt. 25:41. [↑](#footnote-ref-428)
430. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," II.4-5 (*WJW* 3:37-38). [↑](#footnote-ref-429)
431. "A Farther Appeal, II," II.4 (*WJW* 11:216-218); cf. Isa. 33:14; 34:10; Mark 9:43-48; Rev. 14:11; 20:11; on the eternal fire, etc. in general see: Ser. 92, "On Zeal," 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-430)
432. Ser. 84, "The Important Question," II.7 (*WJW* 3:188). "Intermissionless," "and lake of fire" certainly suggest the final state is at least part of what is in view here. The theme of intermissionless torment may also be found in Wesley's letter to William Law, Jan. 6, 1756, II.7. On the eternal nature of hell see also: *NNT*, Matt. 25:41; 2 Thess. 1:9; Rev. 14:11; *SWG*, 5:223. [↑](#footnote-ref-431)
433. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," III.1 (*WJW* 1:367). [↑](#footnote-ref-432)
434. "An Extract of a Letter to the Rev. Mr. Law," II.7 (*LJW* 3:368-370). [↑](#footnote-ref-433)
435. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," II.7 (*WJW* 3:39). Note the substance of Outler's notes on the sources of the quotations:

     (1) There is no such quote in Kempis although it would fit admirably into *Imitation* i.24. See Wesley's translation of it: *The Christian Pattern*, 1753, pp. 56-61. No other source has been located.

     (2) Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ii.596. [↑](#footnote-ref-434)
436. *NOT*, 1 Kings 13:22; see also Job 12:6. [↑](#footnote-ref-435)
437. *NNT*, John 3:3; Acts 2:19; Rom. 2:9; Heb. 4:2; "A Blow at the Root," 10 (*WW* 10:368); "To William Law," Jan. 6, 1756, II.7 (*LJW* 3:369-370); cf. "To Ann Bolton," Dec. 15, 1786 (*LJW* 7:358). [↑](#footnote-ref-436)
438. Ser. 19, "Sermon on the Mount, IV" I.9 (*WJW* 1:538); *NNT*, Matt. 10:28; Luke 12:5; Heb. 2:5; 10:30; 2 Pet. 2:20. [↑](#footnote-ref-437)
439. "To Dr. Lavington, Bishop of Exeter," Feb. 2, 1750; 15 (*WJW* 11:366-367). See also "To William Law," Jan. 6, 1756, II.7 (*LJW* 3:368). [↑](#footnote-ref-438)
440. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," II.1 (*WW* 7:479). See also "An Extract of a Letter to the Rev. Mr. Law," II.7 (*LJW* 3:368); above. [↑](#footnote-ref-439)
441. Outler, *WJW* 1:716. [↑](#footnote-ref-440)
442. *NNT*, 2 Thess 1:9; see also Matt. 25:46; 1 Thess. 1:10; Rev. 12:12. [↑](#footnote-ref-441)
443. Ser. 7, "The Way to the Kingdom," II.4 (*WJW* 1:227). Edward H. Sugden, *Standard Sermons*, 1:157; notes the preferred translation is "liable to." [↑](#footnote-ref-442)
444. Ser. 73, "Of Hell," III.2-3 (*WJW* 3:41-42). The sources of the quotes after Outler's notes are:

     (1) Mark Le Pla, *A Paraphrase on the song of the Three Children*, st. 21,11.7-8 (cf. Wesley, *A Collection of Moral and Sacred Poems* [1774], II.119).

     (2) Cf. Edward Young, *Night Thoughts*, i.1 (Wesley, *A collection of Moral and Sacred Poems* [1744], II.229; "Tired Nature's sweet ###?rewtorer, balmy sleep!"

     (3) George Grederick Handel, *Samson, An Oratorio* (1742):

     Total eclipse: No sun, no moon,

     All dark amidst the blaze of noon!

     (4) Pope, *Essay on Man*, i.197-198.

     (5) Milton, *Paradise Lost*, i.66-67; see also No. 84, *The Important Question*, II.7.

     (6) Cf. *The Last Day*, iii.156-157; see No. 54, 'On Eternity', sec. 15 and n.

