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THUNDERSTORM STORIES

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CONTENTS

Introduction

- 01 -- How God Saved A Pharisee In A Thunderstorm
- 02 -- A Song Inspired During A Thunderstorm
- 03 -- A Moving Prayer By William B. Christie In A Thunderstorm
- 04 -- Will A Holy Person Fear A Thunderstorm?
- 05 -- What Happened To Some Wags During A Thunderstorm
- 06 -- A Thunderstorm In Answer To Freeborn Garrettson's Prayer
- 07 -- A Thunderstorm Delayed In Answer To Holy Ann's Prayer
- 08 -- Carradine Preached On During A Thunderstorm
- 09 -- John Newton Found Mercy During A Thunderstorm -- (First Account)
- 10 -- John Newton Found Mercy During A Thunderstorm -- (Second Account)
- 11 -- How A Thunderstorm Brought Revival During A Caughey Meeting
- 12 -- How A Prayer For Rain Brought A Thunderstorm
- 13 -- Why She Was Not Afraid During The Thunderstorm At Sea
- 14 -- She Did What She Could During A Thunderstorm
- 15 -- A Surprising Answer To Prayer During A Thunderstorm
- 16 -- Benjamin Abbott's Thunder-gust Sermon -- (First Account)
- 17 -- Benjamin Abbott's Thunder-Gust Sermon -- (Second Account)
- 18 -- A Slave To Liquor Delivered During A Thunderstorm
- 19 -- Delivered From A Flash-Flood After A Thunderstorm
- 20 -- Jonas Oramel Peck Saved During A Thunderstorm
- 21 -- A Weird Baptismal Service During A Thunderstorm
- 22 -- The Famous Haystack Prayermeeting During A Thunderstorm
- 23 -- How God Broke Up A Circus With A Thunderstorm
- 24 -- A Holy Vow Made During A Thunderstorm
- 25 -- He Thought Of Jonah During A Frightful Thunderstorm

- 26 -- Rain-Shower Converts During A Thunderstorm
- 27 -- Charles Pitman's Effectual Prayer During A Thunderstorm
- 28 -- God Used A Thunderstorms To Collect What Was Kept Back
- 29 -- The Coming, Uncommon Event Was A Thunderstorm
- 30 -- How God Delayed A Thunderstorm For Major Malan
- 31 -- A Mighty Display Of God's Power During A Thunderstorm
- 32 -- How She Finally Became Unafraid During Thunderstorms
- 33 -- When God Thundered Marvelously With His Voice
- 34 -- God Parted A Thunderstorm In Answer To John Easter's Prayer
- 35 -- How God Sent A Thunderstorm In Answer To Miss Ester's Prayer
- 36 -- How God Watered Fred Powell's Pasture With A Thunderstorm
- 37 -- Clifford B. Barrett's Prayer Answered In A Thunderstorm
- 38 -- How A Blasphemer Was Slain Of God During A Thunderstorm
- 39 -- How God Spared S.S. Children From A Train-Wreck During A Thunderstorm
- 40 -- A Need Was Miraculously Supplied With A Thunderstorm
- 41 -- Charles Wesley And The Thunderstorm
- 42 -- What The Little Girl Wanted During A Thunderstorm
- 43 -- An Unusual Judgment During A Thunderstorm
- 44 -- What Carradine's Child Asked Him During A Thunderstorm
- 45 -- A Cloud Blacker Than The Thunderstorm Overhung New Orleans Area

In Conclusion

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INTRODUCTION

Whewww! When I began this compilation I did not realize that the word "thunder" (in all of its forms) appeared 2,589 times in the HDM Library! Relax though! I have not included all of them in this compilation. But before presenting some of the "Thunderstorm Stories" from our library, let me note that the word "thunder" also appears many times in the Bible. Here are just a few examples:

BEFORE THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT: -- Exodus 9:23-29 -- "And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail. And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Intreat the Lord (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer. And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the Lord; and the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know how that the earth is the Lord's.

AT MT. SINAI -- "And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off" (Exodus 20:18). "The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook" (Psalm 77:18).

DURING SAMUEL'S JUDGESHIP -- "And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel" (1 Sam. 7:10). "Now therefore stand and see this great thing, which the Lord will do before your eyes.

Is it not wheat harvest to day? I will call unto the Lord, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking you a king. So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel" (1 Sam. 12:16-18).

DURING JOB'S DAY -- "Lo, these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand?" (Job 26:14).

DURING JESUS' EARTHLY MINISTRY -- "Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him" (John 12:28-29).

"God's Thunder" has impressed countless millions down across the centuries of time. The writer of one favorite Christian song wrote:

O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder,
Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made;
I see the stars, I HEAR THE ROLLING THUNDER,
Thy Mighty Power throughout the universe displayed,

Then sings my soul, My Savior, God to Thee:
"HOW GREAT THOU ART! HOW GREATH THOU ART!"
Then sings my soul, My Savior, God to Thee:
"HOW GREAT THOU ART! HOW GREATH THOU ART!"

"God's Thunder" -- both actually in earthly skies and spiritually through the mouths of His anointed messengers -- has been often mentioned by Christian writers. In his book "The Soulwinner's Secret" Samuel Logan Brengle wrote: "They thought to silence Madam Guyon in the Bastille, and John Bunyan in the filthy Bedford jail. But who can silence the thunder of God's power, or hush His 'still small voice,' when He chooses a man to speak through him? Their silent prisons but become public telephone stations, connected with the skies."

In this compilation, I shall present instances involving, or in reference to, the actual Thunder of God in our earthly skies -- those loud claps of thunder which instantly follow

lightning bolts, the volume of which is sometimes so great that many are stricken with fear, or awe, or both! It has been said repeatedly that "Thunder never kills anyone" -- but, intelligent human beings realize that just like the loud "bang" or "pop" of a gunshot will not kill you, THERE IS SOMETHING CONNECTED WITH IT THAT CAN KILL YOU! Its not the booming thunder by itself that brings fear, so much as it is the "Thunderbolt" or Lightning-Bolt" connected with it. THE THUNDER WON'T KILL YOU, BUT THE "THUNDERBOLT" COULD!

"The thunder of his power who can understand?" (Job 26:14). Well, intelligent people CAN understand that a thunderstorm accompanied by lightning bolts is something to be respected! That understood, many thunderstorms have been so awesome and fearsome that they have "put the fear of God" into those in their midst -- and, in a number of cases, people have been saved as a result. You will find some of those instances among others in this compilation.

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01 -- HOW GOD SAVED A PHARISEE IN A THUNDERSTORM

From hdm2205 -- "Reminiscences" By Henry Boehm

[Henry Boehm was Bishop Asbury's traveling assistant for a long while.]

One of our preaching places was David Musselmen's. He lived about seven miles from Lancaster, between that and Marietta. It was a fine family, and their house one of the choice homes the early ministers loved to find. There was something very peculiar about his conversion. He was a Pharisee; thought himself good enough, a little better than most men, and looked on experimental religion as fanaticism. One day he was in his field at work, in the summer of 1800, when a storm suddenly gathered, and the clouds were dark and lowering. His little boy was with him. He saw they would not have time to reach the house before the rain fell, so they went under a large walnut tree that stood by the roadside. The rain fell in torrents; there was a flash of lightning, and quick as thought a loud peal of thunder followed. The tree was struck, and father and son fell to the ground, both senseless. When the father recovered he heard louder thunder -- the thunder of Mount Sinai; all his sins were set in order before him; his guilty soul trembled. He had hoped that his darling boy was, like himself, only stunned; but, alas! he found he was dead. His self-righteousness was now all gone, and he cried out, "O Lord, I thank thee that thou hast taken the innocent and spared the guilty." There under the tree, beside his dead son, he knelt down and sought the Lord with prayer and tears, and the Lord heard and answered. He united with the Methodist Church, and was a most excellent member. His house was the pilgrim's rest, indeed it was a sanctuary, "for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." My father, Thomas Burch, myself, and many others, have preached under his roof "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God." He lived faithful many years, and then died happy in the Lord.

