

Title: John Wesley's Evangelistic Theology of Severe Storms

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Abstract

A life of fear is antithetical to a life of holiness and happiness. This is the witness of the Scriptures (e.g., 1 John 4:18) and was a central conviction for John Wesley, affecting both his faith formation and his evangelistic ministry. However, how did Wesley deal with something that frightened him? Storms were a source of fear for Wesley, and they continue to be so today for many people as climate change generates more frequent severe weather. Reviewing how Wesley reflected on storms in his journals and sermons offers insight for how Christians can address their own fear and provide a faithful witness while facing increasingly violent weather today. Wesley's growing pastoral sensibilities toward himself and others coupled with his attribution of spiritual purposes for storms allowed him to move beyond his early belief that being afraid during severe storms was emblematic of a lack of faith.

[**Note:** This paper includes extensive indexes which are for information only and not necessary to read.]

A Tale of Two Storms

On the seventeenth, twenty-third, and twenty-fifth of January 1736, three different severe storms struck the *Simmonds* as it crossed the Atlantic. Onboard were John Wesley and other English passengers. On the evening of the seventeenth, Wesley confessed in his journal:

About nine the sea broke over us from stem to stern; burst through the windows of the state cabin, where three or four of us were, and covered us all over, though a bureau sheltered me from the main shock. About eleven I lay down in the great cabin, and in a short time fell asleep, though very uncertain whether I should wake alive, and much ashamed of my unwillingness to die. O how pure in heart must he be, who would rejoice to appear before God at a moment's warning!¹

Wesley did his best to deal with this fear. He reported that on the twenty-fifth, when the third storm started,

We spent two or three hours after prayers, in conversing suitably to the occasion, confirming one another in a calm submission to the wise, holy, gracious will of God. And now a storm did not appear so terrible as before. Blessed be the God of all consolation!²

However, as the storm increased in intensity, Wesley found that this time of consolation was not sufficient. His continuing fear became evident when he went to the worship service being conducted by German Moravian passengers:

In the midst of the psalm wherewith their service began, the sea broke over, split the main-sail in pieces, covered the ship, and poured in between the decks, as if the great deep had already swallowed us up. A terrible screaming began among the English; The Germans calmly sung on. I asked one of them afterwards, "Was you not afraid?" He answered, "I thank God, no." I asked, "But were not your women and children afraid?" He replied, mildly, "No; our women and children are not afraid to die."³

While Wesley does not mention being afraid during this storm, it is clear he was. Looking back at his fear two years later (8 January 1738), especially contrasted with the evident peace of

¹ John Wesley, *Journals and Diaries*, eds. W. Reginald Ward and Richard Heitzenrater, 7 vols.; Vols. 18–24 in *The Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988–2006), vol. 18: 141.

² *Journals & Diaries*, 18: 142.

³ *Journals & Diaries*, 18: 143.

the Moravians, he questioned his own faith, “In the fullness of my heart, I wrote the following words: — ‘By the most infallible of proofs, inward feeling, I am convinced...Of gross irrecollection; *inasmuch as in a storm I cry to God every moment*; in a calm, not.’”⁴

At this point in Wesley’s life, he believed to fear death—or anything in the created world—signified a lack of faith in God. Wrapping his fear of storms together with the other sins he believed himself guilty of, he came to the damning conclusion, “Lord, save, or I perish!”⁵

Forty-five years later, on the twelfth through fourteenth of April 1781, Wesley was in another severe storm while onboard ship. Traveling from Liverpool to Ireland with a contingent of other Methodists, he recounted:

But scarce were we out at sea, when the wind turned quite foul, and rose higher and higher. In an hour I was so affected, as I had not been for forty years before. For two days I could not swallow the quantity of a pea of anything solid, and very little of any liquid. I was bruised and sore from head to foot, and ill able to turn me on the bed. All *Friday*, the storm increasing, the sea of consequence was rougher and rougher. Early on *Saturday* morning, the hatches were closed, which, together with the violent motion, made our horses so turbulent, that I was afraid we must have killed them, lest they should damage the ship. Mrs. S. now crept to me, threw her arms over me, and said, “O Sir, we will die together!” We had by this time three feet water in the hold, though it was an exceeding light vessel.⁶

As he had while onboard the *Simmonds*, he looked to prayer as a potential source of help, especially when the captain found the helm unresponsive:

Meantime we were furiously driving on a lee-shore; and when the Captain cried, “Helm a lee,” she would not obey the helm. I called our brethren to prayers; and we found free access to the throne of grace. Soon after we got, I know not how, into Holyhead harbor, after being sufficiently buffeted by the winds and waves, for two days and two nights.⁷

⁴ *Journals & Diaries*, 18: 208-209 (italics added).

⁵ *Journals & Diaries*, 18: 208-209.

⁶ *Journals & Diaries*, 23: 198-199.

⁷ *Journals & Diaries*, 23: 199.

The adventure ended with the ship arriving safely in Holyhead, well short of its original Irish destination. Whether the ship's deliverance came by divine intervention through the prayers of the Methodists or by sailing skill, Wesley did not opine.

The similarities between Wesley's two accounts are striking. Both entail a description of the storm, the effect of the storm on the ship, the fear expressed by his traveling companions, his own physical discomfort and fear, an attempt to address the situation through prayer, and a final resolution.

The one significant difference between the two is how Wesley assessed his reaction to the storms afterward. Far from questioning his faith following the storm in 1781, Wesley concluded that the storm was a sign God wanted him to preach somewhere other than Ireland. Upon landing in Holyhead, he wrote, "The more I considered, the more I was convinced, it was not the will of God I should go to Ireland at this time. So we went into the stage-coach without delay, and the next evening came to Chester."⁸

What occurred in Wesley's life to bring about such a significant change in how he interpreted the storms and his reaction to them? It is hard to imagine the younger Wesley passing over the fear the older Wesley experienced during the 1781 storm without comment, much less only seeing the storm as a means God used to redirect an upcoming preaching tour.

In part, the answer to this lies in the way Wesley came to understand fear in relation to faith as he matured theologically. It is also found in how Wesley came to understand storms. It is one thing to theologize about fear and faith in the abstract. It is another to demonstrate one's convictions when facing something that is frightening. In Wesley's case, storms were a constant source of fear throughout his life.

⁸ *Journals & Diaries*, 23: 199.

