There is no divine visitation which is likely to have so general an influence upon sin­ners as an earthquake.¹

For the English, it was a decade filled with events pointing to the possible consummation of the age. There had been “a sparing scourge of locusts” that had destroyed crops, a devastating and persistent disease of cattle, and the rebellion of 1745. Then, on February 8, 1750, London experienced the first of three earthquake events that would rock the city that year. The French and Indian War commenced in 1754, and two years later, England became embroiled in what came to be known as the Seven Years War. In the midst of this, in 1755, the first “great earthquake” known to have occurred since the settlement of America struck Boston. All of these events, however, paled in comparison with the disaster that befell Lisbon on All Saints Day, November 1, 1755.

In the “pre-scientific” era, the experience of an earthquake elicited an understandable fear. Earthquakes were not only a reminder of human mortality, but also brought to mind the biblical account of the end of the age. Charles and John Wesley were active in Britain in the mid-18th century, and both responded to the disasters of the times. Charles, in particular, left a body of writing directly influenced by the earthquakes.

I

The earthquakes of the mid-18th century far predate modern methods of locating and reporting earthquake events. Based on historical reports, however, estimates are currently available to pinpoint the location (epicenter) and to indicate mathematically both the energy released during an earthquake (Richter scale) and the amount of damage in populated areas (Mercalli Scale). The Richter Scale is a logarithmic scale of magnitudes from 0 to 9. Since 9 is the upper limit of rock strength, it is a theoretical maximum. No earthquakes with a magnitude over 8.6 have ever been reported. The intensity, or effect of an earthquake on people and buildings, is reported on the modified Mercalli Scale, with numbers ranging from I (barely felt)

On February 8, and again on March 8, earthquakes of moderate strength were felt in London and vicinity. The tremors of February have been estimated at a magnitude of approximately 4 on the Richter scale. According to John Wesley, “It was about a quarter after twelve, that the earthquake began at the skirts of the town ... There were three distinct shakes, or wavings to and fro, attended with a hoarse, rumbling noise, like thunder. How gently does God deal with this nation! O that our repentance may prevent heavier marks of his displeasure.” In his journal for this date, Charles Wesley simply noted, “There was an earthquake in London.”

Exactly one month later, a pair of earthquakes was felt in London, the first, occurring in the very early morning, with an estimated intensity of V (no reported damage), and the later one at VII (with some attendant damage). Again, John Wesley:

Today God gave the people of London a second warning; of which my brother wrote as follows:

“This morning, a quarter after five, we had another shock of an earthquake, far more violent than that of February 8. I was just repeating my text, when it shook the Foundry so violently, that we all expected it to fall upon our heads. A great cry followed from the women and the children. I immediately cried out, ‘Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved, and the hills be carried into the midst of the sea: For the Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.’ He filled my heart with faith and my mouth with words, shaking their souls as well as their bodies.”

The earth moved westward, then east, then westward again, through all London and Westminster. It was a strong and jarring motion, attended with a rumbling noise, like that of distant thunder. Many houses were much shaken, and some chimneys thrown down, but without any farther hurt.

This new earthquake appears to have caught the attention of the populace in a significant way. The next day, Charles Wesley recorded in his Journal, “Many flocked to the morning word; and were yet more stirred up thereby. I have scarce seen so many at intercession. At the chapel I preached on the occasion, from Psalm xlvi with very great awakening power.”

The occurrence of two earthquakes separated by an interval of precisely twenty-eight days fanned apocalyptic fears and expectations in the general public.
Methodist History

populace. Therefore, the prediction by the "madman" Mitchell that the third and completely devastating tremor would occur on the night of April 4-5 sent many Londoners into a state of panic, a level of "distress...not recorded to have happened before in this careless city." Charles Wesley noted on April 4, "Fear filled our chapel, occasioned by a prophecy of the earthquake's return this night. I preached my written sermon on the subject, with great effect, and gave several suitable hymns. It was a glorious night for the disciples of Christ." The next day he wrote:

At four I rose after a night of sound sleep, while my neighbors watched. I sent an account to M.G., as follows:--"The late earthquake has found me at work. Yesterday I saw the Westminster end of the town full of coaches, and crowds flying out of the reach of divine justice, with astonishing precipitation. Their panic caused by a poor madman's prophecy: last night they were all to be swallowed up. The vulgar were in almost as great a consternation as their betters. Most of them watched all night: multitudes in the fields and open places; several in their coaches. Many removed their goods. London looked like a sacked city. A lady, just stepping into her coach to escape, dropped down dead. Many came all night knocking at the Foundry-door, and begging for admittance for God's sake. Our poor people were calm and quiet, as at another time."