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02 -- A SONG INSPIRED DURING A THUNDERSTORM

From hdm0668 -- "The Nightingale Of The Psalms" By Jarrette E. Aycock

One night during a terrible storm a man walked along the shore of the sea. The clouds hung low overhead; the wind howled; thunder roared; lightning flashed and the rain poured down in torrents. The man, puffing his big coat closer about him, bent his body to the wind and rain and hurried home. A little bird lost in the storm sought shelter under his coat; he took it in his hand, carried it home, placed it in a warm cage that night, and the next morning after the storm had passed, and the clouds had cleared away, he took the little bird to the door. It paused on his hand for a moment; then lifting its tiny wings, it hurried back to its forest home, and Charles Wesley caught the vision, and going back to his room he wrote the words of that song which has become almost immortal:

"Jesus lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high.

"Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life is past
Safe into the haven guide;
O receive my soul at last.

"Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on thee,
Leave, O leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me."

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03 -- A MOVING PRAYER BY WILLIAM B. CHRISTIE IN A THUNDERSTORM

From hdm0730 -- "Foot-Prints Of An Itinerant" By Maxwell Pierson Gaddis

While the minister progressed with his discourse, the area in front of the stand, and especially the outer circle in the rear of the tents, presented a scene of great commotion, by the constant arrival of new tent-holders. Before the close of the sermon, the most intense excitement prevailed throughout the entire encampment; yet no one, not even the preacher, attached blame to the conduct of the occupants of the finished tents, or the hurry and confusion among the "new-comers." The face of the whole heavens was overspread with thick clouds, in consequence of which all not engaged in worship at the stand were busily employed in "tightening their canvas," or fixing as well as they could the clapboard roofs of their little log tents. Nearly every family was busily engaged in making the best possible arrangements to protect themselves and friends from the threatened shower.

In company with my young companions, I was engaged in assisting to erect the "Union Tent" on a corner lot, a few rods distant from the preachers' stand. When brother Westlake closed his sermon, an unusual anxiety was depicted in every countenance, and some looked sad and gloomy. All were of the opinion that the services of the meeting would soon be seriously interrupted, if not entirely broken off, by the coming tempest. A storm in the wild wood! How

alarming to the weak and timorous! I have never witnessed a heavy thunderstorm without the deepest emotion of awe and reverence.

At this moment an oppressive silence reigned throughout the encampment, while the muttering thunders were heard in the distant heavens.

"A thunderstorm! the eloquence of heaven,
When every cloud is from its slumber driven,
Who hath not paused amid its hollow groan,
And felt Omnipotence around him thrown!
With what a gloom the ushering scene appears,
The leaves all fluttering with instinctive fears,
The waters curling with a fellow dread,
A breezeless fervor round creation spread,
And last the heavy rain's reluctant shower,
With big drops pattering on the tree and bower,
While wizard shapes the lowering sky deform,
All mark the coming of the thunderstorm!"

At this solemn hour, I saw Rev. William B. Christie for the first time. He ascended the stand to close the service. His voice at first was low, but sweet and melodious; but as he proceeded to line out Cowper's beautiful and well-known hymn, commencing,

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm,"

all eyes in the congregation were riveted upon the stranger. With the reading and singing of each verse of that appropriate hymn, the devotional feeling increased in the audience till the tear of joy sparkled in many an eye; while the hearty "amen" gave additional interest to the scene. At the close of the hymn the assembly kneeled in prayer, while the voice of the stranger was lifted to the throne of grace.

At first the faint whispers of his voice were scarcely audible, owing to preparations in the rear of the stand for a "rainy day." But as the preacher breathed out the desires of a burdened heart in a soft and subdued tone of voice, a solemn and awful stillness fell on the entire encampment. He had not continued long in prayer till all within the area of tents, and in the rear, and on all sides of the ground, fell upon their knees, or assumed a devotional posture. It was but a short time till the sharp crack of the wagoner's whip, and the sound of the ax in the surrounding grove, had died away. At last not a voice or the sound of a solitary footfall on the withered leaves disturbed the stillness of our devotions. The whole scene conspired to remind one of the address to the Hebrew prophet, "Take off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

It was soon apparent, even to the careless, that no ordinary personage was leading the devotion of the people of God at that hour. Brother Christie, after praying for the sanctification of the people of God, the conversion of sinners, and the success of the meeting in general, began to plead most eloquently with almighty God, if consistent with his will in the government of the world, to "stop up the bottles of heaven" and give us "fair weather" in which to continue our worship in the tented grove.

Never shall I forget the sublime portions of the word of God which were quoted in his prayer, with great power and singular appropriateness. I will name a few; such as, "Behold God is great; for he maketh small the drops of water: they pour down rain according to the vapor thereof, which the clouds do drop and distill upon man abundantly. For he saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth; likewise the small rain, and the great rain of his strength. Also, by watering he wearieth the thick cloud: he scattereth his bright cloud, and it is turned round about, so that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth." He also addressed the Almighty as the God of providence -- as able to send or withhold the rain at his pleasure -- as causing it to come for "correction for his land or for mercy," and as "causing it to rain on one city and not on another;" and as working everything after the counsels of his own will, and that "snow and vapor, stormy wind, rain and hail," all fulfilled his word, and then quoted, with pathos and resistless power, the entire history of Elijah on Mount Carmel, and closed by quoting a verse from the hymn sung at the close of the sermon:

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace,
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face."

Never till that day had I known so fully the power and efficacy of prayer; and never before did I witness such a striking and remarkable answer to prayer. The minister on that occasion seemed to converse with God "face to face," as a man with his friend. As the petitioner approached nearer, and nearer still the "mercy-seat," sprinkled with the blood of the Son of God, his faith waxed stronger and stronger till "HE PREVAILED WITH GOD;" and the humble, fervent prayer of the suppliant was almost instantly answered. Hundreds of "living witnesses" at this day would unite their testimony to mine in confirmation of this wonderful interposition of God in answer to the prayer of his faithful servant. Before the close of that ever-memorable prayer, all felt that "the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and that his ear is open unto their cry," and that the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Before he "left off speaking," or while he was yet praying, God turned aside the storm, and the bright cerulean [cerulean adj. deep blue like a clear sky.] was seen through the departing clouds. Never did a more cheerful and luminous light gladden the hearts of God's ancient people in the wilderness than shone out upon the tents of our Israel in the grove that day. As it respects my own observation, I had never seen it on this wise before. That was a memorable day to sinners, "And there was no day like that before, or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man."

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04 -- WILL A HOLY PERSON FEAR A THUNDERSTORM?

From hdm0328 -- "Holiness And The Human Element" By H. A. Baldwin

In the village of Cortland, Ohio, there is a large brick Methodist Church. The rear of the building, where the pulpit is located, is towards the west, and the auditorium is on the second floor. One Sunday morning when the people were gathered for preaching service there arose an awful storm. The wind, lightning and thunder were so terrific that the people became uneasy and frightened. The minister was standing in the pulpit doing his best to encourage them, and said, "Do not be afraid. Before I was converted, I, too, was afraid of storms, but when I was saved I lost all that fear." At that moment the whole gable end of the church fell in and started for the pulpit where the minister was standing. There was no time to consider, or to think of perfect love casting out fear; he jumped from the pulpit and ran down the aisle, shouting, "Come on, brethren." Some of the folks laughed at him -- after it was over. If he had been swimming in the love of God, he would have done just as he did or he would have been a suicide.

The writer was on the camp ground at Steubenville, Ohio, when a cyclone struck it. Thirteen trees were blown down in the circle of tents, the tabernacle fell on the congregation, tents were blown about, people were pinned to the earth and one young lady was killed. These people were good, some of them professed, and doubtless had, the experience of holiness, but, notwithstanding this fact, some of them were on the verge of a nervous collapse, some of them did go under for a time, and others would leave the grounds as soon as a little wind arose. May the writer confess that he has never felt quite as easy in a tent since that time. If the wind blows he would sooner see how things are going on outside than be cooped up in his tent, and he would rather have a tent out in the open than be in danger from suspicious looking trees. Now if any person suspicions the state of the writer's experience, he has company, for there are others who were there that eventful day that will testify to the same feelings. There are possibly some "nervous women" who have never recovered from the shock.