Over time Wesley learned to situate storms and the fear they generated within his theology. This allowed him to interpret storms in a way that reconciled the fear he and others experienced with God's purposes. Having done this, he then deployed the imagery of storms as part of his evangelistic messages. Syncing this theology with his soteriology, he also came to see storms as possible means for conveying God's message to people at different points in their faith development.

Wesley's struggle with storms is relatable to many people today as we experience the effects of living in a world facing a climate crisis. The United Nations Department of Risk Reduction has recorded a 92% increase in severe weather disasters related to climate change over the past twenty years compared to the twenty years prior: from 3,656 climate-related disasters (1980-1999) to 6,681 climate-related disasters in the period 2000-2019.⁹

One effect of this has been to increase the level of fear people have as they process the higher potential that they will be affected by severe weather. This fear has become so prominent that both the United States National Weather Service and the Anxiety and Depression Association of America have established websites to help people handle "storm stress and anxiety."¹⁰ In addition, both lilapsophobia (fear of tornadoes and hurricanes) and astraphobia (fear of thunderstorms) have become diagnosable conditions.

The theology and evangelistic practice Wesley developed related to storms offer insight for how Christians today can address their own fear and provide a faithful witness to others while facing increasingly violent weather.

⁹ Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, *Human Cost of Disasters: An Overview of the Past 20 Years, 2000-2019*, (Geneva, Switzerland: UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2020), 6.
<<https://www.undrr.org/publication/human-cost-disasters-overview-last-20-years-2000-2019>>.

¹⁰ <https://www.weather.gov/oun/stormanxiety> and <https://adaa.org/living-with-anxiety/managing-anxiety/hurricane-season-here-how-reduce-your-anxiety>

A Theology of Storms

The number of times Wesley referred to storms in his journals and sermons demonstrates his interest in them. He described actual storms 133 times throughout his journals, sixty of which he remarked on for their severity. Beyond describing physical storms, he used storms metaphorically twenty-four times throughout his journals and thirty-seven times in his sermons. (See index at end of article for a full list of references to physical and metaphorical storms.)

In developing a theology of storms, Wesley's first and most important move was to decide that storms had a spiritual dimension. They were not just physical phenomena.

This itself was evangelistic given the growing appeal of both materialism and Deism in eighteenth-century England. In their earthquake publications, John and Charles had inveighed against the atheistic logic undergirding both belief systems. John did likewise in relation to storms, stating that as bad as some storms were, they would be far worse if they were left to the random occurrence of natural forces rather than guided by a divine hand. In his sermon "On Faith" (#106), he specifically called out materialists and deists on this point:

I would, First, infer, in how dreadful a state, if there be a God, is a Materialist! ...But it is impossible he should have any faith at all; — any conviction of any invisible world; for he believes there is no such thing; — any conviction of the being of a God; for a material God is no God at all...whosoever believes all things to be mere matter must, of course, believe that all things are governed by dire necessity! — necessity that is as inexorable as the winds; as ruthless as the rocks; as merciless as the waves that dash upon them, or the poor shipwrecked mariners! *Who then shall help thee, thou poor desolate wretch, when thou art most in need of help? Winds, and seas, and rocks, and storms! Such are the best helpers which the Materialists can hope for!*
2. Almost equally desperate is the case of the poor Deist, how learned, yea, how moral, so ever he be. For you, likewise, though you may not advert to it, are really "without God in the world."¹¹

¹¹ John Wesley, Sermon 106, "On Faith," §§ II.1-2, in *Sermons*, 3: 498-99 (italics added).

On 17 March 1756, perhaps still reflecting on the Lisbon earthquake from a year before, he made the same point in his journal:

I learned the particulars of that surprising storm which was here the year before last. It began near Cheltenham, on June 14, 1754, and passed on over Coleford, in a line about three miles broad. It was rain mixed with hail. The hail broke all the windows it had access to, stripped all the trees both of fruit and leaves, and destroyed every green thing. Many of the stones were as large as hen eggs: Some were fourteen or fifteen inches round. The rain occasioned such a torrent of water in the street, as bore away man and beast. A mile or two farther, it joined with the waters of a mill dam; which it broke down, and carried away several houses. How frequent would accidents of this kind be, if chance, not God, governed the world!¹²

Since storms were not by chance, Wesley sought a deeper meaning in them. They were guided by spiritual power and happened for a purpose. However, to determine that purpose required discerning which spiritual power caused the storms. Wesley had two answers for this: God and Satan.

In the case of Satan, Wesley suggested that this work was delegated to other diabolical agents.¹³ These could be evil angels or the spirits of evil people who had died.¹⁴ Borrowing from the opening scene of the Book of Job in which the angels present themselves to God, in his sermon “On Faith” (#122) Wesley described how Satan holds court with demons and the damned dead. Asking them what they have done to harm humanity, one answers, “I have raised a storm at sea, and sunk a ship; and all on board perished in the waters.”¹⁵

The evil spiritual forces have a twofold goal related to storms. The first is simply to cause pain. In his sermon “Evil Angels,” Wesley hypothesized that this pain is specifically meant for those who Satan was not able to tempt into sin:

¹² *Journals & Diaries*, 21: 44-45.

¹³ John Wesley, Sermon 72, “Of Evil Angels,” § II.11, in *Sermons*, 3: 72.

¹⁴ John Wesley, Sermon 132, “On Faith,” § 9, in *Sermons*, 4: 194.

¹⁵ John Wesley, Sermon 132, “On Faith,” § 9, in *Sermons*, 4: 194.

For such is the malice of the wicked one, that he will torment whom he cannot destroy. If he cannot entice men to sin, he will, so far as he is permitted, put them to pain...And innumerable accidents, as they are called, are undoubtedly owing to his agency; such as...the hurt done by the falling or burning of houses, — by storms of wind, snow, rain: or hail, — by lightning or earthquakes.¹⁶

The second reason was to convince people that these sorts of events are brought about by physical forces only, thus luring them toward atheism. He wrote, “this subtle spirit can give the appearance of accidents; for fear the sufferers, if they knew the real agents, should call for help on One that is stronger than him.”¹⁷

Whether causing physical harm or spiritual blindness, the diabolical purpose is the same: to draw people away from God by heightening their fears about things in this world and deceiving them into believing there is nothing they can do about that fear except better understand the natural world. Spending time in repentance would seem irrelevant and possibly foolish to them. Ultimately this would lead them into the devil’s clutches. This point is made dramatically in Wesley’s account of demonic possession being attended by a storm breaking at the very moment a girl concluded she was in the thrall of the devil.¹⁸

Wesley was careful to explain that the evil spiritual forces do not have the power to move outside of God’s providence.¹⁹ They can only use their power to cause storms when God allows it. Still, Wesley was convinced that this is a potent power they can use to cause substantial harm physically and spiritually.