Beyond the Journal entries, John Wesley does not appear to have responded to the earthquakes, although it is likely that the topic came up in his sermons immediately after the events. Charles, on the other hand, published a sermon, "The Cause and Cure of Earthquakes," possibly the "written sermon" to which he referred in his April 5 Journal entry. In addition, his two-part collection of eighteen hymns, Hymns Occasioned by the Earthquake; March 8, 1750 appeared that same year.

III

By all accounts, the morning of November 1, 1755 was calm and pleasant. Lisbon, with a population between 230,000 and 275,000, was the fourth largest city in Europe, a beautiful and bustling center of culture and trade, and home to the Inquisition. But there were subtle hints that disaster would soon strike. The previous evening, there had been plumes of yellow smoke, well water had developed a strange taste as the levels had dropped, and early in the morning, livestock had become unusually agitated, and burrowing animals had come to the surface.

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10 Journal of Charles Wesley, Wednesday, April 4, 1750.
11 Journal of Charles Wesley, Thursday, April 5, 1750.
The Lisbon Earthquake was caused by crustal movement approximately 200 km WSW of Point St. Vincent, the southernmost tip of Portugal. This is in a region prone to earthquakes. The epicenter was most likely located on the transcurrent fault along the Azores Ridge which connects the Mid-Atlantic Ridge with the subduction zone of the northern Mediterranean Sea. As is typical of earthquakes of submarine origin, seafloor displacement resulted in the formation of a tsunami.

The Lisbon earthquake was notable in a number of respects. Modern estimates of earthquake magnitude rank this as one of the strongest earthquakes in recorded history. Experts have estimated it to have been at a magnitude well above 8.5—approaching 9.0, with a maximum intensity of X to XII.

The area affected by the earthquake waves is estimated to have been well over one million square miles. Earth movements were reported from the Azores to Italy and from England to North Africa—over one-twelfth of the earth’s surface. But unique to this earthquake were the waves of oscillation set up in bodies of water that were beyond the affected area: these were reported in France, Italy, Holland, Switzerland, England, and even Norway and Sweden, over 1,800 miles from the epicenter.

The earthquake was experienced as three distinct shocks, occurring between 9:40 am and 10:00 am, with a total tremor time (principally from the second shock) lasting between six and seven minutes. This was followed by minor aftershocks at 11:00 am and 12:00 noon. Only 3,000 of the 20,000 homes in Lisbon were not damaged or destroyed. All large public buildings were at least damaged. Casualties from the collapse of buildings have been estimated at 30,000, many of whom died in the churches as the first All Saints’ Day masses were being celebrated.

Beyond the immediate damage from the earthquake, a major portion of the city was inundated, about 30 minutes later, by a tsunami with a height of 40 to 50 feet. Two more such waves followed. Thousands who had fled the city to the coastal area were lost, as were many who had boarded boats in the harbor. As hard-hit as Lisbon was by these waves, the greatest damage
was to the coastal areas in southern Portugal and Morocco (where waves reached over 90 feet). The force of the tsunami extended to the Azores and Madeira, and to coastal France, England, Belgium, Ireland, Holland, and even Martinique, Barbados, and Antigua. ²⁴

The final blow to Lisbon was the inferno that raged for five or six days, started by candles in churches, cooking fires, and arson. Some buildings, such as the Royal Palace, which had not been destroyed by the earthquake, were lost to fire. ²⁵

When it was all over, Lisbon was in rubble and ashes and an estimated 70,000 lives had been lost in Lisbon alone. ²⁶ On the ocean floor, an underwater avalanche killed the vast majority of life across hundreds of miles of seafloor. ²⁷

It would be impossible to overestimate the significance of the Lisbon earthquake, not only in terms of its magnitude and intensity, as has been noted, but also in terms of the time at which it occurred. In 1755, Europe was in the early stages of the Enlightenment, at a fulcrum point between pre-modern and rationalistic thought. For those in search of apocalyptic signs of the times (and there were many, such as David Clarke, who undoubtedly had the Lisbon, as well as the Boston earthquakes in view, and David Imrie, who predicted in 1756 the destruction of the Roman antichrist, conversion of Jews and Gentiles, and the beginning of the millennium within forty years ²⁸), this earthquake, as well as other events provided much to consider.

