

# 9th Wesleyan Seminar: Wesleyan Views of Eschatology

## 第九届卫斯理神学研讨会： 卫斯理的末世观

Organizer:  
主办:



卫理神学院

Date: 15-17 Aug 2016  
Venue: MTS, Sibul

日期: 2016年8月15-17日  
地点: 诗巫卫理神学院

### Topics 课题:

Eschatological Living 末世生活

Heaven & New Creation 天堂与新创造

Hades & Hell 阴间与地狱

Millennium 千禧年

Judgement 审判

Hymns 圣诗中的末世观

Eschatology of "I" "I"的末世观

# Contents 目录

	Page No. 页数
Programs Timetable 时间表.....	1
Words from the Organizing Chairman 筹委会主席的话.....	3
Participants Name List & Grouping 参与者名单与组别.....	5
Guidelines for Leading Small Group 带领小组指引.....	7
Session 1 –课题 (一) .....	8
Section 2 –课题 (二) .....	15
Section 3 –课题 (三) .....	28
Section 4 –课题 (四) .....	45
Section 5–课题 (五) .....	53
Section 6 –课题 (六) .....	54
Program of the Prayer Meeting 晚祷告会程序.....	65
Campus map 卫神校园图.....	Back cover

## Wesley Church map 卫斯理堂图

### ✓✓ Wesley Methodist church (Map of all the classroom upstairs)

<b>Sanctuary</b>	<b>C 1</b>		<b>B9 Parsonage</b>			<b>B 10</b>
		////////	<b>Small Chapel</b>			<b>B 11</b>
	<b>C 2</b>		<b>B 3</b>	<b>Youth</b>	<b>Lobby</b>	<b>B 12</b>
	<b>Library</b>			<b>B 4A</b>		<b>B4B</b>
		////////	<b>Lobby</b>			<b>B 14</b>
<b>Lobby</b>		////	<b>Car Parch</b>		<b>B 15</b>	
						<b>Chapel</b>

### ✓✓ Wesley Methodist church (Map of all the classroom downstairs)

<b>SS office</b>	<b>A7A</b>	<b>A7B</b>	<b>A8</b>	<b>A9</b>	<b>A10</b>
<b>Lobby</b>					
<b>A 5 Conference Room</b>					<b>A11</b>
<b>A4 BB Room</b>			<b>Lobby</b>		<b>A12 + A13</b>
<b>Car Parch</b>					<b>GB Room</b>
					<b>General Office</b>
					<b>Toilet (F)</b>
			<b>Toilet (M)</b>		



## Programs Timetable 时间表

### 15 August 2016 (Monday)

Time	Program	Venue
3:00-4:30pm	Registration and accommodation 注册与住宿	Admin Block-MTS Office 行政楼-卫理神学院办公室
4:30pm	Return (MTS-Orchid Hotel) 回 Orchid 旅店	Basketball Court 神学院篮球场
5:45pm	Pick-up 接送 (Orchid Hotel – MTS)	Orchid Hotel Lobby 旅店大厅
6:00-7:00pm	Dinner 晚餐	MPI Canteen 毕理学院餐厅 *
6:30-7:00pm	Registration for non-stay in participants 注册 (限非在神学院住宿的参与者)	Wesley Methodist Church (MC) Sanctuary 卫斯理堂圣堂
7:15-7:45pm	Welcome; Singspiration 欢迎; 歌颂赞美	
7:45-9:00pm	Session 1: <b>Wesleyan View of Heaven and New Creation;</b> Q & A 课题一: 卫斯理对天堂与新创造的观点; 问与答	
9:15pm	Return (MTS-Orchid Hotel) 回 Orchid 旅店	Basketball Court 神学院篮球场

### 16 August 2016 (Tuesday):

5:00am	Pick-up 接送 (Orchid Hotel – MTS)	Orchid Hotel Lobby 旅店大厅
5:15-6:15am	Morning service with Holy Communion 圣餐晨祷告	Wesley MC Sanctuary 卫斯理堂圣堂
6:15am	Return (MTS-Orchid Hotel) 回 Orchid 旅店	Basketball Court 神学院篮球场
7:00-7:30am	Breakfast 早餐	Susanna Dining Hall/Hotel 苏珊娜楼底楼饭厅/旅店
8:15am	Pick-up 接送 (Orchid Hotel – MTS)	Orchid Hotel Lobby 旅店大厅
8:30-8:45am	Singspiration 歌颂赞美	Wesley MC Sanctuary 卫斯理堂圣堂
8:45-10:00am	Session 2: <b>Wesleyan View of Hades and Hell;</b> Q & A 课题二: 卫斯理对阴间与地狱的看法; 问与答	
10:00-11:00am	Group Discussion/Sharing with refreshment 分组讨论/点心	Wesley MC/MTS Classrooms 卫斯理堂、卫神各教室
11:00-12:15pm	Session 3: <b>Wesleyan View of Millennium;</b> Q & A 课题三: 卫斯理对千禧年的观点; 问与答	Wesley MC Sanctuary 卫斯理堂圣堂
12:30-3:00pm	Lunch and rest 午餐和休息	MPI Canteen 毕理学院餐厅
1:00pm	Return (MTS-Orchid Hotel) 回 Orchid 旅店	
2:45pm	Pick-up 接送 (Orchid Hotel – MTS)	Orchid Hotel Lobby 旅店大厅
3:00-3:15pm	Singspiration 歌颂赞美	Wesley MC Sanctuary 卫斯理堂圣堂
3:15-4:30pm	Session 4: <b>Wesleyan View of Judgment;</b> Q & A 课题四: 卫斯理对审判的观点; 问与答	
4:30-6:00pm	Recreation/rest 康乐/休息	
6:00-7:00pm	Dinner 晚餐	MPI Canteen 毕理学院餐厅 *
7:15-8:30pm	Singspiration 歌颂赞美 Session 5: <b>Eschatological Living in John Wesley's Theology;</b> Q & A 课题五: 约翰卫斯理的神学看末世生活	Wesley MC Sanctuary 卫斯理堂圣堂
8:30-9:00pm	Prayer Meeting 祷告会	
9:15pm	Return (MTS-Orchid Hotel) 回 Orchid 旅店	Basketball Court 神学院篮球场

**17 August 2016 (Wednesday):**

Time	Program	Venue
5:00am	<i>Pick-up 接送 (Orchid Hotel – MTS)</i>	Orchid Hotel lobby 旅店大厅
5:15-6:15am	Morning service 晨祷会	Wesley MC Sanctuary 卫斯理堂圣堂
6:15am	<i>Return (MTS-Orchid Hotel) 回 Orchid 旅店</i>	Basketball Court 神学院篮球场
7:00-7:30am	Breakfast 早餐	Susanna Dining Hall/Hotel 苏珊娜楼底楼饭厅/旅店
8:15am	<i>Pick-up 接送 (Orchid Hotel – MTS)</i>	Orchid Hotel Lobby 旅店大厅
8:30-8:45am	Singspiration 歌颂赞美	Wesley MC Sanctuary 卫斯理堂圣堂
8:45-10:00am	Session 6: <b>Wesleyan hymns on Eschatology</b> ; Q & A 课题六：卫理宗圣诗中的末世观；问与答	Wesley MC Sanctuary 卫斯理堂圣堂
10:00-10:45am	Group Discussion/Sharing with refreshment 分组讨论和点心	Wesley MC/MTS Classrooms 卫斯理堂、卫神各教室
10:45-12:00pm	Session 7: <b>A Wesleyan Response to Islamic Eschatology</b> ; Q&A 课题七：卫理宗对“I”之末世观的回应；问与答	Wesley MC Sanctuary 卫斯理堂圣堂
12:00-12:15pm	Closing Ceremony 闭幕礼	
12:30-1:00 pm	Lunch 午餐	MPI Canteen 毕理学院餐厅*
1pm	<i>Return (MTS-Orchid Hotel) 回 Orchid 旅店</i>	Basketball Court 神学院篮球场

**18 August 2014 (Thursday):**

7:45am	<i>Pick-up 接送</i>	<b>TBA</b>
8am- 4:30pm	Methodist Heritage Tour 认识本地卫理教会与圣工之旅	

\*Please take note that a room located at Susanna ground floor will be opened at 4:30pm-6pm during the seminar for off-campus participants. You may rest at your convenience.

**Organizing Committee 筹备委员会:**

Advisor	: Rev. Dr. Tie King Tai (Tel no.: 019-8582039)
Chairman/Publicity	: Rev. Thomas Lau Sie Ngiu (Tel no.: 016-8594056)
Secretary/Handbook	: Ms. Irene Lai Dhing Dhing (Tel no.: 016-8748646)
Treasurer/Food/Refreshment	: Ms. Cecilia Ting Ik Huong (Tel no.: 084-328078)
Accommodation	: Rev. Dr. Francis Wong King Sing (Tel no.:019-4681288)
Transportation	: Rev. Ningkan Galung ak Suring (Tel no.: 0113-1708543)
Registration/Name-tag	: Miss Lau Sie Bing (Tel no.: 016-8902027)
Hospitality	: Rev. Dr. Khoo Ho Peng (Tel no.: 016-5796936)





## Words from the Organizing Chairman...

*Selamat datang* (welcome) to the 9th Wesleyan Seminar organized by the Wesley Centre of Research and Practical Theology! It is indeed the privilege of the Methodist Theological School to serve 229 pastors, church leaders, and members from different cities of Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Australia.

For your information, since the year 2000, the Wesley Centre had organized eight seminars on various issues and studied them from the Wesleyan perspective: “Pastoral Spirituality in the Tradition of Wesley” (2000), “Renewing Sarawak Methodist Church from the Wesleyan Perspective” (2002), “Pastoral Leadership and Management in the 21st Century from the Wesleyan Perspective” (2004), “Scripture and Evangelism from the Wesleyan Perspective” (2006), “Wesleyan Theology and the 21st Century: Progress and Relevance” (2008), “Heritage Alive” (2010), “The Theology and Ministry of Healing from the Wesleyan Perspective” (2012), “The Theology and Ministry of Spiritual Warfare from the Wesleyan Perspective” (2014).

In our 9th Wesleyan Seminar, we pray that the Holy Spirit will help us to attain the following purposes:

1. To have more in-depth study of Wesleyan theology and its impact in the area of eschatology;
2. To spread Scriptural holiness across the land of Malaysia and other countries, bringing along churches’ renewal and nations’ transformation, through a profound biblical as well as Wesleyan understanding of eschatology.

In order to help all participants achieving the aims above, we encourage you to take note of the following items which are especially planned to enhance your learning and worship experiences in this seminar:

1. Join all seven sessions of lecture and be engaged in Q & A as well as small group discussion (Tuesday 10:00-11:00 am; Wednesday 10:00-10:45 am).
2. Join the school’s early morning worship (5:15-6:15 am) carried out in the sanctuary of Wesley Methodist Church during the seminar. Rev. Dr. Tie King Tai will preach in the service on Tuesday morning and one of our graduating M.Div. students from China will preach on Wednesday morning.
3. Join a special prayer meeting designed in accordance with Wesleyan hymns on eschatology on Tuesday (8:30-9:00 pm).
4. Visit the Wesley Centre of Research and Practical Theology which is situated on the first floor of the main administration building and be benefited by our collection of Wesleys’ writings as well as books, Ph.D. theses, and articles on Methodist movements, history, and theology.
5. Visit the school’s library (open 8:00 am - 12:00 pm; 1:30-4:30 pm) where special exhibition of books on eschatology is prepared (241 in English, 198 in Mandarin, 61 in Bahasa Malaysia or Indonesia, plus 4 theses, 4 videos). The library is especially opened from 4:30 pm to 6:00 pm on Monday and Tuesday (15 and 16 August) during the seminar so that those participants who stay in the school or do not go back to hotel may go and enjoy reading there.
6. Sign up for a great movie, “Heaven is for Real” (2014), shown on Tuesday 2:00-2:45 pm and 4:45-5:45 pm in the school’s chapel on the first floor of the administration building. The film was a box office success, grossing \$101 million! More interestingly, the father of the child who encountered God in heaven is a pastor of the Wesleyan Church in USA!
7. Buy books published by the Wesley Centre and two great books on Wesley’s sermons. They include the three-volume *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley in Modern English* by Kenneth C. Kinghorn, *The Sermons of John Wesley: A Collection for the Christian Journey* by Kenneth J. Collins and Jason E. Vickers, M.Theo thesis of Rev. Paul Ting on John Wesley’s Salvation View in his late period, Ph.D. thesis of Rev. Dr. Francis Wong on Christianity and Chinese Culture, Rev. Dr. Khoo Ho Peng’s book on Wesley’s prayer, etc.

May our Father in heaven bless your time in our community.



## 筹委会主席的话

敬爱的牧师、传道、弟兄姐妹们，欢迎您来参加由卫斯理研究中心所主办的第九届卫斯理神学研讨会。此次研讨会会有两个目的：

- 一，更深入地认识卫斯理神学，特别是其末世观；
- 二，让卫斯理的末世观激发我们的爱心，勉励我们行各样善事，在末世时代宣扬圣经圣洁，更新转化国家。

为了帮助您在此次研讨会中有美好的学习和敬拜，我们鼓励您注意以下事项：

- 一，参与七篇学术文章发表的课堂，并积极参与两段小组讨论时光。
- 二，参与神学院周间的晨祷会（五时十五分至六时十五分），在卫斯理堂圣堂举行。卫神院长池金代牧师将在星期二早上传讲信息，而一位由中国来的道学硕士学生将在星期三早上讲道。
- 三，参与特别按卫斯理圣诗设计的晚祷会（星期二晚上八时三十分至九时正）。
- 四，参观卫斯理研究中心（在行政楼第一楼图书馆对面），看一看所有关于卫理宗历史和神学的书籍和论文。
- 五，参观卫理神学院图书馆特别为此次研讨会预备的末世论书籍展览（图书馆在星期一至二特别在下午四时三十分至六时开放）；
- 六，观看电影《真的有天堂》，一部由同名畅销书改编的电影，取材自真实事件，而那一位在天堂中与上帝相遇的孩子，其父亲是美国卫斯理教会（Wesleyan Church）的牧师。若有超过十人注册观看，主办单位将在神学院的小礼堂播放电影（星期二下午二时至二时四十五分，及四时四十五分至五时四十五分）。
- 七，购买由卫斯理中心出版的书籍，其中包括邱和平牧师所翻译的卫斯理祷文、陈发文牧师的神学硕士论文（卫斯理救恩观的晚期发展）、黄敬胜牧师的神学博士论文（华人基督徒和礼俗文化之间的纠缠情结）等。

愿您在研讨会中经历天父的同在、遇见基督、被圣灵充满，而重新得力！

Grace and peace,

## Participants Name List & Grouping 参与者名单与组别

<b>1. Pastor Ung Sing Hing</b> (meet in sanctuary)	<b>2. Rev Tiong Chung Tiing</b> (meet in sanctuary)	<b>3. Rev Wong Tuong Toh</b> (meet in sanctuary)
Catherine Chieng Ying Ying Kueh Siang Kiang Lai Kuok Siew Lilian Hii Lu Ee Christina Chieng Ying Hui Hii Mee Kee Ling Ding Ee Rev Ling Yien Loh Siu Ching	Rev Yong Hua Sing Tong Joo Ang Ling Hua Wee Rev Winnie Lau Puong Woei Ivy Tong Siaw Wei Lau Sie Chai Lee Pick Ting Siaw Ming Ming Tang Ru Ni Ting Jia Jia Lee Wei	Charles Lau Chen Chiew Hiong Chieng Lee Song Tang Sie Hie Kong Hock Lian Wong Lee Yieng Yong King Hwa Chan Yut Fun Dolly Ting Luk Wei Wei Ngu Huong Yieng Terence Ting King Siew Ting Sii Hea Tiong Ying Ying
<b>4. Rev Diong Pick Chiong</b> (meet in small chapel)	<b>5. Charles Tiong Yong Like</b> (meet in small chapel)	<b>6. Rev Wong Kah Nguon</b> (meet in sanctuary)
Winnie Chan Sin Ming Chew Kai Tiek Wong Nyuk Ming Daniel Cheng Bing Doreen Ting Huong Lee Ming Huong Yen Hee Jenny Ling Leong Ing Joshua Ling Lau Sie Tung Law Hui Po Lawrence Lau Sie Ching Wong Sui Leh Tracy Lee	Tiong Chiong Hee Lee Siew King Lee Mei Chiong Ling Kian Hua Lybia Su Hie Chiat Lydia Wong Shin Thian Mark Wong Kee Hui Pau Ing Sieng Raymond Wong Shirley Jin Tay Yah Hua Vincent Tang	Rev Lee Wen Chieh Deborah Hiong Siik Ern Wong Siew Lang Tie Ling Ling Chieng Sui Ing Chieng Yi Lian Hii Wen Suog Wong Koh Seng Joan Wong Rev Lin Kuo Chiang
<b>7. Rev Law Hui Seng</b> (meet in small chapel)	<b>8. Rev Chieng Leh Hii</b> (meet in small chapel)	<b>9. Rev Tai Sing Leh</b> (meet in classroom A7A)
Rev Ting Gin Gin Loi Kiong Kieh Chiong Wei Leong Rev Ting Lian Bing Frankie Ting Rev Wong Nyiik Hung Sii Jia Wei Tang Sing Kok Ting Mie Ching	Rev Sii Hee Tiong Pastor Yeu Chin Thai Chan Chok Chee Rev Ngu Teck Tiong Hii Siong Sieng Jerry Hii Jin Bee Hiong Rev Koh Nien Chu Rev Sia Pik Hao Pastor Wong Ling Ting	Rev Wong Chu Yin Angela Wong Pastor Jonathan Lau Jenny Mok Wei Wei Yu Hung Hock Rev Wong Lee Chiang Wong Lin Chui Lee Sieng Ling (Heritage Tour) Doo Ching Howe

<b>10. Rev Wong Khing Ming</b> (meet in classroom A7B)	<b>11. Rev Yui Kah Ching</b> (meet in A9)	<b>12. Rev Wong Che Sing</b> (meet in chapel)
Deng Luong Thai Hii Hiong Yieng Kueh Chu Chiang Wong Ha Khim Rev Lau Ming Lau Kiing King Hii Chew Yu Pastor Lee Tung Sing Teo Siao Yien Rev Wong Siew Ping Yong Sing Jye	Rev Wong Poh Fong William Ting Jaclyn Lau Chai Hsia Sharron Wong Rev Jacqueline Yew Hie Hie Patrick Liw Hui Peng Beatrice Tiong Hie Yii Ling Siew Chung (Heritage Tour) Henry Ko Shian Fong Hong Yu Ling	Rev Phang Liong Eng Toh Chee Leong Teng Mee Hong Ong Hock Hua Sia Mee Ling Pastor Kiew Toh Wei Ting Chai Nyik Ling Chu Yian
<b>13. Rev Phoebe Kiu</b> (meet in chapel)	<b>14. Rev Lu Yia Ping</b> (meet in chapel)	<b>15. Yao Sik Chi</b> (meet in the cry room)
Siew Teck Chui Sii Dai Hee Christina Ling Hie Min Hii Chui Ching Teng Chin Lee Ting Hung Eng Wong Siew Jian Thien Cheng Yii Thien Geng Yii Joseph Wong	Pastor Ling Tiong Cheng Rev Tang Kah Hie Pastor Yong Ching Chi Tiong Ing Siong Pastor Chee Ling Na Pastor Ngu Hung Seng Rev Tie Hieng Sing Sia Kee Nan Law Puong Chui Rev Ling Mei Jin Rev Yu Ming Sang	Moh Ung Tai Huong Hie Hie Sim Tze Sian Stephen Lau Lee Kiong Hii Wei Lung Yvonne Lee Yee Ming Chu Pastor Gabriel Ling How Sain Carol Ling Sze Yee Tan Wan Lin
<b>16. Rev Daisy Lau Lay Yau</b> (meet in chapel)	<b>18. Rev Nicholas Tan</b> (meet in sanctuary)	<b>20. MTS lecturers, students, and family members: following Family Groups. Special arrangements are as follows.</b> 卫理神学院讲师和学生，及学生家人将依据家庭小组安排，有一些小组加上以下参与者：
Pastor Chiong Yew Hee Pastor Lim Hock Sing Albert Loi Wang Shieng (Heritage Tour) Chong Mooi Yeen (Heritage Tour) Lee Hui Jian (Heritage Tour) Michelle Wong Li Yi Hoo Kie Hua Shirley Wong Li Sing Simon Wong Yiing Liang	Thomas Baran Ak Nato Pastor Jarry Garang Sandra Ak Nyambang Rev Bulan	<b>Rev. Dr. Tie King Tai (院长)</b> Rev Chuo Toung Wrn Rev John Ong Yu Jin Rev Koh Sie Keong Pua Poh Keong
<b>17. Rev Wong Sing Tiong</b> (meet in chapel)	<b>19. Rev Chong Chin Chung</b> (meet in chapel)	<b>Rev. Hoo Sing Hang</b> Rev Sison, Harocio T.
Grace Yii Hung Hie Headtly Ejay Ak Ding (Heritage Tour) Joseph Pang Soon Yang (Heritage Tour) Sim Siok Wei Ting Lai Lai Susana Leong Ting Kee Ling Wong Kai Ling Tang Chung Hieng	Rev Christopher Kong Rev Eric Soh Rev Jasper Sim Rev Joshua Tan Sin Kian Rev Kan Man Shek Rev Koh Chew Hai Rev Lau Chong Yaw Rev Seet Keng Tat Rev Peter Pan Rev Kris Chong Hoi Kiew Rev Tack Ng Pastor Cynthia Choo See Lay Pastor Stefanie Oh Pastor Lee Boon Hwa Pastor Zeng Xiu Xia Loh Chee Yen Regina Kan Leung Lai Ying Vicky Law Wai Chee (Heritage Tour) Daniel Lee Kuan Yong	<b>Rev. Ting Huat Ung</b> Cheong Jun Meng Susie Wong Siew Hung
		<b>Miss Irene Lai</b> Rev Ting Siew King
		<b>Rev. Elizabeth Enjut</b> Dato Alice Jawan Umpum Ak Gamang @ Tony
		<b>Rev. Ningkan Galung Suring</b> Rev Steward Damat Pastor Lau Lee Lam



## HELPING THE GROUP ACHIEVE ITS MAXIMUM POTENTIAL

... Here are a few techniques which the leader can use to help the group function more effectively.

### Question making

This is a tool the leader uses in order to stimulate talk and contributions from all members.

**Use straight questions**, not those which are weighted in one way or another, such as: Don't you think . . . ? You don't think, do you ...? Avoid questions with a simple yes/no answer.

**To involve** a person who has not contributed or those who could make a contribution to the discussion, ask: What do you think of this, (name)? I'm interested in your opinion (name). Or ask a question of the whole group rather than to a particular person. Modify the above or ask: Does anyone have a contribution on this? What is the main point here?

**To redirect.** The leader must learn not to answer most of the questions asked but to redirect them to the group as a whole or to a specific person, by asking: What do other members of the group think about this? Let's hear what (name) thinks about this first. How would you answer this, (name)?

**To clarify.** Conversation can get confused and often lead to misunderstanding and conflict if people do not clearly understand what a person meant by what he or she said. Asking clarifying questions can also help the people develop their own thinking as well as get them a good hearing. Ask questions such as: Could you put that another way for us? What do you mean by saying that ...? Why do you make that statement? What is your understanding of that? or Why did you use that? Have you considered this ...?

**To move on.** The group could have talked out an issue or appear to be spending too much time on one item, so the leader can ask: Do you think we have covered that sufficiently? Should we move on now?

**Summarising.** To help the group in their thinking or to reach a conclusion, leaders will give their summary of what they understand the group to be saying. Opportunity is then given for approval or amendment by asking: Is that your understanding of what is being said . . . or the conclusions we have reached? The summary can be attempted by the group in response to questions such as: What have we agreed to so far?

**Silences are a valued part of group process.** Silences can give people space to reflect and think. Sometimes the silence will occur after a question is raised by the leader. The leader should not break the silence by asking: 'Doesn't anyone have an answer?' or by answering it him/herself. The silence can motivate individuals to get involved, as few can stay with silence very long. Occasionally the leader may suggest a period of silence during a discussion to allow for individual consideration, or to seek to hear God's perspective. Effective Leadership 52

**Facilitating group participation.** Leaders should seek to position themselves so they have eye contact with each member. This eye contact will make all conscious that the leader is aware of their presence, and even a casual eye contact can motivate a particular person to respond. The eye contact is also important to pick up non-verbal communication of each person. Part of the leader's role is to enable each member to participate and seek to curb those who are dominating. Normally a leader will interfere with the flow of conversation as little as possible, letting it flow back and forth. It is not always routed through the leader. The flow of conversation where either the leader is dominating the group or people are not comfortable enough to get into dialogue with each other is shown in Diagram No. 7. Group participation should be as shown in Diagram No. 8, where the leader is playing a good enabling role.

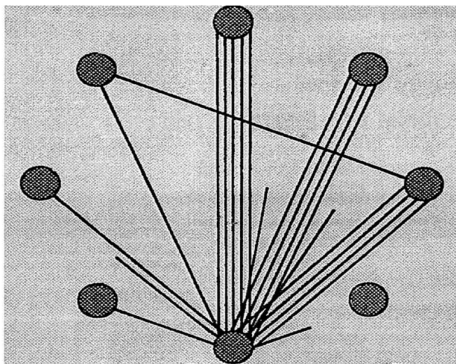


Diagram No. 7

Group participation should be as shown in Diagram No. 8, where the leader is playing a good enabling role.

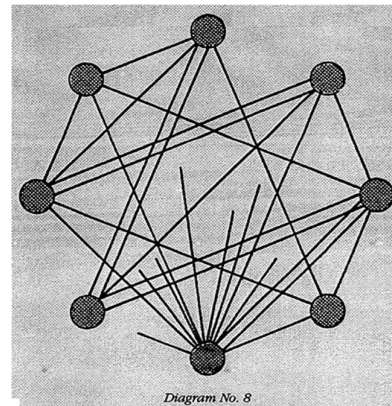


Diagram No. 8

Taken from John Mallison "The Small-Group Leader: A Manual To Develop Vital Small Groups".

## Session 1: Wesleyan View of Heaven and New Creation

Rev. Dr. Khoo Ho Peng, Rev. Ningkan Galung ak Suring

### Introduction

Most Christians in this part of the world would have the image of Heaven and New Creation as portrayed in the book of Revelation: the golden city and streets, the loud praises, the still sea...etc. The vision seems to be uprooted from the contemporary context and belonging to the heavenly ethereal realm. John Wesley, in his description of the heaven and new creation, related a more practical view, and for the most part, a continuation of the salvation already begun in this life. In short, his emphasis is still the means for him to stress the present spiritual realities. This short discourse seeks to address the issue from a tripartite model.<sup>1</sup>

### John Wesley's concept of Heaven and new creation

The question 'When does new creation begin?' seems irrelevant as most will imagine it to begin when this world will be no more and a new beginning sets in. A careful study of Wesley's materials would suggest at least a tripartite model to such an inquiry.

### The Personal Spiritual Dimension

Wesley earliest manuscript sermons, "Death and Deliverance" (1725) and "Seek First the Kingdom" (1725), and subsequently, "The image of God" (1730) presented salvation as deliverance from this earthly life's troubles, including human infirmities and sin, into a kingdom that is "not of this world," where there is perfect happiness in the heavenly city of God<sup>2</sup>. God will rebuild our 'dissolved body' into incorruptible and spiritual body.<sup>3</sup> Wesley believes that Jesus will descend in the clouds; the dead will be resurrected and judged. As the early Church Father such as Irenaeus, He holds on to the belief that believers will wait in Hades to be reunited with their resurrected bodies.<sup>4</sup> This has led him to prepare for his personal salvation and final judgment through the regimen of disciplines for the formation of holy tempers. But his Aldersgate experience of a personal assurance of God's loving acceptance has led him to believe that God's new creation is made available to His people in the here and now. In his words, it is a present taste of "the powers of the world to come."<sup>5</sup> Over his encounter with the English Moravians and the dispute with Thomas Maxfield and George Bell<sup>6</sup>, Wesley allowed himself to further conclude the new creation does not typically bring instantaneous transformation but over time. These two elements, namely, the present availability and the progressive character of the new creation thus govern Wesley's understanding of new creation. Indeed, from such personal spiritual dimension, the new creation is already a reality in the here and now when one accepted Christ as his or her personal Lord and Saviour. God's new creation is present, active, powerful and transforming in the life of God's people. Wesley, however, did not stop at this level. As Collin has

<sup>1</sup> The writers are indebted to the model proposed by Randy Maddox in his "Nurturing the New Creation: Reflection on a Wesleyan Trajectory," M. Douglas Meeks, ed., *Wesleyan Perspective on The New Creation*, Nashville, TN.: Kingswood Books, 2004, 21-52.

<sup>2</sup> Sermon 133, "Death and Deliverance," *Works* 4: 206-216; Sermon 134, "Seek First the Kingdom," *Works* 4: 216-223; Sermon 141, "The Image of God," *Works* 4:290-303.

<sup>3</sup> "On the Resurrection of the Dead," *Works* (Jackson) 7:474-85 and Sermon 141, "The Image of God," §III, *Works* 4:299.

<sup>4</sup> Sermon 141, "The Image of God" §IV.2, *Works* 4: 302, also, Randy Maddox, "Nurturing the New Creation," op. cit., 36.