I do not know what form of neurosis a physician would call it, but I have heard a big man testify as follows: "When I was a small boy I had two older brothers who were always scaring me about ghosts and all sorts of spookish things. The impressions thus formed have never left me, and while I know better, and have no real fear (?) yet I can scarcely go out in the dark without a suspicion that there is some lurking bug-a-boo about. And this is true although I have enjoyed perfect love for a number of years." Remember the deep impressions of this man's childhood -- and we are told that such impressions are never forgotten -- and perhaps you will have an explanation of this phenomenon.

Will a holy person fear a thunder storm? Some say, "No," others say, "Possibly." One thing that convinced Wesley of the genuineness of the religion of the Moravians was their fearlessness in the ocean storm. It may be this question should be studied with reference to the psychological or mental makeup of the individuals concerned. In some the sense of sublimity is so highly developed that they stand in awe before a mighty mountain, a waterfall, a rushing cyclone, or the crashing heavens. They are very near eternity. Combine this with a nervous dread of sudden developments, or unlooked-for occurrences (and sublimity and nervous susceptibility are very often combined in the individual,) and one will readily see why a chain of lightning or a

crash of thunder might startle such a person, and this might develop into an almost hysterical dread. The law of self-preservation will cause one to stand at attention when facing real or supposed danger.

Before proceeding further may we state that there are two kinds of fear, as there are two kinds of love, natural and spiritual. We have never seen this distinction definitely drawn unless it is by inference in the passage from Adam Clarke: "Natural fear is a necessary accompaniment of our mundane existence, and is not cast out by perfect love." It would be absurd to unChristianize a person because he fears a backbiting dog, a kicking mule, or a murderous man. Or because he trembles as he stands before a congregation, or shrinks from public notice. Bramwell says, "Our work as ministers of the gospel is of such importance that I frequently tremble exceedingly before I go into the pulpit. Yea, I wonder how I ever dared to engage in such a work." This is the natural man trembling under the burden of the cross. Some of us often feel the same way! Fletcher says that perfect love inclines to timidity.

On the other hand, spiritual fear, as we have called it, for want of a better name, is servile dread of the Almighty, slavish fear of man, carnal shrinking from showing one's colors, shrinking from doing one's duty because of the consequences, or any other form of fear that hinders a man from being his whole bigness for God and from standing in every place where brave men are needed. Then there is what the Bible calls the fear of the Lord. This fear, in a greater or lesser degree, exists in every saved or sanctified heart. Rut even this fear, as we will see in the quotation from Edwards below, is regulated by the fullness of the Spirit which one has attained. When the fear of the Lord becomes servile, it is inconsistent with sanctifying grace. The fear of the Lord which is not cast out by perfect love is filial and loving; servile fear is salutary and tends to lead the soul to God; filial fear is binding and tends to hold the soul in loving contact with the Lord. With awe and reverence the trusting soul pillows its head on the bosom of the Almighty, and says, "I love Thee for Thou hast loved me."

The feeling of natural fear will cause one to shun dangerous places or circumstances, such as burning buildings, falling walls, thin ice, pestilences, dark and dangerous alleys, dangerous communities. One may dread public notice, false accusations or calumny. They may stand in awe before natural phenomena, such as earthquakes and storms, or before those whom they consider their superiors or those who are unduly critical; they may hesitate under the cross of an unusual burden, and cry, "If it be possible, let this cup pass," but grace will add, "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." Clarke says, "We are not to suppose that the love of God casts out every kind of fear from the soul; it only casts out that which has torment.

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05 -- WHAT HAPPENED TO SOME WAGS DURING A THUNDERSTORM

From hdm0010 -- "A History Of The Methodist Episcopal Church" Vol. III By Nathan Bangs

When the writer of this history visited Detroit, in 1804, he obtained an old building called the "Council House" to preach in. On his second visit, while preaching in the evening there arose a tremendous storm, accompanied with the most vivid lightning and awful peals of thunder. He continued his sermon, however, reminding his hearers that this war in the elements was but a

faint resemblance of that day when "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." He was afterward informed that some of "the baser sort" of the young men; after the candles were lighted, deposited some powder in them at such a distance from the haze that they supposed it would take fire and explode during the sermon. They were disappointed. The exercises closed without any explosion, because the candles had not burned down to the powder. These wags, after all was over, informed their associates of what they had done, and remarked, that while the peals of thunder were bursting over the house, they were fearful that the Almighty was about to hurl a bolt at their heads, as a punishment for their wickedness, and hence they sat trembling for their fate during the greater part of the sermon.

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06 -- A THUNDERSTORM IN ANSWER TO FREEBORN GARRETTSON'S PRAYER
From hdm0013 -- "The Life Of Freeborn Garrettson" By Nathan Bangs

"I crossed the river and went to my appointment, which was at J. More's on Broad Creek. The people assembled, from all quarters; and many came out, some from afar, who were enemies to the way. I had scarcely opened my mouth when my burden dropped off, and in an uncommon manner the Holy Scriptures were opened to me; and the flame ran from heart to heart. I felt as though I had almost faith enough to remove mountains. One thing was noticed, not only by my friends, but likewise by those who were enemies, -- there had been a great drought, so that the vegetable creation hung in mourning; and it was thought by many they would lose their crops if it continued much longer. In a particular manner I was led to pray for rain; and a few minutes after the congregation was dismissed, the face of the sky was covered with blackness, and we had a plentiful shower. This greatly surprised and convinced the people. I was now happy enough to see the prosperity of the young converts. While the Lord was plentifully watering the earth, I collected the family for prayer; and we had a great time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. My soul was so happy while the Lord was uttering his voice in thunder, that it seemed as if I saw, by an eye of faith, the blessed Jesus, and the glorified company around him, in exalted strains, singing and shouting his praise. And this joy continued with me till some time in the night; I then sweetly rested in the arms of my Lord.

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07 -- A THUNDERSTORM DELAYED IN ANSWER TO HOLY ANN'S PRAYER
From hdm0016 -- An Irish Saint, The Life Story of Ann Preston, Known also as "Holy Ann" By Helen E. Bingham

Perhaps the writer might be pardoned for referring to a personal experience along the same line. A friend was expected to arrive by train at the depot about five miles from our home. The men were too busy to go, and it had been arranged that I should take the horse and buggy and go and meet him. However, just before the time to leave, a heavy thunder shower came up. I had always been very much afraid of the lightning, and dreaded the idea of being caught in a thunderstorm away from home. My mother sought to persuade me not to go, as there was no doubt about the storm bursting shortly. We then appealed to Ann, and after quiet communion she

turned and said that it was all right for me to go for not a drop would fall until I had reached my destination. In spite of the gathering storm I drove off and reached the end of my journey. The horse was put in, and just after meeting my friend the rain began to come down in torrents, and we had a tremendous demonstration of electric power.

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08 -- CARRADINE PREACHED ON DURING A THUNDERSTORM

From hdm0048 -- "Revival Incidents" By Beverly Carradine

One Sabbath night in a western state, I was preaching to an excellent audience under a large canvas tent, when a violent wind tempest, accompanied with bursts of rain, swept down upon us. It seemed for a moment as if the big tent would be caught up bodily into the air, so terrific was the sweep of the wind; but fully thirty or forty men sprang to the side poles and with united strength held the great, struggling, fluttering, white body in place. All of these men were dressed in black, and as each one stood by a pole holding it down, he had his face turned toward me, not wishing to lose a word of the sermon.