Reaction to the earthquake led to literary productions such as Voltaire’s satire, Candide, a “counter Pilgrim’s Progress.” ²⁹ Of course, this earthquake provided the framework for the famous poem by Oliver Wendell Holmes, “The One-Hoss Shay”:

Seventeen hundred and fifty-five.
George Secundus was then alive,—
Snuffy old drone from the German hive.
That was the year when Lisbon town
Saw the earth open and gulp her down,
And Braddock’s army was done so brown,
Left without a scalp to his crown.
It was on the terrible Earthquake-day
That the Deacon finished the one-hoss shay. ³⁰

²⁴Kozak and James, “Historical Depictions of the 1755 Lisbon Earthquake.”
²⁵Kozak and James, “Historical Depictions of the 1755 Lisbon Earthquake.”
²⁷Russell Wynn, “Tsunami! Investigating the 1755 Lisbon earthquake.”
The discipline of seismology (the study of earthquakes) was born in the aftermath of the Lisbon earthquake from the search for an adequate explanation. The tragedy also resulted in first instance of governmentally coordinated disaster relief. Thus, this earthquake might be considered the first “modern” natural disaster.

IV

Although the news of the Lisbon earthquake did not reach England for several weeks, the full impact of the disaster was not diminished either by time or distance. That same year, John Wesley published his *Serious Thoughts Occasioned by the Late Earthquake at Lisbon*. The following year, Charles Wesley republished his 1750 sermon, “The Cause and Cure of Earthquakes,” and also both Parts I and II of *Hymns Occasioned by the Earthquake, March 8, 1750*. To the five hymns of Part I he added an additional hymn in two parts, “REVELATION XVI., XVII., &c., &c. Occasioned by the Destruction of LISBON.” He added to Part II, “A HYMN FOR THE ENGLISH IN AMERICA” and “A HYMN FOR THE YEAR 1756.” Charles also published a collection of seventeen hymns, *Hymns for the Year 1756, particularly for the Fast-Day, February 6* in response to the call for a National Fast Day on February 6, 1756.31 This proclamation was occasioned by the combination of the Lisbon earthquake, the London earthquakes, a plague that had killed over 3,000,000 cattle, the locusts that had reduced harvest yields for several years, the war in America, and the threat of war in Europe.

To study Charles Wesley’s apocalyptic view of the Lisbon earthquake and use of the imagery of the Book of Revelation, we examined two groups of hymns. The first group included all texts that included specific references to earthquakes. These included “Merciful God, almighty King” (I), “Ye servant of God” (XIV), “Righteous God, whose vengeful vials” (XV), “Stand th’ omnipotent decree” (XVI), and “How happy are the little flock” (XVII) from *Hymns for the Year 1756, particularly for the Fast-Day, February 6*; “Woe! to the men on earth who dwell” and “Now, only now, against that hour” (“Occasioned by the Destruction of LISBON,” Parts I and II) from the second edition of *Hymns Occasioned by the Earthquake, March 8, 1750*; and “How weak the thoughts and vain” (IX) from *Hymns Occasioned by the Earthquake, March 8, 1750, Part I*.

A second group of “disaster” hymns was chosen from texts published in the period 1749-1759 that included references to the Book of Revelation. These included, “The great archangel’s trump shall sound” (“After deliverance from Death by the Fall of a House”: Hymn II) from *Hymns and Sacred Poems, 1749*; “O When shall we supremely blessed,” “He comes! He comes! the Judge severe,” “Rise, ye dearly purchased sinners,” “Lo! He

comes with clouds descending,” “Lift your heads, ye friends of Jesus” (“Thy Kingdom Come”: Hymns XXXVI - XL) from Hymns of Intercession for All Mankind (1758); and “Come thou conqueror of the nations” (VIII) from Hymns on the Expected Invasion, 1759.

Charles Wesley’s use of imagery from the Book of Revelation in these two groups of “disaster hymns” was examined. In addition, we compared these “disaster” hymns with those selected by John Wesley for inclusion in the Collection of Hymns for the use of the People called Methodists.

The hymn texts originally published in 1756 carried this blunt message: The end of the world is at hand. Through these texts, Wesley both warned of the impending judgment to those who do not fear God and recounted the promises to the faithful. For the unconverted there is the warning:

Woe! to the men on earth who dwell,  
Nor dread the’ Almighty’s frown;  
When God doth all His wrath reveal,  
And shower His judgments down!  