<sup>5</sup> Sermon 7, "The Way to the Kingdom," §I.10, *Works* 1:223.

<sup>6</sup> The English Moravians insisted an instantaneous new creation whilst Maxfield and Bell advocated the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" as the way for new creation.

rightly pointed out that Wesley would relate aspects of eschatology and at the same time posed the question of how then shall the readers live.<sup>7</sup>

In Wesley's *The Character of a Methodist*, he emphasizes Methodism was nothing more than a recovery of the primitive faith. Methodism is not his or her opinion regarding "this or that scheme of religion," nor matters of custom and tradition, but the "common, fundamental principles of Christianity."<sup>8</sup> He sees the Methodist movement as an eschatological movement with the vocation to "spread scriptural holiness over the land," and to usher the kingdom of glory into the kingdom of grace.<sup>9</sup> It is clear that the *telos* of heaven and new creation is not simply a futuristic event and disengaged the present, here and now material cosmic, which will be discussed in the discourse followed.

### Socioeconomic Dimension

Maddox pointed out that Wesley's formal schooling has resulted in his early eschatological concept to be amillennial, at least for some time in his writings. Wesley concurred with the premillennialists that the present socioeconomic expression of God's rule is not all that we could hope for in this earthly setting, and he was also dissatisfied with the amillennialists' acquiescence to the status quo. As noted in the above discourse, these have moved him to seeking to affirm the present availability of God's new creation of the socioeconomic dimension of life, which is processive or progressive in its character. Wesley also emphasizes on the cooperant dynamics in God's New Creation where human redeemed by God will participate in the renewal of the world through the Spirit by the faith that works by love.<sup>10</sup> Such belief has influenced Wesley's lifestyle, including his vision and missions for Methodism.

In the preface his *Primitive Physick*, Wesley reveals the belief that the ultimate healing and renewal of our body must await the resurrection. Wesley insists that our loving God was willing to offer saving help at the present even before that fullness of new creation finally comes.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, Wesley's dealing with the issues of poverty and slavery<sup>12</sup> was also driven by such conviction. In his sermon "*Thoughts on the Present Scarcity of Provisions*," Wesley analyses the scarcity of food due to rising cost of food and immense amount of corn and wheat used by winery for brewing and feeding of horses. At a personal level, Wesley's use of his own money and resources is another clear demonstration of his eschatological stewardship. In fact, Wesley's vision of the heaven and new creation anticipated the modern missionary movement which spread the evangelical faith around the world was fuelled by such eschatological dynamics. Wesley sees the Methodist movement as an eschatological body to fulfill God's calling in the end-time.<sup>13</sup> The active participation in the socioeconomic of Wesley and the whole Methodist movement demonstrated the present availability and processive character of the heaven and new creation vision.

### Cosmic Dimension

In his sermon *New Creation* written in 1785, the aged Wesley commented on the reckoning of three heavens in conformity with both Jewish understandings and Paul's experience.<sup>14</sup> He believes that the third

<sup>7</sup> Kenneth J. Collins, *A Faithful Witness: John Wesley's Homiletically Theology*, Wilmore (KY.: Wesley Heritage Press, 1993), 185.

<sup>8</sup> "The Character of a Methodist," *Works* 9:33, 34, 41.

<sup>9</sup> See Matt. 13 commentary where he refers *Kingdom of grace* as Christ reigning in the heart of believers (esp. vv. 24, 32, 33) and the Kingdom of glory as the future kingdom of God (cf. 1 Cor. 15:25, Rev. 21:5, 1 Cor. 15:28) in the *Explanatory Notes*, 48-49 and Sermon 64, "The New Creation," §18, *Works* 2: 509-510.

<sup>10</sup> Randy Maddox, "Nurturing the New Creation," 38-43. Also, Sermon 66, "The Signs of the Times," §II.8, *Works* 2:529- 30.

<sup>11</sup> *Primitive Physick*, Preface, *Works* (Jackson) 14: 307-18.

<sup>12</sup> Sermon, "Thoughts Upon Slavery," §IV.8, *Works* (Jackson) 11:74

<sup>13</sup> Sermon, "Thoughts on the Present Scarcity of Provisions," §I, *Works* (Jackson) 11: 53-59.

<sup>14</sup> Sermon 64, "The New Creations," §§5, *Works* 2:502 and his *Explanatory Notes Upon The New Testament* on 2 Cor. 12:2 and 2 Pet. 3:11.

heaven is the immediate residence of God and will not be subjected to change. Wesley explained that the saints ascended temporary in this third heaven, while they await the recreation of the heaven and the earth.<sup>15</sup> The other two heavens are the sublunar or earth; and the celestial or the starry heaven. Both these heavens will go through renovation where their qualities will change but not their nature. In the new creation, fire no longer destroys or hurt. So do all the other basic elements of this world: air, water and earth.<sup>16</sup> In Wesley's more natural philosophical view, the eternal state is no longer located in the "heaven above," in some kind of ethereal state, but consists of a renewed material earth inhabited with every kind of being that makes up the great Chain of Being.<sup>17</sup> Then heaven and earth will be united; heaven above and heaven below will finally be one.<sup>18</sup>

Based on Isaiah 65<sup>19</sup> and Romans 8 and the readings of his contemporary works,<sup>20</sup> the elderly Wesley was convinced in the restoration of the whole creation, including the animals. He made his bold statements in his 1781 sermon based on Romans 8:19-22. He argued that God the Creator is rich in mercy towards all and He cannot possibly neglect the animals:

The whole brute creation will then undoubtedly be restored, not only to the vigour, strength, and swiftness which they had at their creation, but to a far higher degree of each than they ever enjoyed.<sup>21</sup>

For Wesley, a righteous and just God has permitted the fall of Adam so that Christ died to bring more holy and happy on earth, and 'of being more happy in heaven, than otherwise they could have been.'<sup>22</sup> As Maddox has rightly pointed out that on these terms, Wesley believed that God would not just restore fallen creation to its original state, God would recreate it with greater capacities and blessings than it had at first, both human and animal.<sup>23</sup> He even speculates that God will move the animals higher in the Chain of Being in the next life --- allowing them greater abilities, even the ability to relate to God as human do now!<sup>24</sup> Although Wesley was more sure as he delivered such discourse in his sermon *The General Deliverance*, we heard of yet another humble voice from the preface he has written for the Book of Revelation with regard to some of his struggles in attempting to make sense the new creation. He was hopeful to understand "many of them [prophecies] in some good degree; for perhaps some will not be opened but in eternity." He concluded, "Let us, however, bless God for the measure of light we may enjoy, and improve it to his glory."<sup>25</sup> Olson considered this as the full mature view of Wesley's new creation eschatology.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Randy Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville, TN.: Kingswood Book, 1994), 253.

<sup>16</sup> Sermon 54, "On Eternity," §7, *Works* 2: 362-63.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. also, "The General Deliverance," *Works* 2: 437, cf. Mark K. Olson, ed., *A John Wesley Reader on Eschatology* (Hayden, Idaho: Truth In Heart, 2011), 37.

<sup>18</sup> Charles Wesley uses the term "heaven below" to describe knowing Jesus and his love, as well as its salvific effects, even the final eschatological renewal of creation. See Henry H. Knight III, *Anticipating Heaven Below: Optimism of Grace from Wesley to the Pentecostals*, Eugene, OR.: CASCADE Books, 2014, xi-xv.

<sup>19</sup> Sermon 63, "The General Spread of The Gospel," §26, *Works* 2:498.

<sup>20</sup> He read Thomas Hartley's *Paradise Restored* in 1764, later Thomas Burnet's *Theory of the Earth*, and James Knight's *A Discourse on the Conflagration and Renovation of the World*,

<sup>21</sup> Sermon 60, "The General Deliverance," §III.3, *Works* 2:446.

<sup>22</sup> Sermon 59, "God's Love to Fallen Man," §§4, *Works* 2:425 .

<sup>23</sup> Maddox, "Nurturing the New Creation," op. cit., 49.

<sup>24</sup> See Sermon 60, op. cit. Also Maddox explained that Wesley probably depend on the work of Charles Bonnet, a Swiss naturalist at his time. Maddox, "Nurturing the New Creation," op. cit., 48.

<sup>25</sup> John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon The New Testament* (Lexington, KY.: Forgotten Books, 2011), 650 (scanned from the original Explanatory Notes Upon The New Testament, 12<sup>th</sup> Edition published by Carlton & Potter, New York.)

<sup>26</sup> Mark K. Olson, op. cit., 37.

### Conclusion: Implication for Discipleship

Our preliminary reading and research above suggested Wesley's understandings of heaven and new creation were with a strong soteriological interest. In other words, the teleological vision of heaven and new creation always informs and determines how we now live. Olson was in the opinion that Wesley was not an innovator in the field of Christian Eschatology: "He did not introduce any new system, a new school of interpretation, or a new eschatological model."<sup>27</sup> True as it may be, yet the impingement of his understanding must not be neglected. He did not stop at a personal spiritual level, where one experiences new creation through Christ salvation. He connects the *telos* with the here and now. It is this teleological dynamic that brought significant implications for the twenty-first century disciples of Jesus Christ:

1. Our vision to live must be deeply influenced by our view of the last things, particular the heaven and the new creation. John Wesley did not choose to live pessimistically but actively engaging the restoration and recreating work of God that has begun in the salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Future eschaton must be connected to the present material cosmos, and it should further affect our vision to working together for restoration of this material cosmic God has graciously blessed us with, including responsible stewardship, medical, psychological technological fields, environmental protection, theodicy, justice (including all possible effort against corruption, animal abuse, such as exotic hunting and dishes; and human abuse, such as racism, human trafficking etc.), and socioeconomic.
3. An attitude of humility before the mystery of the new creation was clearly heard as Wesley put in his preface to Revelation in the *Explanatory Notes Upon The New Testament*. The arrogant attitude of refusing a hermeneutical circle of listening and reflecting upon the voices from different readings of God's words has resulted in disunity and chaos.
4. As Wesley has done, we must see ourselves as a prophetic agent, chosen by God to proclaim and to engaging man and women to live and nurture the fullness of the new creation in the midst of a sin-sick world. This is a hopeful eschatological theology.

### Questions for discussion

1. What are some of the weaknesses or strengthens in applying such a tripartite model to construct a Wesleyan view of heaven and new creation?
2. What are some of the other implications not mentioned in this paper and are important for present pastoral guidance, leadership, discipleship, stewardship etc.?

### References

- Collins, Kenneth J. *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and Shape of Grace*. Nashville, TN.: Abingdon Press, 2008.
- Knight III, Henry H., *Anticipating Heaven Below: Optimism of Grace from Wesley to the Pentecostals*, Eugene, Oregon: CASCADE Books, 2014.
- Olson, Mark K., ed., *A John Wesley Reader On Eschatology*, Hayden, Idaho: Truth in Heart, 2011.
- Maddox, Randy L., *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*, Nashville, TN.: Kingswood Books, 1994.
- Meeks, M. Douglas, ed., *Wesleyan Perspectives On The New Creation*, Nashville, TN.: Kingswood Books, 2004.
- Wesley, John, *Explanatory Notes Upon The New Testament*, Lexington, KY.: Forgotten Books, 2010.

---

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., vii.



**Sermons and articles of John Wesley are taken from:**

Wesley, John, *The Works of John Wesley*, Edited by Albert C. Outler. Bicentennial ed. Nashville, TN.: Abingdon, 1984 -. [ *Works* in the footnote above]

Vol. 1: Sermons I. Albert C. Outler, ed. 1984.

Vol. 2: Sermons II. Albert C. Outler, ed. 1985.

Vol. 3: Sermons III. Albert C. Outler, ed. 1986.

Vol. 4: Sermon IV. Albert C. Outler, ed. 1987.

Wesley, John, *The Work of John Wesley*, Edited by Thomas Jackson. Third Edition. Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Books, 2007.

Vol. 11: Thoughts, Addresses, Prayers, and Letters. Thomas Jackson, ed. 1872, reprinted 2007.

Vol. 14: Letters, Grammars, Music, Indexes. Thomas Jackson, ed. 1872. reprinted 2007.

*Articles*

Vic Reasoner. “The Hope of a Christian World: Wesleyan Eschatology and Cultural Transformation,” *The Arminian Magazine* (Issue 1 Spring 2007 Volume 25), 1 – 4.

Brad Farrow. John Wesley’s view of the Kingdom of God. <http://www.goodnewsmag.org/2014/07/john-wesleys-view-of-the-kingdom> (accessed 2 May, 2016)

## 卫斯理对天堂与新创造的观点

### 引言

在亚洲的基督徒思维中，新天新地的图像绝大多数都是如启示录所描述的：黄金街、碧玉城、极大的赞美、静止的玻璃海等。这样的远象似乎从现有的处境抽离，纯属于属天属灵的境界。约翰卫斯理在他对新天新地的描述中给予一个较实在的观点；而他绝大多数的描述都是一个已经在今生启动的救恩之延续。简言之，他所强调的一切提供了他论述在今生属灵事实的管道。此短文就是要尝试从一个三重模式来论述这个议题。

### 卫斯理约翰新天新地的概念

“新创造何时开始？”这样一个问题似乎多此一举，因为绝大多数的人都会认为它必然在这个世界荡然无存后，有新开始的介入才成的。我们若仔细研读卫斯理约翰的资料，就会发掘这个问题可以从三个层面来回应。

### 个人属灵的层面

卫斯理最早期的手抄讲章，“死亡和释放 (1725)” (Death and Deliverance)，“先求祂的国 (1725)” (Seek First the Kingdom) 以及后来的一篇讲章“上帝的形象 (1730)” 皆将救恩呈现为从地上生命中的困境，包括从人的罪恶中得着释放，进入“不是属于这世界”的国度，而在上帝天上的圣城哪里有完全的喜乐。上帝会重建我们“解散的身体” (dissolved body) 变为不能朽坏和属灵的身体。卫斯理相信耶稣会在云中降临；死人要复活和被审判。正如早期的教父如爱任纽，他坚定相信死去的信徒会在阴间等候与他们复活的身体联合。这影响他认为自己在活着的时候必须为自己的救恩和最后的审判作好准备；藉着严谨的纪律，让圣洁的性情成形在他的生命中。卫斯理约翰在爱德门街的个人经历让他确认上帝对他爱的接纳，也促使他相信上帝的新创造随时都能临在（给予）祂的子民。套用他自己的说法，这就是在现今尝到“那将要来到的世界之能力。” 在他个人与英国莫拉维派的信徒邂逅，以及他与 Thomas Maxfield 和 George Bell 起了争议的种种遭

遇，卫斯理让自己作出更多有关新创造的结论，意即一般上新创造并非即刻的转化，而是在一个时间的进程中达成。这两个因素，就是随时临在和进程式的特征主宰了卫斯理对新创造的理解。对卫斯理而言，从以上个人属灵层面看来，当一个人接受耶稣为个人生命的主和救主，新创造已经在此时此刻成为事实。上帝得新创造已经在临到，而且活跃、大有能力的转化神子民的生命。卫斯理却没有单单停留在这个层面的理解。正如 Collins 正确的指出，卫斯理一般在论及终末的种种时，必然同时也提问读者们如今当如何活出基督徒的生命。在卫斯理所著作的《循道卫理信徒的品格》(The Character of a Methodist)，他强调卫理运动(Methodism)其实就是要复原古老的信仰。作为卫理宗的信徒，他并非“对这个或那个宗教”有自己的意见而已，也并非关乎习俗或传统，而是关注“一般，基要的基督教要道。”他看循道卫理运动是一个终末的运动，以“在全地宣扬圣经圣洁”为其诏命，并要把荣耀的国度引进恩典的国度。我们清楚的看见天堂和新创造的终末(telos)不只是将来的一件事情，与现今，此时此刻的物质宇宙脱节。我们将在以下加以诠释。

### 社会经济层面

Maddox 指出卫斯理在学校的学习影响他初期无千禧年(amillennial)的末世观。这至少在他的著作中出现一段时间。卫斯理与前千禧年派的人共同认以当年的社会经济运作来表达上帝的治理不是我们在今世可以完全赖以盼望的；同时他也不满无千禧年派的人安于现状的表现。正如以上所论，这些因素促使他寻求一个在此时此刻经历上帝新创造的社会经济生活，同时也认定它是渐进式的。卫斯理也强调在上帝的创造中人神同工的动力；被神救赎的人因信藉着圣灵，以爱行动，参与世界的更新。这样的信念影响了卫斯理的个人生活方式，包括他整个卫理运动的异象和使命。

在他的 Primitive Physick (一般保健与治疗的小书) 引言中, 卫斯理显示他相信我们身体最终的医治和更新是要等候复活的来到。他也坚持在终末新创造圆满到来之前, 爱我们的神愿意给予人在现今有从祂而来救赎的帮助。卫斯理也以同样的信念来处理贫穷和蓄奴的议题。在他的讲章《有关现今食物稀少的想法》(Thoughts on the Present Scarcity of Provisions), 卫斯理分析和关注食物的稀少乃因为价格的提升, 同时有许多的玉米和小麦被酿酒厂用来酿酒和给予马匹喂食。在个人的层面, 卫斯理如何使用他的金钱和资源也显明了他终末的受托主义。事实上, 卫斯理对天堂和新创造的远象成为了现代宣教运动的前驱动力, 藉着这样的终末动力, 把这样的福音信仰带到全世界。卫斯理视卫理运动是一个终末肢体, 要成就上帝在末世的召唤。卫斯理和整个卫理运动活跃参社会经济展现了天堂和新创造随时可及和进程性的特性。

### 宇宙的层面

在他 1785 所写的《新创造》(New Creation) 年老的卫斯理基于犹太人的了解与保罗的经历, 对于推测有三重天给予论述。他相信第三层天是上帝的居所, 而且是不会有任何改变的。卫斯理也解释圣徒会暂时在第三重天等候新天新地的重建。其他的两重天即是尘世的或是地球; 和属天的或星空。这两重天将会在新创造中经历重建, 而且它们的本质虽不会改变, 但其质量将经历改变。在新创造中, 火不再毁灭或伤害。其他在世界中的基本元素也是如此: 空气、水和土地。在卫斯理较自然哲理的观点下, 永恒的状态并非位于”天上”, 或是某种属灵的状态, 而是包括一个更新的物质世界, 内居各样构成“巨大生物链”(Great Chain of Being) 的活物。如此可谓天地合一; 天上地下最终合而为一。

依据以赛亚六十五章和罗马书八章以及当时代他所阅读的著作，年老的卫斯理确信整个创造界的更新，其中也包包括动物。他在 1781 年的罗马书 8:19 - 22 讲章中大胆的表达了他的说法。他辩论创造主上帝对万物都是满有怜悯的，因此祂不可能忽视动物：

整个动物界毫无疑问将被修复，不只是重新回到原有被造时的的精壮、活力，和敏捷，而且要享有比原先还要高的程度。

对卫斯理而言，一个公义和公正的上帝容许亚当的堕落，以致基督的死带来地上更圣洁和欢欣，并且“在天上更加的欢欣，有过于他们本来的可能性。”正如 Maddox 精确的指出基于这些理解，卫斯理相信上帝不只是修复堕落的创造，恢复其原有的状况，上帝将重造人类和动物界，让它们比原先有更大的功能和蒙福。他甚至推测在来生，上帝将把动物在生物链中提升---让它们有更大的能力，甚至如人类目前能与上帝沟通！虽然卫斯理在他传讲《一般的救赎》(The General Deliverance) 越发确定这样的论述，我们也同时听见另一个从启示录的引言而来谦卑的声音，其中提及他挣扎要尝试更明白新创造的心声。他存着盼望能了解“许多的[预言]到某种程度；但有些将无法开启，直至到了永恒。”他因此作出结论，“虽然如此，让我们为着我们目前所享有的亮光而颂赞上帝，并且要为着祂的荣耀力求提升改善。”Olson 认为这才是卫斯理终末新创造整全成熟的观点。

### 结论：做门徒的意义

我们以上初步研读卫斯理著作的结果显示卫斯理对天堂和新创造以强烈的救恩观为出发点。换言之，终末的远象和新创造不断的充溢和决定我们如今如何的活着。Olson 认为卫斯理在基督教的终末论界中并非什么革新。“他并没有引介任何新的系统，或是创立新的诠释学派，又或是开研新的末世论的模式。”即或这种说法是正确的，他的了解所带来的影响是不可抹杀的。他没有停留在一个个人藉着主耶稣基督的救恩，经历新创造的属灵层面。他将终末 telos 与现世此时此刻连在一起。这样的终末动力带给廿一世纪主耶稣基督的门徒重要的意义：

1. 基督徒生活的远象需深深的被我们对末后发生的事件所影响，尤其是天堂和新创造。约翰卫斯理并没有选择消极的活着，而是积极参与上帝在主耶稣基督救赎中已经启动的修复和再造之工。
2. 未来的终末事件必须与现世物质的宇宙连结起来，同时它必须影响我们共同修复上帝在祂恩典中所赐福于我们的物质世界，其中包括实行负责任的管家职分，在医药、心理、技术、环保、神义论、公义（包括所有胜过贪污、动物虐待如滥杀和虐待动物以求取新颖奇异烹调方法；人的虐待如种族歧视、贩卖人口等），和社会经济议题。
3. 对新创造中的奥秘持有谦卑的态度是我们清楚从卫斯理在新约解经笔记中有关启示录引言所说的一番话。傲慢拒绝一个释经圈子共同的倾听和反思对上帝话语不同的研读导致不合一和混乱。
4. 正如卫斯理所行，我们必须看自己是上帝所拣选，扮演先知性的角色，去宣告和让人能在罪病的世界中不断孕育和活出新创造的整全。这是一个有盼望的终末神学。

### 讨论问题：

1. 以上述一个三重模式解读卫斯理对天堂和新创造的理解有那些强处或弱点？
2. 有哪些对牧养引导、领袖、门徒、受托主义等极为重要的议题是上文未提及的呢？

## Session 2: Wesleyan View of *Hades* and Hell

Rev. Thomas Lau Sie Ngiu

### Introduction:

In the *Book of Discipline of the Methodist Church in Malaysia* (2012), the second article of the “Doctrinal Statements” states:

#### **Of the Word, or Son of God, Who Was Made Very Man**

The Son, who is the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man’s nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided; whereof is one Christ, very God and very Man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men.<sup>1</sup>

Apparently, one would notice that the statement “He descended to hell” is not mentioned in the Malaysian Methodist article on the Second Person of the Trinity. Such declaration appeared, however, in one of the earliest forms of the Apostles’ Creed, the Creed of Rufinus of Aquileia (404 A.D), as well as in the earliest display of the present text of the Apostles’ Creed found in *De Singulis Libris Canonicis Scarapsus* (700 A.D.),<sup>2</sup> and even in the text of the Apostles’ Creed included in John Wesley’s “The Order for Morning Prayer, Every Lord’s Day” in *The Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America* (1784).<sup>3</sup> In the same book, nevertheless, Wesley discarded any remark to Christ’s descending into hell in the Twenty-four Articles of Religion!<sup>4</sup> Why is this so? What was John Wesley’s understanding of, or his struggle with, the doctrine of Christ’s descent to hell?

This paper will study John Wesley’s notions of “hell” and “hades.” Besides, how Wesley explains “tartarus” to which the fallen angels were casted down, and Christ’s preaching to the “spirits in prison” mentioned in the Epistle of Peter, will be examined. Wesley’s sermons “Of Hell” (1782), “Dives and Lazarus” (1789), and “On Faith” (1791), as well as his explication of Bible verses on the topics aforesaid found in the *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* (1755) will be the primary sources of insights for the investigation.

### **1. John Wesley’s understanding of hell:**

In the month of November, 1782, John Wesley published a sermon in the *Arminian Magazine* which was later entitled “Of Hell.” The sermon was reprinted in 1789 and 1790, with a different title, “the Eternity

<sup>1</sup> Hwa Yung, et al., eds. *The Book of Discipline of the Methodist Church in Malaysia 2012* (Petaling Jaya: The Methodist Church in Malaysia, 2012), 22.

<sup>2</sup> John H. Leith, ed., *Creeeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1973), 22-25. “De Singulis Libris Canonicis Scarapsus” means “Words of Abbot Pirminius, Extracts from the Single Canonical Books.” The date of the *scarapsus* is somewhere between 710-724 A.D.

<sup>3</sup> *The Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America* is a service book prepared by John Wesley for the American Methodists. It was a revision of the *Book of Common Prayer*. Thomas Oden points out that eight offices of the service book have been largely retained by regular usage: the service of Holy Communion, baptism (infant and adult), matrimony, burial of the dead, the three services of ordination. The reading of prayers, however, was soon bypassed by the antiformalism of American Methodist. The reason was that the preachers could pray better with their eyes shut than open! See: James F. White, *John Wesley’s Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America* (Nashville: Quarterly Review, 1984), 12; John Wesley, *Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America, With Other Occasional Services* (London: n.p., 1784), 12 (available from: <https://archive.org/details/amernorm00wesl>); Thomas Oden, *Doctrinal Standards in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008), 31-32, 115-148, 259; Albert C. Outler, ed., *The Works of John Wesley*, vols. 1-4, *Sermons* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984-1987), 3:30.

<sup>4</sup> Wesley, *The Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America*, 306-314.

of Hell Torments.” The text of the sermon was Mark 9:48: “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” (KJV).<sup>5</sup>

At the outset of the sermon, Wesley accentuates his lifelong conviction once again, that is, the “grand end” of all the oracles of God is “the eternal salvation of men.”<sup>6</sup> For Wesley, it is little wonder that Jesus made repeated reference to hell, therefore---“the place of torment”---according to the Gospel writers.<sup>7</sup> The “terrible truths” of the “future state of punishment,” Wesley underscores, are not only meant to warn the “enormous sinners” but also serve as an excellent means to preserve the children of God from sin and hell.<sup>8</sup> Of course, Wesley clarifies that hell is originally prepared not for the children of men but for the devil and his angels. The reason of people being damned in hell is that they reject the warnings of God and resolve to have their portion with the devil and his angels.<sup>9</sup>

In regards to the punishment in hell, Wesley draws on the insights of patristic eschatology particularly that of Augustine as well as Medieval scholastic theology which assume a fiery hell and identified two retributions---*poena damni* (what they lose) and *poena sensus* (what they feel).<sup>10</sup> Wesley points out that the former commences in that very moment when the soul is separated from the body.<sup>11</sup> He elaborates three punishments of loss for “the heirs of shame and everlasting contempt”:

- (1) Losing all those pleasure, the enjoyment of which depends on the outward senses, because there is nothing beautiful and new in hell, but rather “unvaried scene of horror upon horror...groans and shrieks...weeping, wailing...gnashing of teeth.”<sup>12</sup>
- (2) Losing all the persons whom they love, being torn away from their nearest and dearest relations.<sup>13</sup>
- (3) Losing their place in Abraham’s bosom in the paradise of God, and thus unable to “conceive what happy souls enjoy in the garden of God, in the society of angels, and of the wisest and best men that had lived from the beginning of the world (not to mention the immense increase of knowledge which they will then undoubtedly receive).”<sup>14</sup>

To *poena damni*, Wesley says, will be added the punishment of sense, which includes:

- (1) “Worm that never die,” that is, the guilty conscience which results in self-condemnation, sorrow, shame, remorse, and a sense of God’s wrath, plus all unholy passions and tempers that gnaw the soul.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Timothy L. Smith, “A Chronological List of Wesley’s Sermons and Doctrinal Essays” in *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, vol. 17 (1982): 88-110; Outler, *Sermons*, 3:30-44; 4:552, Sermon 73, “Of Hell.”

<sup>6</sup> Sermon 73, “Of Hell,” Pref. 1.

<sup>7</sup> See: Mark 9:43-44, 45-46, 47-48; Luke 12:1-5.

<sup>8</sup> Sermon 73, “Of Hell,” Pref. 2-3.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, Pref. 4. In Wesley’s Sermon 115 “Dives and Lazarus” (1788), § II.4, in Outler, *Sermons*, 4-18, he underscores this point as well: “Ye cannot, unless by your own willful choice---intruding into those regions of woe which God did not procure for *you*, but for the ‘devil and his angels.’” (Italics author’s)

<sup>10</sup> Since the early centuries of the church, three views on the destiny of the wicked have been advocated: (1) universal salvation, i.e. all things will ultimately be brought into subjection to God based on 1 Cor. 15:25 (Origen, 185-254 A.D.); (2) everlasting punishment as a process, i.e. of suffering or torment of both body and soul based on Matthew 25:41-46 (Augustine, 354-430 A.D.); (3) everlasting punishment as an effect, i.e. of extinction or annihilation for nonbelievers, while immortality is given only to Christians (Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Athanasius). See: G. W. Bromiley, “Hell, History of the Doctrine of,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, s.v.; Kent E. Brower and Mark W. Elliott, eds., *Eschatology in Bible and Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 198-207; Brian E. Daley, S.J., *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 36, 42.

<sup>11</sup> Sermon 73, “Of Hell,” Pref. 4.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, § I.1.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, § I.2.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, § I.3-4.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, § II.1-2.