     On the hopelessness of hell see, of course, Dante, "The Divine Comedy," Hell, Canto III, line 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-443)
445. *NNT*, Rev. 2:11. See also Ser. 9, "The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption," II.4 (*WJW* 1:256). [↑](#footnote-ref-444)
446. "To William Law," Jan. 6, 1756, II, 7 (*LJW* 3:370). See also below. [↑](#footnote-ref-445)
447. "To William Law," Jan. 6, 1756, 7 (*LJW* 3:368-370). Note also the classic theodicy that humanity could have greater happiness because God allowed sin: Ser. 59, "God's Love to Fallen Man," [I].1 (*WJW* 2:425); *NNT*, Rom 5:20. This allowance, of course, presupposes punishment of sinners. [↑](#footnote-ref-446)
448. *NNT*, Matt. 27:46; Rom. 1:17; 9:22; Jude 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-447)
449. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," III.1 (*WJW* 1:366). [↑](#footnote-ref-448)
450. "To William Law," Jan. 6, 1756, II.7 (*LJW* 3:368-370). [↑](#footnote-ref-449)
451. *NNT*, 2 Thess. 1:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-450)
452. *NOT*, Josh. 10:40. [↑](#footnote-ref-451)
453. "To William Law," Jan. 6, 1756, II.7 (*LJW* 3:368-370). [↑](#footnote-ref-452)
454. Ser. 7, "The Way of the Kingdom," II.4 (*WJW* 1:228). [↑](#footnote-ref-453)
455. "An Extract of a Letter to the Rev. Mr. Law," II.2 (*LJW* 3:345-346). Note that some of the terms were taken from Law's text by Wesley with the obvious that they should be affirmed as describing God. [↑](#footnote-ref-454)
456. *NNT*, 2 Thess. 1:9. There are many other references which could be added to this list, e.g: John 12:39; Acts 2:20; Rom. 1:24; 1 Thess. 2:16; Heb. 10:31. [↑](#footnote-ref-455)
457. "An Extract of a Letter to the Rev. Mr. Law," II.2 (*LJW* 3:346). [↑](#footnote-ref-456)
458. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 16:22. [↑](#footnote-ref-457)
459. *NNT*, Acts 2:20; see also *NNT*, Rev. 15:8. [↑](#footnote-ref-458)
460. *NNT*, Rom 2:8; Rev. 15:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-459)
461. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," introduction, 4 (*WJW* 2:501); see also *NNT*, Rev. 21:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-460)
462. "To Mary Bishop," Apr. 17, 1776 (*LJW* 6:213). [↑](#footnote-ref-461)
463. *NNT*, Luke 11:52; cf. the similar analysis of Deschner, *Wesley's Christology*, 135-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-462)
464. *NNT*, 1 Tim. 1:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-463)
465. *NNT*, 2 Tim. 4:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-464)
466. *NNT*, Rev. 21:22. [↑](#footnote-ref-465)
467. *NNT*, Matt. 5:8; John 17:24; 1 John 3:2. This is so significant that the levels of existence in heaven are a function of closeness to or distance from God (see below). [↑](#footnote-ref-466)
468. "To Mary Bishop," Apr. 1, 1776 (*LJW* 6:213-214). [↑](#footnote-ref-467)
469. "To Mary Bishop," Apr. 17, 1776 (*LJW* 6:213); see also *NNT*, Matt. 5:8; John 17:24. The full quote to Mary Bishop is: "So the poor dying peasant in Frederica: 'To be sure heaven is a fine place, a very fine *place*; but I do not care for that: I want *to see God* and to *be with Him*." It seems to go back to *Jrn.*, Jun. 1, 1736 (*WJW* 18:159) which reads:

     I was surprised to find one of the most controverted questions in divinity, disinterested love, decided at once by a poor, old man without education or learning, or any instructor but the Spirit of God. I asked him what he thought of paradise-to which he had said he was going. He said, "To be sure, it is a fine place. But I don't mind that. I don't care what place I am in. Let God put me where he will, or do with me what he sill, so I may but set forth his honour and glory.

     This is perhaps another example of Mr. Wesley's haste in writing. Although paradise is focus, this idea certainly applies to the entire experience of the good dead after death.