Sinners, expect those heaviest showers;  
To meet your God prepare!  
For, lo! the seventh angel pours  
His phial in the air.  

TIS DONE! ten thousand voices join  
To’ applaud His righteous ire;  
And thunders roll and lightnings shine  
That set the world on fire.

Jehovah shakes the shattered ball,  
Sign of the general doom!  
The cities of the nations fall,  
And Babel’s hour is come.

Jesus descends in dread array  
To judge the scarlet whore:  
And every isle is fled away,  
And Britain is no more!  

Wesley pleaded for repentance:

The earthquake turned its fatal course,  
Through distant realm the judgment spread,  
And arm’d with heaven’s resistless force  
In ruinous heaps whole cities laid.

O might we by their downfall rise,  
Thy sudden chastisements to’ avert,  
Present thy grateful sacrifice,  
The broken, poor, obedient heart.

O might we all our sin forsake,  
The imminent destruction shun,  
Before thy heaviest judgments shake  
Our land and turn it upside down.

Before Thou all Thy wrath reveal,  
With Sodom and Gomorrah's hire  
Reward, and leave Thy foes to feel  
The vengeance of eternal fire.33

Rev. 21:8

The "little flock," however, rest secure in the promise of eternal peace and reward:

Such happiness, O Lord, have we,  
By mercy gather'd into Thee,  
Before the floods descend:  
And while the bursting cloud comes down,  
We mark the vengeful day begun,  
And calmly wait the end.

The tokens we with joy confess,  
The war proclaims the Prince of Peace,  
The earthquake speaks Thy power,  
The famine all Thy fullness brings,  
The plague presents Thy healing wings,  
And nature's final hour.

Rev. 6:12

Rev. 6:5-6

Rev. 21:1

Rev. 1:7

Rev. 3:21

Rev. 22:4

This place of rest is none other than the restored paradise, the new Jerusalem:

Yet still the Lord, the Saviour reigns,  
When nature is destroyed,  
And no created thing remains  
Throughout the flaming void.

Sublime upon His azure throne,  
He speaks the' almighty word:  
His fiat is obeyed! 'tis done;  
And Paradise restored.

Rev. 19:6

Rev. 21:1

Rev. 16:17, Eze. 1:26

Rev. 16:17

Rev. 21:3

Rev. 21:2, 10

Rev. 21:1

33“Hymn I,” Hymns for the Year 1756.  
34“Hymn XVII,” Hymns for the Year 1756.
The power omnipotent assume;  
Thy brightest majesty!  
And when Thou dost in glory come,  
My Lord, remember me!  

These texts are representative of the 1756 earthquake-related hymns’ frequent allusions to Revelation, especially of Rev. 6:1-8 (the first four seal judgments), Rev. 16:17-20 (the seventh vial), and Rev. 21:1 (nature’s ruin, leading to the new creation), and 21:8 (everlasting fire). They also contain direct references to the earthquake, flood (tsunami), and fire of the Lisbon disaster.

In her recent study of Charles Wesley’s hymns written in response to the London earthquakes, Karen Westerfield Tucker noted the frequent reference to the judgment brought upon a sinful nation and the metaphor of the rock; Wesley’s focus was on motivating people to repentance in response to God’s warning. In the 1756 hymns, however, there is an urgency not detectable in the earlier works. Not surprisingly, the magnitude of the Lisbon tragedy brought home, in a way that the London earthquakes could not, a real sense of the mechanism by which God could bring about the New Creation.

The question might well be asked: Are Charles Wesley’s hymns of 1756 an anomaly, or are they representative of a larger body of literature of the same era? While not all the hymns of 1756 are of an apocalyptic nature, those that do not exist in a vacuum. Even specific hymns predating the London earthquakes find their inspiration in biblical apocalypse, primarily from the Book of Revelation, but also from the apocalyptic verses in I Thessalonians and the Gospels.

Interestingly, Hymn II, “After Deliverance from Death by the Fall of a House,” from *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1749), sets thankfulness for personal deliverance in the context of Christ’s second coming and deliverance of the faithful:

The great archangel’s trump shall sound  
(While twice ten thousand thunders roar),  
Tear up the graves, and cleave the ground,  
And make the greedy sea restore.  

We, while the stars from heaven shall fall,  
And the mountains are on mountains hurled,  
Shall stand unmoved amidst them all,  
And smile to see a burning world.  