- (2) “The fire that is not quenched,” namely, everlasting burnings, in the lake of fire, by real, material fire, which would be more intense to some than others, according to their degree of guilt and wickedness.<sup>16</sup>

Wesley opines that, in light of God’s justice, as Christians who bring most holiness to heaven will find most happiness there, impenitent sinners that bring more depravity to hell will find more misery there. For him, the misery in hell will also be varied according to the various kinds of one’s wickedness.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, the evangelist calls attention to serious consideration of two other pains in hell. That is, first, to be with the wretched inhabitants of hell who are “perfectly wicked, having no spark of goodness remaining.” Second, all the torments of body and soul are without intermission; the inhabitants of hell have “no respite from pain” (Rev. 14:11). “No change of seasons, or of companions,” Wesley concludes, “eternity is the term of their torment!”<sup>18</sup>

Wesley ends his sermon with compassionate calling for repentance and watchfulness:

Have we not seen many sinners, on our right and left, cut off in their sins? And what but the tender mercy of God hath spared us week after week, month after month, and given us space for repentance? What shall we render unto the Lord for all his patience and longsuffering even to this day? How often have we incurred the sentence of condemnation by our repeated rebellion against God! And yet we are still alive in his presence, and are hearing the words of hope and salvation...Let us fly for refuge to the hope that is set before us, and give a thousand thanks to the divine mercy, that we are not plunged into this perdition!<sup>19</sup>

## **2. Wesley’s understanding of Hades:**

In 1791, John Wesley’s last-written sermon, later entitled as “On Faith,” was published in the July and August issues of the *Arminian Magazine*. The sermon was based on Hebrew 11:1: “Now faith is the evidence of things not seen.”<sup>20</sup>

Wesley begins the sermon by defining “faith” as “in one sense of the word, a divine conviction of God and of the things of God; in another (nearly related to, yet not altogether the same) it is a divine conviction of the invisible and eternal world.”<sup>21</sup> Then, he proceeds to explain about the “regions of Hades.” The eighty-eight years old evangelist first expressed his concern for the confusion of the words “Hades” and “Hell” in the English-speaking world. He remarked,

Our English translators seem to have been at a loss for a word to render this. Indeed two hundred years ago it [Hades] was tolerably expressed by the word ‘hell’, which then signified much the same with the word ‘Hades’, namely, the invisible world. Accordingly by Christ descending into hell they meant his body remained in the grave, his soul remained in Hades, which is the receptacle of separate spirits, from death to the resurrection.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., § II.3-7.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., § II.3.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., § III.1-3. Wesley also emphasizes this point in the sermon 84 “The Important Question,” § II.7: “From the moment wherein they are once plunged into the lake of fire, burning with brimstone, their torments are not only without intermission, but likewise without end.” This sermon was based on Matthew 16:26 and was written in Bristol, September 30, 1775. Outler points out that Matthew 16:26 is the text that Wesley had used most often in his oral preaching and by a fairly wide margin, that is, 117 times between 1747 and 1790. Outler observes, “This in itself would seem to be a sufficient comment on the familiar but misleading generalization that Wesley was less interested in eschatology than in soteriology...for Wesley, soteriology and eschatology were actually two sides of the same mystery of God’s proffered grace to man.” See: Outler, *Sermons*, 3:181.

<sup>19</sup> Sermon 73, “Of Hell,” § III.3.

<sup>20</sup> Outler, *Sermons*, 4:187-200, Sermon 132, “On Faith.” The sermon is dated “London, January 17, 1791” and Wesley passed away on March 2, 1791.

<sup>21</sup> Sermon 132, “On Faith,” § 1.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., § 4.

For Wesley, “Hades” is “the abode of *both* happy and unhappy spirits, till they are re-united to their bodies,”<sup>23</sup> while “hell” is “the everlasting fire” for the unholy damned resurrected spirits alone.<sup>24</sup> He believes that, in light of Christ’s account of Dives and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), there are two parts or regions in Hades:

- (1) “The unhappy division of hades” where the unholy spirits that willfully “set affections on things beneath” will remain there, howling and blaspheming, cursing and looking upwards, till they are cast into hell.
- (2) “Paradise,” “the antechamber of heaven,” where the holy souls who have been discharged from the body, from the beginning of the world unto this day, will be continually ripening for heaven, swiftly increasing in knowledge, in holiness and happiness through conversing with all the wise and holy souls that lived in all ages and nations from the beginning of the world, as well as with angels and the eternal Son of God in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Such growth of getting holier and happier “in the whole image of God” will continue until these souls of the righteous are received into the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.<sup>25</sup>

Wesley is convinced that hades is not the “Middle State” in which the wicked souls may be amended or purified by the penal fire and then be removed to a happier mansion. For there is “a great gulf fixed in hades,” Wesley underscores, “between the place of the holy and that of unholy spirits.” He asserts, “who can reconcile this [the doctrine of a purifying Middle State] with Abraham’s assertion that none can pass over the ‘great gulf?’”<sup>26</sup> Wesley points out, therefore, in his explanatory notes on Revelation 1:18:

In the intermediate state, the body abides in death, the soul in hades. Christ hath the keys of, that is, the power over, both; killing or quickening of the body, and disposing of the soul, as it pleaseth Him. He gave St. Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven, but not the keys of death or of hades. How comes then his supposed successor at Rome by the keys of purgatory?<sup>27</sup>

In the sermon “Dives and Lazarus” published in 1789, Wesley cautions against those who aver that “fire alone is supposed sufficient both to purge and expiate” in purgatory. “Vain hope!” the Methodist leader pointedly remarks, “No suffering but that of Christ has any power to expiate sin; and no fire but that of love can purify the soul, either in time or in eternity.”<sup>28</sup> Elsewhere in the same sermon, as Wesley preaches about the cry of the rich man in hades to Abraham for mercy, he once more asserts, “[I]t is our wisdom to cry *now*, while we are in the land of mercy; otherwise it will be too late! ‘I am tormented in this flame.’ ‘Tormented,’ observe, not purified. Vain hope, that fire can purify a spirit!”<sup>29</sup>

In Wesley’s commentary on Matthew 16:18, he put forward another insight on *hades*: “the power and policy of Satan and his instruments.” He firmly believes that the “gates of hades” shall not prevail against the “Church universal” of Jesus Christ.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., § 6. Emphasis is mine.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., § 5.

<sup>25</sup> Sermon 132, “On Faith,” § 4-8, 11; Sermon 115, “Dives and Lazarus,” § 1.3-11. Randy L. Maddox opines that Wesley’s idea on paradise as a place where souls of the righteous “ripen” for heaven, getting perpetually holier and happier, has a characteristically Eastern Christian tone to it, reminiscent of Irenaeus’ description of the purpose of the Millennium. Maddox argues that such notion “fit well with Wesley’s conviction about the progressive nature of salvation.” See: Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley’s Practical Theology* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1994), 250.

<sup>26</sup> Sermon 132, “On Faith,” § 4; Sermon 115, “Dives and Lazarus,” § 1.9.

<sup>27</sup> John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* (London: Epworth Press, 2000), 941.

<sup>28</sup> Sermon 115, “Dives and Lazarus,” § 1.5.

<sup>29</sup> Sermon 115, “Dives and Lazarus,” § 11.6. Italics added.

<sup>30</sup> John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, 81.

In light of Wesley's perception of hades aforesaid, not surprisingly, in 1784, as he revised the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England and produced the Twenty-four Articles of Religion as an official doctrinal statement for the Methodist Episcopal Church organized at the Christmas Conference in Baltimore, America, the following actions were carried out:

- (1) The Twenty-second Article of Anglicanism on Purgatory was kept, and the Methodist's Article XIV, "Of Purgatory," states: "The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardon, worshiping, and adoration, as well of images as of relics, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warrant of Scripture, but repugnant to the Word of God."<sup>31</sup>
- (2) The Third Article of Anglicanism which mentioned deliberately Christ's descent to hell---"Of the going down of Christ into Hell: As Christ died for us, and was buried, so also is it to be believed, that he went down into Hell"---was excised entirely,<sup>32</sup> because Wesley opined that though the word "hell" did have "very wide extent, including the receptacle of separate spirits, whether good or bad,"<sup>33</sup> it was pertinent to use "hell" primarily to indicate "the place of the damned."<sup>34</sup> Such stance of Wesley can be seen from his explanatory notes on the apostle Peter's Pentecost address to the crowd in Acts 2:27:

*Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades* - The invisible world. But it does not appear, that ever our Lord went into hell. His soul, when it was separated from the body, did not go thither, but to paradise, Luke 23:43. The meaning is, Thou wilt not leave my soul in its separate state, nor suffer my body to be corrupted.<sup>35</sup>

Perhaps, this is also why the Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1786 omitted the clause on the Descent into Hades from the Apostles' Creed.<sup>36</sup>

- (3) The Second Article of Anglicanism which had spelled out the identity as well as salvific works of the Son of God was kept without adding "went down into hades," probably, because Wesley deemed the statement was substantial enough to highlight the significance of Christ's incarnation and death in bringing about divine-human reconciliation and atonement. Certainly, Wesley did not mean to belittle the truth as well as importance of Christ's soul moving to hades (i.e. paradise) after his death. Such salvific event did not affect, however, the validity and accomplishment of Christ's sacrificial death on the cross. Wesley observes in his explanatory notes on the Gospel of John 19:30 that the

<sup>31</sup> John Wesley, *The Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America*, 310-311.

<sup>32</sup> The other Anglican Articles of Religion which were also totally excised include: #8 Of the Three Creeds; #13 of Works before Justification; #15 Of Christ alone without Sin; #17 Of Predestination and Election; #18 Of obtaining eternal Salvation only by the Name of Christ; #20 Of the Authority of the Church; #21 Of the Authority of General Councils; #23 Of Ministering in the Congregation; #26 Of the Unworthiness of the Ministers, which hinder not the effect of the Sacraments; #29 of the Wicked, which eat not the Body of Christ in the use of the Lord's Supper; #33 Of excommunicate Persons, how they are to be avoided; #35 Of the Homilies; #36 Of Consecration of Bishops and Ministers; and #37 Of the Civil Magistrates. James F. White, op. cit., 36, comments that the intent of Wesley's revision of the Articles "seems to be to insist only on central Christian doctrines and to avoid unnecessary controversy."

<sup>33</sup> Sermon 115, "Dives and Lazarus," § 1.5. The context of this sentence is Wesley's comment on Luke 16:23 "And in hell he [the rich man] lifted up his eyes." Wesley clarifies that "the word which is here rendered 'hell' does not always mean the place of the damned. It is literally 'the invisible world,' and is of the very wide extent, including the receptacle of separate spirits, whether good or bad."

<sup>34</sup> Ted A. Campbell, *Methodist Doctrine: The Essentials* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 101-110; Kenneth J. Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and Shape of Grace* (Nashville: Abingdom Press, 2007), 318-320; Frederick A. Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism: A History of the United Methodists and Their Relations* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974), 98-101.

<sup>35</sup> John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, 399.

<sup>36</sup> John Deschner, *Wesley's Christology* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1985), 50-52; Thomas Oden, op. cit., 122.

saying of Jesus prior to his death, “It is finished,” demonstrated Jesus’ conviction---“*My suffering: the purchase of man’s redemption.*”<sup>37</sup>

### **3. Wesley’s understanding of “Tartarus” and Christ’s preaching to the spirits in prison:**

The apostle Peter speaks about the false teachers and their destruction in his second epistle. In chapter two, he remarks that “God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to *hell*, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment” (v.4). Some have suggested that the “hell” or precisely speaking “ταρταρώσας” in the verse is the antechamber of hell, which is equivalent to “hades.”<sup>38</sup> Wesley, who was once a Greek lecturer at Lincoln College, Oxford,<sup>39</sup> seemed not to show approval in this regard. In his explanatory notes on this particular verse, he remarks,

*Cast them down to hell* — The bottomless pit, a place of unknown misery; *delivered them* — Like condemned criminals to safe custody, as if bound with the strongest chains in a dungeon of *darkness, to be reserved unto the judgment of the great day*. Though still those chains do not hinder their often walking up and down seeking whom they may devour.<sup>40</sup>

Wesley opines that “tartarus” is “a place” of mysterious agony for the fallen angels punished by God. Nevertheless, he clarifies that these evil angels do not slow down in seeking, “with all subtlety,” to destroy “both soul and body” of humanity on earth prior to the final judgment.<sup>41</sup> One might be perplexed with such explanation, but in any case, he does not use “tartarus” as a specific name for the subset of the reprobate in hades. Indeed, he confesses, “Concerning the spiritual world? It seems it will not be possible for us to discern them at all till we are furnished with senses of a different nature, which are not yet opened in our souls.”<sup>42</sup>

With respect to the apostle Peter’s discourse on Christ’s descent and preaching “to the spirits *in prison* who were disobedient of old” (1 Pet. 3:19), Wesley explanatory notes on this verse show that Christ’s “proclamation” (ἐκήρυξεν) there was not “evangelism” (εὐαγγελίζω) to the suffering unholy souls in hades, and hence, by no means an offer of second opportunity for repentance and salvation after death.<sup>43</sup> The Methodist leader asserts that Christ’s address was done through the ministry of Noah, and “the spirits in prison” were none other than “the unholy men before the flood, who were then reserved by the justice of God as in a prison, till he executed the sentence upon them all; and are now also reserved to the judgment of the great day.”<sup>44</sup>

<sup>37</sup> John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, 268. Emphasis mine.

<sup>38</sup> Randy L. Maddox, *op. cit.*, 250.

<sup>39</sup> John Wesley was elected as a Fellow of Lincoln College on March 17, 1726. Later, in November, he was elected as Greek lecturer and coordinator of the classes at Lincoln. As a Greek lecturer, he expounded upon selected passages of the New Testament to his undergraduate students. On February 14, 1727, he received his Master of Arts degree, and in August, he started to serve as his father’s curate at Epworth and Wroote. See: Kenneth J. Collins, *John Wesley: A Theological Journey* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 38-40.

<sup>40</sup> John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, 268. Italics author’s.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 618.

<sup>42</sup> Sermon 132, “On Faith,” § 8.

<sup>43</sup> In the First Epistle of Peter, one can clearly see how the apostle tends to use the word “evangelism” as he refers to Gospel proclamation. “Euangelisamenōn” is used in 1:12, “those who have *preached the gospel to you* by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.” “Euangelisthen” is used in 1:25, “this is the word that was *preached to you.*” “Euēngelisthē” is used in 4:6, “the gospel was *preached* even to those who are now dead.” “Euangeliō” is used in 4:17, “what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the *gospel of God?*” Although in the New Testament, the Greek term *kerysso* may be used to refer to the proclamation of the kingdom of God or the Gospel (e.g., 1 Cor. 9:27), it does on a few occasions retain its secular meaning of “proclaim” or “announce” (e.g., Lk. 12:3; Rom. 2:21; Rev. 5:2). For further discussion of this controversial verse, see: Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1990), 138-143.

<sup>44</sup> John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, 615. Among the modern biblical scholars, Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 157-161, 203-239, is one of those whose interpretation of this passage are in line

Obviously, Wesley rejects any possibility of chance to believe after death. In his sermon “The Good Steward” which was published in 1768, he emphatically state, “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. . . .”<sup>45</sup> In a letter written on February 25, 1783 to George Blackall, with whom Wesley discusses some eschatological issues, he observes, “We believe (as did the ancient Church) that none suffer after death but those who suffer eternally. We believe that we are to be *here* saved from sin and enabled to love God with all our heart.”<sup>46</sup>

### Conclusion and Appraisal:

John Wesley understands “hell” as the final and eternal woeful destiny for Devil and his angels, as well as those unrepentant humans who have wilfully rejected free salvation offered by God in their lifetimes. He perceives “hades” on the one hand as “the power and policy of Satan and his instruments,” on the other hand as the transitory antechamber of both heaven and hell which comprises the happy-holy paradise and the “unhappy division.” “Tartarus” is not the miserable part in hades, according to Wesley, but rather an unfathomable dark hole into which the rebellious angels were casted temporarily under the punishment of God. A second chance of salvation or purification after death either in the “purgatory” or “prison” mentioned in 1 Peter 3:18, is rejected vigorously by Wesley as “vain hope.”

The major purposes of Wesley’s preaching and teaching of hell and hades are soul-saving in the accepted time and holy living in lifetime as a preparation for future everlasting glory. Such is demonstrated, for instance, in his sermon “The Marks of the New Birth” (1748). For the sake of cautioning against those who assume that “there is no new birth but in baptism” and hence live as “baptized gluttons and drunkards, the baptized liars and common swearers, the baptized railers and evil-speakers, the baptized whoremongers, thieves, extortioners,” Wesley solemnly observes,

Say not in your heart, I was **once** baptized; therefore I **am now** a child of God. . . . Unto you I call in the name of him whom you crucified afresh, and in his words to you circumcised predecessors, “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, *how can you escape the damnation of hell?* How indeed, except ye be born again!

...And if ye have been baptized, your only hope is this: that those who were made the children of God by baptism, but are now the children of the devil, may yet again receive “power to become the sons of God;” that they may receive again what they have lost, even the “Spirit of adoption, crying in their hearts, Abba, Father!” . . . And “because he is a son,” let the Spirit of love and of glory rest upon him, cleansing him “from all filthiness of flesh and spirit,” and teaching him to “perfect holiness in the fear of God.”<sup>47</sup>

Wesley’s intention can also be seen in his sermon “Dives and Lazarus” wherein he challenges people to seriously rethink what is the “chief objects of thy desire and pursuit? . . . If thy heart is in the world, if thou lovest the creature than the Creator?”<sup>48</sup> Then, he earnestly calls for timely repentance: “But blessed be God, *your* die is not cast yet. . . . [H]ave it still in your power to choose whether you will be attended by angels or fiends when your soul quits its earthly mansion. Now stretch out your hand to eternal life or eternal death.

---

with Wesley’s notion. He has a lengthy appendix entitled “Christ’s preaching through Noah: 1 Peter 3:19-20 in the light of dominant themes in Jewish literature.” His conclusion is expressed in an extended paraphrase: “In the spiritual realm of existence Christ went and preached through Noah to those who are now spirits in the prison of hell. This happened when they formerly disobeyed, when the patience of God was waiting in the days of Noah while the ark was being built.”

<sup>45</sup> Outler, *Sermons*, 292, Sermon 51, “The Good Steward,” § III.1.

<sup>46</sup> John Telford, ed., *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, 8 vols. (London: The Epworth Press, 1931), 7:168. Emphasis Wesley’s.

<sup>47</sup> Outler, *Sermons*, 1:417-430, Sermon 18: “The New Birth,” § IV.3-5. The bold Wesley’s while italics mine.

<sup>48</sup> Sermon 115, “Dives and Lazarus,” § II.7.



And God says, ‘Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.’<sup>49</sup> The Methodist enthusiastic leader forgets not to urge Christians to “make full use” of the “standing revelation” (i.e. Holy Scriptures) in bringing about “an entire change both of heart and life, a change from universal wickedness to universal holiness” by the power of God before their course of lives are finished.<sup>50</sup>

Lester Ruth has rightly observes, “Early Methodists did not mention hell to create fear for fear’s sake, but to awaken people out of their negligence and spiritual apathy... In other words, Methodists did not focus on God’s judgment to preach people into hell. They shared the common assumption that people were already well on their way to hell, and longed to offer them God’s grace.”<sup>51</sup>

Interestingly, Wesley is convinced that “the fearing of God as having power to cast into hell, is to be pressed even on *true believer*.”<sup>52</sup> Such fear, according to Wesley, “even in the children of God, is one excellent means of preserving them from it [hell].”<sup>53</sup> It should not be mistaken, however, that Wesley wants Christian to live in tormenting fear under the wrath of God with the spirit of bondage.<sup>54</sup> His major concern is that born-again Christians should be on their guard against any influence of sin and the “gates of hades” (i.e. the power and policy of Satan and his instruments), and evidence the marks of the new birth, namely, faith, hope, and love, working out their own salvation with “the utmost care and diligence.”<sup>55</sup> Wesley is concerned particularly for Christians who conceive themselves “cannot fall from grace” and thus do not live a watchful life.<sup>56</sup> Quoting a seemingly well-known illustration in his age, he delineates:

“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 burnt 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 honor; and all hell resounded with his praise.” Hear this, all ye that imagine you cannot fall from grace!

Ought not we then to be perpetually on our guard against those subtle enemies? Though we see them not....<sup>57</sup>

As a passionate and visionary spiritual leader, Wesley always spurs the people called Methodists to “pursue (in whatsoever measure they have attained) holiness of heart and life, inward and outward conformity in all things to the revealed will of God.”<sup>58</sup> He often stresses that born-again Christian should

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., § II.8. Emphasis Wesley’s.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., § III.1-7.

<sup>51</sup> Lester Ruth, *Early Methodist Life and Spirituality* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2005), 136-137, points out that the early Methodist continued to have such belief on hell and the Methodist’s calling for people to “flee from the wrath to come” was not a harsh one, because “Methodist expectations about heaven and hell were in sync with most of their culture.” See how the early Methodists’ preachers spoke about hell, the Methodists sang of hell’s terror, and even had visions of hell on pp.152-160.

<sup>52</sup> Wesley’s conviction comes from his observation of the context of Luke 12:5, that is, Jesus was speaking then to his disciples about several warnings, which include: “But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him” (Lk. 12:1-5). Wesley asserts, “Even to his peculiar friends, Christ gives this direction.” See: John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, 173. Emphasis mine.

<sup>53</sup> Sermon 73, “Of Hell,” Pref. 2-3.

<sup>54</sup> Outler, *Sermons*, 1:248-266, Sermon 9, “The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption” (Rom. 8:15; 1746).

<sup>55</sup> John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, 509. Wesley interprets “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” in Philippians 2:12 as “with the utmost care and diligence.”

<sup>56</sup> Sermon 132, “On Faith,” § 9.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., § 9-10.

<sup>58</sup> “Advice to the people called Methodists” (10 Oct 1745) in Thomas Jackson, ed., *The Works of John Wesley*, 14 vols. (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872; Reprinted Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 8:352.

grow “from faith to faith, *from grace to grace*, until, at length, he come unto ‘a perfect man.’”<sup>59</sup> Wesley does not want the children of God to either “progress from grace to sin” or “fall away.” In regards to the former, Wesley painstakingly explicates it in his sermon “The Great Privilege of Those that are Born of God” (1748). As he describes the outcome of any children of God who do not keep themselves by God’s grace which is in fact sufficient for them, he says there would be “unquestionable progress from grace to sin”:

He fell, step by step, first, into negative, inward sin---not “stirring up the gift of God which was in him,” not “watching unto prayer,” not “pressing on to the mark of the prize of his high calling;” then, into positive inward sin---inclining to wickedness with his heart, giving way to some evil desire or temper. Next, he lost his faith, his sight of a pardoning God, and consequently his love of God. And, being then weak and like another man he was capable of committing even outward sin.<sup>60</sup>

Wesley clarifies, however, in his fourth Sermon on the Mount (1748), that “fall into sin” is different from “fall away”:

A believer may fall, and not *fall away*. He may fall and rise again. And if he should fall, even into sin, yet this case, dreadful as it is, is not desperate. For “we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins.” But let him above all things beware lest his “heart be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin;” lest he should sink lower and lower till he *wholly fall away*, till he become as “salt that hath lost its savour”: For if we thus sin wilfully, after we have received the experimental “knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins; but a certain, fearful looking for of fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.”<sup>61</sup>

In a short treatise entitled “The Question, ‘What is an Arminian?’ Answered by a Lover of Free Grace” (1770), Wesley put forward the same notion. As he points out the third difference between the Calvinists and Arminians, he remarks:

The Calvinists hold, Thirdly, that a true believer in Christ cannot possibly fall from grace. The Arminians hold, that a true believer may “make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience;” that he may *fall, not only foully, but finally, so as to perish forever*.<sup>62</sup>

Apparently, Wesley’s stance is that wilful *total* apostasy from God without repentance in lifetime would *finally* cause Christians to “fall away,” losing their salvation---which they obstinately reject---and ending up in hades and hell.<sup>63</sup> In his explanatory notes on 1 Timothy 1:9, he states, “none can make

<sup>59</sup> Outler, *Sermons*, 1:117-130; Sermon 1, “Salvation by Faith,” § II:7. Emphasis mine.

<sup>60</sup> Outler, *Sermons*, 1:431-443, Sermon 19, “The Great Privilege of Those that are Born of God,” § II.7, 9. In light of king David’s fall, Wesley elaborates on the progress in further detail: “Thus it goes on, from step to step. (1) The divine seed of loving, conquering faith, remains in him that is born of God. ‘He keepeth himself,’ by the grace of God, and ‘cannot commit sin.’ (2) A temptation arises; whether from the world, the flesh, or the devil, it matters not. (3) The Spirit of God gives him warning that sin is near, and bids him more abundantly watch unto prayer. (4) He gives way, in some degree, to the temptation, which now begins to grow pleasing to him. (5) The Holy Spirit is grieved; his faith is weakened; and his love of God grows cold. (6) The Spirit reproves him more sharply, and saith, ‘This is the way; walk thou in it.’ (7) He turns away from the painful voice of God, and listens to the pleasing voice of the tempter. (8) Evil desire begins and spreads in his soul, till faith and love vanish away: He is then capable of committing outward sin, the power of the Lord being departed from him.”

<sup>61</sup> Outler, *Sermons*, 1:531-549, Sermon 24, “Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, Discourse the Fourth,” § I.9. In Wesley’s discussion of “fall away,” one can see clearly that he draws insights from several Biblical passages: 1 John 2:2; Heb. 3:13; 10:26-27.

<sup>62</sup> Jackson, *Works*, 10:360. Emphases mine.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, 540, on Heb. 10:26.

shipwreck of faith who never had it. These therefore were once true believers. Yet they fell not only foully, but finally.”<sup>64</sup>

The salvation view of Wesley is, therefore, not “once saved, always saved,” as championed by the Reformed Theology in light of their TULIP system. It is incorrect to simply say, however, that Wesleyan understanding of salvation is “once saved, not always sure whether will go to heaven or hell,” or, “once saved yet may lose salvation.” The succinct and proper expression of Wesleyan notion of salvation should be: “Once saved, grow from grace to grace, always saved,” or “once saved, continue in God’s kindness, always saved,”<sup>65</sup> or, “once saved, hold our original conviction firmly to the very end, always saved.”<sup>66</sup> The statements “grow from grace to grace,” “continue in God’s kindness,” as well as “hold our original conviction firmly to the very end,” are not highlighting the capability of human free will, nor advocating the necessity to earn final salvation by works righteousness, but rather, the significance of, in Randy Maddox’s words, “responsible grace.” Maddox comments,

More specifically, I discerned in Wesley’s work an abiding concern to preserve the vital tension between two truths that he viewed as co-definitive of Christianity: without God’s grace, we *cannot* be saved; while without our (grace-empowered, but uncoerced) participation, God’s grace *will* not save... It [responsible grace] focuses Wesley’s distinctive concern on the nature of God and God’s action, rather than on humanity. It makes clear that God’s indispensable gift of gracious forgiveness and empowerment is fundamental, while capturing Wesley’s characteristic qualification of such empowerment as enabling rather than overriding human responsibility.<sup>67</sup>

The writer opines that Wesleyan view of salvation can be described by the acronym GRACE which stands for:<sup>68</sup>

- **G**od works first all the time,
- **R**estore all humanity and redeem all believers *from sin and Satan, hades and hell*,
- **A**tonement is universal,
- **C**ure is double (justification and the new birth, and Christian perfection),<sup>69</sup>
- **E**ternal glory for believers who continue in God’s kindness.

<sup>64</sup> John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, 540.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Romans 11:22: “Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you *continue in his kindness*. Otherwise, you also will be cut off.”

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Hebrews 3:13-14: “But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called ‘Today,’ so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ, if indeed *we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end*.”

<sup>67</sup> Randy L. Maddox, *op. cit.*, 19. Italics author’s.

<sup>68</sup> Don Thorsen, *Calvin Vs Wesley: Bringing Belief in line with Practice* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013), 128-142, proposes another acronym, ACURA, primarily to contrast Wesleyan beliefs with the acrostic TULIP---**A**ll are sinful; **C**onditional election; **U**nlimited atonement; **R**esistible grace; **A**ssurance of salvation.

<sup>69</sup> “Double cure” in Wesleyan tradition indicates not only liberty or rest from the guilt and dominion of sin but also from the inbred sin or carnality. Note how this double cure is described in one of the most well-known Methodist hymn “Love Divine, O Love Excelling.” In the first stanza, Charles Wesley writes, “visit us with thy salvation; enter every trembling heart,” which indicates God’s justifying and regenerating grace. The former sets the repentant sinners free from the guilt and condemnation of sin, while the latter set them free from the power or dominion of sin. Such is the “first rest” attained by whoever that responds to the prevenient and convincing grace of God. Then, in the second stanza, Charles Wesley writes, “Let us all in thee inherit; let us find that second rest. Take away our bent to sinning; Alpha and Omega be; end of faith, as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.” The “second rest” which involves “take away our bent to sinning” is the outcome of entire sanctifying grace as a result of believers’ ardent pursuit of holiness of heart and life. Such grace sets believers free from the being of sin or carnal mind, and enables believers to love God and neighbor will all their hearts, souls, minds, and strength. See: Outler, *Sermons*, 1:346, Sermon 14, “The Repentance of Believer,” 1:19-20; 2:97-124, Sermon 40, “Christian Perfection”; 2:157-158, Sermon 43, “The Scripture Way of Salvation,” § 1.3-4, III.6-18; 2:184-185, Sermon 44, “Original Sin,” § III.3-5.

No wonder, Charles Wesley's hymn, "Jesus the Name High over All" (1749), declares:

Jesus! the Name high over all, in *hell* or earth or sky;  
Angels and men before it fall, and devils fear and fly.