¹⁶ John Wesley, Sermon 72, “Of Evil Angels,” § II.11, in *Sermons*, 3: 72.

¹⁷ John Wesley, Sermon 72, “Of Evil Angels,” § II.11, in *Sermons*, 3: 72.

¹⁸ *Journals & Diaries*, 20: 128.

¹⁹ In his sermon “The Important Question,” Wesley quotes a poem that describes how angels may be sent under God’s providence to bring death through storms. John Wesley, Sermon 84, “The Important Question,” § III.11, in *Sermons*, 3: 195. Likewise, in “Public Diversions Denounced,” Wesley explicitly explains that no activity of evil spirits, including storms, can occur outside of God’s providence. John Wesley, Sermon 143, “Public Diversions Denounced,” intro., in *Sermons*, 4: 319-20.

Storms are not only caused by diabolical forces, however. God likewise has the power to cause storms and even to engender fear through them, but God does this to fulfill good purposes.

God's Purposes for Storms

In his sermon “On Divine Providence,” Wesley contended God’s ability to control the weather is one outworking of God’s omnipresence: “The omnipresent God sees and knows all the properties of the beings that he hath made...what influence the lower heavens, with their magazines of fire, hail, snow, and vapors, winds, and storms, have on our planet.”²⁰

In “The Wisdom of God’s Counsels,” Wesley used almost identical language to show that God’s power over nature, including storms, is also an evidence of God’s power and wisdom, “Yea, all things serve their Creator: ‘Fire and hail, snow and vapor, wind and storm, are fulfilling his word;’ so that we may well say, ‘O Lord, our Governor, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!’”²¹

To what end would God use such power, especially given its potential to cause devastation, fear, and atheism? Wesley offered two answers. First, to bring people to repentance. Second, to give Christians an opportunity to be confirmed in their faith.

Fear, Repentance, and the Awful Providences of God

As much as Wesley believed a life of fear was antithetical to a life of faith, he also believed that God could use fear to turn people to faith. Wesley articulated this most clearly in “The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption.”

²⁰ John Wesley, Sermon 67, “On Divine Providence,” § 11, in *Sermons*, 2: 539.

²¹ John Wesley, Sermon 68, “The Wisdom of God’s Counsels,” § 3, in *Sermons*, 2: 553.

Tracing the route a person takes from being an unrepentant sinner to a sanctified follower of Jesus Christ, Wesley named three states a person can inhabit. The first is the “natural man,” who is content in his sin and unaware of God’s pending judgment. The second is “under the law,” which describes a person who obeys God because they are afraid of the judgment to come. The third is “under grace,” and describes a person who has been assured of God’s love in their heart and who obeys God because their nature is being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Wesley explained that the natural man “is utterly ignorant of God, knowing nothing concerning him as he ought to know.”²² Ironically, one result of this is that the natural man is, “in some sense, at rest. Because he is blind, he is also secure: He saith, ‘Tush, there shall no harm happen unto me.’”²³

For God to leave the natural man in this state would mean doom, for the natural man would die in his sins and be condemned to hell. So, it is an act of grace for God to shatter this man’s rest. According to Wesley, God does this:

By some *awful providence*, or by his word applied with the demonstration of his Spirit, God touches the heart of him that lay asleep in darkness and in the shadow of death. He is terribly shaken out of his sleep, and wakes into a consciousness of his danger.²⁴

The term “awful providence” is a broad term Wesley used to describe any activity of God that inspires fear, particularly the fear of death and judgment, in a way that leads to repentance. Encountering the very real potential of death, the natural man is prompted into a period of fear in which he seeks to overcome sin in his life through obedience to the law (hence, making him “under the law”), but finds he cannot because sin is too strong for him.²⁵ This only heightens his

²² John Wesley, Sermon 9, “The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption,” § I.1, in *Sermons*, 1: 251.

²³ John Wesley, Sermon 9, “The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption,” § I.2, in *Sermons*, 1: 251.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, § II.1, 255 (italics added).

²⁵ John Wesley, Sermon 9, “The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption,” § II.8, *Works* 1:258.

fear until it is finally dispelled by recognizing and accepting the grace of God through Jesus Christ.²⁶

Storms are one of the “awful providences” that God uses to awaken people to their eternal danger and bring them to repentance. Just as with the diabolical, the providential storm generates fear and even possible physical harm. Unlike the diabolical, that fear brings the spiritual into focus and prompts people to seek salvation.

Wesley’s own life was a case study of how God could do this. As Heitzenrater stated about Wesley’s fear onboard the *Simmonds*, “The stark reality of death staring him in the face exposed the frailty of Wesley’s sense of assurance; the question of salvation now took on a new sense of immediacy and urgency. He was afraid to die.”²⁷

Undoubtedly drawing from his personal experience, Wesley described in “The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption” how this fear may come in a moment and then linger before it is resolved. This is what happened to Wesley, as shown by the severe self-assessment he recorded in his journal. It was only following his Aldersgate experience that this fear began to lift and be replaced by a sense of God’s grace.

Beyond his own experience, Wesley saw how God worked through storms to generate repentance in others. On 22 April 1765, Wesley explained how a severe storm so frightened a landlady who was boarding two Methodist women that she immediately began to pray aloud. Wesley reported that one of the Methodist women, “laid hold on the opportunity to speak very closely to [the landlady]. The words seemed to sink into her heart. Who knows but they may bring forth fruit?”²⁸

²⁶ Ibid., § III.1, 260.

²⁷ Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 59.

²⁸ *Journals & Diaries*, 21: 504.