     On Wesley as folk theologian see Outler, *Theological Heritage*, 43-44. [↑](#footnote-ref-468)
470. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:28. [↑](#footnote-ref-469)
471. "To Mary Bishop," Apr. 17, 1776 (*LJW* 6:213-214); see also: *NNT*, Rev. 4:6-7; 5:6-13; 7:11; 8:9-13; 19:4-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-470)
472. "To Mary Bishop," Apr. 17, 1776 (*LJW* 6:213-214). [↑](#footnote-ref-471)
473. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 16 (*WJW* 2:508). [↑](#footnote-ref-472)
474. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 10 (*WJW* 2:504). [↑](#footnote-ref-473)
475. *NNT*, Rev. 21:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-474)
476. *NNT*, Rev. 21:2; he cites the descriptions in Rev. 20:11, 12; 21:1, 2, 5, 8, 9; 22:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-475)
477. "To Mary Bishop," Apr. 17, 1776 (*LJW* 6:213-214). [↑](#footnote-ref-476)
478. *NNT*, Rev. 21:10. References in *NOT*, Ezek. 40-48 to Revelation or the heavenly Jerusalem are singularly unhelpful. They include: (1) a cross reference concerning the measuring reed (Ezek. 40:3 cf. Rev. 11:1; 21:15); (2) a listing of the various descriptions of *cherubim* (Ezek. 41:18 cf. Rev 4); (3) a cross reference concerning the voice of God (Ezek. 43:2 cf. Rev. 14:2; 19:1, 6); (4) a cross reference concerning the many trees (Ezek. 47:4 cf. Rev. 22:2); (5) a cross reference concerning the gates of the city being named after the tribes of Israel (Ezek. 48:31 cf. Rev. 21:12 ff.); (6) a vague discussion concerning the the name of the city as "the Lord *is* there" from "that day" in reference to the heavenly Jerusalem (Ezek 48:35 cf. the heavenly Jerusalem). This dearth of data is especially surprising considering that *NOT* was done well after *NNT*. [↑](#footnote-ref-477)
479. *NNT*, John 14:2; see also Rev. 21:15. Yet, Wesley also laments that in whatever age Christ may return "how few true believers will be found upon earth!" *NNT*, Luke 18:8. See Deschner, *Wesley's Christology*, 136; for a similar discussion. Note also the discussion on the numbers involved in the judgment (above). [↑](#footnote-ref-478)
480. *NNT*, Rev. 21:15. [↑](#footnote-ref-479)
481. *NNT*, Rev. 21:15. [↑](#footnote-ref-480)
482. *NNT*, Rev. 21:18-27. [↑](#footnote-ref-481)
483. "To Mary Bishop," Apr. 17, 1776 (*LJW* 6:213). [↑](#footnote-ref-482)
484. *NNT*, Rev. 22:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-483)
485. *NNT*, Rev. 22:2; see also 2:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-484)
486. *NNT*, Rev. 21:22. [↑](#footnote-ref-485)
487. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 9 (*WJW* 2:503). [↑](#footnote-ref-486)
488. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 9 (*WJW* 2:503). [↑](#footnote-ref-487)
489. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 8 (*WJW* 2:503). Elsewhere, Wesley was unsure whether comets were part "of the original creation or not;" Ser. 56, "God's Approbation of His Works," I.10 (*WJW* 2:394). [↑](#footnote-ref-488)
490. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 11 (*WJW* 2:504-505). [↑](#footnote-ref-489)
491. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 9 (*WJW* 2:503). [↑](#footnote-ref-490)
492. *NNT*, Rev. 7:16. Perhaps a personal note of great joy given how much he traveled. [↑](#footnote-ref-491)
493. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 9 (*WJW* 2:504). [↑](#footnote-ref-492)
494. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 15 (*WJW* 2:507-508). [↑](#footnote-ref-493)
495. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 15 (*WJW* 2:507-508). [↑](#footnote-ref-494)
496. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 15 (*WJW* 2:507-508). [↑](#footnote-ref-495)
497. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 15 (*WJW* 2:507-508). [↑](#footnote-ref-496)
498. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 12 (*WJW* 2:505). The quote is from Milton, *Paradise Lost*, VIII, 263 (*WJW* 2:390, n. 4; concerning: Ser. 56, "God's Approbation of his Works," I.4.) It is notable that in the *Primitive Physick*, "the most frequent remedy of all is cold water (applied internally and externally), fresh air and exercise and an emphasis on the importance of a tranquil mind;" Henry D. Rack, "Early Methodist Healing," in *The Church and Healing*, ed. W. J. Sheils (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), 137-152, esp. 144. [↑](#footnote-ref-497)
499. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 9 (*WJW* 2:503). [↑](#footnote-ref-498)
500. *NNT*, Rev. 7:16. Perhaps a personal note of great joy given how much he traveled. [↑](#footnote-ref-499)
501. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 14 (*WJW* 2:507), again using a citation from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, X, 668-671. [↑](#footnote-ref-500)
502. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 10 (*WJW* 2:504). [↑](#footnote-ref-501)
503. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 15 (*WJW* 2:507-508). [↑](#footnote-ref-502)
504. Interestingly, some classic passages on the restoration of the "brute" creation is applied figuratively to humanity: *NOT*, Isa. 11:6-7; 65:25; Ezek. 34:25-26; and some seem to be taken more literally: Hos. 2:18. [↑](#footnote-ref-503)
505. Ser. 60, "The General Deliverance," II.1 (*WJW* 2:442). [↑](#footnote-ref-504)
506. Ser. 60, "The General Deliverance," I.3, 5 (*WJW* 2:440, 441). Wesley cites to Gen. 1:28 and Ps. 8:6-8 in support. See also II.1 (*WJW* 2:442). [↑](#footnote-ref-505)
507. Ser 60, "The General Deliverance," II.1 (*WJW* 2:442). [↑](#footnote-ref-506)
508. Ser. 60, "The General Deliverance," I.1 (*WJW* 2:438). [↑](#footnote-ref-507)