Jesus! the Name to sinners dear, the Name to sinners giv'n;  
It scatters all their guilty fear, it turns their *hell* to Heav'n.

Jesus! the prisoner's fetters breaks, and bruises Satan's head;  
Power into strengthless souls it speaks, and life into the dead.

O that mankind might taste and see, the riches of His grace!  
The arms of love that compass me, would all the world embrace.

O that my Jesu's heavenly charms, might every bosom move!  
Fly, sinners, fly into those arms, of everlasting love.

Thee I shall constantly proclaim, though earth and *hell* oppose;  
Bold to confess Thy glorious Name, before a world of foes.

His only righteousness I show, his saving grace proclaim;  
'Tis all my business here below, to cry "Behold the Lamb!"

Happy, if with my latest breath, I may but gasp His Name,  
Preach Him to all and cry in death, "Behold, behold the Lamb!"<sup>70</sup>

For Christian churches and especially the Methodists in Southeast Asia where the total population is estimated to grow to 650 million in the year 2020,<sup>71</sup> John Wesley's understanding of hell and hades remind us to keep our fervour for *both* evangelism and social works which have long been dichotomized since the transpacific Modernist-Fundamentalist debate erupted in the second decade of the twentieth century.<sup>72</sup> The real existence of the woeful transitory hades and everlasting hell should compel us to be caught up in the *missio Dei*, looking upon the eleven countries here as our parish and preaching the gospel to all creation, for God does not want anyone to perish but everyone to come to repentance.<sup>73</sup> The promise of Christ that the "gates of hades"---the power and policy of Satan and his instruments---cannot destroy the Church universal, should stimulate us to rise as the light as well as the salt of all spheres of influence in this domain, fearing not the corrupted political power and violence, social and economic strain, persecution and oppression, environmental crisis, black magic and sorcery, etc. By united prayer and discipling converts, avoiding evil of every kind and doing all good in accordance with the image of God in the shared, interactive,

<sup>70</sup> Kenneth G. C. Newport comments that Charles Wesley has apparent conviction that Jesus would soon return to this earth and that his coming would be visible, glorious, cataclysmic, and premillennial. See: Kenneth G. C. Newport and Ted A. Campbell, *Charles Wesley: Life, Literature and Legacy* (Werrington: Epworth, 2007), 329; *The United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989), #193.

<sup>71</sup> Henriette Litta, *Regimes in Southeast Asia: An analysis of Environmental Cooperation* (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien, 2012), 27.

<sup>72</sup> To understand how the Modernist-Fundamentalist debate results in the dichotomization, see: J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans, 1923); William R. Hutchison, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976); W.H. Griffith Thomas, "Modernism in China," *Princeton Theological Review*, 19 (1921), 630-72; available from <http://journals.ptsem.edu/id/BR1921194/dmd006>; Internet; Lian Xi, *The Conversion of Missionaries: Liberalism in American Protestant Missions in China, 1907-1932* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997); Robert E. Chiles, *Theological Transition in American Methodism: 1790-1935* (New York, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965).

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Mk. 16:15; 2 Pet. 3:9; Kenneth Cracknell, *Our Doctrines: Methodist Theology as Classical Christianity* (Sheffield: Cliff College Publishing, 1998), 81-85, underscores how the Methodists knew of the *mission Dei* from their beginning.

public existence, the missions and ministries of the Methodists as well as the Body of Christ in this territory will certainly remain vibrant and influential by the grace of God.<sup>74</sup>

By and large, Wesleyan eschatological conviction of an avoidable hell for anyone who is born again in Jesus' name, and an attainable final justice through judgment executed in the lake of fire, plus a conquerable hades, namely the power and policy of Satan and his instruments, by the universal Church standing on the promises of Christ the Rock, should strongly color the Methodists' being and doings in Southeast Asia in the last days.

**Questions for discussion:**

1. What are the insights you gain from Wesley's understanding of hades and hell?
2. How can the Chinese Church articulate the notion and significance of hades and hell effectively in our culture and context?

**Bibliography:**

**Primary Sources:**

- Davies, Rupert E., ed. *The Works of John Wesley, Vol. 9: The Methodist Societies: History, Nature, and Design*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1989.
- Jackson, Thomas, ed. *The Works of John Wesley*, 14 vols. London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872; Reprinted Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007.
- Outler, Albert C., ed. *The Works of John Wesley, Vols. 1-4, Sermons*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984-1987.
- Telford, John, ed. *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, 8 vols. London: The Epworth Press, 1931.
- Wesley, John. *Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America, With Other Occasional Services*. London: n.p., 1784. Available from: <https://archive.org/details/amernorfm00wesl>
- Wesley, John. *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*. London: Epworth Press, 2000.
- White, James F. *John Wesley's Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America*. Nashville: Quarterly Review, 1984.

---

<sup>74</sup> Rupert E. Davies, ed., *The Works of John Wesley, vol. 9: The Methodist Societies: History, Nature, and Design* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1989), 70-73; Theodore R. Weber, *Politics in the Order of Salvation: Transforming Wesleyan Political Ethnics* (Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 2001), 392-395.



**Secondary Sources:**

- Bromiley, G. W. "Hell, History of the Doctrine of," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, s.v.
- Brower, Kent E. and Mark W. Elliott, eds. *Eschatology in Bible and Theology*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997.
- Campbell, Ted A. *Methodist Doctrine: The Essentials*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999.
- Chiles, Robert E. *Theological Transition in American Methodism: 1790-1935*. New York, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965.
- Collins, Kenneth J. *John Wesley: A Theological Journey*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003.
- , Kenneth J. *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and Shape of Grace*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007.
- Daley, S.J., Brian E. *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Davids, Peter H. *The First Epistle of Peter*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1990.
- Deschner, John. *Wesley's Christology: An Interpretation*. Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1985.
- Hutchison, William R. *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1976.
- Hwa Yung, et al., eds. *The Book of Discipline of the Methodist Church in Malaysia 2012*. Petaling Jaya: The Methodist Church in Malaysia, 2012.
- Kenneth Cracknell. *Our Doctrines: Methodist Theology as Classical Christianity*. Sheffield: Cliff College Publishing, 1998.
- Lian Xi. *The Conversion of Missionaries: Liberalism in American Protestant Missions in China, 1907-1932*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997.
- Leith, John H., ed. *Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present*. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1973.
- Litta, Henriette. *Regimes in Southeast Asia: An analysis of Environmental Cooperation*. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien, 2012.
- Machen, J. Gresham. *Christianity and Liberalism*. Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans, 1923.
- Maddox, Randy L. *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*. Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1994.
- Newport, Kenneth G. C. and Ted A. Campbell. *Charles Wesley: Life, Literature and Legacy*. Werrington: Epworth, 2007.
- Norwood, Frederick A. *The Story of American Methodism: A History of the United Methodists and Their Relations*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974.
- Oden, Thomas. *Doctrinal Standards in the Wesleyan Tradition*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008.
- Ruth, Lester. *Early Methodist Life and Spirituality*. Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2005.
- Smith, Timothy L. "A Chronological List of Wesley's Sermons and Doctrinal Essays" in *Wesleyan Theological Journal*. Vol. 17 (1982): 88-110.
- Thomas, W.H. Griffith. "Modernism in China," *Princeton Theological Review*, 19 (1921), 630-72; available from <http://journals.ptsem.edu/id/BR1921194/dmd006>; Internet.
- Thorsen, Don. *Calvin Vs Wesley: Bringing Belief in line with Practice*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013.
- Weber, Theodore R. *Politics in the Order of Salvation: Transforming Wesleyan Political Ethnics*. Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 2001.

## Session 3: John Wesley's View of Millennium

Rev. Dr. Tie King Tai, Rev. Ting Huat Ung

### Introduction

As we talk about Wesley's Eschatology, we have to go into the area of his view of Millennium, as it is one of the topics of Eschatology. When talking about this, most scholars' main argument is whether Wesley is a Premillennialist or Postmillennialist. They read him as a Premillennialist or Postmillennialist first to understand his view of Millennium, which is not so appropriate. This paper will question the quest of Wesley as a Premillennialist or Postmillennialist. Then, we will search for Wesley's view of Millennium from his *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*<sup>1</sup>, with the influence of Johann Albrecht Bengel, sermons and letters.

### 1. Arguments of Wesley's millennial view: Premillennial or Postmillennial

#### a. Premillennial

Daniel T. Taylor was one of the earliest scholars to claim Wesley as a premillennialist. He cited Wesley's interpretation in *NT Notes* in Revelation 11:15 as Christ's second coming to reign. Thus, this made Wesley Premillennial.<sup>2</sup> But Wesley's interpretation here was just that Christ will reign and he never mentioned that this is the event of Christ's second coming before Millennium.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, in verse 17, Wesley said one of the messages of verse 15 is that the kingdoms of the earth will return to Christ, then, the Kingdom of Christ will come. This means that this was not the return of Christ to establish His kingdom on earth.

Another example is Luke Tyerman. One of his arguments is that Wesley consented with Thomas Hartley who is a Premillennialist. In a letter, he responded to Hartley's work 'Paradise Restored: A Testimony to the Doctrine of the Blessed Millennium,' he said: "I cannot but thank you for strong and reasonable confirmation of that comfortable doctrine; of which I cannot entertain the least doubt as long as I believe the Bible."<sup>4</sup> Actually, the purpose of the letter is to denounce Hartley's defense on mystic writer and to affirm his own belief of Millennium according to the Bible.<sup>5</sup> Thus, what Wesley affirmed is the doctrine of Millennium from the Bible, not the doctrine of Premillennial from Hartley.

Another Tyerman's argument was that Wesley seemed to defend the premillennialism of Justin Martyr when he responded to Conyers Middleton's "Free Inquiry," which said Justin's belief of millennium was heresy. Wesley disagreed and he based on Revelation 20:4-5 in trying to defend Justin's belief in a millennium that was biblical.<sup>6</sup> Actually, his point was that whoever believed in Millennium also believed in the Bible and was not a heresy. Thus, he was defending the doctrine of Millennium, not necessarily to agree with premillennial. This was why he said, "Now, to say they believed this is neither more nor less than to say, they believed the Bible."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Here after cited as *NT Notes*.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel T. Taylor, *The Voice of the Church on the Coming and Kingdom of the Redeemer, Or, a History of the Doctrine of the Reign of Christ on Earth* (New York: J.M. Fairchild, 1855), 245–48.

<sup>3</sup> cf. Robert B. Brown, "Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down: Perfection and Millennium in the Eschatology of John Wesley" (Master of Philosophy, The University of Manchester, 2011), 17.

<sup>4</sup> Luke Tyerman, *The Life and Times of the Reverend John Wesley, M.A.*, 3 vols. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1871), 2:522-23. The letter sees Letter to the Rev. Thomas Hartley (March 27, 1764), Works B, 27:356.

<sup>5</sup> cf. Brown, "Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down: Perfection and Millennium in the Eschatology of John Wesley," 18.

<sup>6</sup> Tyerman, *The Life and Times of the Reverend John Wesley, M.A.*, 524. Wesley's respond sees "Thomas Jackson, ed., "Letter to the Reverend Dr. Conyers Middleton (January 4, 1748-9)," vol. 10, *The Works of John Wesley* (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872), para 5, 30–31. Hereafter cited as Works J.

<sup>7</sup> cf. Brown, "Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down: Perfection and Millennium in the Eschatology of John Wesley," 17, 77.

Tyerman also read some Wesley's words as premillennial. For example, "Between the present pollution, corruption and degradation of the earth...and that of total, universal restoration of all things, in purely angelical, celestial, ethereal state...and that in this middle period, between these two extremes...the earth will be restored to its paradisiacal state...renewed in its primitive lustre and beauty," from "The Renovation of all Things."<sup>8</sup> The problem is Wesley said nothing about Christ's return here and the transformation mentioned here could happen before or after Christ's return.<sup>9</sup>

Other premillennialists like Nathaniel West, Leander Munhall, Jessie Silver, L. L. Pickett, Andrew Johnson, C. F. Wimberly, Kenneth Newport follow Taylor and Tyerman's arguments with more references from Wesley's *NT Notes*, Sermons and articles that seem to be premillennial.<sup>10</sup>

For example, West read it as premillennial when Wesley spoke of the end-time conversion of the Jews in his sermon 'The General Spread of the Gospel.' He interpreted that Wesley was saying that when Christ returns, all the Jews will turn to Christ.<sup>11</sup> The problem is Wesley never said this in the sermon.<sup>12</sup>

Silver read Wesley's words in 'On Former Times,' "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," as the world would get worse until Christ returns. So it was premillennial. Silver also read Wesley's sermon 'The Mystery of Iniquity', in which Wesley said, "The whole world never did, nor can at this day, show a Christian country or city."<sup>13</sup> But "the world getting worse" not only can be interpreted as premillennial because it still has room for revival and transformation when "righteousness shall be as universal as unrighteousness is now,"<sup>14</sup> in the future, even before Christ returns.

Lavington quoted Wesley's words, "Behold the Lord is come; he is again visiting and redeeming his people...at this very hour the Lord is rolling away our reproach," interpreted as Christ returns and so it's premillennial.<sup>15</sup> But actually, this was not talking about Christ's coming but opposing stillness for doing nothing, and encouraging people to search for Christ actively as He is nigh.<sup>16</sup>

Even a specific line in his sermon 'The Righteousness of Faith', "perhaps he will appear as the day-spring from on high, before the morning light, O do not set him a time. Expect him every hour. Now, he is nigh! Even at the door," was quoted as saying that Wesley even believed in imminent rapture.<sup>17</sup> But Wesley was just urging his listeners to expect Christ to come to their lives anytime to save them.

Some premillennialists like William Blackstone, Silver, LeRoy Froom etc. even used the argument that as Wesley's colleagues like Charles, Thomas Coke, John Fletcher etc. were premillennial and so

<sup>8</sup> Tyerman, *The Life and Times of the Reverend John Wesley, M.A.*, 524.

<sup>9</sup> cf. Brown, "Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down: Perfection and Millennium in the Eschatology of John Wesley," 19.

<sup>10</sup> Kenneth G. C. Newport, *Apocalypse and Millennium: Studies in Biblical Eschatology* (Cambridge: University Press, 2000), 91–149; Brown, "Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down: Perfection and Millennium in the Eschatology of John Wesley," 20–31.

<sup>11</sup> Nathaniel West, *John Wesley and Pre-Millennialism* (New York: John de Witt, 1894), 24. Cited in Brown, "Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down: Perfection and Millennium in the Eschatology of John Wesley," 21.

<sup>12</sup> Albert C. Outler, ed., "The General Spread of the Gospel," in *Sermons II*, vol. 2, The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976), 485–99. Hereafter cited as Works B.

<sup>13</sup> Jessie Silver Forest, *The Lord's Return Seen in History and in Scripture as Pre-Millennial and Imminent* (Chicago: F. H. Revell, 1914), 152. Cited in Brown, "Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down: Perfection and Millennium in the Eschatology of John Wesley," 25.

<sup>14</sup> "Of Former Times," Works B 3:440-53. cf. Brown, "Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down: Perfection and Millennium in the Eschatology of John Wesley," 26.

<sup>15</sup> George Lavington, *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compared*, 2nd ed. (London: J & P Knapton, 1749), 80. The words are from "An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," para 99, Works B 11:89.

<sup>16</sup> cf. Brown, "Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down: Perfection and Millennium in the Eschatology of John Wesley," 30.

<sup>17</sup> V. Reasoner, *The Hope of the Gospel: An Introduction to Wesleyan Eschatology* (Evansville: Fundamental Wesleyan Publishers, 1999), 249n46. Cited in Brown, "Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down: Perfection and Millennium in the Eschatology of John Wesley," 28. The quote sees "The Righteousness of Faith," para III.4, Works B 1:216.

Wesley also was.<sup>18</sup> The point is weak as it is jumping to the conclusion that everyone should be the same as their colleagues.

### b. Postmillennial

Postmillennial scholars like Charles Munger, Daniel Steele, George Eckman, Harris Franklin Rall, John Faulkner, William Greathouse, Vic Reasoner, examined the arguments that said Wesley was premillennial and found that the premillennialists always put their words in Wesley's mouth and made him premillennial.<sup>19</sup>

Steele, Rall, Faulkner, Jerry Mercer, William Greathouse, Arthur Wainwright, Vic Reasoner then further went into Wesley's *NT Notes*. In Revelation 20, they found that Wesley was influenced by Bengel to believe in two different millennia before Christ returns. And the reign of Christ with the raised martyrs are not on earth but in heaven for a thousand years. Then Christ will return at the Last Day.<sup>20</sup> Faulkner even said that in Wesley's *NT Notes*, Christ's return is always linked with the end time judgement and the Last Day, not Millennium.<sup>21</sup>

For Wesley's Eschatological sermons, they were postmillennial oriented in the eyes of Eckman and Rall. Eckman said that although "The Former Time" showed the falling of the world, it would improve by the grace of God with the spread of the Gospel and unity of the Church before Christ returns.<sup>22</sup> Rall said that in 'The General Spread of the Gospel' and 'On Former Times' Wesley expected a latter-day glory before Christ returns.<sup>23</sup> He even said 'The Great Assize' was postmillennial as it expected a spiritual renewal of all man to obey God.<sup>24</sup> But this was not the case as the renewal was not related to Millennium but Last Judgement and New Creation after the destruction of the earth. Faulkner said 'The Great Assize' and 'The General Deliverance' did not have any relation with Millennium. 'The General Spread of the Gospel,' expected a great expansion of Christianity through the renewal of life and devotion to God to spread the Gospel which was postmillennial.<sup>25</sup>

Some like James McEldowney, Colin Williams, Roger Hahn, Jerry Mercer, James DeJong, W. Ralph Thompson, Donald Dayton, Greathouse, Arthur Wainwright, Kenneth Collins, Randy Maddox and Reasoner see Wesley as postmillennial from his optimistic Soteriology that the optimistic grace of God will renew mankind in this sinful world to its optimistic state that come an utopia of Christianity in the future.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>18</sup> LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, vol. 2 (Washington D. C: Review and Herald, 1950), 694; Brown, "Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down: Perfection and Millennium in the Eschatology of John Wesley," 23, 26–28.

<sup>19</sup> Charles Munger, "Was Wesley a Premillennialist?," *A Substitute for Holiness or Antinomianism Revived*, accessed June 16, 2016, [http://www.gospeltruth.net/Antinomianism/antinom\\_wesley\\_premil.htm](http://www.gospeltruth.net/Antinomianism/antinom_wesley_premil.htm); Daniel Steele, "Difficulties in the Thousand Years," *A Substitute for Holiness or Antinomianism Revived*, accessed June 16, 2016, [http://www.gospeltruth.net/Antinomianism/antinom\\_chap14.htm](http://www.gospeltruth.net/Antinomianism/antinom_chap14.htm); George P. Eckman, *When Christ Comes Again* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1917), 197; Harris Franklin Rall, *Modern Pre-Millennialism and the Christian Hope* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1920), 245–53; Brown, "Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down: Perfection and Millennium in the Eschatology of John Wesley," 31–7, 40–1.

<sup>20</sup> Steele, "Difficulties in the Thousand Years"; Jerry L. Mercer, "The Destiny of Man in John Wesley's Eschatology," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 2, no. 1 (Spring 1967): 60; Brown, "Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down: Perfection and Millennium in the Eschatology of John Wesley," 32–4, 36, 40–1.

<sup>21</sup> John A. Faulkner, *Burning Questions in Historic Christianity* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1930), 175; Cited in Brown, "Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down: Perfection and Millennium in the Eschatology of John Wesley," 36.

<sup>22</sup> Eckman, *When Christ Comes Again*, 197–98, 199n29.

<sup>23</sup> Rall, *Modern Pre-Millennialism and the Christian Hope*, 246.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. The sermon sees "The Great Assize," Works B 1:354-75.

<sup>25</sup> Brown, "Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down: Perfection and Millennium in the Eschatology of John Wesley," 35–36. The sermon "The General Deliverance" sees Works B 2:436-50.

<sup>26</sup> Colin W. Williams, *John Wesley's Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960), 196; Mercer, "The Destiny of Man in John Wesley's Eschatology," 60; Kenneth J. Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of Grace* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 316; Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville: Kingswood

The reading of Wesley as postmillennial or some degree of postmillennial is proper and more accurate study of his words. Thus, is Wesley really a postmillennialist? The fact is in the 18th century, the concepts of postmillennialism were still in the process of becoming systematic. Then in 19th century, Daniel Whitby made the concepts mature and evoked hot debate between pre and post.<sup>27</sup> This indicates that in Wesley's time, people might talk about Millennium and the chronology of Christ's return, but not in terms of premillennialism or postmillennialism. When Wesley talked about Millennium, he never thought to take a side on either premillennialism or postmillennialism. What he actually did was just to explain what he knew about Millennium according to Bible and his Soteriology. He of course might speak of something similar to what we called premillennialism or postmillennialism today, but he was not one of them. Thus, it is a bias to find some similarities between Wesley and a Millennialism and then put him in that millennial camp. Just like Kenneth Brown concluded, "Was he postmillennial or premillennial? The answer lies with the interpreter."<sup>28</sup>

## 2. Search of Wesley's millennial view: Church revived, Gospel spread throughout the world

Wesley spoke what he thought to be right according to Bible and his Soteriology, and not premillennialism or postmillennialism. This made some of his words sound similar to both of the camps. Furthermore, there was progression of his Eschatological view over the years that would make him emphasize different eschatology languages that might fit into different millennial camps later:

Early period	Middle period	Late period <sup>29</sup>
Christ's reign in Church: no Millennium <sup>30</sup>	Christ's victory: second coming of Jesus who will judge and make all things new <sup>31</sup>	Christ's salvation: Church being revived, Gospel spread throughout the world <sup>32</sup>
More Anglican influence	More Protestant influence	More Methodist influence

When we talk about Wesley's millennial view, we have to set aside our own perspective as to which camp he belonged to and we just need to focus on what he had said. Wesley did say something about Millennium in his Notes, sermons and letters.

### a. Wesley's *NT Notes* and his use of Bengel

Wesley's *NT Notes* was one of his doctrinal standards that was surely a reliable source to know his theology.<sup>33</sup> *NT Notes* actually was Wesley's translation and abridgement of Bengel's Gnomon with minor omissions, especially the Revelation, which he seemed to wholly adopt.<sup>34</sup>

Wesley followed Bengel using historicist reading to understand Revelation. In his *NT Notes* on Revelation 22:21, he even listed down the chronical events that happened and would happen from St. John

Books, 1994), 239; Brown, "Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down: Perfection and Millennium in the Eschatology of John Wesley," 37–38, 40–41.

<sup>27</sup> Brown, "Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down: Perfection and Millennium in the Eschatology of John Wesley," 7n4.

<sup>28</sup> Kenneth O. Brown, "John Wesley – Post or Premillennialist?," *Methodist History* 28, no. 1 (October 1989): 41.

<sup>29</sup> Most scholars divided Wesley's life and theological development into three periods: Early Period (1725-1738), Middle Period (1738-1765) and Late Period (1765-1791). Mark K. Olson, *John Wesley's Theology of Christian Perfection: Development in Doctrine & Theological System*, The John Wesley Christian Perfection Library 2 (Fenwick: Truth In Heart, 2007), 342.

<sup>30</sup> Brown, "Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down: Perfection and Millennium in the Eschatology of John Wesley," 79.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>33</sup> Huat Ung Ting, "From Faith of a Servant to Faith of Son: The Development of John Wesley's Salvation View in His Late Period" (Trinity Theological College, 2013), 32–4.

<sup>34</sup> Brown, "Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down: Perfection and Millennium in the Eschatology of John Wesley," 64–5.

to his time. These included, as Robert B. Brown said, the seals, trumpets and bowls that indicated “Gothic invasions of the Christianized Roman Empire, the rise of Islam, the reign of Charlemagne, the corruption of the Papacy and the Protestant Reformation resultant.”<sup>35</sup>

As Bengel, Wesley believed the millennium to be literally a thousand years. In his *NT Notes* on Revelation 20:1-10, he said, “these thousand years.” Wesley certainly believed in millennium, but the odd thing was not one but two. On Revelation 20:4, he said:

A thousand years - It must be observed, that two distinct thousand years are mentioned throughout this whole passage. Each is mentioned thrice; the thousand wherein Satan is bound, verses 2, 3, 7; chap. xx, 2, 3, 7, the thousand wherein the saints shall reign, verses 4-6. chap. xx, 4-6 The former end before the end of the world; the latter reach to the general resurrection. So that the beginning and end of the former thousand is before the beginning and end of the latter.<sup>36</sup>

As Wesley said, he believed in two millennia because Revelation 20:2, 3, 7 talk about the one millennium and 4-6 another. The First Millennium is when Satan is bound. Then when Satan is released there comes the Second Millennium when the saints will be raised to reign with Christ in heaven. This will end with the general resurrection for the rest of the man. His reason was:

Therefore as in the second verse, chap. xx, 2 at the first mention of the former; so in the fourth verse, chap. xx, 2 at the first mention of the latter, it is only said, a thousand years; in the other places, "the thousand," verses 3, 5, 7, chap. xx, 3, 5, 7 that is, the thousand mentioned before.<sup>37</sup>

As Satan is bound in the first millennium, the Church reach the climax to fully realize the Kingdom of Grace. Then, in the second millennium, the saints will be raised to reign with Christ in heaven and Satan is released to deceive the nations. This will end with the general resurrection for the rest of the man to establish His Kingdom, which is the Kingdom of Glory. Wesley said:

During the former, the promises concerning the flourishing state of the church, chap. x, 7, shall be fulfilled; during the latter, while the saints reign with Christ in heaven, men on earth will be careless and secure.<sup>38</sup>

Marino commented that Wesley’s millennia were “two distinct, contiguous, chronologically sequential, and literal periods of one thousand common years each.”<sup>39</sup> More than that, there were two resurrections also, first is at the beginning and the second at the end of the second millennium. Then, the events stated in Revelation 20:11-22:5 will follow, which “manifestly follows the things related in the nineteenth chapter.”<sup>40</sup> After the second millennium, the event that follows is in Revelation 20:11-15 that is about the Final Judgement of Christ. Does that mean for Wesley that Christ will return after the second millennium? On Revelation 20:3 in his *NT Notes*, he said, “Quickly he will be bound: when he is loosed again, the martyrs will live and reign with Christ. Then follow his coming in glory, the new heaven, new earth, and new Jerusalem.”<sup>41</sup> Wesley did say that Christ is returning after the millennia! Although in his *Explanatory*

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>36</sup> *NT Notes*, Rev 20:4.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Bruce Roger Marino, “Through A Glass Darkly – The Eschatological Vision of John Wesley” (Ph. D. thesis, Drew University, 1994), 88; Cited in Brown, “Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down: Perfection and Millennium in the Eschatology of John Wesley,” 69.

<sup>40</sup> *NT Notes*, Rev 20:2.

<sup>41</sup> *NT Notes*, Rev 20:3.

*Notes Upon the Old Testament*<sup>42</sup>, Wesley also said in Isaiah 60:18, that the promised peace so described “will be fulfilled during in the thousand years wherein Christ shall reign upon earth,” which can be interpreted as Christ returns before Millennium to reign. But this reigning is not necessarily connected with the physical return of Christ, as Christ may reign in Heaven upon the earth in the Millennium. And according to Wesley’s interpretation in Revelation 11:15, this reigning in Isaiah 60:18 should be Christ’s reign with His grace in Heaven upon the earth to establish the Kingdom of Grace to convert the kingdoms of earth.<sup>43</sup>

For Wesley, after ascension to Heaven, Christ reigns in Heaven and the angels do His will. On earth, it is through the Church that Christ gradually reigns in one’s heart and nations to do His will, until the establishing of the Kingdom of Grace in the First Millennium, before Christ’s Second Coming to establish the Kingdom of Glory to reign on a new earth.<sup>44</sup> The problem is in his *OT Notes* for Isaiah 24:23 Wesley did say that Christ “shall come in the flesh, and set up his kingdom first in Jerusalem, and afterward in all other nations.”<sup>45</sup> This seems to say that Christ will come before Millennium. But do not forget that Wesley has two millennia. In the second millennium Satan will be loosed to deceive the nations to revolt against the reign of Christ in Heaven through the Church, then Christ will return in glory on earth to reign and create the new heaven, new earth, and new Jerusalem.

For Wesley, who followed Bengel, the First Millennium would start on 1836 although he never specifically stated it.<sup>46</sup> Thus, the Second Millennium was from 2836 to 3836,<sup>47</sup> then Christ will come and the world will end with Last Resurrection and Final Judgement. Before the First Millennium, Satan still has ‘the little time’ to show it great wrath towards the earth when it had been cast out of heaven. Wesley said, ‘the little time’ was “probably four-fifths of a chronos, or somewhat about 888 years. This time of the third woe may reach from 947 to the year 1836.”<sup>48</sup> At these times, Satan wanted to hinder the woman who is Church from spreading wide. However, the woman or church was kept safe in the wilderness for 1260 days, which is from 847 to 1524.<sup>49</sup> At the same time, Satan wanted to persecute the Church, but she would be given wings to fly to wilderness to be kept safe for ‘a time and times and half a time,’ which is from 1058 to 1836.<sup>50</sup> Of the three and half times, the first ‘time’ was from 1058 to 1280 during the reign of the Turks. The next ‘two times’ continued from 1280 up to 1725 when “the Turkish power flowed far and wide.” And the ‘half time’ was between 1725 and 1836 as the Turkish’s power began to fade.<sup>51</sup> The period of Antichrist is 1810-1836, and he who is the beast would be released from the bottomless pit on 1832. Then, the First Millennium will come in 1836.<sup>52</sup> Thus, Wesley who live from 1703 to 1791, saw himself living in a period in which Satan still had “the little time” to show its wrath to attack and persecute the Church, but the Church would be kept safe and continue to spread wide towards the First Millennium to reach the highest peak. Thus for Wesley, the First Millennium is very close. Even he said those who believed it to be close “will appear to have spoken the truth.”