On a much larger scale, Wesley reported with evident delight how a severe storm served as the impetus for a long-running revival in the town of Witney. Wesley had written about preaching to the society at Witney several times over the years, always with appreciation for the seriousness with which they received his messages. However, he believed God moved beyond the society and in the hearts of the broader populace of the town through a storm they experienced on Friday 11 July 1783. Wesley described the storm and its effect in some detail:

About ten the storm was just overthrown; and both the bursts of thunder and lightning, or rather sheets of flame, were without intermission. Those that were asleep in the town were waked, and many thought the day of judgment was come. Men, women, and children, flocked out of their houses, and kneeled down together in the streets. With the flames, the grace of God came down also in a manner never known before; and as the impression was general, so it was lasting: It did not pass away with the storm; but the spirit of seriousness, with that of grace and supplication, continued. A prayer-meeting being appointed on *Saturday* evening, the people flocked together; so that the preaching-house was more than filled; and many were constrained to stand without the door and windows. On Sunday morning, before the usual time of Service, the church was quite filled. Such a sight was never seen in that church before. The Rector himself was greatly moved, and delivered a pressing, close sermon, with uncommon earnestness. When I came on *Wednesday [16 July]*, the same seriousness remained on the generality of the people. I preached in the evening at Wood-Green, where a multitude flocked together, on the Son of man coming in his glory. The word fell heavy upon them, and many of their hearts were as melting wax. *Thursday, 17.* At five they were still so eager to hear, that the preaching-house would not near contain the congregation. After preaching, four-and-thirty persons desired admission into the society; every one of whom was (for the present, at least) under very serious impressions: And most of them, there is reason to hope, will bring forth fruit with patience.²⁹

Wesley's hope was sustained. The initial fear caused by the storm persisted. When he returned to Witney three months later, on 15 October, he wrote, "The flame which was kindled here by that providential storm of thunder and lightning, is not extinguished; but has continued

²⁹ *Journals & Diaries*, 23: 285.

ever since, with no discernible intermission. The preaching-house is still too small for the congregation.”³⁰ One year later, on 21 October 1784, he was equally pleased:

I preached at Witney, on, “As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.” We had a large congregation at five in the morning; at twelve I met the children, and was pleased to find that the impression which was made on them by the storm last year, is not yet worn-out; and the whole society, still double to what it was, appears to be much in earnest.³¹

Even five years after the storm, Wesley declared, “I preached at Witney, which I generally find a very comfortable place. I think much of the impression which was made on the people here, at the time of the great storm, remains still.”³²

This is the perfect example of what Wesley believed God could do through the “awful providence” of a storm: frighten people in such a way that awakens them to their mortality, their sin, and the danger of hell. The fear of these terrible things prompts them to seek the grace of God in repentance, yielding a lifetime of growing in grace which can even be passed on to the next generation.

Storms as Means of Affirming Faith

In concert with his soteriology that moved people to holiness, Wesley began to interpret storms not only as means God used to bring sinners to repentance, but to confirm those who were already “under grace.” The first time he offered this interpretation for a storm was on 1 November 1740:

While I was preaching at Long-Lane, the storm was so exceeding high, that the house we were in shook continually: But so much the more did many rejoice in Him whom the winds and the seas obey; finding they were ready to obey his call, if He should then require their souls of them.³³

³⁰ *Journals & Diaries*, 23: 291.

³¹ *Journals & Diaries*, 23: 334.

³² *Journals & Diaries*, 24: 112.

³³ *Journals & Diaries*, 19: 172.

Here the storm did not inspire fear in sinners, but consolation in the faithful. They were so certain of the grace they had experienced through Christ that the possibility of being gathered into glory by God immediately because of the storm was an occasion for joy.

Wesley was so taken with this new interpretation for storms that he used it to explain seven of the next eight storms he mentioned in his journal as well as many storms after that (see index at end of article). He usually nuanced this interpretation in one of two ways: to commend the faithful and to give thanks for God's protection.

Wesley commended the faithful when a congregation remained attentive to his preaching despite severe weather occurring. Two examples of this from his journal:

The morning was extremely cold. In the evening it blew a storm. However, having appointed to be on the Calton-Hill, I began there to an huge congregation. At first, the wind was a little troublesome; but I soon forgot it. And so did the people for an hour and a half, in which I fully delivered my own soul.³⁴

Although it was a lone house, yet such a multitude of people flocked together, that I was obliged to preach abroad. It blew a storm, and we had several showers of rain; but no one went away. I do not wonder that this society is the largest, as well as the liveliest, in these parts of Lincolnshire.³⁵

In some cases, Wesley was less focused on commending the faithful than recognizing how God's providential hand protected the faithful. There are several examples of this, including both personal experiences while traveling and the experiences of Methodist societies.

In relation to his own travels, Wesley saw this protection occur in different ways. Sometimes Wesley and his companions endured a difficult storm but still arrived safely at their destination.

³⁴ *Journals & Diaries*, 21: 466.

³⁵ *Journals & Diaries*, 23: 178.

We rode home through heavy rain, joined with much thunder and lightning, part of which was just over our heads. But “the Lord sitteth above the water floods.” So we came safe, only very wet, to Epworth.³⁶

Other times they were spared from the storms altogether. Two examples of this:

As we rode to Clifton, John Hampson and I could not but observe a little circumstance. A black hail cloud was driven full upon us, by a strong northeast wind; till, being just over us, it parted asunder, and fell on the right and left, leaving us untouched. We observed it the more, because three several storms, one after another, went by in the same manner.³⁷

The packet-boat was ready in the morning, but waited for the mail, hour after hour, till past three in the afternoon. Hereby we avoided a violent storm, and had only what they called a fresh breeze.³⁸

In some cases, Wesley believed God worked through the prayers of the faithful to offer protection. In one instance, he reported that God twice answered his prayers for a storm to abate:

The wind shifting to the south, and blowing hard, in the afternoon the Captain seemed under some concern. There was all reason to expect a stormy night; and he despaired of getting into the Bristol Channel; and knew the danger of beating about, when it was pitch dark, among these rocks and sands. It was much on my mind, “They cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distress.” I knew not why we should not cry to Him as well as they. Immediately the wind came fair, and blew so fresh, that in less than two hours we came into the Bristol Channel.

But the danger was not over...It blew a storm; and, the wind being contrary to the tide, the sea ran mountain-high. The ship had no goods, and little ballast on board; so that it rolled as if it would overset every moment. It was intensely dark, and neither the Captain nor any man else knew where we were; only that we were tossing in a bad, narrow channel, full of shoals, and rocks, and sands. But does not God hear the prayer? Mr. Hopper and I believed it our duty to make the trial again; and in a very few moments the wind was small, the sea fell, and the clouds dispersed; so we put up a little sail, and went on quietly and slowly, till the morning dawned. About nine in the evening we reached the Pill, where I took horse, and rode on to Bristol.³⁹

³⁶ *Journals & Diaries*, 21: 340.