There was nothing to do but for the preacher to preach, and for the band of noble, strong, faithful Holiness brethren to hold the tent down. Both were done. The stalwart, devoted hands held the tabernacle fast, and the people say I preached exactly two hours. Was ever a sermon preached under such circumstances? And who that beheld and heard can ever forget how God blessed us all that stormy evening?

Years have passed, but the memory of that night, with its claps of thunder, the moaning sweep of the wind, the flashes of lightning, the solemn attention of the audience, the sight of that strangely human pillared tabernacle, and the unmistakable presence and power of God, has not and never can or will leave the tablets of my mind and the deep recesses of my heart.

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09 -- JOHN NEWTON FOUND MERCY DURING A THUNDERSTORM -- (First Account)

From hdm0049 -- "Revival Sermons" By Beverly Carradine

John Newton was a fearful character. All the means of grace had failed to touch him, and so God brewed a special storm at sea to awe his haughty spirit. the clouds and waves knotted themselves together, the thunders crashed in platoons, the lightnings poured down in electric cataracts--the scene was one of horror, and the heart of the bold bad man trembled and sank before the Omnipotent God who was flinging His wrath abroad. Falling on his face on the deck of the ship he called for mercy, and God forgave him then and there. Later on in England, he was sanctified and preached with the courage of Paul and wrote hymns with the sweetness of John. Look into the Methodist Hymn Book and when you read a hymn especially beautiful, tender and pure you will find John Newton's name at the top. I recall a couple of stanzas of one of them:

"I saw One hanging on a tree
In agonies and blood,

Who fixed His dying eyes on me
As near His cross I stood.

Sure never 'till my latest breath
Can I forget that look;
It seemed to charge me with His death
Though not a word He spoke."

As you feel the heart melt and eyes fill under these tender and solemn lines do you think that John Newton, whose pinions had been broken by the shots of Satan, was soaring as high again?

Hallelujah! Our Christ is able to save unto the uttermost. He can undo the works of the devil. He found our hearts black, and made them whiter than the snow. He lifted us up from the pit, and will yet place us above the stars. Hallelujah! Glory! Bless the Lord! Amen!

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10 -- JOHN NEWTON FOUND MERCY DURING A THUNDERSTORM -- (Second Account)
From hdm0692 -- "Effectual Prayer" By G. Chester Morgan

Fervent prayer availeth much in the salvation of the unsaved. It availed much when the great English preacher and song writer, John Newton, was an exceedingly wayward youth. He ran away from his widowed mother and made his way to Africa where he gave himself up to every manner of unbridled sin. But his mother never ceased to pray for him. She often expressed her faith that he would be saved and become a minister. Her nightly prayer was always for her wayward son; her early morning prayer was a deep welling up in her soul and cry to heaven for her son to come back to God. One day she was found dead, kneeling by her bedside in an attitude of prayer with the coverlets wet with her tears. There is no question that she pleaded with dying breath for the salvation of her erring boy. At that time, John, in the heart of Africa, was seized with fearful conviction. Driven by his frenzy, he returned to the seacoast and boarded a ship for England. While he was at sea a terrible storm arose. The lightning flashed and the thunders bellowed until the entire crew expected the immediate destruction of the ship. The bold, bad heart of John Newton melted like wax before a fire. He began to cry mightily to God, who gloriously converted him. Upon hearing of his mother's prayers for him, he became one of the most devoted spiritual preachers that ever graced the pulpits of England. Truly he sang from his heart:

"Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see."

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11 -- HOW A THUNDERSTORM BROUGHT REVIVAL DURING A CAUGHEY MEETING

From hdm0937 -- "Revival Miscellanies" By James Caughey

I was present in the awful and important hour when a most powerful revival commenced, under the following circumstances and instrumentality: In the town of Burlington, State of Vermont, United States, we had a small Methodist society. It had been in existence several years; but, having no "house of worship," and having to hold their meetings in school-houses, and in private dwellings, their influence with the community was very limited. A few brethren, assisted by several of the inhabitants of the place, resolved to build a house for God. After many painful struggles and sacrifices, the church was completed and dedicated. The pastor and his little flock, entering into conversation respecting their depressed state in such an important town, came to the conclusion, now that they had a church, that something should be done towards filling it with regular hearers, and also to increase the number of converted members. It was resolved, accordingly, to hold a "protracted meeting."

The prospects of a revival were very problematical to their feeble faith. The pastor secured the assistance of several ministers, among whom was the writer. Many said, "What can these feeble Methodists do?" We felt the force of the remark, and humbled ourselves before God. We had preaching every night, but could make no impression upon hardened sinners. One night, after a sermon from Romans 12:1, -- "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service," -- and just as the congregation was retiring, and before we knew of a single case of awakening, and I should think before fifty of the audience got out, a most tremendous storm of thunder, lightning, and rain, burst over the town. The windows of the church were unusually large, and they appeared all in a blaze, from the effect of the lightning.

The mass of the people were arrested in a moment. It was at a season of the year when thunder is very seldom heard in that country. The storm raged in fury; and one of the preachers, a plain young man, began to exhort, and wielded with power that passage in the eleventh Psalm, -- "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup." Thus, while God thundered and lightened outside, his minister did the same within. It was a scene of terror and awful grandeur. Some began to tremble, and weep, and pray. At length there was a movement towards the ministers, where they were standing at the altar; not to take vengeance upon the fiery exhorter, but to cry for mercy from that God who was thundering through the heavens, and to seek an interest in the prayers of his people. Still the storm continued, with peals of loudest thunder, which were reached by successive bursts of the most impassioned appeals to the consciences of terrified sinners. Nothing was heard but, --

"See the storm of vengeance gathering
O'er the path you dare to tread;
Hear the awful thunder rolling,
Loud and louder, o'er your head!"

And all this attended by the deep and subdued groans of sinners, slain by the sword of the Spirit. This was help in time of need. Victory, from the Lord of hosts, was on our side from that hour; and the victories achieved by a preached Gospel, during the three or four weeks following, amazed the whole town.

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12 -- HOW A PRAYER FOR RAIN BROUGHT A THUNDERSTORM

From hdm2219 -- "Wayside Sketches" By Mrs. Sarah A. Cooke

Dear Bro. Kent: Brothers and Sisters of the "Banner": "Where shall I His praise begin?" Once more I am amidst the beauties of nature, breathing the fresh country air, and tracing every day the works of our God, His handiwork in hill and valley, in the moon as she walks in her brightness, and the sun in his glorious majesty making the circuit of the heavens; still, as in the days of old when the prophets walked this earth, "all His works praise Him," and His saints, taking up the chorus, "bless His holy name." As we rode together yesterday, the heat was very great, and the thirsty land seemed calling for the rain. After a long pause, the dear brother whose thoughts had gone home to fields and crops, said: "I wish you would pray for rain!" I answered I would; "and let us pray right now;" and, slackening the horse's pace, we poured out our full hearts to God -- the God of Elijah. We took dinner at a friend's, where he left me, to go some fourteen miles farther to his home, to return in two or three days. Long before he could have reached his home the clouds gathered, the lightnings flashed, the thunder pealed, and then, in torrents, came the refreshing rain, making all nature to rejoice. "O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, who still maketh the bright clouds and giveth the showers of rain!"

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13 -- WHY SHE WAS NOT AFRAID DURING THE THUNDERSTORM AT SEA

From hdm0564 -- "Mastering Our Midnights" By Russell V. DeLong

An ocean liner was crossing the Atlantic. A terrific storm struck. The lightnings flashed, thunders roared, winds blew. The ship climbed the mountainous waves and plunged to the watery depths. It seemed that the vessel would break in two or sink. Everyone was frightened -- that is, everyone except one little girl who sat rocking her doll and singing.

Someone asked, "Little girl, aren't you scared?"

She replied, "No. My father is captain of this ship. His hand is on the wheel. All is well."

Listen, friend. If you have lost control, let Christ, the great Pilot, become your Pilot. Thus you can gain control here and hear God say, "Well done," hereafter.