<sup>42</sup> Here after cited as *OT Notes*.

<sup>43</sup> *NT Notes*, Rev 11:15.

<sup>44</sup> *NT Notes*, Mat 6:10, Rev 11:15; 17, 16:1, 20:4-5. “Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount,” Works 1: III.8, 582.

<sup>45</sup> *OT Notes*, Isa 24:23.

<sup>46</sup> *NT Notes*, Rev 22:21.

<sup>47</sup> cf. Brown, “Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down: Perfection and Millennium in the Eschatology of John Wesley,” 70.

<sup>48</sup> *NT Notes*, Rev 12:12.

<sup>49</sup> *NT Notes*, Rev 12:6.

<sup>50</sup> *NT Notes*, Rev 12:14.

<sup>51</sup> *NT Notes*, Rev 12:16.

<sup>52</sup> *NT Notes*, Rev 22:21. cf. Brown, “Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down: Perfection and Millennium in the Eschatology of John Wesley,” 68.



Although Wesley used the dates set by Bengel but he was quite reserved of the dates. In a letter to Christopher Hopper in 1788, Wesley said:

My dear brother, I said nothing, less or more, in Bradford church, concerning the end of the world, neither concerning my own opinion, but what follows: that Bengelius had given it as his opinion, not that the world would end then, but that the millennial reign of Christ would begin in the year 1836. I have no opinion at all upon the head: I can determine nothing at all about it. These calculations are far above, out of my sight. I have only one thing to do, to save my soul, and those that hear me.<sup>53</sup>

Wesley would not emphasize things that did not have much value in saving souls, especially interpretation of the Bible that would only cause controversy. Arthur Skevington Wood commented that as Wesley was an evangelist, he “confined himself to the bold outlines of prophecy, rather than wrestling with the details of debatable interpretation.”<sup>54</sup>

Another important thing noted is that Wesley’s view of Millennium emphasizes the continuing growth of the Church and coming to a peak. His view is not about Christ’s return before or after Millennium. This is evidenced by the fact that in *NT Notes* he just said once that Christ would come back after Millennium, and in his sermon, it was mute totally.

#### **b. Wesley’s sermons and letters**

Wesley’s Standard Sermons is another doctrinal standard of his theology.<sup>55</sup> And his other published sermons can also represent his thoughts. In his sermons, he did not preach about millennium, but he always mentioned the continuing growth of Church to reach a period of utopian state and to reach its spiritual peak by the grace of God. One thing that is worthy to notice is that when he said this, he never mentioned the second coming of Christ before or after this period. For example, even in his early period, in “Scriptural Christianity,” published in 1744, he said there would be a Christian world ahead when the Scriptural Christianity spread all over the world as the Holy Spirit will do greater work than the Pentecostal in the days of the Apostles in Acts 4:31. In the sermon, he said:

“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. Let us stand a little, and survey...this strange sight, a Christian world.”<sup>56</sup>

In his “Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, VI, dated 1748, Wesley believed that the Church by the grace of God would establish Kingdom of Grace that would overcome the world’s kingdoms:

All kingdoms shall bow before him, when...the church of Christ, ‘shall be established in the top of the mountains.....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, 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 forever and ever.’<sup>57</sup>

Certainly, other sermons published in the middle to his late period at the peak of the Methodist Revival spoke more clearly of the flourishing of the Church to establish the Kingdom of Grace on earth. “The Reformation of Manners,” for example, published in 1763, preached that God would do something to

---

<sup>53</sup> Works J 12: 319.

<sup>54</sup> Arthur Skevington Wood, *The Burning Heart: John Wesley, Evangelist* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1978), 275; Cited in Brown, “Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down: Perfection and Millennium in the Eschatology of John Wesley,” 16.

<sup>55</sup> Ting, “From Faith of a Servant to Faith of Son: The Development of John Wesley’s Salvation View in His Late Period,” 26–32.

<sup>56</sup> “Scripture Christianity,” para III. 1, Works B 2:169.

<sup>57</sup> “Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount,” para III.8, Works B 1:582.

prevent the continuance of rebellion of humans, to change the heart of a man and transform the society and nation. This would bring glory to God and establish peace on earth, “even in this present world...nor is it to individuals only...but to the whole community whereof we are members. For is it not a sure observation, ‘righteousness exalteth a nation’? ...there can be no doubt but God will give national prosperity, in accomplishment of his faithful word, ‘Them that honour me, I will honour.’”<sup>58</sup>

The classic sermon that expressed continue flourishing of the Church was “The General Spread of the Gospel,” published in 1783. In the sermon, Wesley believed the Methodist Revival would not die and was “only the beginning of a far greater work – the dawn of the ‘latter day glory.’”<sup>59</sup> God would “carry on his work in the same manner as he has begun.”<sup>60</sup> The revival would advance and expand gradually “spread from heart to heart, from house to house, from town to town, from one kingdom to another”<sup>61</sup> until “in every nation under heaven,”<sup>62</sup> in which people would be converted to Christ and enter into the kingdom of God in what he called “the grand Pentecost.”<sup>63</sup> In the process, “pure and undefiled religion, of experimental knowledge and love of God, of inward and outward holiness, will afterwards spread.”<sup>64</sup> Then, even Mahometans or Muslims would be amazed by Christian’s lives and be convicted.<sup>65</sup>

Not the Gentiles will come vastly to God, but also all Israel that they would be brought into their own land. Then, “all these glorious promises made to the Christian church, which will not then be confined to this or that nation, but will include all the inhabitants of the earth”<sup>66</sup> will be accomplished. Wesley was very sure that the world will be changed although the present world were still full of evils because “it will not always be thus: these things are only permitted for a season by the Great Governor of the world, that he may draw immense, eternal good out of this temporary evil.”<sup>67</sup> Indeed, “all unprejudiced persons may see with their eyes 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.”<sup>68</sup>

His 1787 sermon “The Signs of the Times,” after briefly looking at the signs demonstrated by Christ’s coming, Wesley asked, “What are ‘the times’ which we have reason to believe are now at hand?” The answer is clear: “the time of ‘the latter-day glory’; meaning the time wherein God would gloriously display his power and love in fulfilment of his gracious promise that ‘the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea.’”<sup>69</sup> And Wesley saw ‘the times’ were already happening all around the world at his time and would continue to peak:

At this day the gospel leaven – faith working by love, inward and outward holiness, or...’righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost’ – hath so spread in various parts of Europe, particularly in England, Scotland, Ireland, in the islands, in the north and south, from Georgia to New England and Newfoundland, that sinners have been truly converted to God, thoroughly changed both in heart and in life; not by tens, or by hundreds only, but by

<sup>58</sup> “The Reformation of Manners,” para II.2-4, Works B 2:309.

<sup>59</sup> “The General Spread of the Gospel,” para 16, Works B 2:493.

<sup>60</sup> “The General Spread of the Gospel,” para 17, Works B 2:493.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> “The General Spread of the Gospel,” para 19, Works B 2:493.

<sup>63</sup> “The General Spread of the Gospel,” para 20, Works B 2:494.

<sup>64</sup> “The General Spread of the Gospel,” para 18, Works B 2:493.

<sup>65</sup> “The General Spread of the Gospel,” para 21, Works B 2:495.

<sup>66</sup> “The General Spread of the Gospel,” para 26, Works B 2:498.

<sup>67</sup> “The General Spread of the Gospel,” para 27, Works B 2:499.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> “The Signs of the Times,” para II.1, Works B 2:525.

thousands, yea, by myriads! The fact cannot be denied: we can point out the persons, with their names and places of abode.<sup>70</sup>

Wesley even said, “How swift, as well as how deep, and how extensive a work has been wrought in the present age!”<sup>71</sup>

In another sermon of 1787 named “Of Former Times,” Wesley disagreed that the spiritual situation in present days were worse than the past days. To say the past was better “is not only contrary to truth, but is an instance of black ingratitude to God, and a previous affront to his blessed Spirit. For whoever makes a fair and candid inquiry will easily perceive that true religion has in no wise decreased, but greatly increased, in the present century.”<sup>72</sup> Wesley believed that “the general infidelity, the Deism which has overspread all Europe”<sup>73</sup> was used by God to force nominal Christians into accepting real Christianity, which Wesley described as “the love of God and man, filling the heart and governing the life.”<sup>74</sup> Thus, a previous “total disregard for all religion pave the way for the revival of the only religion which was worthy of God!”<sup>75</sup> Therefore, “no ‘former time’ since the apostles left the earth has been ‘better than the present’...wherein he is hastening to renew the whole race of mankind in righteousness and true holiness.”<sup>76</sup>

Wesley believed the First Millennium which brought the “latter day glory” of the Church was imminent as the Church revivals could be seen all over the world. And the Methodist Revival was the ‘great work’<sup>77</sup> God raised to spread Christianity to the world. Indeed, the revival had been spreading, “by degrees farther and farther, till the whole is leavened...for half a century.”<sup>78</sup> His focus was to preach salvation in Christ to invite the people to walk with him in the journey to be saved by the grace of God, not the disputable areas of some issues like millennium that did not have any benefit for one to go on for his journey of salvation.<sup>79</sup>

Brown commented, “Wesley clearly not only foresaw the imminent arrival of time where God would usher in an exceptional period of grace through His Church on earth, he believed this golden age was already dawning.”<sup>80</sup> The Methodist Revival was the sign that the First Millennium was approaching. Right at the end of his life, he wrote a letter to Thomas Morrell, said, “One would hope the time is approaching when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. Indeed, the amazing revolutions which have Europe seem to be the forerunners of the same grand event.”<sup>81</sup> In another correspondence of the same year to William Black, Wesley was pleased that God “is doing great things in many parts of Europe such as have not been seen for many generations; and the children of God expect to see greater things than these. I do not know that England was ever before in so quiet a state as it is now. It is our part to wait the openings of Divine Providence, and follow the headings of it.”<sup>82</sup>

<sup>70</sup> “The Signs of the Times,” para II.4, Works B 2:527.

<sup>71</sup> “The Signs of the Times,” para II.10, Works B 2:531.

<sup>72</sup> “Of Former Times,” para 19, Works B 3:451.

<sup>73</sup> “Of Former Times,” para 20, Works B 3:51-2.

<sup>74</sup> “Of Former Times,” para 11, Works B 3:448.

<sup>75</sup> “Of Former Times,” para 20, Works B 3:452.

<sup>76</sup> “Of Former Times,” para 23, Works B 3:453.

<sup>77</sup> “The Signs of the Times,” para II.2, Works B 2:525; Journal December 31, 1776, Works B 23:39.

<sup>78</sup> “The Signs of the Times,” para II.8, Works B 2:530.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Letter to Mr. John Smith (December 30, 1745), 13, Work B 26:181.

<sup>80</sup> Brown, “Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down: Perfection and Millennium in the Eschatology of John Wesley,” 85.

<sup>81</sup> Marino, “Through A Glass Darkly – The Eschatological Vision of John Wesley,” 94n243. Cited in Brown, “Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down: Perfection and Millennium in the Eschatology of John Wesley,” 86.

<sup>82</sup> Marino, “Through A Glass Darkly – The Eschatological Vision of John Wesley,” 94n244. Cited in Brown, “Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down: Perfection and Millennium in the Eschatology of John Wesley,” 86.

Wesley's view of Millennium was quite simple, literal and imminent as Brown commented. He literally believed the Bible said there were two millennia and the First Millennium, which showed the flourishing of the Church, was approaching as great revival of the Church was happening. Thus, this was the Millennium he would defend. And as said previously, when he defended Justin's and affirmed Hartley's Millennium, it was just their belief in the Bible that there was millennium, and not their premillennial stand.

### Conclusion

Wesley believed in Millennium with two of it before the return of Christ. The church will continue to expand until the First Millennium to reach the peak. His view of Millennium is consistent with his interpretation of the Bible. As an evangelist, Wesley tended to interpret the Bible literally to provide the plainest and indisputable meaning of the text to maintain the truth and promise of the Bible, so that whoever hears it can understand correctly to believe and be saved.<sup>83</sup> Only when literal interpretation contradicts with other verses or go against the main general teaching of Scripture, then one can interpret non-literally within the faith.<sup>84</sup> Thus for Wesley, when Revelation 20 says there is a thousand years, there literally is a thousand years. He even found out that there are two literal different periods of thousand years in Revelation 20: 2 and 4, when he mentioned the former and latter thousand years "it is only said, a thousand years; in other places, 'the thousand,' verses 3, 5, 7, chap. xx, 3, 5, 7 that is, the thousand mentioned before."<sup>85</sup> Marino said that Wesley found his belief "in an actual thousand years is consistent with Church tradition from the Apostles to Justin, Papias and Irenaeus, through to the second and third centuries."<sup>86</sup> The difference is that he believed in two!

Wesley's view of Millennium is also consistent with his theology, which focuses on Soteriology. He believed that the grace of God would save a person to its outmost in the redemption of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit to recover the image of God in believers' life, so that they can think and walk like Christ. The believers will go through a process of sanctification to become perfection holiness, in order to love God and man wholeheartedly, by using the means of grace. The believers will not walk alone in this journey of salvation, but they walk together heart in heart and hands in hands, also to call others to join the salvation journey, in order to spread the Gospel and Holiness to all the nations. And this is what the Church is. The Church is "a body of men compacted together in order, first, to save each his own soul, then to assist each other in working out their salvation, and afterwards as far as in them lies, to save all men from present and future misery, to overturn the kingdom of Satan, and set up the kingdom of Christ."<sup>87</sup> The Church's salvific responsibility is not just individuals' salvation but reformation of the societies as a whole. And for Wesley, the expansion of Gospel and Holiness, the salvation of individuals and the reformation of the societies will continue to grow to reach their peak in the First Millennium. This was the focus of his view of Millennium and not the second coming of Christ which he was always mute about when talking about millennium or thousands years or the flourishing of the Church.

Thus, Millennium is just a part of Wesley's Soteriology according to the Bible. For him, salvation is not static, but is continually advancing in the gradual and instantaneous grace of God with no limit.<sup>88</sup> He emphasized that every person who repents and believes in Jesus should continue to be empowered by the

<sup>83</sup> "The Marks of the New Birth," para I.5-6, III.4, *Works* 2: 420-21, 427.

<sup>84</sup> Brown, "Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down: Perfection and Millennium in the Eschatology of John Wesley," 74.

<sup>85</sup> *NT Notes*, Rev 20:4.

<sup>86</sup> Marino, "Through A Glass Darkly – The Eschatological Vision of John Wesley," 87–8; Cited in Brown, "Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down: Perfection and Millennium in the Eschatology of John Wesley," 74.

<sup>87</sup> "The Reformation of Manner," para 2, *Works* 2: 302.

<sup>88</sup> Clarence L. Bence, "Processive Eschatology: A Wesleyan Alternative," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 14, no. 1 (Spring 1979): 56.

Holy Spirit to go for holiness, in order to glorify God and serve people. Then, the Church will be revived and the gospel will be spread all over the world. The Church becomes the strong pole of the world. Although the world will go into tribulation, the Church will reach her peak period in the double millennium. In the first millennium, Satan will be locked; in the second millennium, the saints will govern with Christ in heaven. Thus, Wesley's Millennium view emphasizes how to grab the opportunity now to make a bright future: Christian holiness and witness (personal ethics) will influence to reform the world (social ethics) to create a holy and happy future! Wesley's Millennium is optimistic and shows that the bright and glorious future is imminent and can boost Christian to spread the Gospel; can encourage Christian to pursue personal entire sanctification; can stimulate Christians to be involved in social concern.

### **Some Comments**

It has been an enlightening journey for us (the presenters) to come to the above conclusion about Wesley's view of millennium. We would like to make some comments about this finding concerning Wesley's view:

1. Wesley's double Millennia interpretation of Revelation 20 may not so convincing according to the Bible. That Satan will be locked for a thousand years, and that the saints will reign for a thousand years may not be concluded as two different thousands years. There may be only a thousand years but it is mentioned twice because there are two different things that will happen in that thousand years. Furthermore, Revelation 20:2 says that Satan will be locked for a thousand years and in 20:7 says that after this thousand years, it will be released, they show that the things that happen in 20:3-6 would be in the same thousand years.
2. Wesley's First Millennium saw the locking of Satan and the flourishing of the church. In his Second Millennium, he saw the releasing of Satan, and the reigning of the saints with Christ in Heaven at the same time. The world will be careless and secure in the Second Millennium. It is difficult to relate the releasing of Satan to a careless and secure world for a thousand years. If the presence of Satan still can have a careless and secure world in the Second Millennium, then there is no point to lock the Satan in order to have the flourishing of the Church in the First Millennium. Furthermore, what would Satan do in these Second thousand years when it is released? The Bible says the releasing of Satan is to deceive the nations to attack the camp of the saints and the beloved city (Rev 20:18-19), and this may not need a thousand years to accomplish.
3. In Wesley's Second Millennium, Satan will be released for a thousand years, and the saints have to reign with Christ in Heaven. Does that mean that the saints can't reign on earth as Satan is there to reign? Or the presence of Satan on earth is so powerful to force them to reign there with Christ in
4. Heaven? If the saints already reign with Christ, it should not just reign in Heaven but also on earth! Furthermore, the Bible says the camp of the saints is on the earth, not in Heaven. (Rev 20:9)
5. Wesley saw Christ's coming back on the earth after the double Millennia in Revelation 20. This is still open to debate. Especially the interpretation of Revelation 19 is describing the coming of Christ to destroy the rivalry army on earth before chapter 20.

#### **Questions for discussion:**

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of Wesley's view of Millennium?
2. Do you agree with Wesley's view of Millennium? Why?

## 卫斯理约翰的千禧年观

### 引论

当我们谈及卫斯理的末世观时，我们必须涉及他的千禧年观，因这是末世观的一部分。在这一块上，大部分的学者都在辩论他是属于前千禧年还是后千禧年。他们先解读他是属于那一派的，然后才来理解他的千禧年观，这是不恰当的。这篇文章首先会质疑这样的解读。然后，本文会从他受 Johann Albrecht Bengel 影响的新约注释笔记、一些讲章和书信来探索他的千禧年观。

### 1. 学者的辩论：前千禧年或后千禧年

#### a. 前千禧年

Daniel T. Taylor 是其一最早说卫斯理是前千禧年的。他认为卫斯理新约注释对启十一 15 的解释为基督再来的统治。因此，卫斯理是前千禧年的。不过，卫斯理在这里的解释只是基督将要统治，并无提及祂将于千禧年前再来。在者，在 17 节，卫斯理说 15 节的一个信息就是世上的列国会归向基督，然后基督的国度会临到。这表明这不是基督再来建立祂在地上的国度。

另外一个例子是 Luke Tyerman。他其中一个论证就是卫斯理认同 Thomas Hartley 前千禧年的论点。在一封回应 Hartley ‘恢复乐园：蒙福千禧年教义的一个见证’的信中，他说，“我不能不感谢你有力和合适地证实那美好的教义；那是只要我相信圣经就不能有任何疑惑的。”事实上，这封信的目的是反驳 Hartley 对神秘主义的辩护，同时赞同他按照圣经相信千禧年。因此，卫斯理赞同的是按照圣经有千禧年，而不是 Hartley 的前千禧年论。

Tyerman 另外一个论证是卫斯理看似维护 Justin Martyr 的前千禧年论，当他回应 Conyers Middleton 的“自由询问”，说 Justin 相信千禧年是异端。卫斯理不认同 Middleton，按着启廿 4-5 尝试维护 Justin 相信有千禧年是合乎圣经的。事实上，卫斯理的论点是，谁相信千禧年，就是相信圣经，并不是异端。因此，他要辩护的是千禧年这教义，而不是赞同前千禧年论。这是为什么他说，“现在，说他们相信这个，就是等于说他们相信圣经。”

Tyerman 也把卫斯理的一些话解读为前千禧年论的论说。比如，他讲章“万物的更新”中，有说“在目前地球的污染、破坏和衰败...与那完全、宇宙性的万物更新为纯天使般、天上、属灵的状况...与那在这中间的期间，在这两级之间...地球会被更新至乐园式的情况...更新到它当初的光辉和美丽”。问题是卫斯理在这没有说到基督的再来，并且这里所说的更新可以发生在基督再来之前或之后。

其他前千禧年派的人如 Nathaniel West, Leander Munhall, Jessie Silver, L. L. Pickett, Andrew Johnson, C. F. Wimberly, Kenneth Newport 都跟从 Taylor 和 Tyerman 的论证，只是提出多一些来自卫斯理新约注释、讲章和文章的资料。

例如，West 把卫斯理在‘福音的遍传’这篇讲章里所说，末世犹太人归向基督解读为前千禧年的言论。他认为卫斯理是说当基督再来时，全部的犹太人都将归向基督。问题是，卫斯理在这讲章并没有如何说。

Silver 把卫斯理在讲章‘以前的时代’所说，“亚当和夏娃在乐园的日子是比任何他们的后代好得多，甚至没有更好的了，一直到基督再来在地上统治为止”解读为前千禧年的说辞。因为这个世界会不断败坏一直到基督再来。另外一篇讲章‘The Mystery of Iniquity’，卫斯理说，“这个世界，从没，也不能在今时，展现一个基督徒的国家或城市。”只是，“这世界逐渐败坏”不只可以解读为前千禧年。因为它在未来还是有空间让复兴和更新的来到，到时“公义的普遍性就如现今的不义”，甚至就在基督再来之前。

Lavington 引述卫斯理的话，“看哪主已经来临；祂再次来到和救赎祂的子民...就在此时主把对我们的责备除去”解读为基督的再来，所以是前千禧年的言论。但是事实上，这不是谈到基督的再来，而是反对寂静主义者什么都不做，为要鼓励人主动寻求嫉妒，因为祂是那么靠近。

不但如此，甚至在卫斯理讲章‘信心的称义’中的一句话，“可能祂会如晨曦从高天出现，在黎明来临之前，哦，不要为祂设置时间。无时无刻都仰望祂。就是现在，祂已靠近！甚至就在门前”都被引来说卫斯理相信即刻的被提！但是，卫斯理实际上只是要求他的听众要无时无刻期盼基督会来到他们的生命中来救赎他们。

有一些前千禧年派的人如 William Blackstone, Silver, LeRoy Froom 等等甚至以卫斯理的同伴如 Charles, Thomas Coke, John Fletcher 等等是前千禧年派的论证来说卫斯理也是其中之一。这论证很薄弱，因为这是一个跳跃式的结论，说每一个都必须跟他的同伴相同。

### b. 后千禧年

后千禧年派的人如 Charles Munger, Daniel Steele, George Eckman, Harris Franklin Rall, John Faulkner, William Greathouse, Vic Reasoner，检视了那些说卫斯理是前千禧年的论证，发现卫斯理常常被人把话放在他嘴里。

Steele, Rall, Faulkner, Jerry Mercer, William Greathouse, Arthur Wainwright, Vic Reasoner 接着进一步探索卫斯理的新约注释。在启廿，他们发现卫斯理受 Bengel 的影响，相信在基督再来前，有两个千禧年。而且，基督与众复活的圣徒一起统治一千年是在天上，而不是在地上。然后，基督会在最后的日子再来。Faulkner 甚至说在卫斯理的新约注释，基督的再来通常与末日的审判和最后的日子关联，而不是千禧年。

卫斯理有关末世的讲章，在 Eckman 和 Rall 的眼中都是后千禧年导向的。Eckman 说虽然“以前的时代”讲到世界的堕落，但是它会在神的恩典中，藉着福音的广传和教会的合一，在基督再来前得以改善。Rall 说在‘福音的遍传’和‘以前的时代’卫斯理期盼在基督再来前，有一个“后期的荣耀”。他甚至说‘大审判’是后千禧年的，因为它期盼一个属灵的更新，所有人都顺服神。只是，这不是这篇讲章的意思，因为这更新是连于最后的审判和新创造，而不是千禧年。Faulkner 就说‘大审判’和‘大解放’与千禧年并无关联。而‘福音的遍传’的确期盼一个基督徒信仰的大复兴，藉着生命的更新和对神的委身来广传福音，因而是后千禧年的论调。

一些人如 James McEldowney, Colin Williams, Roger Hahn, Jerry Mercer, James DeJong, W. Ralph Thompson, Donald Dayton, Greathouse, Arthur Wainwright, Kenneth Collins, Randy Maddox and Reasoner 则从卫斯理积极的救恩论，相信神积极的恩典将更新在这罪恶世界中的人类到一个极致的境界，以在未来开创一个基督徒的乌托邦，来论说他是后千禧年派的。

说卫斯理是后千禧年派或某个程度的后千禧年派的，看来是比较准确地解读他的文字。如此，卫斯理真的是后千禧年派的？事实上在 18 世纪，后千禧年的思想还在系统化的过程中。到了 19 世纪，Daniel Whitby 才把它成熟化，并且引发激烈的前后之辩。这显示在卫斯理的时期，人会谈千禧年和基督再来的时序，但不是按照前千禧年或后千禧年的论调。当卫斯理论及千禧年时，他并无要站在前千禧年或后千禧年那一边的想法。他所想的只是尽力解释他按着圣经和救恩论所了解的千禧年。他当然会说一些看来与前千禧年或后千禧年相似的论述，但他并不属于哪一派。因此，去找一些卫斯理的言论与某一个千禧年观的相似点，然后就说他是某一个千禧年阵营的，是一个偏见。就如 Kenneth Brown 的结论，“卫斯理是前千禧年或后千禧年？答案在于解读者的。”

## 2. 卫斯理千禧年观的探索：教会复兴，福音在世界广传

卫斯理只说他认为按照圣经和其神学是对的事，并不在乎前千禧年或后千禧年。这造成他的一些观点与两个阵营都很相似。再加上，他生涯中不断进展的末世观促使他在某个时期特别强调某些不同的末世言论造成后来不同派别都可以在他的言论中找到依据：

早期	中期	晚期
基督在教会里掌权：无千禧年	基督的得胜：基督再来将会审判和更新一切	基督的救赎：教会复兴，福音在世界广传
比较受国教（圣公会）影响	比较受改革宗影响	比较受循道运动影响



谈及卫斯理的千禧年观，我们需要放下他是属于那一派的观念，以专注他到底说了什么。我们可以从他的新约注释，一些讲章和书信的确来了解他对千禧年的看法。

### a. 卫斯理的新约注释和使用 Bengel 的资料

卫斯理的新约注释是其教义标准之一，是可靠的资料可以从中了解他的神学。他的新约注释其实是他翻译和浓缩 Bengel 的 Gnomon。当中，只有一些的删减，尤其是启示录更是几乎照单全收。

卫斯理跟随 Bengel 用历史进路来了解启示录。在他新约注释中启廿二 21，他甚至列下从使徒约翰到他当代所发生的连串历史事件。正如 Robert B. Brown 说，这包括了七印、七号、七碗是“基督化罗马帝国的哥特式侵略、伊斯兰的兴起、查理曼的统治、天主教的腐败和改革归正宗的影响。”

就如 Bengel，卫斯理相信千禧年就是字面的一千年。在他的新约注释启廿 1-10，他说：“这些千年”。他相信千禧年，但令人惊讶的是不是一个，而是两个！在启廿 4，他说：

*一个千年-必须注意，这有两个不同的千年被提及。每一个被提及三次；一个千年撒旦被捆绑，2, 3, 7 节；另一千年殉道圣徒将要统治。前者在世界的末了前结束；后者将延伸到普遍的复活。因此，前者的开始和结束是在后者的开始和结束之前。*

卫斯理说，他相信两个千禧年因为启廿 2, 3, 7 说到一个千禧年和 4-6 说到另外一个。第一个千禧年是撒旦被捆绑的时期。然后，当撒旦被释放时就是第二个千禧年，殉道圣徒会被这时期被提到天上与基督一同掌权。这时期将在世人普遍复活时结束。他的理由是：

*所以在廿 2，第一次提到前者；在第四节第一次提及后者，就如第二节，都只是说一千年；在别的地方则说，“那一千年”，3, 5, 7 节，就是指之前提到的一千年。*

当撒旦被捆绑的第一个千禧年中，教会达到其巅峰，以致恩典的国度完全实现。然后，在第二个千禧年，殉道圣徒会被提到天上与基督一同掌权，而撒旦则被释放去迷惑在地上的列国。这一切将在世人普遍复活时结束，以建立基督的国度，就是荣耀的国度。卫斯理说：

*在前者的期间，对教会辉煌状态的应许，十 7，将会实现；在后者的期间，当殉道圣徒在天上与基督一起掌权时，人类在地上将安定和安稳。*

Marino 说卫斯理的千禧年观是“两个不同、连接、顺序和每个都是字面的一千年的时期。”还有，复活也有两种，第一种是在第二个千禧年的开始，第二种是在其结束时。然后，启廿 11-廿二 5 所描述的事件将接着发生，这“明显地是接续十九章所讲的东西。”当中，第二个千禧年之后，接续启廿 11-15 所发生的事件是最后的审判。这是否表明卫斯理相信基督会在第二个千禧年后再来？是的。在新约注释廿 3，他说：“很快它就会被捆绑；当它被释放后，殉道者会复活并与基督一同掌权。然后，跟着就是基督在荣耀中再来、新天新地、和新耶路撒冷。”卫斯理的确有说基督的再来是在千禧年之后！虽然在他的旧约注释笔记中，卫斯理在赛六十 18 有说，那所应许的太平“将会实现在那千年中，既基督会统治全地，”可以被解读为基督在千禧年之前再来。但是，这统治不一定牵涉基督亲身的再来，因为基督可以在千禧年中于天上统治地上。而且，按照卫斯理在启十一 15 的注释，这赛六十 18 所说的统治就是基督在天上以恩典统治地上，建立一个恩典的国度来使地上的国度归信。