³⁷ *Journals & Diaries*, 20: 451-52.

³⁸ *Journals & Diaries*, 22: 74.

³⁹ *Journals & Diaries*, 20: 353.

In reference to societies, Wesley believed that God offered protection to affirm the faithful who gathered. One of the most dangerous situations Wesley described in his journal that a congregation nonetheless emerged unscathed from was on 15 March 1752:

While I was preaching at West-Street in the afternoon, there was one of the most violent storms I ever remember. In the midst of the sermon a great part of an house opposite to the chapel was blown down. We heard an huge noise, but knew not the cause; so much the more did God speak to our hearts: And great was the rejoicing of many in confidence of his protection.⁴⁰

In another case he claimed that God protected the faithful who had gathered on a mountainside to hear him preach while sending judgment in the form of a rainstorm on those who stayed in the valley. He wrote on 18 May 1757:

A large congregation was waiting for us, not only on the ground, but on the side and tops of the neighboring houses. But no scoffer or trifler was seen among them. It rained in the adjoining valley, all or most of the time that I was preaching; but it was fair with us, on the top of the mountain. What an emblem of God's taking up his people into a place of safety, while the storm falls on all below!⁴¹

Through either being spared from enduring severe storms altogether or being protected from any serious harm caused by those storms, Wesley came to see storms as a means God used to strengthen the faithful. Those who could remain steadfast in worship and mission in the face of storms would also see God's gracious power overcome storms on their behalf.

Bringing together Wesley's beliefs that storms could provide spiritual benefit to sinners and the faithful alike, it is evident that the theology of storms Wesley developed fit with his overarching soteriology. God used storms first to awaken sinners from their "natural" state so they could come to repentance. God then used storms to test and affirm the faithfulness of those who were seeking to grow in grace. Central to both these ideas is that storms are fear-inducing. It is precisely because they cause fear that they can awaken sinners, and it is because they are

⁴⁰ *Journals & Diaries*, 20: 411.

⁴¹ *Journals & Diaries*, 21: 102.

dangerous that God's affirmation and protection is evident when the faithful pass safely through them.

Based on this theology, Wesley developed ways of deploying storms in his evangelistic messages.

Stormy Evangelism

Before addressing how Wesley used storms in his evangelism, it is important to clarify what practices count as evangelistic. Since Wesley's soteriology involved a constant growth in grace from the "natural man" to the "one under the law" to the "one under grace," this paper will maintain that Wesley's evangelism can be understood as encompassing any activity that invited people to participate more fully in God's salvific work. Even those "under grace" could be evangelized since they could always be more fully formed in God's holiness and because the danger of backsliding was ever-present prior to entering glory. As such, in the analysis below, messages that call listeners to respond by taking another step with God, regardless of what that step is, are considered evangelistic.⁴²

Wesley deployed his theology of storms in multiple ways to invite people to take the next step in faith. This is most visible in his sermons in which he 1) used physical storms as object lessons, 2) tapped into the evocative power of storms by using them as metaphors to describe struggles in the Christian life, and 3) assured his listeners of the final cessation of storms in glory.

⁴² This is a contentious statement. Wesleyan scholars of evangelism have disagreed on this point for some time. Jeff Conklin-Miller, Priscilla Pope-Levinson, Lacey Warner, and my own work defend this more sweeping understanding of evangelism, while William Abraham and Jack Jackson both contend for the more limited view of evangelism so as not to lose focus of the specific need to call people to repentance for the first time.

Object Lessons and Metaphorical Storms

As seen above, Wesley sometimes had to contend with storms while he was field preaching. When faced with severe weather, Wesley and his listeners sometimes would move indoors, other times they would simply endure the elements. As Wesley became convinced of God's providential use of storms, he began to see these moments as opportunities to strengthen his message. On 26 June 1739 he linked the Scripture he was preaching on to the storm raging during his sermon to enhance his call to repentance:

I preached near the house we had a few days before began to build for a school, in the middle of Kingswood, under a little sycamore-tree, during a violent storm of rain, on those words, "As the rain cometh down from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth and maketh it bring forth and bud: — So shall my word be that goeth out of my mouth: It shall not return unto me void. But it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Three persons terribly felt the wrath of God abiding on them at the society this evening. But upon prayer made in their behalf, He was pleased soon to lift up the light of his countenance upon them.⁴³

More often than use the storms as object lessons, Wesley spoke of storms metaphorically to emphasize the seriousness involved in seeking holiness. He used the metaphor to describe either the internal struggles that people would have to tame the passions or the external resistance that faithful Christians (particularly Methodists) would face.

Internal Storms of Passion

Wesley contended that one of the most difficult points in a person's spiritual development is the time between being convicted of sin and experiencing the new birth. In this interim state, the person is buffeted by their passions as temptations seek to draw them back into sin. Sensitive to the evil of these passions, but without the Spirit's power to master them, the person can easily

⁴³ *Journals & Diaries*, 19: 74.

give way to despair and fear. Given this danger, it is little wonder that Wesley chose the metaphor of a storm to describe it.

In his sermon “On the Witness of the Spirit, II,” Wesley has a person who has been convicted of sin but who has not yet felt the direct witness of the Spirit say, “I have no joy in the Holy Ghost; my soul is sorrowful even unto death. I have no peace; my heart is a troubled sea; *I am all storm and tempest.*”⁴⁴

He used similar imagery in “Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, VII”:

*Yea, when the storm rose high; “when an horrible dread overwhelmed” one who had been without God in the world, his soul would “loathe all manner of meat;” it would be displeasing and irksome to him; he would be impatient of anything that should interrupt his ceaseless cry, “Lord, save or I perish.”*⁴⁵

These storms are especially dangerous because those who feel their effects know the will of God. If they refuse to obey, only doom awaits them. Wesley stated this flatly in his reflection on Jesus’ parable of the men who built their respective houses on a rock and on the sand:

*And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house;” — as they will surely do, sooner or later, upon every soul of man; even the floods of outward affliction, or inward temptation; the storms of pride, anger, fear, or desire; — “and it fell: And great was the fall of it:” So that it perished for ever and ever.*⁴⁶

Fortunately, though, Wesley declared that God offers hope to those caught in these dangerous storms. He counseled in his sermon “In the Wilderness State” that those who encounter people facing these storms should:

Convince them that the whole work of sanctification is not, as they imagined, wrought at once...and [they] *may expect many storms before they come to the full stature of Christ.* Above all, let them be instructed, *when the storm is upon them,*

⁴⁴ John Wesley, Sermon 11, “On the Witness of the Spirit, II,” § III.7, in *Sermons*, 1: 291 (italics added).