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14 -- SHE DID WHAT SHE COULD DURING A THUNDERSTORM

From hdm0104 "Selected Sermon Illustrations" By Absalom Backas (A.B.) Earle

Six years ago Miss Shelley won a gold medal from the Iowa Legislature, "and a wealth of admiration from all who read of her act of heroism." The facts are these. In a fearful thunder-storm and a torrent of falling rain, she looked out of her window in the darkness of the

night, and by the vivid flashes of lightning shining on the scene, she saw that a railroad bridge near her home had been swept away by the storm. Just then she saw the headlight of a locomotive swiftly approaching the spot where the bridge had just been swept away, and plunge into the abyss below. She lighted her lantern, and alone, amidst the thunder and lightning and storm, she crept up a rocky steep, and with her clothes torn to rags, and lacerated flesh, she reached the rails, and on her hands and knees crept out to the last tie of the fallen bridge, swung her lantern back and forth over the abyss, until she heard the faint voice of an engineer, who, though in the greatest peril himself, cried to her to go quickly and give the alarm, to save an express train which was then coming towards that perilous spot, and some help, also, to rescue him.

She started for the nearest station, which was a mile away. To reach that station, she had to cross a high trestle bridge of five hundred feet in length. She had gone but a few steps when a fearful gust of wind put out her lantern, which she threw away, knowing she could not re-light it in the storm. So she dropped upon her hands and knees, and crept along from tie to tie over the trestle. Her way was lighted only by frequent flashes of lightning. After crossing the bridge, she hastened along the rails by the flashes of lightning to the station, and with what strength she had left told her story, and then fell in a dead faint at the station-agent's feet.

Help went quickly to the poor engineer's rescue, and telegrams flew up and down the line, notifying all that the bridge was gone. While Miss Shelley lay yet unconscious, the express train came rushing into the depot.

When the passengers learned what perils the brave girl had passed through to save them, and saw her still lying in an unconscious state, they took her up tenderly, and bathed her torn and bleeding limbs, and soon brought her back to consciousness. Oh, how the scene beggars description, as the men and women gather about this brave girl of sixteen, looking upon her pale face, her torn and bleeding form. As they think how she went through all this to save their lives, words are too weak and lean to express the deep gratitude of their hearts. They laid a substantial expression of their appreciation at her feet. Then, as the best they could do, they embalmed her memory in their warmest affections, while the world placed a wreath of lasting honor on her brow. And Kate Shelley, living or dying, with her approving conscience, can say:

"I did what I could."

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15 -- A SURPRISING ANSWER TO PRAYER DURING A THUNDERSTORM

From hdm0551 -- "The Voice Of God" By Paul Frederick Elliott

The Baptist church stood on the hill about two blocks from our home. I could see the folks going to church; I hated every one of them, and cursed them as far as I could see them. When the bell would ring I would put my fingers in my ears so I could not hear the sound. One Sunday morning, while it was ringing, there was thundering and lightning; I called on the God whom I tried to disbelieve in to strike the church with lightning. To my surprise, God answered the prayer of a sinner. There was a sharp flash and a clap of thunder. I looked out of the window,

and soon discovered that the church had been struck with lightning. It had struck the rear of the building and run by the pulpit. This frightened the preacher and the choir, for they were not used to the fire.

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16 -- BENJAMIN ABBOTT'S THUNDER-GUST SERMON -- (First Account)

From hdm0361 -- "Experience And Gospel Labor Of Benjamin Abbott" By John Ffirth

Next morning I went to the place of my appointment, where I found many hundreds collected on the occasion of a funeral there that day. The minister who preached the funeral sermon being of the Church form, went through the ceremonies thereof, and then preached a short, easy, smooth, soft sermon, which amounted to almost nothing. By this time a gust was rising, and the firmament was covered with blackness; two clouds appeared to come from different quarters, and to meet over the house, which caused the people to crowd into the house, up stairs and down, to screen themselves from the storm: when the minister had done, he asked me if I would say something to the people. I arose, and with some difficulty got on one of the benches, the house was so greatly crowded; and almost as soon as I began, the Lord out of heaven began also. The tremendous claps of thunder exceeded any thing I ever had heard, and the streams of lightning flashed through the house in a most awful manner!

It shook the very foundation of the house, the windows jarred with the violence thereof I lost no time, but set before them the awful coming of Christ, in all his splendor, with all the armies of heaven, to judge the world and to take vengeance on the ungodly! It may be, cried I, that he will descend in the next clap of thunder! The people screamed, screeched, and fell all through the house. The lightning, thunder, and rain continued for about the space of one hour, in the most awful manner ever known in that country, during which time I continued to set before the people the coming of Christ to judge the world, warning and inviting sinners to flee to Christ. One old sinner made an attempt to go, but had not gone far before he fell. Some went to him and put him in a carriage, and took him home, where, as I was informed, he remained three days and three nights, and neither ate nor drank. When the storm abated we broke up the meeting; many were that day convinced, and many converted.

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17 -- BENJAMIN ABBOTT'S THUNDER-GUST SERMON -- (Second Account)

From hdm0222 -- "Benjamin Abbott, "No Man's Copy" by Duane V. Maxey

Thus he continued, from place to place, with scarcely varying effect, till he arrived near Kent Meeting-house, (Hinson's Chapel,) where a still more remarkable scene occurred. Many hundreds were collected at a funeral service, which was conducted by a church clergyman, who, after the usual forms and a sermon, invited Abbott to address the assembly. A tempest had been rising, covering the heavens; "two clouds appeared to approach from different quarters and met over the house. The people crowded in, upstairs and down, to screen themselves from the storm. With some difficulty the evangelist made his way through the throng, and took his stand on one of the benches.

Almost as soon as he "began, the Lord out of heaven began also." The tremendous claps of thunder exceeded anything he had ever heard, and the streams of lightning flashed through the house in "a most awful manner. The very foundations shook, the windows jarred with the violence thereof." He lost no time, but "set before them the awful coming of Christ, in all his splendor, with all the armies of heaven, to judge the world, and to take vengeance on the ungodly." The people wept, cried aloud, and fell all through the house. One "old sinner" attempted to escape, but fell to the floor as dead. The lightning, thunder, and rain "continued for about one hour in the most awful manner ever known in that country," during which time he continued to "set before the people the coming of Christ to judge the world, warning and inviting them to flee to him."

Many were "convinced and many converted" on that great day. Fourteen years later, while Abbott was passing through the same region, he met "twelve living witnesses," who informed him that they dated their salvation from it, and enumerated others who had died in the faith, and some who had moved out of the neighborhood, who began their Christian life at that memorable time. It was long an occasion of general interest in the neighborhood, and old Methodists of Kent County were accustomed to speak with wonder of what they called "Abbott's thunder-gust sermon." "Between the voice of the Lord from heaven and the voice of his servant in the house, the people had never known such a time.

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18 -- A SLAVE TO LIQUOR DELIVERED DURING A THUNDERSTORM

From hdm0361 -- "Experience And Gospel Labor Of Benjamin Abbott" By John Ffirth

A schoolmaster in the neighborhood, who was a learned sensible man, but a very drunken and wicked one, got awakened, and so far reformed, that he left off drinking to excess, and other vices, for sometime; but at a certain time he gave way to temptation, and was overcome by strong drink; after he got sober, his mind was tormented with great horror, and he went to a neighbor's house to tarry all night: in the night, after the family were all in bed, he could not sleep, but lay with tormenting reflections, which increased his fears, until at length he imagined that he saw two devils enter the room, in order to take him away. This frightened him out of bed, and he ran up into one corner of the room, and there screamed and fought as though he was fighting and beating off the two devils.

This alarmed the whole family, who arose in great confusion, and could not tell what to do. They sent over for me; I went, and found him in a shocking condition: I told him it was only the strength of imagination; that there were no devils there to take him away; but he still declared they were in the room; and what added to the awfulness of the scene, was, at this time, a very dark and dismal cloud arose in the skies, that gave awful sensations to all who beheld it: at length a most remarkable flash of lightning came blazing from the clouds, and the streams of lightning flashed into the house, and a tremendous clap of thunder, equal to any I had ever heard, burst forth as if the place had been sinking, and the very house trembled. At this instant I felt the power of the Lord, like lightning, run through me. I instantly went to prayer, and they all fell upon their knees, and were much affected, and continued in supplication during the whole night.