509. Ser. 60, "The General Deliverance," I.4-5 (*WJW* 2:441). [↑](#footnote-ref-508)
510. Ser. 60, "The General Deliverance," text; I.5 (*WJW* 2:441-442); see also: Ser. 56, "God's Approbation of His Works," II.3 (*WJW* 2:399); Ser. 61, "The Mystery of Iniquity," 36 (*WJW* 2:470); Ser. 77, "Spiritual Worship," III.7 (*WJW* 3:100-101); Ser. 109, "The Trouble and Rest of Good Men," Introduction (*WJW* 3:533) *NOT*, Gen. 3:14-15, 17; *NNT*, Rom. 8:19-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-509)
511. Ser. 60, "The General Deliverance," II.2 (*WJW* 2:442). There is a curious interpretation of Rom. 5:14 which equates those who did not sin in the similitude of Adam as being the brutes; II.5 (*WJW* 2:445). *NNT*, Rom. 5:14, however, speaks of "even over infants who had never sinned, as Adam did, in their own persons; and over other who had not, like him, sinned against an express law." Wesley then goes on to describe Adam as "a public person, and a federal head of mankind." [↑](#footnote-ref-510)
512. Ser 60, "The General Deliverance," II.2 (*WJW* 2:442-443). [↑](#footnote-ref-511)
513. Ser. 60, "The General Deliverance," III.1 (*WJW* 2:445). See also 2 (2:445-446) where he refers to Rev. 21:5 and "To Dr. John Robertson," Sep. 24, 1753 (*WJW* 26:521). [↑](#footnote-ref-512)
514. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 17 (*WJW* 2:508-509). [↑](#footnote-ref-513)
515. Ser. 60, "The General Deliverance," III.3 ff. (*WJW* 2:446 ff.). [↑](#footnote-ref-514)
516. Ser. 60, "The General Deliverance," III.6 ff. (*WJW* 2:448). [↑](#footnote-ref-515)
517. "A Letter to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Gloucester," II.8 (*WJW* 11:507). [↑](#footnote-ref-516)
518. *NOT*, 3:1-5, (1.). [↑](#footnote-ref-517)
519. *NOT*, Num. 22:28. [↑](#footnote-ref-518)
520. Ser. 60, "The General Deliverance," III.9 (*WJW* 2:448). [↑](#footnote-ref-519)
521. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 16 (*WJW* 2:508). [↑](#footnote-ref-520)
522. Ser. 60, "The General Deliverance," III.7ff. (*WJW* 2:448). On Wesley's belief in an afterlife for animals see William Henry Fitchett, *Wesley and His Century, A Study in Spiritual Forces* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1906), 489. [↑](#footnote-ref-521)
523. *NNT*, Rom. 8:19-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-522)
524. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 18 (*WJW* 2:510). [↑](#footnote-ref-523)
525. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:26; see also *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:54-56. [↑](#footnote-ref-524)
526. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," II.1 (*WW* 7:479). [↑](#footnote-ref-525)
527. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," III.1 (*WJW* 1:366); cf. (as does Wesley) *NOT* Ps. 16:11; 36:8. [↑](#footnote-ref-526)
528. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," II.1 (*WW* 7:481). [↑](#footnote-ref-527)
529. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," III.5 (*WJW* 1:370-371). [↑](#footnote-ref-528)
530. *NNT*, Rev. 22:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-529)
531. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," III.5 (*WJW* 1:370-371); see also *NNT*, 2 Pet. 3:18; Rev. 22:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-530)
532. Ser. 56, "God's Approbation of His Good Works," 7 (*WJW* 2:392). [↑](#footnote-ref-531)
533. "A Letter to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Gloucester," II.9 (*WJW* 2:508); see also: Ser. 92, "On Zeal," III.6 (*WJW* 3:317-318). [↑](#footnote-ref-532)
534. *NNT*, Rev. 21:14; cf. *NOT*, Ezek. 48:31. [↑](#footnote-ref-533)
535. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 18 (*WJW* 2:510); cf. Ser. 5, "Justification by Faith," I.4 (*WJW* 1:184-185). [↑](#footnote-ref-534)
536. *NNT*, Rev. 21:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-535)
537. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:51-52. See *NNT*, Rev. 20:12 for the connection between the rapture events of 1 Cor. 15 and the events at the end of the world indicating that the bodies of the resurrected dead and those who are alive and transformed at the coming of the Lord are have the same kind of resurrection or spiritual body. See also Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," II.4 (*WW* 7:483). [↑](#footnote-ref-536)
538. "To Mary Bishop," Apr. 1, 1776 (*LJW* 6:214). "Empyrean" is an adaptation of the Medieval Latin with the connotation of the highest heaven of purest fire. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 1:134 traces the term to (Richard Rolle of) Hampole's *Pricks of Conscience* (7761; c. 1340): "*Dis heven is cald heven empiry*." Interestingly, John Deacon and J. Walker in *Spirits and Divels* (93, 1601) spoke of them as consisting "of empyreall fierie bodies." Milton, *Paradise Lost* also uses the term vii.14; 1:73. [↑](#footnote-ref-537)
539. *NNT*, Phil. 3:21; see also *NOT*, Num. 4:32. [↑](#footnote-ref-538)
540. *NNT*, Luke 24:51; Eph. 1:20; Heb. 7:26; cf. John Deschner, *Wesley's Christology*, 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-539)
541. *NOT*, Num. 4:32. [↑](#footnote-ref-540)
542. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:36. [↑](#footnote-ref-541)
543. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:36. Note also the special circumstances of the rapture in vs. 51 and Rev. 20:12. [↑](#footnote-ref-542)
544. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," I.3 (*WW* 7:478). [↑](#footnote-ref-543)
545. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," I.1 (*WW* 7:475); cf. 1 Cor. 15.38. Charles even made this a point in his own epitaph:

     Here rest in hope, beneath this humble clod,

     A breathless temple of the living God,

     Assured the all-reviving trump to hear,

     To see the Judge on His white throne appear,

     Spring from the tomb, and meet Him in the air,

     Body and soul shall then united rise,

     The dead shall life - a life that never dies,

     And I attain my place eternal in the skies

     (*PW*, 6:292). [↑](#footnote-ref-544)
546. *NOT*, Ezek. 37:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-545)
547. Ser 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," I.1 (*WW* 7:476). [↑](#footnote-ref-546)
548. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," I.1 (*WW* 7:477). But see the slightly different view present in *SWG*: Matter may neither be created or destroyed (*SWG* 1:306). "And it may be truly said that the matter which clothes the present body clothed the bodies of our ancestors some thousand years ago, and will continue its successive alterations as long as the world shall endure" (*SWG* 1:70). Or again:

     God, in creating the first individual of each species, animal or vegetable, not only gave a form to the dust of the earth, but a principle of life, inclosing in each, a greater or smaller quantity of original particles, indestructible and common to all organized beings. These pass from body to body, supporting the life, and ministering to the nutrition and growth of each. And when any body is reduced to ashes, these original particles, on which death hath no power, survive and pass into other beings, bringing with them nourishment and life. Thus every production, every renovation, every increase by generation or nutrition, supposes a preceding destruction, a conversion of substance, an accession of these original particles, which ever subsisting in an equal number, render nature always equally full of life.