1Thess. 4:16  
Rev. 20:13  
Rev. 6:13-14

See the celestial bodies roll
In spires of smoke beneath our feet!
They shrivel as a parchment scroll!
The elements melt with fervent heat!

By faith we now transcend the skies,
And on that ruined world look down;
By love above all height we rise,
And share the everlasting throne. 37

Rev. 6:14

Pamphlets printed in 1758 (Hymns of Intercession for All Mankind) and 1759 (Hymns on the Expected Invasion, 1759) extended the apocalyptic pattern in Charles Wesley's hymns. The former publication of fifty hymns contained a series of five hymns under the title, "Thy Kingdom Come." These relied heavily on the imagery of Revelation, especially chapters 4-5 and 21-22. Among the eight Invasion hymns is one ("Hymn VIII") that is based almost entirely on Revelation 19.

The Collection of Hymns for the use of the People called Methodists (1780) represents a double culling of the hymns of Charles Wesley by his brother John, who selected not only the hymns, but also the specific verses for inclusion. An examination of the Collection, then, gives a window into the degree of similarity in the eschatology of the Wesleys. Examination of the "disaster" hymns selected for analysis in this paper with those of the Collection at large reveals an interesting shift in emphasis in the use of the Book of Revelation. In the Collection, the references to Revelation seem more personalized (we are the saints, we will wear the crown), while in the "disaster" hymns such allusions are held more at arm's length, perhaps because of the more horrifying content, especially of the later earthquake hymns. In addition, the Collection relies heavily on the views into heaven and of the exalted Christ, and on references of rewards to the faithful in chapters 1-3, 5, 7 and 19-22 (primarily 3 and 22). The "disaster" hymns most frequently reference chapters 1, 4, 6, 16, 19, 21, 22 (especially 6, 16, 19, and 21). The differences in scripture references by chapter in these two groups are illustrated in Table 1.

One of the reasons for the differences between these hymn groups may be seen in John's editorial excision of specific hymn verses. The hymn, "Occasioned by the Destruction of Lisbon," appears in the Collection in two parts, but with the equivalent of four of the ten original verses missing. These four verses had contained five allusions to passages in Revelation chapter 16, one to chapter 17, four to chapter 21, and one each to chapters 5, 11, and 17. Of the fourteen hymns considered for this study, only seven are included (in whole or in part) in the Collection. Perhaps John felt that they were so laden with foreboding and alarm that the ordo salutis was overwhelmed, or perhaps hymns so intensely emotional fell into the same cate-

37Hymn II, "After deliverance from Death by the Fall of a House," Hymns and Sacred Poems, 1749.
gory as the "blood and wounds" hymns which he avoided. As Beckerlegge noted, "Why in fact Wesley chose one hymn rather than another is usually impossible to say: he selected those that in his judgment best served his purpose, although another man might well have chosen differently among such riches. So also with the content of the individual hymns." 38

Table 1. Comparison of Hymns from the Collection with Selected "Disaster" Hymns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter of Revelation</th>
<th>Percent of the Collection</th>
<th>Percent of &quot;Disaster&quot; Hymns</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.2</td>
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<td>22</td>
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Charles Wesley, the preacher, viewed the earthquakes in much the same way as Charles Wesley, the poet: "Of the judgments which the righteous God inflicts on sinners here, the most dreadful and destructive is an earthquake." "On the Cause and Cure of Earthquakes" 39 is a call to repentance. Through detailed descriptions of previous destructive earthquakes in Europe, the Caribbean, and South America, Wesley pointed to the urgency to "repent and believe the gospel." Earthquakes are the result of a creation marred by a fallen humanity: "We cannot conceive that the universe would have been disturbed by these furious accidents during the state of original righteousness." 40 God warns those who have been weighed in the balance

and found wanting of the impending judgment," then "waits to see what effect his warnings will have upon you. He pauses on the point of executing judgment.... Should he beckon the man on the red horse to return? ... Should he send the man on the pale horse whose name is Death, and the pestilence destroy thousands and tens of thousands of us; can we deny that he first warned us by the raging mortality among our cattle?" The reference to the return of the red horse suggests that Wesley saw these apocalyptic figures as harbingers of destruction, whenever such calamities occur, not specifically at the close of the age. The lack of reference to the white horse is consistent with his other treatments of the "horsemen of the apocalypse." In his hymns the white horse always represents the exalted Christ who, with the saints, will conquer.