Soon after this, all the grown part of the family were brought into the liberty and knowledge of the truth, as it is in Jesus.

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19 -- DELIVERED FROM A FLASH-FLOOD AFTER A THUNDERSTORM

From hdm0194 -- "Deliverance From A Flash Flood" By Blanche Perry Fuhrman

[This dramatic event occurred years ago at Kentucky Mountain Bible Institute.]

We girls rushed into the hall. Someone, looking at her watch, said, "Three-thirty." There was an awful roar, a crashing of timbers, a flickering of the gas lights, then total darkness. The building gave a lurch, then a groan; she had gone off her foundations. I cannot describe my feelings. The water rose twenty feet in five minutes. There had been a cloudburst farther back in the hills; the water rushed off the mountain sides in torrents causing a flash-flood in the narrow gorge where the buildings were located. We were perfectly helpless. My first thought was that we were God's children, that this was His school and His water and if He wanted to let His water wash His Bible School away with His children in it, it was His business. A great calmness came over me and I knew I was ready to meet God. The building shook violently; the windows crashed; the ceiling began dropping at our feet; pictures fell off the walls; dishes tumbled across the floor, while trunks, pianos, chairs, and girls were lashed from one side of the hall to the other. The floor opened and things began dropping through. Thunder rolled; lightning flashed; the rain poured. It was dark as a dungeon, and the whole situation was horrible.

The water kept rising. We rushed to the attic; the steps disappeared immediately. In less than ten minutes we had floated a mile or more. The water was soon knee-deep in the attic. The lightning would flash and linger, thus lighting the whole attic at times. Elsie stood by the window weeping. The devil was there to tempt and she cried out, "If we really belonged to God and He loves us, why did we not have a warning? Do you suppose He loves us?" I saw she was frightened and the devil was taking advantage. How I wanted to console her. Putting my hand on her shoulder, I said, "Elsie, we've trusted God to save us and to sanctify us and to take us through school, can't you trust Him now? No one will ever know how you took it but can't you prove to Him that you really do love Him by going out to meet Him calmly?"

She turned; the lightning flashed. I wish you could have seen her face! Heaven was all over it as she smiled through her tears and exultantly cried, "Of course, I can trust Him! I don't know why I hadn't thought of that before! Girls! Had you thought? In a few minutes we will all be with Jesus!" I'll never forget that face.

By this time the building was too dangerous to remain in any longer. We decided to jump out. Elsie went first. I saw her swim a few feet in that awful current. Then she went down. I felt sick all over. I knew she was gone. Her body was found three days later about fifty miles away. I couldn't weep for her because she was with Jesus.

Christine sat in the window. I can still see her big blue eyes and face as white as snow. "Are you going?" I ventured.

"I can swim but not that current," she replied. "If you'll move back, I'll go," I told her. "We have only a few seconds left."

She moved back and I jumped into that awful creek of angry, swirling, muddy water. She followed immediately. Her body was found later about fifteen miles away. She is also with Jesus now.

Memories of that horrible plunge cause me to shudder yet. I could not swim, therefore expected soon to be in heaven. I asked the Lord to keep me calm and sensible so He could help me if He wanted me to live. A great calmness crept over me and I thought rapidly. I knew the current was too strong for me and there was no use fighting it. I gave myself to the current, which sent me to the bottom. I knew the human body would float if given a chance. I held my breath, relaxed, came to the top, caught my breath; then went down again. I repeated the process for two or three miles. Sometimes I would float on my back, sometimes hang on to a bit of debris and sometimes tread the water standing up...

I was too weak to sing, so sailed on. My ten-mile journey came to an end when I picked up a two-by-four and pushed the debris -- trunks, mattresses, chairs, boards, etc., from between my board and the bank and drifted in. (Miss Drake was rescued one-half mile farther down.) Near the bank I caught hold of a willow limb, threw myself into the tree, slid down to the bottom, the water being up to my neck; then pulled myself to the bank.

Daylight had dawned. It was still raining. A snake wriggled out of the weeds and slid into the water. I tried to walk but my head was so heavy it kept pulling me over. The angry old river kept lashing the bank. I sat down and for a moment forgot what had happened. My head was in a whirl.

Finally, pulling myself together, I followed a path which led to a mountain home. The mother and several children stared at me with horror. I explained as best I could what had happened. Then she ventured, "Ain't ye scared to death?" I said, "No, I'm a Christian and was ready to go." She gave me some dry clothes, and I walked barefoot two miles across a hill where I was met by the Mt. Carmel workers and taken to the high school.

There were about sixty lives lost (I don't know the exact number), nine of our group.

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20 -- JONAS ORAMEL PECK SAVED DURING A THUNDERSTORM
From hdm0401 -- "Forty Witnesses" By S. Olin Garrison

Taken from "Divine Life" and submitted to Dr. Peck for revision. -- Ed.

I was converted in 1856, in Vermont, on a mountain, alone, amid a terrific thunder storm, after only a few minutes' meditation upon the goodness of God.

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21 -- A WEIRD BAPTISMAL SERVICE DURING A THUNDERSTORM

From hdm0091 -- "Phineas F. Bresee -- A Prince In Israel" By E. A. Girvin

"Arrangements had been made for a baptismal service on Saturday afternoon, at the lake. The church having no baptistery for persons desiring the ordinance by immersion, the lake is resorted to. Saturday came with wind and rain. For a time our going was a question, but candidates desired that there be no postponement, so those who had gathered at the church repaired to the lake, where many awaited them. Nearly three hundred Nazarenes gathered on the shore. A song was sung, prayer offered, a brief ritual service held, and the pastor and his helpers began baptizing the twenty-nine candidates. It was somewhat of a weird scene. The clouds had gathered blacker than before, the forked lightning was playing in every part of the heavens, the rain was coming down, and nearby was an upset boat, which had been overturned a few hours before, resulting in the drowning of the fisherman, whose body had not been recovered. As all mingled, pealing thunder, flashing lightning, descending rain, the presence of death, the song of the warriors, the vows of eternal devotion to Jesus Christ, the dashing waves, the gathered multitude, the anxious candidates, the officiating minister, the shouts of triumph--the scene was one not easily described, and not to be forgotten.

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22 -- THE FAMOUS HAYSTACK PRAYERMEETING DURING A THUNDERSTORM

From hdm0092 -- "Hazarded Lives" By Edith P. Goodnow

A little boy stood at his mother's knee and as she prayed and laid her hands upon his head, he heard her pray for the heathen. The years passed and this Samuel J. Mills was in college, and when he accepted Christ a strange burden came upon him for the heathen. He planned a missionary day out in the woods with several of his college mates. But his hopes were blighted in the coming up of a thunderstorm, which scattered the congregation, and he with five other boys found shelter under a haystack.

The Haystack Prayermeeting -- In April, 1806

"We can do it if we will."

That summer the prayermeetings were held twice a week, on Wednesday afternoons under some willows and on Saturday afternoons in a maple grove in what was then called Sloan's Meadow, half way between the college and the Hoosic River.

One hot, sultry, Saturday afternoon in August the group was unusually small -- only five were present -- Samuel Mills, James Richards, Francis Robbins, Harvey Loomis and Byram Green. As they prayed, a heavy thunderstorm came up and they ran to a nearby haystack for shelter. As they sat under the hay their talk turned to Asia that most of them had been studying in their college course of geography. The work of the East India Company which was just opening Asia to trade came in for its share of the discussion, and from this it was but a step to the moral darkness and misery of the people. Of course, that was Mills' opportunity with deep feeling and

enthusiasm he pointed out that they themselves knew the one and only remedy for these awful conditions, the gospel of Jesus Christ, and, consequently, it was their duty to carry this gospel to those who needed it so much. He closed his appeal with the words destined to echo down through all the years since -- "We can do it if we will."