     The total quantity of life in the universe therefore perpetually the same. And whatever death seems to destroy, it destroys no part of that primitive life, which is diffused through all organized beings. Instead of injuring nature, it only causes it to shine with greater lustre. If death is permitted to cut down individuals, it is only, in order to make of the universe, by the reproduction of beings, a theater ever crowded, a spectacle every new. But is never permitted to destroy the most inconsiderable species." (*SWG* 1:304-305).

     On Wesley's views of the conservation of matter and energy see Frank W. Collier, *John Wesley among the Scientists* [New York: Abingdon Press, 1928], 137-143).

     May Wesley's ideas and matter nourishment, and the identity of the resurrection body be reconciled? It is difficult, but its seems that Wesley might say that essence of physical life and the basic substance of one body may pass through another loosing nothing of value and that these may be reunited in the resurrection body. [↑](#footnote-ref-547)
549. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," I.2 (*WW* 7:478). [↑](#footnote-ref-548)
550. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," I.3 (*WW* 7:478). [↑](#footnote-ref-549)
551. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:36. [↑](#footnote-ref-550)
552. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:36. Note also the special circumstances of the rapture in vs. 51 and Rev. 20:12. [↑](#footnote-ref-551)
553. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," I.3 (*WW* 7:478). [↑](#footnote-ref-552)
554. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:37, 39-40, 50-52. Is a sort of "transaccidensiation" implied here? [↑](#footnote-ref-553)
555. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," II.2 (*WW* 7:479). [↑](#footnote-ref-554)
556. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:50; cf. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," II.4 (*WW* 7:483); *NNT*, 2 Cor. 5:1-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-555)
557. *NNT*, I Cor. 15:42-44. [↑](#footnote-ref-556)
558. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," II.1 (*WW* 7:479-480). [↑](#footnote-ref-557)
559. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," II.1 (*WW* 7:480-81). [↑](#footnote-ref-558)
560. *NNT*, Rev. 21:15. [↑](#footnote-ref-559)
561. *NNT*, 2 Cor. 5:2, 4; see also *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:50; Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," II.1 (*WW* 7:479). [↑](#footnote-ref-560)
562. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," II.4 (*WW* 7:482-483). [↑](#footnote-ref-561)
563. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," II.4 (*WW* 7:482-483). [↑](#footnote-ref-562)
564. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," II.4 (*WJW* 7:483). [↑](#footnote-ref-563)
565. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," II.1 (*WW* 7:479); see also II.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-564)
566. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," II.1 (*WW* 7:479); see also *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15.42-43. [↑](#footnote-ref-565)
567. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:42. [↑](#footnote-ref-566)
568. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:44; see also 15:45; Rev. 21:15. [↑](#footnote-ref-567)
569. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," II.1 (*WW* 7:481). [↑](#footnote-ref-568)
570. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," II.1 (*WW* 7:481). [↑](#footnote-ref-569)
571. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," II.1 (*WW* 7:481). [↑](#footnote-ref-570)
572. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:43. [↑](#footnote-ref-571)
573. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," II.3 (*WW* 7:482). [↑](#footnote-ref-572)
574. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," II.2 (*WW* 7:481-482). One wonders at the lack of any reference to the Damascus Road experience of St. Paul as well as possible Old Testament theophanies. *NOT*, Eccl. 8:1 contains no eschatological connection. [↑](#footnote-ref-573)
575. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," II.2 (*WW* 7:482). [↑](#footnote-ref-574)
576. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:43; see also Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," II.1 (*WW* 7:481); cf. III.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-575)
577. *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:48-49; 2 Pet. 3:18. [↑](#footnote-ref-576)
578. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," II.1 (*WW* 7:482). [↑](#footnote-ref-577)
579. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," III.1 (*WW* 7:483-484). [↑](#footnote-ref-578)
580. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," III.1 (*WW* 7:484). [↑](#footnote-ref-579)
581. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," III.2 (*WW* 7:484). [↑](#footnote-ref-580)
582. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," III.1 (*WW* 7:483). [↑](#footnote-ref-581)
583. See also: Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," II.2 (*WW* 7:482); cf. Ser. 59, "God's Love to Fallen Man," [II,] 11 (*WJW* 2:431-432). See also Ser. 73, "Of Hell," II.3 (*WJW* 3:37). [↑](#footnote-ref-582)
584. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," III.5 (*WJW* 1:370-371). Although at the wedding feast of Matthew 22 a mixed group of believers and nonbelievers may be found representing the Church militant, at the marriage supper of the Lamb in Revelation 19 only pure and holy saints are in attendance; Ser. 127, "The Wedding Garment," 9 (*WJW* 4:143-144) [Ser. 120, "The Wedding Garment," 9 (*WW* 7:313)]. The sermon text is Matt. 22:12. An examination of the *NNT* on the Matt. 12 and Rev. 19 passages throws no additional light on the matter. [↑](#footnote-ref-583)
585. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 18 (*WJW* 2:510). [↑](#footnote-ref-584)
586. *NNT*, Rev. 7:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-585)
587. *NNT*, John 3:36. [↑](#footnote-ref-586)
588. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 12 (*WJW* 2:506). [↑](#footnote-ref-587)
589. *NNT*, Mark 12:25; see also Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," II.1 (*WW* 7:481); *NNT*, Luke 20:38. [↑](#footnote-ref-588)
590. *NNT*, Rev. 7:11. [↑](#footnote-ref-589)