对于卫斯理来说，基督升天后，就在天上统治，天使遵行祂的旨意。在地上，就是透过教会逐渐地扩展，使基督可以统治人心和地上国度遵守祂的旨意，一直到祂恩典国度建立在第一千禧年中。这是在基督再来建立荣耀的国度，于新天新地中统治之前。另一个问题是卫斯理在他旧约注释赛廿四 23 中有说，基督“要亲身降临，先在耶路撒冷建立祂的国度，然后是列国。”这看来是说基督会在千禧年前再来。但是，不要忘记，卫斯理有两个千禧年。他相信在第二个千禧年，撒旦会被释放来迷惑列国来反抗基督在天上藉教会在地上的统治，然后基督就会在荣耀中再来击杀列国，在地上统治并且建立新天新地和新耶路撒冷。

卫斯理跟随 Bengel，相信第一个千禧年会在 1836 年开始，虽他没有特别提起。因此，第二个千禧年是从 2836 to 3836 年，然后基督就会再来，这个世界就会毁灭，接着就是最后的复活和审判。在第一个千禧年前，被赶出天上坠落的撒旦还有‘不多的时候’来展现它对这世界的怒气。卫斯理说，‘不多的时候’的意思“可能是 4/5 chronos，或大概是 888 年。这是第三个祸哉，可能是从 947 至 1836 年。”在这时期，撒旦要拦阻那妇人就是教会继续扩展。无论如何，那妇人或教会被安全地藏于旷野 1260 天，既从 847 到 1524 年。同时，撒旦也要逼迫教会，但她被赋予翅膀飞到旷野安全地被隐藏了‘一载两载和半载’，既从 1058 到 1836 年。对于三个半载，第一载是从 1058 到 1280 年土耳其的统治。接着的两载是从 1280 到 1725 年，当“土耳其的势力扩展得又远又阔。”而半载是从 1725 到 1836 年，当土耳其的势力逐渐消退。故基督的时期是从 1810 到 1836 年，而身为兽的敌基督会在 1832 年从无底坑中被释放出来。然后，第一个千禧年就会在 1836 年来到。因此，1703-1791 的卫斯理看自己是活在撒旦还有“不多时候”来展现它的怒气，攻击和逼迫教会的时期，但是教会会被安全地隐藏，并且继续扩展直到在第一个千禧年中达到巅峰。因此，对于卫斯理来说，第一个千禧年已经很靠近了。甚至他都说那些相信它已经很靠近人是“很明显地在说实情”。

值得注意的是，虽然卫斯理使用 Bengel 所设定的日期，但他实际上还是对此有所保留。在 1788 年一封写给 Christopher Hopper 的信中，他说：

*我亲爱的弟兄，我在 Bradford 教会所说的，不是有关世界的末了，也不是根据我个人的意见，是按照 Bengelius 的意见，那不是指世界会在那时结束，而是千禧年基督的统治会在 1836 年开始。我对此没有什么个人的看法：我对此不能确定什么。这些的计算远超我个人的理解。我只有一件事要做，那就是拯救我的灵魂，还有那些听从我的。*

卫斯理不会强调一些对拯救灵魂没有多大价值的东西，尤其是那些只会引发争议的圣经诠释。Arthur Skevington Wood 就说卫斯理身为一个布道家，他“对预言只是粗略地解说，不在具争议性的圣经辩论中费力。”

另外一个重要的观察就是卫斯理的千禧年观强调教会的持续扩展，一直到她的巅峰。他的重点不在于基督是在千禧年前或后再来。这可从他的新约注释只一次提到基督将在千禧年后再来证明。不但如此，在他提到末世的讲章中，只字不提基督什么时候再来，却一直谈论教会荣耀的前景。

### b. 卫斯理的一些讲章和书信

卫斯理的标准讲章是他另外一个教义标准。不但如此，他其他出版的讲章也可代表他的神学思想。在他的讲章，他没有传讲千禧年，但是很常提到教会在神的恩典中的持续扩展直到一个乌托邦的属灵巅峰。值得注意的是当他谈到这些时，他从来没有提及基督是这时期前或后再来。比如，甚至在他早期 1744 年的讲章“按照圣经的基督徒信仰”中，他说当按照圣经的基督徒信仰广传到世界各处时，那将出现一个基督徒的世界。因为圣灵将做比徒四 31 五旬节更大的工作。

在他 1748 年的讲章“登山宝训 VI”，卫斯理相信教会藉着神的恩典会建立一个恩典的国度，胜过世上的列国。当然，其他一些他中期到晚期，循道卫理运动逐渐兴盛期间的讲章，讲更多教会将来的繁盛以致在地上建立一个恩典的国度。例如，他 1763 年的讲章“品行的革新”中，讲到神会做一些事来拦阻人的持续悖逆，来改变人的心并更新社会和国家。这将会带给神荣耀和地上的平安。

提及教会繁盛最经典的讲章是卫斯理 1783 年的“福音的传遍”。当中，他相信循道卫理运动的兴盛不会熄灭，它“只是一个更大复兴的开始-一个‘后期荣耀’的黎明”。神会“继续祂的工作就如祂当初如何开始”。这复兴将逐渐扩展，“从一心到一心，一家到一家，一城到一城，一国到一国”，直到“每一个在天下的国家”，其中的百姓都会认罪悔改、信从基督，得以进入神的国度。这是“一个大五旬节”。在这过程中，“纯正和不参杂，有亲身经历的体会和爱神，有内外圣洁的信仰，会被广传。”到时，甚至穆斯林都会羡慕基督徒的生命，因而悔改信服。

不只是外邦人会大量归向神，全以色列人都会被带回他们的地。到时，“所有赐予教会，那不再局限于这国家，那国家，而是包含地上所有的百姓的荣耀应许”就要实现。卫斯理非常肯定

这个世界会被改变，虽然当前的世界充满罪恶。因为“这不是恒常如此：这些事情只是掌管世界的神短暂的允许，以便从这短暂的邪恶中产生巨大，永恒的美事来。”其实，“所有不偏激的人都可看见神已经在更新这世界的面貌。我们有很强的原因来盼望这祂开始的工作会持续一直到主耶稣的日子。”

在卫斯理 1787 的讲章“时代的预兆”中，他简单介绍了基督再来的预兆后，他问，“那是什么‘时代’我们有理由相信很快就来到？”答案非常清楚：“一个‘后期荣耀’的时代；意即一个神荣耀地彰显祂的权能和慈爱的时代，实现了那‘认识耶和華的知识要充满遍地，好像水充满洋海一般’的荣耀应许。”卫斯理认为‘这时代’已经开始在世界各地发生，并且会持续一直到巅峰。他甚至说，“如此快速，也如此深远，这工作已经在此时开展了！”

在另外一篇 1787 年的讲章“以前的时代”，卫斯理不认同当代的属灵状况比之前糟糕。说之前比较好“不但是与真理相悖，也是对神忘恩负义，和冒犯圣灵。谁按照公正和坦白的思索，就会明白真信仰并没有减退，反而不断增长，就在这时代。”卫斯理相信“普遍出现的不忠诚，无神论遍布整个欧洲”是神使用来激发挂名的基督徒成为真实的基督徒，可以“爱神爱人的爱充满内心，并且导引一个人的生命和生活。”因此，之前“完全藐视所有信仰的情况是要开路给那唯一神所看重的信仰得以复兴！”所以，“没有一个‘以前的时代’，从使徒离开这世界后，是‘好过现在’...其中，神毫不犹豫要以公义和真圣洁来更新全人类。”

卫斯理相信带来“后期荣耀”的第一个千禧年已经很靠近。因为教会的复兴在世界各地都在发生。当中，循道卫理运动是神的一项‘大工作’来广传基督徒信仰到世界各地。其实，这复兴已经“越传越远，直到整团都被醉所发起来...已经半个世纪了。”他的焦点是传扬在基督里的救赎，邀请人跟他一起走在被神恩典救赎的旅程上，不是一些引起争辩，对帮助人走在救赎的旅程上无益的神学课题如千禧年。

Brown 评述，“卫斯理很明显不只看见一个神透过教会彰显祂美好恩典的时期已经即将到来，他相信这黄金时期已经近在眼前了。”循道卫理运动是第一个千禧年即将来到的记号。在他晚年时，他写信给 Thomas Morrell 说，“有人期盼那日子的来到，地上充满认识主荣耀的知识。其实，这在欧洲发生的奇妙复兴，就是那大事件的前驱。”在另外一封给 William Black 的信，卫斯理非常喜悦神“正在欧洲各处做前所未闻的大事；神的儿女期盼看见比这更大的事。”

## 结论

卫斯理相信在基督再来前有两个相连的千禧年。教会会继续扩展一直到第一个千禧年中达到巅峰，因撒旦此时会被捆绑。第二个千禧年，撒旦被释放，而殉道圣徒就在天上与基督一同统治。他的千禧年观跟他的解经是一致的。身为一个布道家，卫斯理倾向于字面解经以提供浅白和易明的经文信息来传递圣经的真理和应许，使每一个听到的人可以正确地明白，相信和得救。只有当字面解经与其他经文有冲突或违背圣经的基本教导，那才可按着信仰不按字面解经。因此，当启 20 说有一千年，那就是字面的一千年。他甚至认为按字面那里有两个不同的一千年，分别在启 2 和 4。Marino 说卫斯理发现他相信“有真正的一千年是与从使徒到查斯丁、帕比亚司和爱任纽，一直到二三世纪的教会传统是一致的。”不同的只是他相信两个！

卫斯理的千禧年观也跟他的救恩神学一致。他相信神的恩典透过基督的救赎，圣灵的大能，可以拯救人到一个极致，恢复人生命中神的形象，使他可以思主所思，行主所行。他会真诚地用恩典途径，经过一个成圣的过程来领受完全的圣洁，以致可以全心爱神爱人。他在这救恩的旅程中不会独自孤行，而是与弟兄姐妹同心同行，也招呼其他人来加入，把福音和圣洁传扬至列国。这就是所谓的教会和其角色。教会是“一群人聚合在一起，首先要拯救自己的灵魂，然后帮助彼此做成他们的救赎之工，接着竭尽所能去拯救所有人脱离现在和未来的苦楚，以败坏撒旦的国度，建立基督的国度。”教会拯救性的责任不只是个人的救赎，也是社会的更新。对于卫斯理来说，福音和圣洁的扩展，个人的救赎和社会的更新，会继续发展一直到第一个千禧年达致巅峰。这是他千禧年观的核心，而不是基督的再来。

如此，千禧年是卫斯理按着圣经的理解，也是救恩神学的一部分。对他来说，救赎不是静止的，而是持续不断在神的逐渐和立刻的恩典中无限成长。他强调每一个认罪悔改，信从基督的人应当继续靠着圣灵的大能往圣洁迈进，以致可以荣神益人。这样，教会会被复兴，福音会被广传至列国，成为世界的中流砥柱。虽然世界会面临极大的灾难，教会却会在第一个千禧年中达致巅峰。因此，卫斯理的千禧年观强调如何抓住这神所赐的机会来开创美好的未来：基督徒的圣洁和见证（个人伦理）会影响和更新世界（社会伦理）以创造一个圣洁和喜乐的社会！卫斯理这积极和乐观，宣扬那荣耀和光明的未来就在眼前的千禧年观，可以激发基督徒广传福音，鼓励他们继续迈向完全圣洁，鼓动他们参与社会关怀。

### 一些评述

对于我们这发表者来说，这是一个很有启发性的旅程来发现卫斯理的千禧年观的真实面貌。我们的一些评述如下：

1. 按照圣经，卫斯理对启 20 双千禧年的解经不是那么令人信服。撒旦会被捆绑一千年，殉道圣徒会在天上与基督统治一千年，不一定指有两个不同的一千年。可能那只有五千年但被提两次。因为在那一千年里发生了两件不同的事件。再者，启 22 2 说，撒旦将被捆绑一千年，然后在 22 7 说，这一千年后，它会被释放，显明发生在 22 3-6 的事是在同一个千年中。
2. 卫斯理第一个千禧年描述撒旦被捆绑，教会会繁盛。而第二个千禧年一开始，撒旦被释放，殉道圣徒与基督一同在天上统治，世界将会安稳，安全。其中难以理解的是撒旦被释放与世界的安稳，安全的关系。如果撒旦的存在，世界还是可以安稳，安全，那撒旦在第一个千禧年就不需要被捆绑，以致教会可以繁盛。再者，启 22 18-19 说，撒旦被释放是要引诱列国来攻击圣徒和那蒙爱的城，而且这也不需要一千年来完成。
3. 在卫斯理的第二个千禧年中，撒旦将会被释放，而殉道圣徒会在天上与基督一同统治。这是否表示由于撒旦在地上统治，以致殉道圣徒只能在天上统治？事实上，如果殉道圣徒若已经与基督一同统治，就不应该只是在天上，也应该包括在地上。再者，启 22 9 说，圣徒的城是在地上，而不是在天上。
4. 卫斯理认为基督是在启 22 千禧年之后才再来。这解经还是可以有所辩论的。尤其是启 19 按字面来看，是描述基督再来击杀那些敌对的军队。这是在启 22 描述千禧年之前。

### 问题讨论

1. 卫斯理的千禧年观有何优点和缺点？
2. 你赞同卫斯理的千禧年观吗？为什么？

## Session 4: Wesleyan View of Judgement

### 卫斯理对审判的观点

Rev. Dr. Ling Tung Kiing, Rev. Dr. Francis Wong King Sing, Rev. Elizabeth Salang ak Enjut

#### INTRODUCTION

This paper attempts to introduce the Wesleyan view of judgement. First of all, we would like to determine a brief understanding of the final judgement, since the Wesleyan's view of judgement is very much related to it. Then, we present an overview of Wesley's understanding of the wrath of God, and follow with his view of judgement.

#### 1. A brief understand of the final Judgement

According to WebBible Encyclopaedia, the final judgement means: the sentence that will be passed on our actions at the last Day.

The Bible does mention issue pertaining to the final judgement. For example, "And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." (Matt.25:46); "Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God," (Rom.14:10), and see also 2 Cor.5:10; 2 Thess.1:7-10.

The judge is Jesus Christ, as mediator. All judgment is committed to Him (Acts 17:31; John 5:22, 27; Revelation 1:7). It pertains to Him as mediator to complete and publicly manifest the salvation of His people and the overthrow of His enemies, together with the glorious righteousness of His work in both respects.

The persons to be judged are:

1. The whole race of Adam without a single exception (Matt. 25:31-46; 1 Cor. 15:51,52; Rev. 20:11-15)
2. The fallen angels ( 2 Peter:4; Jude 1:6)

The rule of judgement is the standard of God's law as revealed to men, the heathen by the law as written on their hearts (Rom.2:12-16; Luke 12:47, 48); the Jew who "sinned in the law shall be judged by the law" (Rom.2:12); the Christian enjoying the light of revelation, by the will of God as made known to him (Matt.11:20-24; John 3:19). Then the secrets of all hearts will be brought to light (1 Cor.4:5; Luke 8:17; 12:2, 3) to vindicate the justice of the sentence pronounced.

The time of judgment will be after the resurrection, as revealed in Hebrews 9:27 "Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgement." and Acts 17:31 "For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead."

#### 2. Overview of Wesley's understanding of the wrath of God.

For many today, notions of "the wrath of God" may seem outdated, questionable, or even backward. Regardless, the theme of God's wrath permeates all of Scripture and was a central theme in the DNA of the Wesleyan revival.<sup>1</sup> Should we also consider the reality of God's wrath as we seek to bring people to get seriously upon their spiritual journey? John Wesley thought it so important that he and others framed an important question around this theme for every participant in the Methodist movement, was as follows: "*Do you desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from your sins?*"

<sup>1</sup> Paul Lawler, Seedbed. June 16, 2014. From website: (<http://www.seedbed.com/wesley-wrath-revival-changed-nation>) accessed on 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2016.

Here are four reasons for our consideration:

1. God's wrath is expressed in the entire Bible

Both Old Testament and New Testament speak explicitly of the wrath of God. In the New Testament passage of 2 Peter 2: 4-10, examples of God's wrath out of the Old Testament are specifically referred to as examples of what God will bring again to a segment of humanity at an appointed time in the future. Ananias and Sapphira lay dead on the pavement in Acts 4(Acts 4:32). God, revealed in Jesus Christ, speaks of hell (Matt. 5:22, 29, 30, 10:28, 11:23, 18:9, 23:33) and condemnation (John 3:18), and "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt.25:30) dozens of times. The New Testament cites these realities repeatedly (John 3:36; Romans 5:9; Ephesians 2:3; 1 Thess.1:10). This does not even take into account the book of Revelation, with its explicit descriptions of God's wrath. The reason John Wesley ask people that question because he reads the Bible.

2. An understanding of God's wrath is center to our Wesleyan heritage.

It is hard for some to fathom that an "understanding of God's wrath" as being central in our Wesleyan heritage. On the surface, a question like: "Do you desire to flee the wrath to come?" It sounds appalling to many who have grown up with a Methodist heritage in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Here is the testimony by the writer of 'Seedbed' Paul Lawler:

For several years I taught at a historically United Methodist conference center where thousands gather every summer. Despite the majority of participants being active in local churches for decades, I was saddened by how many did not know basic teachings from Scripture or basic teachings out of the Wesleyan corpus. In one of the Bible studies I taught involving a large number of people, I asked participants to complete the following sentence: "Do you desire to flee the coming....." Silence followed. No one knew the answer. No one even knew the question was ever asked in Methodism. When I began to explain the origins and the biblical reasoning for the question, many sat in stunned silence.<sup>2</sup>

Why would John Wesley require Methodists to be regularly asked, "*Do you desire to flee from the wrath to come?*" John Wesley required this question to be asked because he read and believed the Bible. Not only that, but Wesley was deeply concerned about people and their souls. This question, along with the thought-provoking response it solicited, is a portion of the pattern that sustained revival in a nation for decades through the societies.

3. A reverence for God's wrath has the potential to jolt us out of bland, moral therapeutic deism.

Because critical masses of people who have attended North American churches for decades suffer from alarming levels of biblical anemia, many have only a shallow and vague notion of God's character.<sup>3</sup>

A streamlined interpretation of moral therapeutic deism would be as follows: "A spiritual person, who has a vague notion of God, whose chief end is to be happy and fulfilled, knowing that one can call on God if one has a need; or one seeks to be a good person because "good people go to heaven when they die."<sup>4</sup> High reverence for God's wrath magnifies the depth of God's grace and mercy.

It was John Wesley who said,

---

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Christian Smith & Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford, 2009).

How a sinner may be justified before God, the Lord and Judge of all, is a question of no common importance to every child of man. It contains the foundations of all our hope, inasmuch as while we are at enmity with God, there can be no true peace, no solid joy, either in time or in eternity. What peace can be there be, while our own heart condemns us; and much more, He that is ‘greater than our heart and knoweth all things?’ What solid joy, either in this world or that to come, while ‘the wrath of God abideth on us?’<sup>5</sup>

Wesley was meticulously mindful that we are at enmity with God, “For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will be saved by His life.” (Rom.5:10); and that we are under God’s wrath (Rom.5:9) apart from God’s justifying grace through Jesus Christ (Rom.5:1). But his articulation of these realities was not motivated by magnifying wrath and enmity, but by magnifying the radiance and appeal of God’s justifying grace and mercy through the Lord Jesus Christ.

One thing is certain, the wrath of God can be drawn into the place of God’s eternal punishment. And that is the final judgment of God.

### 3. Wesley’s view of judgment

With reference to the book, *John Wesley: Doctrine of Final Judgement*, written by Herbert Boyd McGonigle who considered in 1756, Wesley complained that his mentor William Law interpreted hell as nothing more than a condition of the soul here and now.<sup>6</sup> Wesley refers Law to a work by Bishop Peter Browne, added Browne’s argument for hell as conscious eternal misery. Wesley was familiar with Bishop Browne’s exposition of hell as early as 1729 and was sympathetic to his interpretation.

Following the texts of Daniel, Hebrews, 2 Peter, Romans, Matthew and Thessalonians, he concluded that anyone who live and die in their sins will not vainly hope to escape God’s vengeance, in that day those that sleep in the dust of earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to everlasting contempt and shame. The texts speak of hell as it exists, if there be any fraud in the Bible, then Bible is not from God. If there’s no everlasting burning, there’s now dependence on the writings. So that if we give up the one, we must give up the other. No hell, no heaven, no revelation.<sup>7</sup>

Wesley began his ministry in Bristol in 1739 and there soon appeared a letter boycotting Wesley because he preached against election. Wesley decided to raise an alarm by preaching “Free Grace” and warning the people not to be afraid of the letter. The revival was young and the sermon went against the doctrine. It tends to destroy religion’s comfort, Christianity’s happiness, they destroy the great and precious promises, and afford no comfort. They are not the elect of God.<sup>8</sup>

John Wesley debated whether Christianity the World’s only religion in 1744. Then in 1745, Wesley published a longer version of his book, ‘A farther appeal to men of reason and religion, where he challenged the readers about cursing and swearing. In 1755 Wesley delineated the doctrine of eternal punishment at his *Explanatory notes upon the New Testament*. He comments that hell was a place of conscious punishment. With reference to the Scriptural passage of Matthew 25:46, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life,” Wesley argued that as the reward of the righteous is everlasting, so the punishment of the wicked will likewise be everlasting.<sup>9</sup> In 1758 appeared

<sup>5</sup> Wesley’s 52 Standard Sermons, Schmull Publishing, 1985, p.42. Wesley’s Sermon, Justification by Faith.]

<sup>6</sup> Herbert Boyd McGonigle, *John Wesley: Doctrine of Final Judgement*, Moorley’s Print & Publishing, UK, 2015, p1.

<sup>7</sup> Herbert Boyd McGonigle, *John Wesley: Doctrine of Final Judgement*, Moorley’s Print & Publishing, UK, 2015, pp1-2.

<sup>8</sup> John Wesley, *Works*, Vol. 3, pp.549, 550.

<sup>9</sup> Herbert Boyd McGonigle, *John Wesley Doctrine of Final Judgement*; p.4



John Wesley's fullest account yet of the nature of hell and punishment. He stated the finale will come when earth and heaven will pass away and then the glorious sight will come.<sup>10</sup>

When Wesley read Emanuel Swedenborg's *Account of Heaven and Hell* in April, 1779, he expressed his judgement contradicts the traditional doctrine of eternal punishment. As he said in his works,

Of this work in particular I must observe that the doctrine contained therein is not only quite unproved ... it is contradictory to Scripture. And the worst is, he flatly affirms, none can go to heaven who believes three persons in the Godhead. His account of hell leaves nothing terrible in it, for he quenches the unquenchable fire.<sup>11</sup>

Wesley later reviewed Swedenborg's writing and found that his account of hell was so misleading. Wesley alarmed his readers by saying that,

Who illuminated Swedenborg flatly to contradict these things? ... Certainly it was the spirit of darkness. And indeed the light which was in them was darkness, while they laboured to kill the never-dying worm, and to put out the unquenchable fire. My brethren, let none of you that fear God recommend such a writer any more. All his folly is contradicting to the whole oracle of God. If the preceding extracts are from God, then the Bible is only a fable.<sup>12</sup>

His 1782 sermon, *Of Hell*, was based on Mark 9:48 where the undying worms live and unquenched fire and the sinners will lost everything.<sup>13</sup> In other words, their punishment will be either they have lost, or what they feel. As Wesley said,

Let us consider the punishment of loss. This commences in that very moment wherein the soul is separated from the body. In that instance the soul loses all those pleasures, the enjoyment of which depends on the outward senses. ... All the pleasures of the imagination are at an end. ... At the same instant will commence another loss, that is the person whom they have loved. All the pleasure is gone, vanished away. For there is no friendship in hell.<sup>14</sup>

In 1786, Wesley wrote a sermon based on Luke 16:31, *Dives and Lazarus*, it shows, "Wesley consistent stress on the importance of human response initiatives of divines grace in this life and on the fixed status of soul after death whether in "hell", "purgatory", or "paradise".<sup>15</sup> Wesley made clear that he was sure the words of Jesus recorded a real historical instance; not mere parabolic language. After their deaths, Dives and Lazarus entered a kind of intermediate world, not the final heaven or hell, but places of peace and torment respectively. In that accursed place has no room for mercy or of grace.<sup>16</sup> As Wesley says, "Whoever could escape from the place of torment, let him cry to God, the Father of mercy. Nay, but the time is past., No mercy can enter within the shades of hell."<sup>17</sup>

Wesley climax in the sermon showed again the importance he placed on men and women hearing the Gospel's good news. If sinners meet a spirit from the world of spirits who warned them of the horror of hell, and they would not be convinced about Jesus' testimony, they are accountable to the warnings of the Holy Scripture.<sup>18</sup>

When Wesley is about to die, he wrote "On Faith" which was based on Hebrews 11:1. Defining faith as a "divine conviction of the invisible and eternal world", Wesley pondered upon the world to come. And

<sup>10</sup> John Wesley. *Works*, Vol. 3, pp.370,371

<sup>11</sup> John Wesley, *Works*, Vol. 23, pp. 126, 127.

<sup>12</sup> John Wesley *Works*, Vol.13, pp. 447, 448.

<sup>13</sup> John Wesley, *Work*, Vol 3, p33-34.

<sup>14</sup> John Wesley, *Works*, Vol. 3, p.34.

<sup>15</sup> Albert Outler, "An Introductory Comment", *Work*, 1987, Vol 4, p4.

<sup>16</sup> Herbert Boyd McGonigle, p12; see also John Wesley, *Work*, Vol 4, pp 9, 10.

<sup>17</sup> John Wesley, *Work*, Vol. 4, pp.9, 10.

<sup>18</sup> Herbert Boyd McGonigle, p13.

said, “Nothing but the execution of that sentence which has been passed by the righteous Judge; fixing thee in a state which admits of no change, through everlasting ages.”<sup>19</sup> For sure, the states of Heaven and hell as described in the Scripture are fixed and unchangeable.<sup>20</sup>

But that is not at all. The lost will know that they are cut off from God. To Wesley, they were punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.<sup>21</sup> And this punishment under judgement is without intermission and without end. In John Wesley’s words:

The inhabitants of hell have nothing to divert them from their torments even for a moment ... when they are once cast into the fire, the unquenchable all is concluded: their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.<sup>22</sup>

However, John Wesley wasn’t finishing yet in describing the punishment of the wicked. According to his Works, he further explained that:

Consider that all those torments of body and soul are without intermission, they have no respite from pain day and night. It brings no interruption of their pain ... there is no business, but one uninterrupted scene of horror, to which they must be all attention. Nothing but eternity is the term of their torment. Neither the pain of body, nor of soul is any nearer at the end than it was millions of years ago.<sup>23</sup>

Many years earlier the bishop of Aberdeen endeavoured to prove that souls in hell would amend being purified by the penal fire. However, Wesley protested against it because he believed it to be unscriptural optimism. As his opinion points out that,

I cannot therefore but think that all those who are in the unhappy divisions of Hades will remain there, howling and blaspheming, cursing God and looking upwards, till they are cast into the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels ... It has not pleased God to reveal anything concerning it in the Holy Scripture and consequently it is not possible for us to form any judgement or even conjecture about it.<sup>24</sup>

Enough evidence has been drawn beyond all doubt that he believed the Bible warned against the awful reality of final punishment. John Wesley linked together the final coming of Christ with the Last Judgement. As Paul links them too and says: “We shall all stand before the Judgement seat of Christ.”

As for the time of judgement, John Wesley believes that it will be at the final coming of Christ, not at the moment of death. He claims that the soul know its final destination immediately after death, but the judgement come later. As John Wesley wrote:

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 judgement which we pass upon ourselves. But the Scripture gives us no reason to believe that God will then sit in judgement upon us.<sup>25</sup>

Christ will be helped by the saints during the last judgement. With reference to 1 Corinthians 6:2, Wesley expounded this principle: the Saints shall be assessors with Christ in the judgement where he shall

<sup>19</sup> John Wesley, *Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 284-296.

<sup>20</sup> Herbert Boyd McGonigle, p14.

<sup>21</sup> John Wesley, *Works*, Vol. 3, p.35.

<sup>22</sup> John Wesley, *Works*, Vol. 3, pp.41, 42. The ‘worm’ refers to the unspeakable anguish of the shame and remorse of a tormented conscience which knows it has offended a holy God and can never escape from self-condemnation.

<sup>23</sup> John Wesley, *Works*, Vol. 3, pp.41-42.

<sup>24</sup> John Wesley, *Works*, Vol. 4, p.190.