⁴⁵ John Wesley, Sermon 27, “Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, VII,” § II.2, in *Sermons*, 1: 598 (italics added).

⁴⁶ John Wesley, Sermon 33, “Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, XIII,” § I.6, in *Sermons*, 1: 691 (italics added).

not to reason with the devil, but to pray; to pour out their souls before God, and show him of their trouble.⁴⁷

Wesley assured his readers that God will answer these prayers. When that answer comes the Holy Spirit “so works upon the soul by his immediate influence, and by a strong, though inexplicable operation, that *the stormy wind and troubled waves subside*, and there is a sweet calm.”⁴⁸

The assured Christian can then hold the storms at bay through careful attention to living according to the virtues. Wesley particularly identified the virtue of “long-suffering” for this purpose.

Walk with all “long-suffering.” This is nearly related to meekness, but implies something more. It carries on the victory already gained over all your turbulent passions...It is patiently triumphant over all opposition, and *unmoved though all tidal waves and storms thereof go over you*.⁴⁹

Even those on their way toward sanctification need to be mindful of sustaining this virtue, lest they backslide into the storm. He continued:

Are you wanting in long-suffering? Then, so far as you fall short of this, you fall short of happiness. The more the opposite tempers — anger, fretfulness, revenge — prevail, the more unhappy you are. You know it; you feel it; *nor can the storm be allayed, or peace ever return to your soul*, unless meekness, gentleness, patience, or, in one word, love, take possession of it.⁵⁰

Wesley was clear: the Christian, whether in the earliest stages of repentance or later in sanctification, can choose to live buffeted by the storms of passion or to practice the virtues by the help of God. There is no compromise.

⁴⁷ John Wesley, Sermon 46, “The Wilderness State,” § III.14, in *Sermons*, 2: 220 (italics added).

⁴⁸ Wesley, Sermon 11, “On the Witness of the Spirit, II,” § II.4, in *Sermons*, 1:287 (italics added).

⁴⁹ John Wesley, Sermon 74, “Of the Church,” § [II.]25, in *Sermons*, 3: 54 (italics added).

⁵⁰ John Wesley, Sermon 149, “On Love,” § III[.4], in *Sermons*, 4: 386 (italics added).

External Storms of Resistance

Wesley's metaphorical use of storms to convince people of danger and pending destruction was not solely related to internal strife. He also applied it to Christians facing external resistance.

In recounting how Christianity first spread following the witness of the Apostles, Wesley favored the storm metaphor. In "Scriptural Christianity" he stated,

*Thus it was that the heavens grew black with clouds, and the storm gathered amain. For the more Christianity spread, the more hurt was done, in the account of those who received it not; and the number increased of those who were more and more enraged at these "men who thus turned the world upside down."*⁵¹

He made a similar statement in "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, III," where he saw God's providence behind the persecution of Christians:

When the storm shall begin, how high it shall rise, which way it shall point its course, when and how it shall end, are all determined by his unerring wisdom... God permitted the storm to rise high, and his children were called to resist unto blood.⁵²

Wesley even applied this to the Methodists' experience of facing resistance throughout England. Ascribing the rise of this anti-Methodist hostility to Satan, he wrote, "He [Satan] stirred up the beasts of the people. They roared like lions, they encompassed the little and defenseless on every side. *And the storm rose higher and higher.*"⁵³

Wesley's reason for using this imagery to describe the hostility faced by Christians was not just to offer a history lesson; it was evangelistic. Through it he called Christians to stand firm even when persecuted so they might gain a greater salvation. As with the internal storms, the

⁵¹ John Wesley, Sermon 4, "Scriptural Christianity," § II.6, in *Sermons*, 1: 168 (italics added).

⁵² John Wesley, Sermon 23, "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, III," § III.5, in *Sermons*, 1: 523-4.

⁵³ John Wesley, Sermon 107, "On God's Vineyard," § IV.2, in *Sermons*, 3: 513 (italics added). Beyond this sermon, Wesley frequently also refers to the storm of resistance to Methodists in his journals.

external storms were meant to humble the Methodists and drive them to rely entirely on God to bring them safely through their struggles.

As Wesley aged and watched a new generation of Methodists arise who had not faced the sort of hostility the earlier Methodists did, he worried that they would not retain their distinctive striving for holiness. Beginning in the 1750s—a notable decade because it marks when Methodism had become a more accepted feature in British Christianity and opposition was less common—he began to question whether facing the storms of hostility might not have been a blessing for Methodists’ growth in grace. This idea seemed to form as he examined long-standing societies. One example of this is found in his comments about the society at Roughlee.

On 25 August 1748, Wesley and his traveling companions had been surrounded by a mob during a preaching service at Roughlee and were conducted to a house two miles away where they were held prisoner for about an hour. They were then forced to leave and chose to avoid the area because it remained guarded by mobs.⁵⁴ Notwithstanding, a society took hold there and even managed to grow despite this severe opposition. However, nearly a decade later, on 20 May 1757 Wesley tersely noted that he had preached “about noon, at Roughlee; where those who stood firm in the storm had melted away in the calm.” It was notable to Wesley that a society which had flourished during such severe opposition now demonstrated such poor staying power when the storms of opposition were past.

In “A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason, part 2” he made a similar point, though not addressing Methodists but “those who are at the smallest distance from us, whether they are termed Presbyterians and Independents.” These groups had likewise demonstrated a strong moral witness when they had faced opposition. Now that the opposition had abated, Wesley questioned:

⁵⁴ *Journals & Diaries*, 23: 243-44.

How is it then, my brethren...that the generality of you also are fallen from your steadfastness? *In the times of persecution ye stood as a rock, though "all the waves and storms went over you."* But who can bear ease and fulness of bread? How are you changed, since these came upon you!⁵⁵

In time, Wesley's conclusion that Christians become lazy once the storms of opposition ended led him to be concerned when he saw Methodist societies moving into a relatively calm period. In his assessment of the society he visited in Pebworth on 6-8 July 1777, he declared,

The society here, by patient continuance in well-doing, has quite overcome evil with good; even the beasts of the people are now tame, and open not their mouths against them. They profited much when the waves and storms went over them: May they profit as much by the calm!"