591. "To Ann Bolton," Dec. 15, 1786 (*LJW* 7:358). [↑](#footnote-ref-590)
592. "The Doctrine of Original Sin," III (*WW* 9:310). [↑](#footnote-ref-591)
593. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 18 (*WJW* 2:510); cf. Ser. 5, "Justification by Faith," I.4 (*WJW* 1:184-185). [↑](#footnote-ref-592)
594. See the analysis under the consideration of the intermediate state. [↑](#footnote-ref-593)
595. Ser. 59, "God's Love to Fallen Man," II.11 (*WJW* 2:431-432); see also: Ser. 73, "Of Hell," II.3; Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," III.2 (*WW* 7:484); *NNT*, 1 Cor. 15:58; 11:18. [↑](#footnote-ref-594)
596. *NNT*, Rev. 7:9; see also Rev. 15:13. [↑](#footnote-ref-595)
597. *NNT*, Rev. 22:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-596)
598. *NNT*, Rev. 22:26; see also 24-26. [↑](#footnote-ref-597)
599. *NNT*, Rev. 22:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-598)
600. Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," III.3 (*WJW* 1:367-368); Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 13 (*WJW* 2:506). *NNT*, Rev. 4:6 does not allude to these speculations. *NNT*, Rev. 15:2 also speaks of a sea of glass but on "mingled with fire." Wesley saw this as that which "devours the adversaries." [↑](#footnote-ref-599)
601. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 13 (*WJW* 2:506). The citation is from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, iii.44. Jakob Boehme (1575-1624) was "the famous German theosophist, widely influential in England, espec. in the later works of William Law" (*WJW* 2:506). [↑](#footnote-ref-600)
602. N. Burwash, *Wesley's Doctrinal Sermons* (Salem, OH: Schmul, 1982), 139. [↑](#footnote-ref-601)
603. *Jrn.* Sep. 3, 1741 (*WJW* 19:222). [↑](#footnote-ref-602)
604. "Thoughts on the Writings of Baron Swedenborg," May 9, 1782 (*WW* 13:425), the entire tract is instructive. [↑](#footnote-ref-603)
605. Downes, "Eschatological Doctrines," 174. [↑](#footnote-ref-604)
606. Ser. 4, "Scriptural Christianity," III.4 (*WJW* 1:169). [↑](#footnote-ref-605)
607. Ser. 63, "The General Spread of the Gospel," 27 (*WJW* 2:499). [↑](#footnote-ref-606)
608. Ser. 26, "Sermon on the Mount VI," III.8 (*WJW* 1:582). [↑](#footnote-ref-607)
609. See the discussion on Rev. 20 in *NNT*. [↑](#footnote-ref-608)
610. *NNT*, Rev. 20:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-609)
611. *NNT*, Rev. 20:14. [↑](#footnote-ref-610)
612. Ser. 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," II, 1 (*WW* 7:479). [↑](#footnote-ref-611)
613. Ser. 60, "The General Deliverance," III.1 (*WJW* 2:445). See also sec. 2 (2:445-446) where he refers to Rev. 21:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-612)
614. Spangenberg, *Exposition* sec. 265; p. 467. [↑](#footnote-ref-613)
615. Spangenberg, *Exposition* sec. 266; p. 468-469; cf. Rev. 20:11; 2 John 3:10-12. [↑](#footnote-ref-614)
616. Spangenberg, *Exposition*, sec. 268-270; p. 470-473. [↑](#footnote-ref-615)
617. Spangenberg, *Exposition*, sec. 271-273; p. 475-481. [↑](#footnote-ref-616)
618. Spangenberg, *Exposition* sec. 275-276; p. 484-485. [↑](#footnote-ref-617)
619. Spangenberg, *Exposition* sec. 277; p. 486. [↑](#footnote-ref-618)
620. Gill, *Body of Divinity*, sec. 7.3, p. 595. [↑](#footnote-ref-619)
621. Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 7.3, p. 593; 7.8, p. 667. [↑](#footnote-ref-620)
622. Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 7:4, p. 607. [↑](#footnote-ref-621)
623. Gill, *Body of Divinity*, sec. 7.8, p. 676. [↑](#footnote-ref-622)
624. Gill, *Body of Divinity*, sec. 7:10, p. 692-693. [↑](#footnote-ref-623)
625. Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 7.1, p. 579; 7.3, p. 598. [↑](#footnote-ref-624)
626. Gill, *Body of Divinity*, sec. 7.3, p. 593-595. [↑](#footnote-ref-625)
627. Gill, *Body of Divinity*, sec. 7.2, p. 587. [↑](#footnote-ref-626)
628. Gill, *Body of Divinity*, sec. 7.3-4, p. 600-602. [↑](#footnote-ref-627)
629. Gill, *Body of Divinity*, sec. 7.2, p. 604-614. [↑](#footnote-ref-628)
630. Gill, *Body of Divinity*, sec. 7.6, p. 625-637. See Wesley: Etna, Kekla, Vesuvius: Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," III.4 (*WJW* 1:369); Ser. 56 "God's Approbation of His Works," I.3 (*WJW* 2:390); *NNT*, 2 Pet. 3:10. Etna and Vesuvius: Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 15 (*WJW* 2:507). Gill mentions all three of Wesley's volcanos by name and location going on for nearly an entire column (p. 628). [↑](#footnote-ref-629)
631. Gill, *Body of Divinity*, sec. 7.7, p. 636-642. [↑](#footnote-ref-630)
632. Gill, *Body of Divinity*, sec. 7.9, p. 673-676. [↑](#footnote-ref-631)
633. Gill, *Body of Divinity*, sec. 7:10, p. 676-684. For Wesley's reference to Virgil's see Ser. 15, "The Great Assize," II.5 (*WJW* 1:362). Rhadamanthus was the son of Zeus and Europa and the judge of the underworld, Virgil, "Aeneid," vi.567-569. [↑](#footnote-ref-632)
634. Gill, *Body of Divinity*, sec. 7:10, p. 686-694. [↑](#footnote-ref-633)
635. Gill, *Body of Divinity*, sec. 7:10, p. 678; sec. 11, p. 689-690. [↑](#footnote-ref-634)
636. Jewish influences in the sermons: Ser. 2, "The Almost Christian," I.5: a Talmudic form of the Golden rule (*WJW* 1:133); Ser. 36, "The Law Established through Faith, II," I.3: a reference to an "eminent rabbi," David Kimchi (*WJW* 2:35-36); Ser. 43, "The Scripture Way of Salvation," I.1: Abraham's bosom, and *Kiddushin* 72b (*WJW* 2:156); Ser. Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 5: an explicit reference in the text to the three heavens of "ancient Jewish writers" (*WJW* 2:502); Ser. 66, "The Signs of the Times," I.2: an explicit reference in the text the to interpretation of Shiloh as Messianic by both "ancient and modern Jews" (*WJW* 2:523); Ser. 87, "The Danger of Riches," II.8: a passing reference in the text to the Jewish tithing tradition (*WJW* 3:239-240); Ser. 88, "On Dress," 5: "Cleanliness is next to Godliness," a Jewish phrase from the *Midrash Rabbah*, I.1:9 which Wesley attributes in Ser. 98 to "a pious man" (*WJW* 3:249-250) Ser. 98, "On Visiting the Sick," II.6: the preceding saying attributed to "a pious man" (*WJW* 3:392); Ser. 115, "Dives and Lazarus," I.3: the Rabbinic background to the parable (*WJW* 4:7); Ser. 121, "Prophets and Priests," 5: Moses preeminence as a prophet (*WJW* 4:76-77); Ser. 126, "The One Thing Needful," I.5: Satan as the evil impulse (*WJW* 4:134).