<sup>25</sup> John Wesley, *Works*, Vol. 2 p292.

condemn all the wicked.<sup>26</sup> Undoubtedly, John Wesley regarded judgement as necessary to create within the hearts of unbelievers a sense of fear. As he writes:

Is there a God? You know there is. Is he a just God? Then there must be a state of retribution, a state wherein the just God will reward every man according to his works. Then what reward will be render to you? ...before you drop into eternity, put a stop to it before it be too late. Instantly, at any price, were it half your goods, deliver thyself from blood – guiltiness. Surely, it is enough, accumulate no more guilt, spill no more the blood of the innocent.<sup>27</sup>

We cannot deny that Wesley who had his own understanding of the Bible, religious experience and knowledge of faith, after all, that was his understanding and prospective of the judgement, but Marjorie Bowen castigated Wesley's revival methods and motives:

Wesley offered...a hideous, depressing and degrading creed. Accepting his “fable” and his “dream”, relying on that medley of fiction, romance, poetry, ethics and superstition, termed the bible, he took advantage of that religious emotion he was able to rouse in the wretched and ignorant, to implant some terrible falsehoods in their shivering hearts; the most dreadful of these was hell. His disciples were not only shown the love of God, only to be reached by blind faith, but the wrath of God; he did not often use eternal punishment at his central theme, but he hardly spoke and wrote without glancing at the awful consequences of sin and disbelief, and in at least one sermon he expatiated clearly enough on this appalling subject.<sup>28</sup>

For Wesley that was an unfair castigate and prejudice. In fact, from Wesley's sermons, we can understand that he is very focused on God's wrath and judgment.

He has revealed that there are 37 personal testimonies which regards to the conviction of sin of dropping into Hell. Perhaps, the most striking feature of these accounts is how often a deep conviction of sin is expressed in terms of men and women feeling they are about to drop into hell. For example, Wesley has met a twenty years old girl, who was troubled by dreadful convulsions of fear and hell. He then prayed for her and then God spoke peace into the soul. Wesley also prayed for a woman who believed that she was damned to Hell, and later she found deliverance.<sup>29</sup>

This, however, did not mean that Wesley preached hell and damnation in all or even many of his sermons preached in the next fifty years. Perhaps, to certain extent, Ernest Rattenbury could be right, after studying Wesley's life and ministry, especially in the area of his evangel, summarily concluded:

Wesley preached little on the subject. His one published on hell has more literary ornament and is less alive than most. It is an artificial production. The dominant message of Wesley was love, not hell, though a second generation sometimes reversed the order, but second generation of great movements are often blamed for the faults of their successors. Some early nineteenth-century Methodist preaching on hell was a caricature of Wesley's teaching.<sup>30</sup>

One of Wesley's sermon published in 1785, *The Important Question* which based in Matthew 16: 26, asks these three questions:

1. What is meant by gaining the world?
2. What does it mean to lose one's soul?
3. What is the profit of gaining the world but losing one's soul? <sup>31</sup>

<sup>26</sup> John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon New Testament*, .1 Cor. 6:2.

<sup>27</sup> John Wesley, *Works*, Vol. 11, pp.76-78.

<sup>28</sup> Marjorie Bowen, *Wrestling Jacob*, 1938, p316.

<sup>29</sup> Herbert Boyd McGonigle, p21.

<sup>30</sup> Ernest Rattenbury, *Wesley Legacy to the World*, 1928, p101.

<sup>31</sup> Herbert Boyd McGonigle, p24.

There are indications of losing the comfort of true Scriptural religion, the love of God and joy in the Holy Spirit. That is only small loss compared to a man in death when he loses his soul.<sup>32</sup> There is clearly no profit to the man who gains the world but loses his soul. Indeed, Wesley preached powerful warning about the eternal loss of the soul more often than any other Biblical text. As Boyd McGonigle claims, “he puts into the element of judgement in his revival ministry.”<sup>33</sup> In General, Wesley’s prospect of hell that is to enrich and clear in his service career.

### Conclusion

Basically, Wesley’s prospect of Eschatology was Postmillennialism that the Second Coming of Christ will be the culmination of the prophesied millennium of blessedness. Which also can be defined as: After the last thing on a view that through the preaching of the gospel, and of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of individuals working to save the kingdom of God in the world today will eventually expanding world of Christ. When Christ returns, a time when the end of a long period of righteousness era of peace, this period is commonly known as the Millennium.<sup>34</sup>

From the beginning Christians have recognized that this age will terminate with judgment at the return of Christ. Because God is holy, He must judge all that is unholy or He would no longer be holy. Judgment is a necessary expression of God’s own character. However, God’s judgment will be fair and according to truth (Rom. 2:2). Paul stressed the judgment takes place in the present age when he declared, “The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness” (Rom. 1:18). However, this is not the final judgment. The Scriptures indicate there will be a future judgment connected with the return of Christ.<sup>35</sup> Jesus, Son of God has the authority to render judgment (John 5:27–29). He also declared that the knowledge (or lack of it) that people had would affect the judgment. Those who had greater knowledge would receive greater judgment (Matt. 11:24).

All people, without exception, will die and come under the judgment of God (Heb. 9:27). All the unbelieving dead, whether in the sea or on the earth, will be judged in the presence of God in that day. The destiny of unbelievers will be the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15). Believers will also be judged, as like as Paul declares, “We will all stand before the judgment seat of God” (Rom. 14:10; cf. 2 Cor. 5:10). The lives of believers will be reflected in this judgment (1 Cor. 3:12–15). Some will have lived qualitative lives and will be rewarded accordingly (1 Cor. 3:12–13). The parables of the talents (Matt. 25:14–30) and the parable of money (Luke 19:11–27) both teach the importance of faithful stewardship in connection with the final judgment.

The eternal fire of hell has been prepared for the Devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41). At the end of the age God will also judge Satan and his demons when, together with the Beast and the False Prophet, the Devil is cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10).<sup>36</sup>

As with the opinion of Cyril Downes:

Wesley’s doctrines of hell are firmly rooted in the Scriptures.....But on the authority of Scripture, Wesley firmly believed that at the Final Judgement those who were condemned would suffer torments of body, mind and spirit, and that their ‘spiritual’ suffering – their sense of separation and banishment from the presence of God – would be the hardest to

<sup>32</sup> Herbert Boyd McGonigle, p25.

<sup>33</sup> Herbert Boyd McGonigle, p27.

<sup>34</sup> Paul P. Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1989. From website (<https://citysemarang.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/the-moody-handbook-of-theology.pdf>), accessed 4 August 2016.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

bear.....As for him, he would continue to proclaim that divine grace which can deliver from hell and 'the death that never dies,'and can see men safe to heaven." <sup>37</sup>

One could summarize the whole issue of judgement as William Strawson says:

It is impossible to read Wesley's sermon and tracts without being aware that for him the eternal destiny of man was the ground of the urgency of his writing and speaking....Hell was a vivid reality to Wesley. He believed that if he or any man died in his sins, the only prospect before him was a literally endless punishment and torment.... The use which is made of this doctrine of hell is partly to encourage sinners to turn to God through fear of damnation, but also to set before them the vivid contrast between the bliss of heaven and the misery of hell....Considering the times in which he lived, Wesley was certainly not an extremist in this doctrine, and beneath all his expression of doom and dismay lies the insistence on the possibility of faith, repentance and life.<sup>38</sup>

### Questions for discussion

1. What enlightments do you gather from the Wesleyans view of Judgement?
2. How will Wesleyan view of Judgement be influencing your life style at this age of end times?

---

<sup>37</sup>Cyril Downes, *Eschatological Doctrines in the Writings of John and Charles Wesley*, 1960, Unpublished thesis, Ph.D., Nazarene Theological College Library, Manchester.

<sup>38</sup> William Strawson, "Wesley's Doctrines of the Last Things," *LQHR*, July, 1959, pp 241-248.

## Session 5: Eschatological Living in John Wesley's Theology

### 卫斯理约翰与终末性生活

Rev. Dr. Wong Tik Wah

#### 引言

一。目的性指标：在荣耀天国与上帝连结

二。终末性盼望：在恩典国度与上帝连结

三。终末性生活（1）：深化天国特质

1. 消极层面

1.1 慎防撒旦的手段

1.2 深化悔改的操练

2. 积极层面

2.1 与圣灵同步

2.2 强化我们的信心

2.3 切慕被圣爱充满

2.4 孕育基督化的喜乐

2.5 渴慕公义

2.6 遵守道德性的律法

四。终末性生活（2）：体现天国特质

1. 负责任的钱财营管

2. 创意性的牧导培育

3. 多元化的慈惠关顾

4. 大公性的肢体连结

5. 富温情的社会公义

6. 不妥协的福音分享

结论：现代的意涵

## Session 6: Wesleyan Hymns on Eschatology

Rev. Dr. Lu Chen Tiong, Miss Cecilia Ting Ik Huong, Miss Irene Lai Dhing Dhing

Methodism was born in song, and we have rich musical heritage. John and Charles Wesley, the co-founder of Methodism were great evangelical hymnologist and writers in 18<sup>th</sup> century. Charles Wesley wrote about 6,500 hymns with variety of contents and he is known as a lyrical theologian. Parallel to his brother's preaching, he wrote hymns on doctrine of grace, other repertory includes the church, the unity and fellowship, Holy Communion, Christian Year, evangelical hymns, and hymns of Christian experience.

In this paper, "Wesleyan Hymns on Eschatology", we are going to explore into several aspects of the eschatology including: death, heaven, judgment, second coming of Christ, and watchfulness. As the repertory of Wesleyan hymns is vast, we limit ourselves to Wesleyan hymns that found in the *United Methodist Hymnal* (1989), *Wesley Hymns* compiled by Ken Bible, and hymns written by one of the Methodist hymn writer, Fanny Crosby.

As a lyrical theologian, Charles Wesley draws imagery and allusion extensively from the Bible to express his faith through hymns. In his eschatological hymns, normally there are more than one eschatological elements.

### I. Charles Wesley

#### A. Death, (earth) and heaven

To most of the Christians, "eternal world" or "heaven" starts at the moment they die. Wesley, however, declares not only that the "eternal world, commences at death," but also that "eternal life then commences when it pleases the Father to reveal His Son in our hearts" which is at the new birth,<sup>1</sup> the moment we receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord. In Wesley's perception, therefore, the soteriology and eschatology are intimately connected. In this way, the enjoyment of eternal life could be experienced through a grace abound life here on earth through eternity.<sup>2</sup>

#### 1. Come, Let Us Join Our Friends Above.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Come, let us join our friends above<br/>Who have obtained the prize<br/>And on the eagle wings of love<br/>To joys celestial (heavenly) rise<br/>Let saints on earth unite to sing<br/>With those to glory gone<br/>For all the servants of our King<br/>in earth and heaven, are one</p> | <p>3. Ten thousand to their endless home<br/>This solemn moment fly<br/>And we are to the margin come,<br/>And we expect to die<br/>Even now by faith we join our hands<br/>With those who went before<br/>And greet the blood-be-sprinkled bands<br/>On the eternal shore</p>                       |
| <p>2. One family we dwell in Him<br/>One Church above, beneath<br/>Though now divided by the stream<br/>The narrow stream of death<br/>One army of the living God<br/>To His command we bow<br/>Part of His host have crossed the flood<br/>And part are crossing now</p>                       | <p>4. Our spirits, too, shall quickly join<br/>Like theirs with glory crowned<br/>And shout to see our Captain's sign<br/>To hear His trumpet sound<br/>Jesus, be Thou our constant Guide<br/>Then, when the word is given<br/>Bid Jordon's narrow stream divide<br/>And bring us safe to heaven</p> |

<sup>1</sup> Albert C. Outler, ed., *The Works of John Wesley*, vols. 1-4, Sermons (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984-87), 4:25. Quoted from Kenneth J. Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of Grace* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 314.

<sup>2</sup> Kenneth J. Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of Grace* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 314.



By its title and throughout the entire hymn, Wesley conveys the message of the oneness of all Christian people in heaven and on earth. For example, in stanza 1, he asks all the “saints on earth” to unite with those who had gone before, for all the saints “in earth and heaven are one.” In stanza 2, “one Church above, beneath,” separated only by “the narrow stream of death,” are “one family.” In stanza 3, by faith even now we are able to join “those who went before,” for “on the eternal shore” we are going to greet each other. In stanza 4, Wesley urges us, the Christians on earth, to pursue Jesus Christ as “our constant Guide,” for He is the only One will “bring us safe to heaven.”

## 2. All Praise to God Above

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>1. All praise to God above<br/>In whom we have believed<br/>The tokens of whose dying love<br/>We have even now received<br/>Have with His flesh been fed<br/>And drank His precious blood<br/>His precious blood is drink indeed<br/>His flesh immortal food</p> <p>2. O what a taste is this<br/>Which now in Christ we know<br/>An earnest (pledge) of our glorious bliss<br/>Our heaven begun below<br/>When He the table spreads<br/>How royal is the cheer (food)<br/>With rapture we lift up our heads<br/>And own (confess) that God is here</p> | <p>3. He bids us taste His grace<br/>The joys of angels prove (experience)<br/>The stammerer’s tongues are loosed to praise<br/>Our dear Redeemer’s love<br/>Salvation to our God<br/>That sits upon the throne<br/>Salvation be alike bestowed<br/>On His Triumphant Son</p> <p>4. The lamb for sinners slain<br/>Who died to die no more<br/>Let all the ransomed sons of men<br/>With all His hosts adore<br/>Let earth and heaven be joined<br/>His glories to display<br/>And hymn the Savior of mankind<br/>In one eternal day</p> |
|---|--|

Wesley expresses that through Jesus Christ’s “precious blood” (st. 1) and “His flesh immortal food”, the experiencing of heaven on earth is rendered — “O what a taste is this” (st. 2). Since the heaven commences at new birth on earth — “our heaven begun below” (st. 2), all the children of God and His hosts on “earth and heaven be joined” (st. 4) to sing hymn to the “Savior of mankind in one eternal day” (st. 4).

## B. Heaven

The immortal soul enters Hades at death. According to Wesley the Hades is both the antechamber of hell and of heaven. Wesley indicates that for the lost souls as soon as they die, they are led to the place of torment called hell. But the souls of the righteous enter to antechamber of heaven which is called “paradise,” a place awaiting for the coming judgment.<sup>3</sup>

### 1. Leader of Faithful Souls, and Guide.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Leader of faithful souls and Guide<br/>Of all that travel to the sky<br/>Come and with us, even us, abide<br/>Who would on Thee alone rely<br/>On Thee alone our spirits stay<br/>While held in life’s uneven way</p> <p>2. Strangers and pilgrims here below<br/>This earth, we know, is not our place<br/>But hasten through the vale of woe<br/>And restless to behold Thy face<br/>Swift to our heavenly country move<br/>Our everlasting home above</p> | <p>3. We have no lasting city here<br/>But seek a city out of sight<br/>Thither our steady course we steer<br/>Aspiring to the plains of light<br/>Jerusalem, the saints’ abode<br/>Whose founder is the living God</p> <p>4. Patient the appointed race to run<br/>This weary world we cast behind<br/>From strength to strength we travel on<br/>The new Jerusalem to find<br/>Our labor this, our only aim<br/>To find the new Jerusalem</p> |
|--|---|

<sup>3</sup> Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of Grace*, 318.

5. Through Thee, who all our sins hast borne  
 Freely and graciously forgiven  
 With songs to Zion we return  
 Contending for our native heaven  
 That palace of our glorious King  
 We find it nearer while we sing

It is a marching song of the pilgrim church. Wesley encourages all the members of the Church to press on through the “vale of woe” (st. 2) to the “sky” (st. 1), or “everlasting home above” (st. 2), or “city out of sight,” (st. 3) or “new Jerusalem” (st. 4), or “our native heaven that palace of our glorious King” (st. 5), for on earth is “no lasting city here” (st. 3). Throughout the entire hymn, Wesley has depicted vividly heaven is our everlasting home above which beckons the Christian onwards.

## 2. Christ, the Lord, is Risen Today

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Christ, the Lord, is risen today. Alleluia<br/>             Sons of men and angels say: Alleluia<br/>             Raise your joys and triumphs high. Alleluia<br/>             Sing, ye heavens, and earth, reply, Alleluia</li> <li>2. Lives again our glorious King. Alleluia<br/>             Where, O death, is now thy sting! Alleluia<br/>             Dying once, He all doth save. Alleluia<br/>             Where thy victory, O grave? Alleluia</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Love’s redeeming work is done. Alleluia<br/>             Fought the fight, the battle won. Alleluia<br/>             Death in vain forbids Him rise. Alleluia<br/>             Christ has opened paradise. Alleluia</li> <li>4. Soar we now where Christ has led. Alleluia<br/>             Following our exalted Head, alleluia<br/>             Made like Him, like Him we rise. Alleluia<br/>             Ours the cross, the grave, the skies. Alleluia</li> </ol> |
|--|--|

It is an Easter hymn. The hymn begins by calling both heaven and earth singing in praise of Christ for He has won the battle and defeated death. In stanza 2, Wesley quotes Paul’s letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15:55): “Where, O death, is now thy sting? Where thy victory, O grave?” Immediately in stanza 3, Wesley answers that Christ’s redeeming love has prevailed death and grave. Moreover, Christ has opened the “paradise” to all who has fought the fight and has won the battle. In stanza 4, Wesley declares that we must be made like Christ and we must follow Christ’s example in order to be risen like Christ is risen. This is the ultimate hope of Christian – present, past and future.

## 3. Servant of God, Well Done

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Servant of God, well done!<br/>             Thy glorious warfare's past;<br/>             The battle's fought, the race is won,<br/>             and thou art crowned at last.<br/>             With saints enthroned on high,<br/>             Thou dost thy Lord proclaim,<br/>             And still to God, “Salvation,” cry;<br/>             “Salvation to the Lamb!”</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Oh, happy, happy soul!<br/>             In ecstasies of praise,<br/>             Long as eternal ages roll,<br/>             Thou seest thy Saviour's face.<br/>             Redeemed from earth and pain,<br/>             O when shall we ascend,<br/>             And all in Jesus’ presence reign<br/>             Through ages without end?</li> </ol> |
|--|---|

As a servant, it’s always excited to hear good comments from the master. Likewise, it is really good to hear God comments on his servant, “Well done, good and faithful servant!”

In this hymn, “Servant of God, Well Done,” Wesley draws the allusion and imagery from Matt 25:21; 2 Tim 4:7-8; Rev 7:9-17; 22:4. This hymn reminds us that we will be rewarded in heaven if we are diligent and good steward to fulfill what is entrusted to us; when we win the fight and race. There, all souls are happy and will be in the state of ecstasy in praising God for ever and ever.

#### 4. How Happy Every Child of Grace

1. How happy every child of grace,  
Who knows his sins forgiven!  
“This earth,” he cries, “is not my place,  
I seek my place in heaven!  
A country far from mortal sight;  
Yet O! by faith I see  
The land of rest, the saints' delight,  
The heaven prepared for me.”
2. A stranger in the world below,  
I calmly sojourn here;  
Nor can its happiness or woe  
Provoke my hope or fear:  
Its evils in a moment end,  
Its joys as soon are past;  
But O! the bliss to which I tend  
Eternally shall last.
3. To that Jerusalem above  
With singing I repair;  
While in the flesh, my hope and love,  
My heart and soul are there:  
There my exalted Saviour stands,  
My merciful High-priest,  
And still extends his wounded hands  
To take me to his breast.
4. O what a blessed hope is ours!  
While here on earth we stay,  
We more than taste the heavenly powers,  
And look to that great day:  
We feel the resurrection near,  
Our life in Christ concealed,  
And with his glorious presence here  
Our earthen vessels filled.

This is a hymn for the hope of heaven. The author claims that the earth is not our place, but heaven is the place prepared for us (st. 1). We are strangers and sojourners in this world. All things will soon come to an end, but our final destiny is the New Jerusalem, there the Lord Jesus will be receiving us with his wounded hands. Wesley says that this is a blessed hope, while we are on earth today, we can taste the heavenly powers and as we anticipate that day we feel the resurrection is near (st. 4). This perhaps expresses Wesley's eschatological concept on “already” but “no yet” of the presence of the Kingdom in this world.<sup>4</sup>

#### 5. Who (What) are These Arrayed in White?

1. Who are these arrayed in white,  
Brighter than the noon-day sun?  
Foremost of the sons of light;  
Nearest the eternal throne?  
These are they that bore the cross,  
Nobly for their Master stood;  
Sufferers in His righteous cause,  
Followers of the dying God.
2. Out of great distress they came,  
Washed their robes by faith below,  
In the blood of yonder Lamb,  
Blood that washes white as snow:  
Therefore are they next the throne,  
Serve their Maker day and night:  
God resides among His own,  
God doth in His saints delight.
3. More than conquerors at last,  
Here they find their trials o'er;  
They have all their sufferings past,  
Hunger now and thirst no more:  
No excessive heat they feel  
From the sun's directer ray;  
In a milder clime they dwell,  
Region of eternal day.
4. He that on the throne doth reign,  
Them the Lamb shall always feed,  
With the tree of life sustain,  
To the living fountains lead;  
He shall all their sorrows chase,  
All their wants at once remove,  
Wipe the tears from every face,  
Fill up every soul with love.

This hymn is based on the imagery and allusion of Revelation 7:9-17. Here, the author questions as one of the elders did by asking who are these arrayed in white (even brighter than the midday sunlight) standing close to the eternal throne? The answer is that they are the followers of Jesus who died because of the righteousness. They washed their robes by faith in the blood of Jesus white as snow and serving next to the throne (st. 1 & 2). Now, they lay down all trials and sufferings, hunger and thirst, sorrows and tears. They will be sustained and led by the tree of life and living fountains. Above all, they will be filled with love (st. 3 and 4).

<sup>4</sup> Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: The Systematic perspective of Wesleyan Theology in Wesleyan Theology Journal*. Vol 19, no 2, 1984. 17.

### C. Judgment

In Wesley's opinion, the great white throne judgment will be "high exalted above the earth."<sup>5</sup> The people to be judged will be both the living and the dead. They will be judged according to their works, both done and left undone in their lives.<sup>6</sup> Judgment also includes all the words they spoke; their thoughts, desires, inclinations as well as their intentions.<sup>7</sup>

#### 1. Thou Judge of Quick and Dead

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Thou Judge of quick and dead,<br/>Before whose bar severe,<br/>With holy joy, or guilty dread,<br/>We all shall soon appear:<br/>Our cautioned souls prepare<br/>For that tremendous day;<br/>And fill us now with watchful care,<br/>And stir us up to pray.</p>             | <p>3. O may we all be found<br/>Obedient to His Word,<br/>Attentive to the trumpet's sound,<br/>And looking for our Lord!<br/>O may we thus ensure<br/>A lot among the blest;<br/>And watch a moment to secure<br/>An everlasting rest!</p> |
| <p>2. To pray, and wait the hour,<br/>That awful hour unknown,<br/>When, robed in majesty and power,<br/>Thou shalt from heaven come down.<br/>Th' immortal Son of Man,<br/>To judge the human race,<br/>With all Thy Father's dazzling train,<br/>With all Thy glorious grace.</p> |   |

This hymn emphasizes especially on the judgment of humankind. In stanza 1, the author declares that God will judge both the living and the dead, and he reminds us that our cautioned souls to be prepared for that tremendous day. In stanza 2, author urges us to pray and wait for that hour which is unknown. He further stresses in stanza 3, that we have to be obedient to His word, be attentive to the trumpet sound and secure an everlasting rest finally.

### D. Second Coming

#### 1. Lo! He Comes, with Clouds Descending

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Lo! He comes with clouds descending,<br/>Once for favored sinners slain;<br/>Thousand thousand saints attending,<br/>Swell the triumph of His train:<br/>Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!<br/>God appears on earth to reign.</p>     | <p>3. The dear tokens of His passion<br/>Still His dazzling body bears;<br/>Cause of endless exultation<br/>To His ransomed worshippers;<br/>With what rapture, with what rapture, with what rapture<br/>Gaze we on those glorious scars!</p> |
| <p>2. Every eye shall now behold Him<br/>Robed in dreadful majesty;<br/>Those who set at naught and sold Him,<br/>Pierced and nailed Him to the tree,<br/>Deeply wailing, deeply wailing, deeply wailing,<br/>Shall the true Messiah see.</p> | <p>4. Yea, Amen! let all adore Thee,<br/>High on Thine eternal throne;<br/>Savior, take the power and glory,<br/>Claim the kingdom for Thine own;<br/>Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!<br/>Everlasting God, come down!</p>                 |

This hymn anticipates the second coming of Christ Jesus in glory which Wesley draws allusion from Rev 1:7. First of all, we are enlightened that sinners are transformed into saint through the redemptive life,

<sup>5</sup> Outler, *The Works of John Wesley, vols 1-4, Sermon, 1: 361*. Quoted from Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley*, 320.

<sup>6</sup> Collins. *The Theology of John Wesley*, 321.

<sup>7</sup> Outler, *The Works of John Wesley, vols 1-4, Sermon, 1:362-363*. Quoted from Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley*, 321.

ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (st. 1).<sup>8</sup> When Jesus comes again, no one is able to avoid seeing Him, including Judas who sold Him for thirty pieces of silver, and those soldiers who pierced him (st. 2). Christ coming brings hope to humankind as when He comes all kind of suffering will turn into joy (st. 3). Wesley affirms that Christian's ultimate hope is the second coming of Christ, God lays claim to the kingdom of the earth and reigns the whole world (st. 4).

## 2. Come, Let us Anew Our Journey Pursue

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Come, let us anew,<br/>Our journey pursue,<br/>Roll round with the year,<br/>roll round with the year,<br/>And never stand still<br/>And never stand still<br/>Till our master appear.</p> | <p>4. The arrow is flown,<br/>The moment is gone,<br/>The millennial year,<br/>The millennial year<br/>Rushes on to our view,<br/>Rushes on to our view;<br/>And eternity's here.</p>                               |
| <p>2. His adorable will<br/>Let us gladly fulfil,<br/>And our talents improve,<br/>Our talents improve,<br/>By the patience of hope<br/>By the patience of hope,<br/>And the labor of love.</p>  | <p>5. O that each in the day<br/>Of his coming may say:<br/>"I have fought my way thro',<br/>I have fought my way thro'<br/>I have finish'd the work<br/>I have finish'd the work<br/>Thou didst give me to do.</p> |
| <p>3. Our life is a dream,<br/>Our time, as a stream,<br/>Glides swiftly away,<br/>Glides swiftly away.<br/>And the fugitive moment<br/>And the fugitive moment<br/>refuses to stay.</p>         | <p>6. O that each from the Lord<br/>May receive the glad word,<br/>"Well and faithfully done,<br/>Well and faithfully done,<br/>Enter into my joy<br/>enter into my joy<br/>And sit down on my throne.</p>          |

This hymn is centered on the imagery and allusion of Matthew 24:42-47; 25:14-30; 2 Timothy 4:7. It is a hymn expressing the shortness of life, the swiftness of time, the urgency of the second coming of Jesus Christ, and the affirmations from God for those who are serving well (st. 5 and 6). Wesley uses the term "millennial year" (st. 4), not in its strict sense but, as was common in his day, as denoting the expected time of Christ's second coming to earth.<sup>9</sup>

## II. Fanny Crosby and Fred Pratt Green

Fanny Crosby (1820-1915), who was known as a gospel hymn writer, was drawn to Methodist because of its congregational singing. When exploring Crosby's gospel hymns, Edith L. Blumhofer writes,

...her understating of Christian faith, rooted in Puritanism, developed by Methodism, warmed by the Holiness movement, and nourished by her Congregationalist, Baptist, and Presbyterian associates...<sup>10</sup>

Encouraged by William Batchelder Bradbury, an educator and publisher during her time, Crosby started writing hymns (ca. 1863-64).<sup>11</sup> Most of Crosby's hymns are about salvation; however, some of her

<sup>8</sup> S T Kimbrough, Jr, *A Heart to praise My God* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 130.

<sup>9</sup> Neil Dixon, "Come, let us anew our journey pursue." *The Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology*. Canterbury Press, <http://www.hymnology.co.uk/c/come-let-us-anew-our-journey-pursue> (accessed on July 21, 2016).

<sup>10</sup> Edith L. Blumhofer, *Her Heart Can See: The Life and Hymns of Fanny J. Crosby* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 279.

<sup>11</sup> Bert Polman, John Richard Watson, and Carlton Young, "Fanny Crosby." *The Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology*. Canterbury Press, <http://www.hymnology.co.uk/f/fanny-crosby> (accessed on July 20, 2016).

hymns end with the hope of heaven or meeting with Jesus.<sup>12</sup> *To God Be the Glory* (UMH98), for example after glorifying God of His love, perfect redemption, and free grace instead of limited atonement (stz. 1-2), in stanza 3, she continues to picture what God will do for His people in the future:

Great things he hath taught us,  
Great things he hath done,  
and great our rejoicing thru Jesus the Son,  
**But purer, and higher, and greater will be  
Our wonder, our transport, when Jesus we see.**

Since Crosby was blinded when she was six weeks old, her anticipation of seeing Jesus at the restoration of her sight during her resurrection, prominently shows how great will be God's grace and His glorious deeds at the end time. Moreover, she boldly uses the phrase "purer, and higher, and greater will be our wonder, our transport" to proclaim that the mind and the state of the faithful will be expanded---in holiness, height, and breadth, when seeing Jesus.