Because this sermon was originally written in response to the 1750 London earthquakes, there are no specific references to the Lisbon disaster. Nevertheless, from the full and terrifying descriptions of the earlier earthquakes, the re-publication of this sermon in 1756 undoubtedly had a profound impact.

Since John included Charles’ sermon in the collection of *Sermons on Several Occasions* (#129) and several of Charles’ earthquake and other “disaster” hymns in the *Collection*, it may be assumed that he was in substantial theological agreement with Charles’ eschatological view. This is confirmed by John’s 1755 publication of *Serious Thoughts occasioned by The Late Earthquake at Lisbon*. Like Charles, he saw such natural disasters as a product of God’s wrath, and it did not escape John that Lisbon was one of the major cities of the Inquisition:

> And what shall we say of the late accounts from Portugal? That some thousand houses, and many thousand persons, are no more! that a fair city is now in ruinous heaps! Is there indeed a God that judges the world? And is he now making inquisition for blood? If so, it is not surprising, he should begin there, where so much blood has been poured on the ground like water! where so many brave men have been murdered, in the most base and cowardly as well as barbarous manner, almost every day ..."And shall not I visit for these sins, saith the Lord? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a city as this?"

To the Deists of the day, Wesley addressed the relationship between God and nature: “If by affirming, ‘All this is purely natural,’ you mean, it is not providential, or that God has nothing to do with it, this is not true, that is, supposing the Bible to be true...you may decant ever so long about the natural causes...yet...you prove nothing at all, unless you can prove that God never works in or by natural causes. But this you cannot prove...What is nature itself, but the art of God, or God’s method of acting in the material

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world?"\(^44\)

For John Wesley, the Lisbon earthquake did not appear to elicit an apocalyptic view of the end of the world. In consideration of his treatment of Revelation in his _Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament_, where he confessed great puzzlement, but accepted the interpretation of Bengel,\(^45\) this is not surprising. The bottom line was, in effect: Repent; you may escape all possible natural disasters, but you cannot ultimately escape death.

A second work of John Wesley’s following the Lisbon earthquake, and to which he made reference, is his 1758 sermon which was preached in a civil court, “The Great Assize.”\(^46\) Wesley’s use of Revelation serves to confirm from Scripture the events on earth that will precede the judgment (Rev. 16:20), the universality of the judgment (Rev. 20:11-13), and the promised life in the new creation (Rev. 21:1-4, 22:2-3).\(^47\)

The hymns of Charles Wesley written in the aftermath of the mid 18th-century earthquakes might, in their totality, be deemed mildly apocalyptic. Earthquakes and other natural disasters will be a prelude to the new heaven and new earth that are clearly in view. Earthquakes are, in fact, the mechanism by which this new creation will come about. God’s infinite “wisdom is continually employed in managing all the affairs of his creation for the good of all his creatures”; his wisdom and goodness are “inseparably united,” and his power, “equal to his wisdom and goodness, continually cooperates with them.”\(^48\)

Beyond that, there seems to be little interest in how the end of the age will come. There is no interest in numerology, no interest in the sequence of end-times events, and certainly no attempt to parse the details of the tribulation or the timing of the millennial reign (as is so common today). They will indeed occur and that seems to be enough for Charles.

In the writings of both John and Charles Wesley, there seems to be a curious mix of pre-millennialism and post-millennialism. On the one hand, their silence regarding the need for the faithful to _endure_ the tribulation suggests a pre-millennial (and pre-tribulation) view, but their strong soteriological emphasis on the need for personal and national (and world-wide) repentance is suggestive of a post-millennial understanding. John, in effect, avoids the question altogether in the interpretation of Revelation 20 in his _Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament_ by positing _two_ millennial periods of which humans will be unaware, since they will occur in the spiritual realm.

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\(^44\) John Wesley, “Serious Thoughts,” 6.
\(^46\) Thomas C. Oden, _John Wesley’s Scriptural Christianity: A Plain Exposition of His Teaching on Christian Doctrine_ (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 351.
For both the Wesleys earthquakes were regarded as a significant warning from God to the human race. But Charles seemed far more willing than John to entertain the possibility that the escalating earthquake violence in Europe might presage the end of the age. In terms of their apocalyptic vision, John and Charles Wesley seem to have cut their theology from similar, although not identical, pieces of cloth—or an identical cloth from which they fashioned slightly different garments.