The others all agreed and shared his mounting enthusiasm with the exception of Harvey Loomis. He raised the objection that the time was not yet ripe -- the missionaries would all be killed, he said; what should come first was a new crusade and then, after the heathen were all nicely subdued, it might be safe to send out a few missionaries. The others with one accord rejected this view and several pointed out that God was always willing to have His cause and plan of salvation advanced, and if Christians would do their part God would do His. The time seemed ripe to clinch the matter so Mills said, "Come, let us make it a subject of prayer under the haystack, while the dark clouds are going and the clear sky is coming."

One by one they prayed that their vision might become a reality, till only Harvey Loomis and Samuel Mills had not yet prayed. Loomis refused to pray: why should he pray for something he did not believe possible? he asked. That left Mills alone to pray, but his faith had been mounting till this rebuff only served to intensify it. He laid hold on God and prayed mightily till God's glory fell on him and he was through to a clear sky spiritually just as the thunder clouds rolled away and left the sky blue, the air fresh and the westering sunlight golden. And so possibly the most momentous prayermeeting in American history came to an end.

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23 -- HOW GOD BROKE UP A CIRCUS WITH A THUNDERSTORM

From hdm1531 -- "Praying Clear Through" By William J. Harney

It was a beautiful sunshiny morning in October. Brother Yates and I were holding a meeting in Louisville, Ark., and this morning we decided to take a walk through the city. As we were wandering about we came to a well-beaten country road, and as we passed over the railroad tracks, we noticed they were unloading a circus. We said to Brother Yates, "This will never do. God is displeased, this circus will draw the crowd or part of it that we ought to have in the tabernacle meeting today; the young people, the boys and girls especially, will be so anxious to see those elephants, lions, panthers and the other wild animals, that they will go there instead of to the meeting."

My soul was troubled, my spirit was pressed when strangely the Holy Spirit whispered in my heart, "Is not the same God who rolled back the Red Sea and gave Israel a dry path, who rolled back the waters of the Jordan and gave Israel dry footing, is not this same God, who quenched the fiery furnace, who locked the lions' mouths, answered Elijah's cry in Mt. Carmel, is not He able to stop this circus?" Yes! So tenderly the Holy Spirit whispered, "Cannot you pray clear through; cannot you get a grip upon God? Cannot you place your face between your knees? Will not God answer your heart's cry? Is He not the same yesterday, today and forever?" "Before he calls I will answer." Dare to trust Him. "Ask, and ye shall receive," and if two agree it shall be done.

We turned our steps homeward, or rather to our room, and went before God in earnest, protracted soul agony. There was a crushing burden on our hearts. We felt that God would be true to His promise if we could get hold of that promise and make it ours. Somehow the Spirit pressed us more and more urging us on, urging us to pray and helping us to take hold on God. Finally, from the depths of our spirits, we began crying, "Lord, send a cyclone! Lord, send a cyclone! Tear up that circus tent, teach these godless church-members a lesson, open their eyes and help them to see their sin, help them to see what it means to leave a meeting with altars crowded with broken -- hearted seekers and go to a circus. The more we prayed, the more we wanted to pray; we could not let go the horns of the altar, it seemed we had to pray until we prayed clear through; we had to pray until we heard from the God of Heaven; we had to pray until the answer came. After a time, Brother Yates said, "I must go to the tabernacle and practice some new songs," but the Holy Spirit kept us on our faces and we continued to pray. Just before noon, God gave us a wonderful, glorious vision.

There on our knees, by faith, we could see the black storm clouds gathering, we could hear the thunder rolling, we could see the lightning flashing. The Holy Spirit said in unmistakable terms, "God has answered your cry and the cyclone is coming. The circus tent will be broken down. The people will be taught a lesson, God will be honored, sinners convicted and blinded church members will have scales drop from their eyes. " After God gave us this promise, we arose from our knees, our spirit was satisfied, we knew that God was working.

We went to dinner at the boarding-house and after partaking of the meal arose and announced the fact that, in answer to prayer, God would send a cyclone that afternoon about two o'clock. Some of the folks took it seriously, others laughed and mocked at the idea. Still others said God would not answer such a prayer, and others advised, "You had best wait and see, for it is only two hours now if the cyclone comes at two o'clock; you will not have so long to wait." We went back to our rooms, once again to our knees, and began crying to God not to fail us. We had given forth His message, we had publicly stated that which the Holy Spirit had whispered in our hearts, and now we plead with Him to see us through. Again the Spirit whispered and assured us, "It is coming. Wait." "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength."

We went to the afternoon service, sang one hymn, prayed one prayer, gave a few minutes talk, and then there was a terrific clap of thunder announcing the fact that the cyclone was coming. We said to the people, "Hurry to your homes, the storm is on." What forked lightning! what black clouds! Men and women rushed homeward, some screamed aloud, and all in a terrible fright. It was an awful hour, the circus had just been opened. The cyclone struck the circus tent and tore it wide open and down went the center pole. The people were rushing homeward in the wildest confusion. That night we had hundreds at the tabernacle, God had awakened the people to realize that He still answers prayer. Those who laughed and scoffed at our announcement of God sending a cyclone were put to shame. God got the glory.

Oh, dare to trust Him, He will answer prayer. He has never failed us, but in order to have the answer, we must wait, we must have patience. we must pray clear through. Jesus will answer prayer. Will we call upon Him? Will we hold fast until He gives the witness that the answer is coming? We can have it if we will.

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24 -- A HOLY VOW MADE DURING A THUNDERSTORM

From hdm1864 -- "Tears And Triumphs" By John William Harris

Here is an outstanding event which took place in her [Pearl Yantis'] early Christian life when she was about fifteen years of age and had become a member of the Epworth League, a young people's society in the Church. At first this was very beneficial, but finally the Christian zeal waned, and the young people began to meet in various homes for sociability instead of spirituality. It was on one of these occasions that an entertainment was gotten up by the more worldly inclined who called it "The Crazy Social." None knew its nature except those who had planned it. It was held on a lawn where a table was luxuriously spread for the occasion. Various worldly stunts were performed which produced loud laughter.

But right in the very height of their hilarity a violent storm broke in on their revelry with awful fury blinding lightning, peals of thunder which shook the earth, and a heavy wind accompanied with torrents of rain which flooded the earth -- making a wreck of the table with its contents and other fixings, and driving the frightened Leaguers in great confusion into the house for shelter. It was a humbled crowd of young people which broke up that night. As our heroine started for her own home with two of her girl friends and her brother, in a buggy, she had time to meditate upon her folly; especially as it was intensely dark and the road very narrow and most dangerous, having a deep ditch on one side running full of water, the flashing lightning now and then illuminating the way. Suddenly there was a blinding flash, a deafening roar, and the horse fell in the shafts stunned. As she prayed for the Lord to spare her life, she promised him never to again engage in such folly. This sacred vow she kept inviolate to the end of her life.

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25 -- HE THOUGHT OF JONAH DURING A FRIGHTFUL THUNDERSTORM

From hdm0432 -- "Running From God" The Life Story of Rev. J.W. Morgan By S. P. Hawley

Coming from Montreal back to the United States I boarded the steamer "Persia," came up the St. Lawrence River past the Thousand Islands, and on to Port Delusia near Buffalo, New York. There were about two hundred passengers on board. All of us were having a hilarious time drinking and dancing. The dance broke up about midnight when we retired to our staterooms.