Addressing a wider audience in his sermon "The Danger of Riches," Wesley levied the charge of how increasing in wealth had led to greater ease among the Methodists as a whole. In doing this, he made the rare move of talking about storms both negatively and positively. Negatively, Wesley referred to the physical rainstorms that Methodists had braved to attend preaching services or class meetings. Positively, Wesley adapted Jesus's comment from Matthew 11:12 and described the effort the Methodists had made to grow in grace as "taking heaven by storm." This dual usage demonstrates that Wesley had determined that enduring the physical storms strengthened the Methodists to generate spiritual storms as they sought after the holiness of God. If the Methodists lost their willingness to face even mild physical storms because they were now acclimated to lives of wealth and ease, they then would lose their capacity to be stormy in their zeal for holiness.

You no longer rejoice to "endure hardship as good soldiers of Jesus Christ." You no longer "rush into the kingdom of heaven, and *take it as by storm.*" You do not cheerfully and gladly "deny yourselves, and take up your cross daily." You cannot deny yourself the poor pleasure of a little sleep, or of a soft bed, in order to hear the word that is able to save your souls! *Indeed, you cannot go out so early in the morning; besides it is dark, nay, cold, perhaps rainy too.* "Cold, darkness, rain, all

⁵⁵ John Wesley, *A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason, Part II* in *The Appeals*, ed. Gerald R. Cragg, vol. 11 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976–), 251. III.2 (italics added).

these together, — I can never think of it.” You did not say so when you were a poor man. You then regarded none of these things.⁵⁶

Thus, ironically, Wesley concluded that both physical storms and metaphorical storms of opposition do less damage to people’s souls than the good weather of peaceful times. As he wrote in his journal on 13 April 1771, “Some perish by the storm, but far more by the calm.”⁵⁷

The Cessation of Storms in Glory

A final way that Wesley deployed storms in his evangelistic messages was to use them as a counterpoint to what the glory of heaven would be like. This reinforces how dangerous he believed storms were, especially in the damage and terror they could cause, because he could not imagine them persisting in paradise. He made this point in three sermons: “The New Creation,” “General Deliverance,” and “On the Resurrection of the Dead.” The pertinent passages from each are below.

We may more easily conceive the changes which will be wrought in the lower heaven, in the region of the air. It will be no more torn by hurricanes, or agitated by furious storms, or destructive tempests...No: All will then be light, fair, serene; a lively picture of the eternal day...[T]here will be no more rain...there will be no clouds or fogs; but one bright, refulgent day. Much less will there be any poisonous damps, or pestilential blasts. There will be no sirocco in Italy; no parching or suffocating winds in Arabia; no keen northeast winds in our own country, ‘Shattering the graceful locks of yon fair trees’; but only pleasing, healthful breezes.⁵⁸

As there will be nothing within, so there still be nothing without, to give them any uneasiness: No heat or cold, no storm or tempest, but one perennial spring. In the new earth, as well as the new heavens, there will be nothing to give pain, but everything that the wisdom and goodness of God can create to give happiness.⁵⁹

We are now but on our journey towards home, and so must expect to struggle with many difficulties; but it will not be long ere we come to our journey’s end, and

⁵⁶ John Wesley, Sermon 87, “The Danger of Riches,” § II.17, in *Sermons*, 3: 243-4 (italics added).

⁵⁷ *Journals & Diaries V*, 22: 270.

⁵⁸ John Wesley, Sermon 64, “The New Creation,” §§ 9, 11, in *Sermons*, 2: 503-5.

⁵⁹ John Wesley, Sermon 60, “General Deliverance,” § III.4, in *Sermons*, 2: 447.

that will make amends for all. We shall then be in a quiet and safe harbor, out of the reach of all storms and dangers.⁶⁰

In an unusual break from his close adherence to the Bible, Wesley's assertion that storms will come to an end is not scriptural. Rather, he interpolated this from the promise of a perfected heavens and earth. Part of glory for him was to be free of storms completely, along with the fear and danger they generate. He evidently saw this as such a generally accepted feeling that he included it as an additional item to persuade his listeners either to repent or to remain firm in their faith. It was not the chief hope he preached, but it was significant enough to him and to others that he believed it was worth including.

From Fearfulness of Storms to Fearless Evangelism

Wesley had a perpetual fear of storms throughout his life. Early in his life this fear convinced him that he was not truly saved. However, as he aged, he became more accepting of both his fear and the fears that others had related to storms.

Critical to Wesley coming to peace with his fear was the theology he developed related to storms. This theology asserted that storms were spiritual as well as physical and so had a purpose behind them. Satan used them to lure people away from God. God used them to awaken sinners to their need for repentance as well as to affirm the faithful. Most importantly, in all cases Wesley believed that fear was an appropriate response to experiencing a storm.

Wesley applied this theology by weaving storms into his evangelistic messages. He did this by commenting on physical storms during his preaching and using storms metaphorically to convey the intensity of struggle Christians had to sustain against internal and external resistance

⁶⁰ John Wesley, Sermon CXXXVII, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," § III.3, in *Sermons III*, ed. Thomas Jackson, vol.7 of *The Works of John Wesley*, 3rd edition, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1899), 7:484.

to leading a holy life. Wesley ultimately promised that storms of all types would cease for those who persevered in holiness.

Today, we can hope with Wesley for the time when God brings an end to at least the severe weather that beleaguers us. Until then, we can offer an evangelistic Christian witness by following in the footsteps of Wesley through meeting the needs of those affected by severe weather and climate change while explicitly declaring the goodness of God through Jesus Christ and inviting others to share in that goodness too.