     Although Wesley made no reference to Jewish traditions here, Bengelius commented on Abraham's bosom in his *Gnomon*: Luke 16:19-31 in relation to rabbinics.

     Wesley's conception of the three heavens comes not only from rabbinic sources and 2 Cor. 12:2; but is also found in John Ray's *Three Physico-Theological Discourses*, III "The Dissolution of the World," by William Derham, 1732; a treatise on Aristotelian and Ptolemaic astronomy (Outler, *WJW* 2:502, n. 17).

     Bengelius is also familiar with Lightfoot whom he cites in Luke 16:8 in a different connection. John Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica, Matthew-1 Corinthians*, 4 vols., trans. (probably) John Strype and others, (London: John Strype, 1684; reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989), 3:165-176, clearly made the connection to the Talmud in which there is a double chambered state for the dead, although it as an intermediate is not considered. Bengelius was well aware of Lightfoot since he not only references him Bengelius Luke 16:22. follows his wording. Wesley also knew Lightfoot. His father had produced an abridgment (Tyerman, *Samuel Wesley*, 464) and it was on Dodderidge's recommended reading list which was requested by Wesley (reproduced Tyerman, *Life and Times*, 1:518). [↑](#footnote-ref-635)
637. Flavius Josephus, "An Excerpt from Josephus' Discourse to the Greeks Concerning Hades," in *The Complete Works of Josephus*, William Whiston, trans. (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1981.), 637-638. Whiston's 1737 (see p. xi, xxi) translation quickly eclipsed those of Thomas Lodge who first published a translation in 1602 followed by editions in 1609 and 1620 and Sir Robert L'Estrange who produced five editions between 1700 (at Oxford) and 1733. [↑](#footnote-ref-636)
638. All italics are as in the original. The complete text can be found in Appendix 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-637)
639. Josephus, "Concerning Hades," in *Complete Works*, sec. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-638)
640. Josephus, "Concerning Hades," in *Complete Works*, sec. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-639)
641. Josephus, "Concerning Hades," in *Complete Works*, sec. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-640)
642. Josephus, "Concerning Hades," in *Complete Works*, sec. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-641)
643. Josephus, "Concerning Hades," in *Complete Works*, sec. 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-642)
644. Josephus, "Concerning Hades," in *Complete Works*, sec. 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-643)
645. Josephus, "Concerning Hades," in *Complete Works*, secs. 7-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-644)
646. Josephus, "Dissertation VI, to prove That the Fragment or ###Extractour of an Homily concerning Hades Belongs to Josephus, the Jewish Historian; and Was by Him Preached or Written when He Was Bishop of Jerusalem, About the End of Trajan" in *Complete Works*, 708-714. [↑](#footnote-ref-645)
647. "Remarks on the Limits of Human Knowledge," (*WW* 13:489). [↑](#footnote-ref-646)
648. Whiston's most important work in this regard was his *Primitive Christianity Revived*, 5 vol. 1711-1712. After resigning from the Society for the Promoting Christian Knowledge, he founded the Society for Promoting Primitive Christianity Martin Schmidt, *John Wesley: A Theological Biography*, vol. 3, Translated by Norman Goldhawk (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 231, n. 7; 283, n. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-647)
649. Downes, "Eschatological Doctrines," 85. [↑](#footnote-ref-648)
650. Downes, "Eschatological Doctrines," 141; Edward H. Sugden, *Standard Sermons*, 2:400 in the introduction to "The Great Assize." [↑](#footnote-ref-649)
651. "Downtrodden" may be overstated. See the social analysis collected in Henry D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast* (Philadelphia, PA: Trinity Press International, 1989), 437-449. Much of his analysis comes from C. Field, "The Social Structure of English Methodism in the Eighteenth to Twentieth Centuries," *British Journal of Sociology*, XXVIII, 1977, 199-202. [↑](#footnote-ref-650)
652. Downes, "Eschatological Doctrines," 17, 84. [↑](#footnote-ref-651)
653. Dodd, *Apostolic Preaching*, 86. [↑](#footnote-ref-652)
654. C.H. Dodd, *The Coming of Christ* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), e.g. 8-9, 17. Dodd's comment that is a future consummation which he has "passed over too lightly" (p. 16) may refer to all his past work and not simply the preceding part of the chapter. Dodd is arguing for a sort of poetical double entendre in the sayings of Jesus which can apply to numerous human crises throughout history (18-22): "all of Christ's comings" (59-60). See also Norman Perrin, *The Kingdom of God in Teaching of Jesus* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1963), 67. (Perrin's n. 5, p. 67 in reference to Dodd's *The Coming of Christ* should read "16 f.") [↑](#footnote-ref-653)
655. Dodd, *Coming of Christ*, 4; see also 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-654)
656. C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments* (Keny, England: Hodder and Stoughton, 1939), 85-86. [↑](#footnote-ref-655)
657. Dodd, *Apostolic Preaching*, 86. [↑](#footnote-ref-656)
658. Dodd, *Apostolic Preaching*, 85-86. [↑](#footnote-ref-657)
659. C.H. Dodd, *Parables of the Kingdom* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961), 83. Note that Wesley can still speak of promise *NOT*, Gen 36:43. [↑](#footnote-ref-658)
660. See Perrin, *The Kingdom of God*, 64-78. [↑](#footnote-ref-659)
661. C.H. Dodd, *Parables of the Kingdom*, 50. [↑](#footnote-ref-660)
662. Ser. 102, "Of Former Times," 2 (*WJW* 4:443). [↑](#footnote-ref-661)
663. "The Doctrine of Original Sin," III. Regeneration (*WW* 9:310). Note also Lindstrom's parallel display of Adamic and Christian perfection suggesting a similar state achieved by different means; *Wesley and Sanctification*, 153-154. See also: *NOT*, Gen. 2:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-662)
664. Ser. 56, "God's Approbation of His Works," I.2-14; *WJW* 2:389-397); *NOT*, Gen. 2:8-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-663)
665. Ser. 56, "God's Approbation of His Works," II.3 (*WJW* 2:399). This idea is also clearly evident in his sources: *CL*, "An Extract of John Arndt's True Christianity," III, "Of the fall of Adam;" IV, "Of the restoration by Christ: shewing how man is renewed in him to life everlasting" (1:148-152). [↑](#footnote-ref-664)
666. Ser. 59, "God's Love to Fallen Man," [I.] 1 (*WJW* 2:425). [↑](#footnote-ref-665)
667. Ser. 59, "God's Love to Fallen Man," I.1-II.16 (*WJW* 2:425-435). [↑](#footnote-ref-666)
668. Ser. 59, "God's Love to Fallen Man," I.14 (*WJW* 2:427), The idea is also intimated in Ser. 64, "The New Creation," 16 (*WJW* 2:508). [↑](#footnote-ref-667)
669. Ser. 57, "On the Fall of Man," II.11 (*WJW* 2:411); see ###also4 sec. 109. [↑](#footnote-ref-668)
670. Ser. 59, "God's Love to Fallen Man," II.10 (*WJW* 2:431). [↑](#footnote-ref-669)
671. Ser. 56, "On God's Approbation of His Works," II.3 (*WJW* 2:399). [↑](#footnote-ref-670)
672. Ser. 59, "God's Love to Fallen Man," II.14 (*WJW* 2:434). [↑](#footnote-ref-671)
673. Hence Howard A. Snyder's thesis ("The Holy Reign of God." *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 24 [1989]: 74-90; 84-85) that "apocalypticism . . . is foreign to the sense of growth and process one finds in Wesley" cannot be sustained. It is only the most radical renovation to the present universe that will allow that "growth and process" to mature as it originally should have. [↑](#footnote-ref-672)
674. Ser. 59, "God's Love to Fallen Man," II.14 (*WJW* 2:343). [↑](#footnote-ref-673)
675. Ser. 56, "God's Approbation of His Works," II.2 (*WJW* 2:398-399). Outler indicates that Wesley's protagonist here was Soame Jenyns (1704-1787), *Free Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil*, published without name in 1737 (*WJW* 2:398, n. 8; cf. Ser. 59, "God's Love to Fallen Man," II.15, *WJW* 2:434 and n. 78). [↑](#footnote-ref-674)