Salvation of God assures the destiny of humankind. In other words, it is because of God's salvation that humankind has hope for heaven. For Crosby, she longs for the nearness of God because of God's abundant grace through His saving deeds on her journey home to heaven. In three of her hymns--- *Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross* (UMH301), *Close to Thee* (407) and *I Am Thine, O Lord* (419), she moves from nearer (closer) to the nearest (closest) by ending the hymns with eschatological view:

*Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jesus, keep me near the cross,<br/>There a precious fountain;<br/>Free to all, a healing stream,<br/>Flows from Calv'ry's mountain.</li> <li>2. Near the cross, a trembling soul,<br/>Love and mercy found me;<br/>There the Bright and Morning Star<br/>Shed His beams around me.</li> <li>3. Near the cross! O lamb of God,<br/>Bring its scenes before me;<br/>Help me walk from day to day<br/>With its shadow o'er me.</li> <li>4. Near the cross! I'll watch and wait,<br/>Hoping, trusting ever;<br/><b>Till I reach the golden strand,<br/>Just beyond the river.</b></li> </ol> | <p>Refrain:<br/>In the cross,<br/>in the cross<br/>Be my glory ever,<br/>Till my ransomed soul<br/>shall find<br/>Rest beyond the river.</p> |
|--|--|

*Close to Thee*

1. Thou my everlasting portion,  
more than friend or life to me,  
all along my pilgrim journey,  
Savior, let me walk with thee.
  2. Not for ease or worldly pleasure,  
nor for fame my prayer shall be;  
gladly will I toil and suffer,  
only let me walk with thee.
  3. Lead me through the vale of shadows,  
bear me o'er life's fitful sea;  
**then the gate of life eternal  
may I enter, Lord, with thee.**
- Refrain:  
Close to thee, close to thee,  
close to thee, close to thee,  
all along my pilgrim journey,  
Savior, let me walk with thee.

These three hymns express a common lifestyle of a Christian on the way to heaven---constantly focusing on the Cross or God as the only salvation, guidance, direction, awareness, trust, portion, harbor, Lord, cause of service, strength, hope, and delight.

An eminent British hymnologist Erik Routley (1917-1982) called Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000), a British Methodist minister, as a successor of Charles Wesley among the Methodists.<sup>13</sup> *The United Methodist Hymnal* (1989) has 15 hymns written by him. His hymns collected in *The United Methodist*

<sup>12</sup> Blumhofer, *Her Heart Can See: The Life and Hymns of Fanny J. Crosby*, 278.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Hawn, "When in Our Music God Is Glorified," under "History of Hymns," <http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-when-in-our-music-god-is-glorified> (accessed on July 22, 2016).

*Hymnal* do not convey his view of eschatology directly, but they inform us how we live with an eschatology view. For example, the stanza 3 of the hymn *Seek the Lord* (UMH124), Green uses the Word of God in Isaiah 55: 6-11 to urge people to seek the Lord and repent while living, since death, for Wesley, “means that time has literally run out, that the process of transformation toward purity is now at an end.”<sup>14</sup>

### Conclusion: *Watchfulness*

Having looked at the eschatological elements: death, heaven, judgement and the second coming of Jesus Christ in the selected Wesleyan hymns, as Christians of this age how should we respond to these issues? Perhaps, “A Charge to Keep I Have” would be a proper hymn to respond to this question.

#### A Charge to Keep I Have (Judgement and Watchfulness)

1. A charge to keep I have, a God to glorify,  
a never-dying soul to save, and fit it for the sky.
2. To serve the present age, my calling to fulfill;  
O may it all my powers engage to do my Master's will!
3. Arm me with jealous care, as in thy sight to live,  
and oh, thy servant, Lord, prepare a strict account to give!
4. Help me to watch and pray, and on thyself rely,  
assured, if I my trust betray, I shall forever die.

This familiar hymn reminds us that we all have a charge to keep that is to glorify our eternal God (a God to glorify). With the charge entrusted, we are obligated to nurture God’s gift in preparation for life eternal (and fit it for the sky).<sup>15</sup>

We are called “to serve the present age,” and we must keep the charge daily. Moreover, we have to rely on the Lord our master to help us to “watch and pray” that we will not betray the trust we are charged with as the consequences will be eternal death (I shall forever die).<sup>16</sup> According to Kimbrough, this phrase, “assured, if I my trust betray, I shall forever die,” should be understood from Leviticus 8:35 in which this hymn is based.<sup>17</sup> “Wesley affirms that the breach of God’s charge is not without consequences.”<sup>18</sup>

#### Questions for Discussion

1. How can we elevate the awareness of eschatology through hymn singing in our congregation to help them to be prepared for the end time?
2. How does singing of Wesleyan eschatological hymns impact your daily life?

## 卫理宗圣诗中的末世观

卫理公会在诗歌的熏陶中形成并拥有丰富与音乐有关的资产。约翰和查尔斯卫斯理共同创立卫理公会，也被认为是十八世纪伟大的福音派圣诗学家和作家。查尔斯卫斯理写了约六千五百首包括各种神学内容的圣诗，被后世称为诗词神学家。与约翰卫斯理的讲道相辅而行，查尔斯创作有关恩典、教会、合一与联系、圣餐、教会年历、福音诗歌和基督徒信仰经历的圣诗。

<sup>14</sup> Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of Grace*, 317.

<sup>15</sup> Kimbrough, *A Heart to praise My God*, 31.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

在此文章「卫斯理圣诗中的末世观」中，我们将探究末世论中的几个方面：死、天堂、审判、基督再来和警醒。然而，由于卫斯理圣诗极多，我们只探究 *United Methodist Hymnal* (1989)、*Wesley Hymns* (Ken Bible 编录) 和一位卫理宗圣诗作家 Fanny Crosby 和 Fred Pratt Green 的圣诗。身为诗词神学家，查尔斯卫斯理的圣诗广泛地提取圣经中的描写与图像来表达他的信仰。在他写有关末世的圣诗中，常含有一个以上有关末世的要素。

## I. 查尔斯卫斯理

### A. 死、(地上)和天堂

对多数的基督徒来说，「永恒世界」或「天堂」是在人死的那一刻开始。卫斯理陈述，不单是「永恒世界始于死的那一刻」而是「永恒的生命始于天父乐意在我们心中向我们显明祂的孩子」，也就是重生，接受主耶稣基督成为我们救主的那一刻。在卫斯理的观念中，救恩与末世是密切关联的。因此，藉着神丰富的恩典，我们得以在地上享受永恒生命，直到永远。

#### *Come, Let Us Join Our Friends Above.*

据此标题和整首的圣诗，卫斯理传递一个讯息：所有在天堂和地上的基督徒皆为一体。例如在第一节诗节，他邀请所有在「地上的圣人」与那些已离开的圣人联合，因为「在地上和天上是一体的」。在第二节诗节，「上、下，一个教会」，是「一家人」，只被「窄小的死之川」所分割。第三节诗节中，因着信，我们此刻能加入「那些已前往」的人，并在「永恒海岸」那边彼此问候。第四节诗节，卫斯理催促我们在地上的基督徒，以耶稣为「我们永远的引导」追随祂，因为唯有祂能「带我们平安到天堂」。

#### *All Praise to God Above*

卫斯理表示，靠耶稣基督的「宝血」（第一节）和「祂的身体——不朽的米粮」，在地上能经历天堂，是「何等滋味」（第二节）。在地上，天堂始于人的重生——「我们的天堂已在地上开始」（第二节），所有神的孩子和军队「在地上的和在天堂的回合」（第四节）「在那永恒之日」歌颂「全人类的救主」（第四节）。

### B. 天堂

会朽的灵魂在死亡时会进入阴间。根据卫斯理的观点，阴间是地域和天堂的前院。卫斯理表明当那些迷失的灵魂死亡时，将被带领到一个痛苦的地方——地狱。然而，义人的灵魂将进入天堂的前院——乐园，一个等候审判的地方。

#### *Leader of Faithful Souls, and Guide.*

这是一首教会进行曲。卫斯理鼓励教会成员努力地从「世间的悲痛中」（第二节）前进至「天空」（第一节），或「天上永恒的家」（第二节），或「看不见的城市」（第三节），或「新耶路撒冷」（第四节），或「家乡天堂——荣耀君王的宫殿」，因为在地上「这里没有永远的城市」（第三节）。在这整首圣诗中，卫斯理生动地描述天堂是我们永恒的家，召唤基督徒向前迈进。

#### *Christ, the Lord, is Risen Today*

这是一首复活节的圣诗。这首圣诗以呼唤天地齐来歌颂赞美基督得胜死亡为开始。在第二节，卫斯理引用保罗写给哥林多教会的信（林前十五：55）「死啊，你得胜的权势在哪里？死啊，你的毒钩在哪里？」卫斯理随即在第三节回答，基督救赎的爱已胜过死亡与坟墓。此外，基督已为那些曾在斗争中奋斗并得胜的人，打开了「乐园」的门。在第四节，卫斯理宣称我们必须像基督并跟随基督，以至于我们能如基督一样复活。这是基督徒终极的盼望——现在、过去和将来。

#### *Servant of God, Well Done*

成为仆人，听到主人给予好的评价常是件兴奋的事。同样的，听神对祂的仆人说「做得好，良善又信实的仆人」也是件美好的事。



在这首圣诗〈神的仆人，做得好〉中，卫斯理从马太福音廿五 21，提摩太后书四 7-8，启示录七 9-12，廿二 44 提取当中的描写与图像。这首圣诗提醒我们若在所托付的事上能成为精明又良善的管家，或是在斗争和比赛中得胜，我们将在天堂得奖赏。在那里，所有的心灵欢欣，在极欢愉之中永远赞美神。

### ***How Happy Every Child of Grace***

这是一首盼望天堂的圣诗，作者主张这地上并不是我们的地方，但天堂才是神为我们预备的地方（第一节）。我们是世上的陌生人和旅客。世上的所有将瞬间消亡，新耶稣撒冷才是我们最后的命定，在那里，主耶稣以祂被钉的双手接待我们。卫斯理认为这是满有福气的盼望——我们虽此刻是在地上，却能尝到属天的力量；当我们期待那日的时候，会惊觉复活之日将近。这也许就表达了卫斯理所提及神的国是「已经」却「还未」实现的末世观。

### ***Who (What) are These Arrayed in White?***

这首圣诗是依据启示录七 9-17 的图像和描写。作者在这里如经文中的长老一样，问及「这些穿白衣，站在靠近永恒宝座的是谁（必午间日头的光辉更明亮）？答案是那些跟随基督，为义而死的人。他们以信靠主耶稣的宝血把衣裳洗净了，并在神宝座前事奉祂（第一、二节）。这时，他们卸下磨练与痛苦、饥饿与干渴、悲伤和眼泪。那时必有生命树供养他们，他们也必被领到生命水的泉源。最重要的是他们必被爱充满（第三、四节）。

#### **C. 审判**

卫斯理认为，白色大宝座的审判将会「超乎全地之上」。所有的人——无论是活着或已死的人将被审判。个人将按着自己所做过和未完成的接受审判。审判也包括个人所说过的每一句话、思想、渴望、意向和意图。

### ***Thou Judge of Quick and Dead***

这首圣诗主要强调全人类的审判。在第一节诗节，作者宣称神会审判死人与活人。作者提醒我们要警醒预备那极大之日。第二节，作者催促我们祷告等候，因为我们不知道那日是何时。他继续在第三节强调，我们要顺从神的话，留意喇叭的吹响并确保能获得最后永远安息。

#### **D. 再来**

### ***Lo! He Comes, with Clouds Descending***

这首圣诗是卫斯理引用启示录一 7 的描写来表达对基督耶稣在荣耀中再来期待。第一，当我们看见罪人借着耶稣的救赎、服侍、死亡和复活而转化成圣（第一节），那是何等地叫人惊叹。当耶稣再来时，没有人能避开不见祂；其中包括为三十个银子出卖耶稣的犹大和那些刺祂的兵丁（第二节）。基督的再来也带来全人类的盼望——祂再来时，所有的痛苦将转为喜乐（第三节）。卫斯理很肯定基督徒至终的盼望是基督的再来，神必取得地上的国度并统治全世界（第四节）。

### ***Come, Let us Anew Our Journey Pursue***

这首圣诗以马太福音廿四 42-47，廿五 14-30 和提摩太后书四 7 的图像和描写为主要内容。这首圣诗表达生命的短暂、时间的飞逝、基督再来的急迫和神对那些忠心完成工作的人的肯定（第五、六）。卫斯理对「千禧年」（第四节）的诠释是根据当时人们普遍的理解，既基督再来的日子。

## **II. Fanny Crosby 和 Fred Pratt Green**

福音圣诗作家 Fanny Crosby 被卫理公会的会众唱诗所吸引而加入参与卫理公会。在研究 Crosby 的福音圣诗时，Edith L. Blumhofer 提到：

……她的信仰是始于清教徒，在卫理公会得到建立，在圣洁运动中得温饱，并在与公理会和浸信会的信徒合作时得滋润。

经当时一位教育兼出版家 William Batchelder Bradbury 的鼓励，Crosby 开始创作圣诗（约在 1863-64 年）。她所创作的圣诗绝大部分是与救恩有关，其中有不少的圣诗以天堂或与耶稣相见作为结束，就如她的〈荣耀归于真神〉；因着神的爱、完全的救赎和白白的恩典而归荣耀于神之后，Crosby 在第三节继续描述神在未来会为信靠祂的人完成的事：

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| 1. 荣耀归于真神祂成就大事<br>为爱世人甚至赐下独生子<br>献上祂生命为人赎罪受害<br>永生门已大开人人可进来 | 2. 救主流宝血，何等全备救恩<br>真神应许赐给凡信祂的人<br>罪人中之罪魁若真心相信，<br>一信靠主就必得赦罪之恩。 | 1. 父神启示真理，祂成就大事<br>藉圣子耶稣我们欢欣无比<br>将来见主面我们必更惊讶<br>何等奇妙改变，更纯洁无瑕 |
|---|--|---|
- （副歌）赞美主 赞美主 全地听主声  
赞美主 赞美主 万民快乐高兴  
请来 藉主耶稣进入父家中  
荣耀归主 祂已成就大事工

Crosby 在出生后的第六个星期就瞎了。因此，歌词中那确信的期盼——在复活之日眼睛复明而得以「见主面」，凸显了神的恩典与末后时的荣耀作为。此外，她充满信心地以「我们的惊奇和变化将会更圣洁、更高、更广」（原文意译）来宣告在面见耶稣的那日，神子民的心思与状态在圣洁、高度和阔度上将被扩张。

神的救赎保障人类的命运。换句话说，因神的救赎，人类才得以拥有天堂的盼望。对 Crosby 来说，她渴望接近神，因为在回到天家的路上，神的救赎工作中满有恩典。在她的〈耶稣使我近十架〉、〈亲近主〉和〈主啊，我属祢〉中，她期盼最亲近神的那一刻，因此，她以末世来结束。（歌词请参荧幕）

这三首圣诗诉说了基督徒在前往天堂路途上共同拥有的生活方式——时刻仰望十字架或神，因那是唯一的救赎、引导、方向、意识、信靠、福分、避风港、主、侍奉的动力、力量、盼望和喜乐。

一位著名圣诗家 Erik Routley (1917-1982) 称一位英国卫理公会牧者 Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000) 为卫理公会中查尔斯卫斯理的继承者。《The United Methodist Hymnal》收集了 15 首他所创作的圣诗。虽然这些圣诗当中并没有直接表达他对末世的看法，但，这些圣诗却告诉我们应当如何带着末世观生活。例如，圣诗 Seek the Lord, Green 引用以赛亚书五十五 6-11 的经文来催促人们要在活着的时候寻求神饼悔改，因为死对卫斯理来说，就是成圣的时机已结束。

Crosby 的创作是以福音为导向而显得较简单，而 Green 则以牧养为导向。虽然 Crosby 和 Green 并没有对末世观有过多的着墨，但是他们的圣诗所描绘有关基督徒和教会生活皆是对末世观的回应。

## 结论：警醒

探讨过了部分卫理宗圣诗中有关末世观的元素，身为今日的基督徒，我们当如何在生活回应？〈我有本分当尽〉可能是一首理想的圣诗来回应这问题。

此熟悉的圣诗提醒我们每一个人都有自己的本分为要荣耀我们永恒的神（我有上主当尊）。在预备我们永恒生命之际，我们有责任培育主所托付给我们的恩赐。

我们被召，服侍这时代，因此我们要每一天守此本份。此外，我们要靠着我们的主，帮助我们警醒祷告，以致我们不会辜负主托付我们的本分；因为这后果将是永远的死。根据 Kimbrough, 这永远的死「必须根据利未记八 35 来理解」。「卫斯理很确定地认为若我们违背上帝所赋予我们的本分必然有严重的后果」。

## Evening Prayer

2016/08/16, 8:30pm

### GOODNESS

*For the Fruits of This Creation UMH 97*

### PRAYER

Where shall my wondering soul begin?  
How shall I all to heaven aspire?  
A slave redeemed from death and sin,  
A brand plucked from eternal fire,  
How shall I equal triumphs raise,  
Or sing my great Deliverer's praise?

O how shall I the goodness tell,  
Father, which Thou to me hast showed?  
That I, a child of wrath and hell,  
I should be called a child of God,  
Should know, should feel my sins forgiven,  
Blessed with this antepast of Heaven!

(译意)

我疑惑的灵要从那里开始？  
我怎能向往天堂？  
一个从死与罪中被救的奴隶，  
一根从永火中被救拔的柴薪  
我当如何相等地高歌胜利，  
或歌唱我伟大救赎主的赞美？

我要怎样倾吐祢向我所施的好处，  
我这个当下火湖的可怒之子，  
竟然得称为神之子  
我竟得知我的罪已被涂抹，  
因着预享属天美福而蒙恩。

Charles Wesley's *Where Shall My Wondering Soul Begin*, Stz.1 & 2

Leader : O God, we thank and praise You  
for all Your benefits,  
All : for the comforts of this life,  
and for our hopes of everlasting salvation  
in the life to come.

Leader : We depend upon You especially  
for the grace of Your HOLY SPIRIT.

All : that we may feel it perpetually bearing us up,  
Sister : by the strength of our most holy faith,

Brother: above all the temptations  
that may at any time assault us;

All : so that we may keep ourselves  
unspotted from the world,  
and may still cleave to thee in righteousness,

Sister : in lowliness,

Brother: in purity of heart,

All : yea, in the whole mind that was in CHRIST.

领：上帝啊，我们感谢和赞美祢所赐的  
一切好处，

众：今生的安舒，  
和我们将来永恒救恩的盼望。

领：我们依靠祢，  
尤其依靠祢的恩典把圣灵赐给我们。

众：让我们感受到它永远承载我们，  
女：透过我们神圣的信仰力量，  
男：胜过任何时候来攻击我们的试探；

众：以至于我们不被世界玷污，  
并仍然在义中忠于祢，

女：在卑微中忠于祢，

男：在清心中忠于祢，

众：是的，就如基督，  
在我们所有的心思中忠于祢。

from John Wesley's *A Collection of Prayers for Families*, alt.

取自《主啊，请听》，修

### PROMISE

*Behold, I Make All Things New*

**GOD'S WILL*****Singing: In our worldwide task of caring, for the hungry and despairing***

God of love, God of mercy, God of all power!  
 Why do you let your people unrest  
 - your people whom you have redeemed?  
 Why do you let the earth suffer  
 - the earth you have created in your sovereign power?  
 Lord, look and see the misery of the war  
 that is ravaging your people;  
 Look and see these children, these women and men,  
 who are dying of selfishness  
 and who cry to you in their need.  
 Give them, we pray, according to your grace  
 and according to their need,  
 to the glory of your name.

慈爱之神、怜悯之神，全能之神！  
 祢为何让祢的子民不安  
 ——那些祢已拯救的人？  
 祢为何让地球受苦  
 ——这块祢以祢至高权柄所造的土地？  
 主阿，请看、请瞧那战争的悲惨  
 正在蹂躏祢的子民；  
 请垂看那些孩子们，那些女人们和男人们，  
 他们因人的自私正在迈向死亡  
 他们也向祢求告他们所需的。  
 我们祈求，依照祢的慈爱  
 与他们所需要的，给予他们，  
 为要荣耀祢的名。

***Singing: In the harvests we are sharing, God's will is done.***

God of love, God of mercy, God of all power!  
 Why do you let your people die  
 Lord, look and see the misery of the famine  
 that is ravaging your people;  
 Look and see these children, these women and men,  
 who are dying of hunger  
 and who cry to you in their need.  
 Give them, we pray, according to your grace  
 and according to their need,  
 to the glory of your name.

慈爱之神、怜悯之神，全能之神！  
 祢为何让祢的子民死亡  
 主阿，请看、请瞧那饥荒的悲惨  
 正在蹂躏祢的子民；  
 请垂看那些孩子们，那些女人们和男人们，  
 他们因饥饿正在迈向死亡  
 他们也向祢求告他们所需的。  
 我们祈求，依照祢的慈爱  
 与他们所需要的，给予他们，  
 为要荣耀祢的名。

***Singing: In the just reward of labor, God's will is done;  
 In the help we give our neighbour, God's will is done;  
 In our world-wide task of caring for the hungry and despairing,  
 In the harvests we are sharing, God's will is done.***

**SCRIPTURE****Luke 16:19-31****SILENT MEDITATION & CONFESSION****PRAYER**

God, let Your mighty power enable us  
 to do our duty towards You, & towards all men,  
 with care, & diligence, & zeal,  
 & perseverance unto the end.  
 Help us to be meek & gentle in our conversation,  
 prudent & discreet in ordering our affairs,  
 observant of Your fatherly providence  
 in everything that befalls us,  
 thankful for Your benefits,  
 patient under Your chastisements,  
 & readily disposed for every good word & work.

上帝啊，求祢的大能容我们  
 向祢和众人履行我们的责任，  
 以关爱、努力、火热，  
 坚持到底。  
 帮助我们在与人沟通时能谦卑和温柔，  
 有智慧也能谨慎来安排我们所当做的事情，  
 并且察觉祢如父亲一般的，  
 透过每一件临到我们的事上供应我们。  
 帮助我们为祢所赐的好处感恩，  
 在祢督责我们的时候忍耐，  
 并且能欣然说出美善的话语和执行善工。

Deliver us, we beseech You,  
from wordly cares and foolish desires,  
from vain hopes and causeless fears;  
and so dispose our hearts,  
that death itself may not be dreadful to us.  
O that our hearts may be  
so firmly established in grace,  
that nothing may affright us,  
or shake our constancy.

from John Wesley's *A Collection of Prayers for Families*, alt.

我们恳求祢把我们  
从世界的恋慕和愚昧的欲望中救拔出来；  
也从虚无的盼望和无故的惧怕中的释放，  
好使我们的的心灵不再惧怕死亡。

惟愿我们的心  
紧紧建立在祢的恩典中，  
因此没有任何的东西可以惊吓我们，  
或是摇动我们。

取自《主啊，请听》，修

## HYMN

*A Charge to Keep I Have* (UMH413)

## PRAYER

God, strengthen all thy faithful servants.  
Bring back them that wander out of the way;  
raise up those that are fallen;  
confirm those that stand,  
and grant them steadily  
to persevere in faith, love, & obedience.  
Relieve & comfort all that are in distress.  
Let the earth bring forth her fruit in due season;  
& let all honest & industrious people  
be blessed in their labors.  
Remember all those who have done good unto us;  
Grant forgiveness & charity to all our enemies;  
& continue good-will amongst all our neighbors.  
Support the sick with faith & patience;  
assist those who are leaving this world;  
receive the souls which you have redeemed  
with thy Son's precious blood,  
& sanctified by the HOLY GHOST;  
& give us all a glorious resurrection & eternal life.  
Our Father, who art in heaven...

from John Wesley's *A Collection of Prayers for Families*, alt.

上帝啊，愿祢坚固祢的众仆人，  
把那些迷失的人带回来，  
把那些跌倒的扶持起来，  
肯定那些持续站稳的仆人。  
求祢给予稳定的脚步，  
持守他们的信心，爱心并顺服。  
那些忧伤的求祢安慰并救拔他们，  
让地按时出土产，  
也让那些诚实和努力的人们  
劳苦蒙福。  
求祢纪念那些那些向我们施慈爱的人们，  
也求祢赐饶恕和爱给我们的敌人，  
并且让我们向邻舍不断发出亲善有爱的态度。  
求祢给予病痛者有信心和忍耐，  
扶持那些将要离开世界的人，  
接纳祢透过祢独生子的宝血所救赎  
并靠圣灵而成圣的灵魂，  
更求祢给予我们将来有荣耀的复活。  
我们在天上的父……

取自《主啊，请听》，修

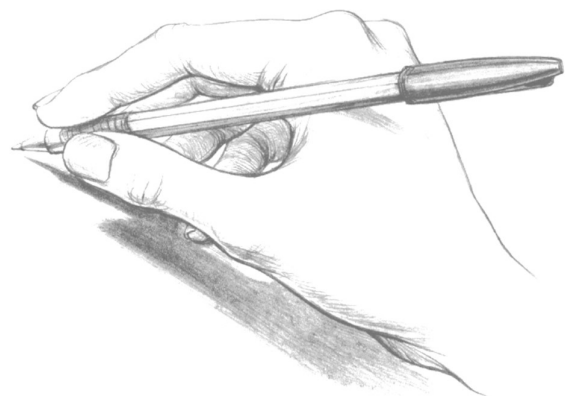
## HYMN

*Jesus! The Name High over All* (UMH193)

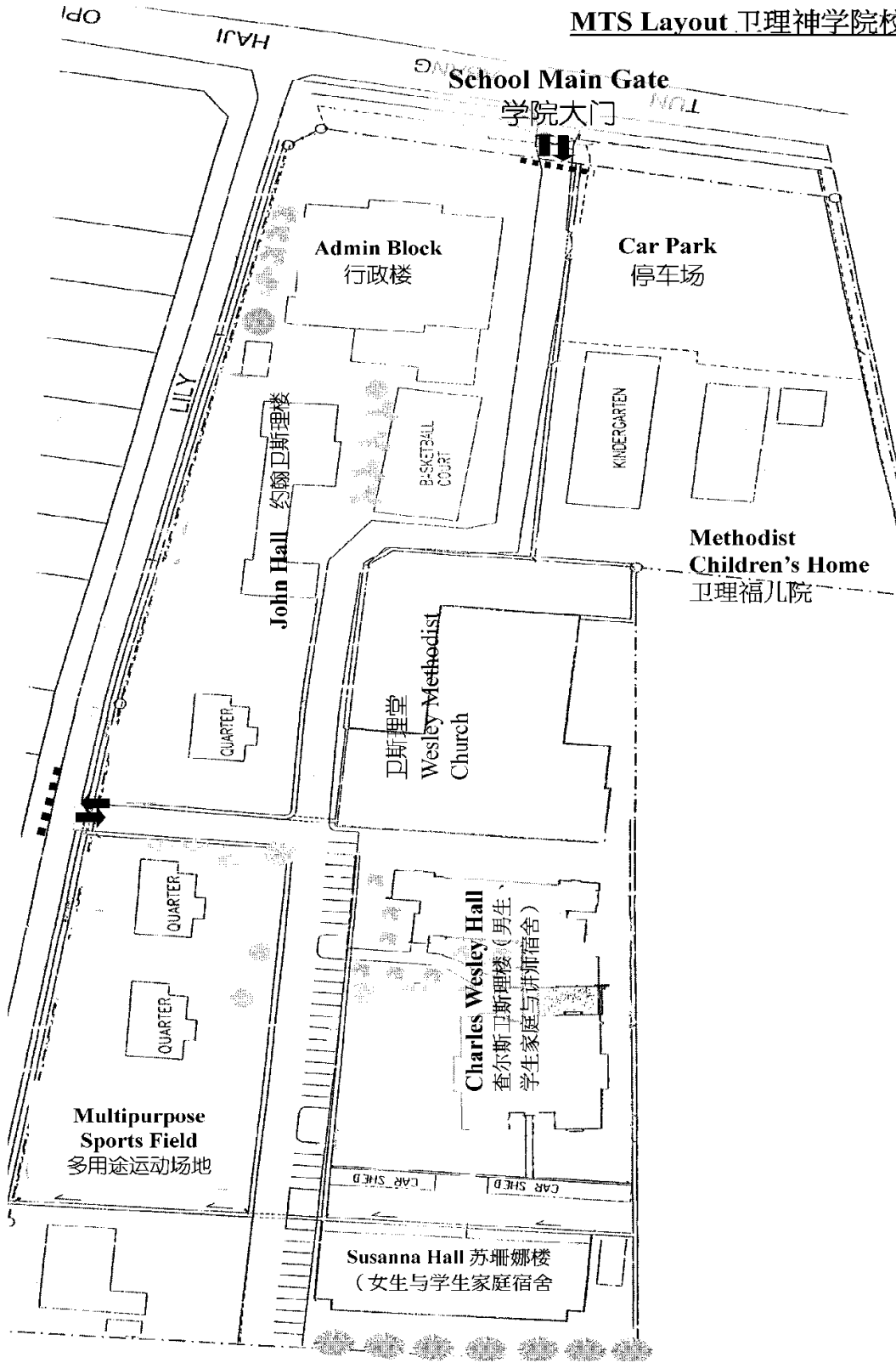
## PEACE

*As We Part from the Town and City*

# Note



MTS Layout 卫理神学院校园图



To MPI Canteen



51, Jln Tun Abang Haji Openg, P.O.Box 78, 96007 Sibul, Sarawak.

Tel: 084-321409 Fax: 084-341409 E-mail: [general@mtssibu.edu.my](mailto:general@mtssibu.edu.my) Website: [www.mtssibu.edu.my](http://www.mtssibu.edu.my)