Alphabetical Index of Wesley's Sermons that Contain References to Storms

"The Cause and Cure of Earthquakes," II

"On Charity," III.3

"Of the Church," 25

"The Danger of Riches," II.17

"On Divine Providence," 11

"Of Evil Angels," II.11

"On Faith" (106), II.1

"On Faith" (122), 8 & 9

"General Deliverance," II.4, III. 4

"On God's Vineyard," IV.2

"The Great Assize," I

"Heaviness through Manifold Temptations," IV.7

"The Important Question," III.11

"On Love," III

- “Marks of the New Birth,” I.7
- “The New Creation,” 9 & 11
- “Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, I,” II.8
- “Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, II,” Intro
- “Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, III,” II.3, III
- “Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, VII” II.2
- “Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, XIII” I.6
- “On Public Diversions,” Intro
- “On the Resurrection of the Dead,” III.3
- “Scriptural Christianity,” II.6
- “Spiritual Idolatry,” II.6
- “The Trouble and Rest of Good Men,” II.2
- “The Wilderness State,” III.14
- “The Wisdom of God’s Counsel,” 3
- “The Witness of the Spirit II,” II.4, III. 7

Index of References to Storms in Wesley’s Journals

Legend

- * – Wesley reflects on storms more generally rather than a specific storm
- d – Wesley related storm to demonic activity
- p – Wesley was preaching during the storm
- s – Wesley was onboard ship during the storm
- t – Wesley was in transit on land during the storm
- w – Related to Witney Revival

Date	Affected personally	Linked to Fear	Severity/ Destruction	While Preaching	God's Judgment	Sinners Repent	Faithful Protected/ Affirmed
11/20/35	x		x				
11/23/35	x s	x					
1/17/36	x s	x					
1/23/36	x s	x					
1/25/36	x s	x	x				
1/29/36	x s						
1/30/36	x s						
7/10/36	x	x	x				
4/19/37	x s						
1/8/38 *		x					
1/13/38	x s		x				
1/24/38 *		x					
5/20/39	x p			x		x	
6/26/39	x p	x	x	x	x	x	
11/1/40	x p		x	x			x
12/21/40	x		x				x
6/7/41	x p		x				x
12/27-28/42	x p		x	x			x
12/30/42	x p		x	x			x
10/22/43	x s		x				x
10/26/43							x s
4/1/44	x p			x			x
3/5/46	x p			x			x
8/13/46		x d					
2/16-18/47	x t		x				
12/1/47	x t		x				
2/15-16/48	x t		x				
3/8/48	x s		x				
4/12/48	x p		x	x			x
5/4/48	x p			x			x
4/15/49	x s						
9/14/49	x t						
9/29/49	x t		x				
3/25/50	x s						
3/29/50	x		x				x
7/23/50	x s		x				x
11/30/50	x tp		x	x			x
5/5/51	x p			x			x
9/7/51	x tp			x			x
3/15/52	x tp		x	x			x
3/23/52	x tp			x			x
9/19-21/52	x tp		x				x

9/24/52			x				x
10/8/52	x s						x
10/10-11/52	x s		x				x
3/14/53	x t						x
8/31/53	x						
3/17/56			x				x
3/23/56	x t		x				
3/29/56	x s						x
5/1-2/56	x p			x			x
4/24/57			x				
5/18/57	x p			x			x
5/22/57	x p		x	x			x
5/5/60							x
1/6/62	x tp			x			x
1/12/62	x t						x
3/29-30/62	x t		x				x
3/31/62	x p		x	x			x
4/2/62	x s		x				
11/2/62			x				x
1/13/64	x p		x	x			
4/9/64	x tp		x	x			x
5/27/64	x p			x			x
6/8/64	x p			x			
3/23/65	x tp			x			x
4/22/65	x	x	x			x	
4/15/66	x t						
9/13/66	x p			x			x
3/20/67	x t						
3/28/67	x s						x
4/14/68	x t		x				
5/31/68	x p			x			
9/17/68	x s						x
11/30-12/1/68	x tp		x	x			x
4/21/69	x p			x			
5/1-5/69	x		x				
5/13/69	x p			x			
4/14/71	x p			x			
4/15/72	x t		x				
8/23/72	x tp		x	x			x
12/6/73			x				
4/18/74	x tp			x			x
4/24/74	x p			x			
7/23/75	x p			x			
10/24/75	x t						x

8/16/76	x p		x	x			
11/20/76	x p		x	x			
12/18/76	x p			x			
10/3/77	x s		x				
10/14/77	x s		x				x
1/19/78	x t		x				
7/19/78	x s						
12/31/78	x		x				
3/21/79	x p	x d	x	x			
6/14/80	x p		x	x			x
8/18/80	x p			x			x
4/12-14/81	x s	x	x		x		x
8/28/81	x tp		x				
2/22-23/82	x tp		x				x
5/29-30/82	x t						x
6/24/83						x	
7/14/83			x				
7/16/83 w	x		x	x	x	x	
10/15/83 w	x		x	x	x	x	
4/12/84	x p						x
5/20/84	x t						x
7/8/84	x t		x				x
10/21/84 w				x			x
12/6-7/84	x tp		x	x			x
5/13/85	x p			x			x
5/29, 31/85	x p			x			x
5/25-26/86	x ts		x				x
7/23/85							x
8/31-9/2/85	x s		x				
9/9/85	x p			x			
3/3/87	x p			x			
4/30/87	x p			x			
5/26/87	x p			x			x
5/31/87	x p			x			x
8/11-12/87	x sp		x	x			
8/31-9/6/87	x ps		x	x			x
4/3-4/88	x p			x			
6/5/88	x p			x			
10/6/88	x p			x			x
10/14/88 w	x p			x			
11/25-26/88	x p			x			
4/28/89	x tp			x			
6/7/89	x p			x		x	
9/19/89	x			x		x	

Index of Metaphorical References to Storms in Wesley's Journals

Date	Affected personally	Linked to Fear	Evil Passions	External Hostility	God's Judgment	Sinners Repent	Faithful Affirmed
3/28/39 in letter dated 12/10/34	x	x					
5/20/39			x			x	
10/22/41						x	x
11/6/41	x						x
7/4/45	x			x			
7/5/45				x			x
8/12/45 in letter dated 7/10/45			x		x		
9/22/45				x			
8/20/48				x			x
3/25/50				x			
4/1/50	x			x			
11/30/50	x			x			
12/12/55					x		
5/20/57	x			x			
10/4/57	x			x			
3/9/59	x			x			
5/30/59			x			x	
4/2/62 in letter dated 1/9/60					x		
9/1/66				x			
3/26/69	x			x			x
4/13/71	x			x		x	
6/16/77			x	x			
7/6/77				x			x
7/3/79	x		x				
8/12/79	x			x			
2/15/87			x				
3/5/88	x	x d					
4/14/88			x				

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