Soon there came a flash of lightning followed by a mighty thunder peal. The wind was high, and repeated flashes of lightning revealed to our bewildered vision the angry waves beating upon the ship. The thunder continued to roll and soon the rain began to pour in torrents from the blackened sky. The pilot lost his channel, and suddenly the ship crashed into a rock in Lake Ontario. The shock was so sudden and so severe that I was almost thrown from my bed. I got up at once, dressed hurriedly, and ran up on deck to see what had happened. There an awful sight was presented to my vision. About fifty men and women in their night clothes were down on their knees praying and screaming. I shall never forget the awful confusion and babel of prayer and screams in that terrible hour. All of us thought that we should be lost in the bottom of Lake Ontario. Just then above the din I heard a man yelling in thunder tones: "Cheer up everybody, the

worst is yet to come. We are all going to hell." And instantly I thought of Jonah and wondered if I were the Jonah that had caused that wreck.

If Jonah were thrown into the sea and swallowed by the whale because he was running from God, why should I expect any better? I had sinned and brought sorrow to my mother and disgrace to myself. Every sin I had committed came rolling up before me as a great mountain. I had never realized as now how black my life had been. I, who had been reared by a devout Christian mother, who had been taught to pray at her knee, and had twice known the love of God and His pardoning grace, had gone on and on in sin. Oh! why had I sinned? Why had I not given my life to God? And if I had owned the world I would have cheerfully given it all at that moment for a square foot of solid ground on which to stand. Thus I stood meditating and expecting at any moment to be called into the presence of an angry God to give an account for a life of sin and disobedience to His voice.

But God was merciful to me, and it was not very long until a tugboat came from Brockville and pulled us off the rock at nine o'clock the next morning which was Labor Day. We stopped at Toronto several hours for repairs, the ship having been damaged considerably, then sailed on to Buffalo, N.Y.

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26 -- RAIN-SHOWER CONVERTS DURING A THUNDERSTORM

From hdm2360 -- "History Of The E. Genesee Conference" By Freeborn Garrettson Hibbard

Brother J. D. Kipp says: "The Ontario Circuit at that time embraced eight preaching appointments, namely, Walworth, Macedon Center, Hall's Center, Ridge Chapel, Ontario, Pultneyville, Centenary, and East Williamson. The camp-meeting," he adds, "held a little west of Walworth, at which many were converted, was visited near its close with a severe thunder-storm, in which all the tents but two were blown down. These last contained persons who had been stubborn all through the meeting, but were now awakened and converted, and were thence called the 'shower converts,' but they all remained faithful."

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27 -- CHARLES PITMAN'S EFFECTUAL PRAYER DURING A THUNDERSTORM

From hdm0101 -- "Pentecostal Light" By Aaron Merritt Hills

It was this [the Pentecostal Power of the Holy Ghost] that caused Dr. Charles Pitman to be an apostolic camp-meeting preacher, the effect of whose preaching was felt in three worlds. During his travels he stopped at a camp-meeting in an eastern state, and said to the presiding elder in charge: "Brother, I have a message from God to deliver to this people, and I can not get away from it; and if you will let me preach this afternoon, as I must leave tomorrow, I will deliver it in the name of God." As the service began fierce lightnings flashed across the sky and the loud thunders rolled up into mid-heaven.

Dr. Pitman knelt before the God of the universe with whom he was acquainted, and in whom he believed, and prayed with holy boldness: "O Lord God Almighty, Thou who hast sent me to preach to this people, hold back these threatening clouds for one hour, while we go on with this service in Thy name, and let us not be disturbed by the impending storm, but let Thy presence descend upon both preacher and people, and let great good be accomplished this day in the salvation of souls." His auditors were amazed, and held their watches while he preached just an hour with heavenly pathos and Holy Ghost anointing. "Now," said he, "go to your tents, and fall before God." Again the pent-up lightnings flashed and the thunders roared; the rain descended almost in a deluge. The people stood aghast and trembled. Sinners fell to the earth under the power of the convicting Spirit, and "over five hundred souls were converted." Glory to God! He has a heavenly dynamite to put into the life and face and words of any one who is willing to surrender, and die to self, that he may be used of God.

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28 -- GOD USED A THUNDERSTORMS TO COLLECT WHAT WAS KEPT BACK

From hdm0504 -- "God's Financial Plan For His Church" By H. H. Hooker

One of our preachers was pastoring a rural church and doing some farming in connection with his pastorate. He related the following incident which illustrates how God may discipline one of His children. That Spring he was cultivating a small but very promising patch of strawberries. In April a cold spell of weather threatened his berries, so he went alone and asked God to bring a change in the weather and thus spare his berries, promising to tithe the income from them. That evening about dark it clouded up and his berries were not damaged. He sold \$300 worth and had the money in his pocket. The devil came up and said to him, "You are a preacher and need the money as much as anyone. If I were you, I would tithe twenty dollars to myself, and ten to the church." He did so. A few mornings later while he was plowing in one of his patches, a small cloud appeared. There was one flash of lightning and one clap of thunder. As the lightning flashed, he looked toward his hog pasture and saw his big hog fall dead. He said, "Glory to God! I know why you were killed. I kept twenty dollars of the Lord's tithe and He has sent the lightning and collected it." A few days before he had refused twenty-five dollars for his hog, but since God had to collect His tithe, He charged him five dollars collection fees.

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God's disfavor is upon all who do not tithe. "Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation." God is as certain to punish those who do not tithe as He is faithful in blessing every faithful steward. Some Christians who have been disobedient in this matter have recognized God's disfavor in the form of wicked children, poor health, or loss of money or material possessions, or some spiritual leanness. A woman told me that she was attending a camp-meeting in Michigan some years ago with her father's family. In a missionary service held the last afternoon her father pledged \$100 to foreign missions. On the way home that evening he grumbled about it and said, "I do not see why I made this pledge. I do not believe in foreign missions anyway. I just cannot pay this pledge." As they reached home there was thunder in the distance; God spoke to him in the thunder and said, "I will burn your barn tonight with lightning and show you how you can pay that pledge." He began to draw water and carry it

to the barn so that he could extinguish the fire as the lightning struck. The next bolt struck but he was unable to extinguish the fire. The barn and contents were worth \$5,000, but he had only \$1,000 worth of insurance. After the fire God spoke again and said, "You can pay that pledge with \$100 of the insurance money." It is as impossible for a person to escape the curse of God before the cause of the curse is removed, as it is for a person to lift himself by his own bootstraps. If you have robbed God of His tithe repent of your robbery, make restitution, practice God's plan of giving, and the blessings of God are assured to you.

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29 -- THE COMING, UNCOMMON EVENT WAS A THUNDERSTORM

From hdm0365 -- "The Lives Of Early Methodist Preachers" By Thomas Jackson
(From The Life Of Richard Rodda)

On the 29th of last June I preached on Wood-Green, at the end of Witney, in Oxfordshire. While I was preaching, something uncommon impelled me to say, "My dear friends, take notice of what I am going to say. Before this day month, [before one month from today -- DVM] you will hear and see something very uncommon:" but I knew not why I said so. On Wednesday, the 2d of July, it began to thunder and lighten in a very dreadful manner. The people cried out that I had prophesied the world was to be at an end in a month; and they thought it was now fulfilling: two persons were struck dead by the lightning. Numbers had their sins set in order before them, saw the necessity of a, Saviour, and some groaned after Him.

On the 10th the Lord thundered from heaven, and sent forth His lightnings, a second time. On the 11th it was more dreadful than it had been before. Now, indeed, the most stubborn heart trembled, and bowed before the Lord. The numbers that flocked both to the church and meeting were incredible and there was such an awakening among them, as the oldest man living could not remember. In consequence thereof, the next time I came there I added fifty new members to our society.

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30 -- HOW GOD DELAYED A THUNDERSTORM FOR MAJOR MALAN

From hdm0691 -- "Answered Prayer In Missionary Service" By Basil William Miller

Major Malan relates an unusual experience which took place when he was doing missionary work among the Kaffirs in Africa. A storm came on at late sunset which was accompanied by thunder and lightning. It appeared evident that the major's journey, which he was making to a distant point for gospel services, would be ended. The major prayed the Lord definitely to open a way onward. At two o'clock the next morning he was awakened to the roar of thunder and the flashing of lightning.

"Nevertheless, I knelt in my bed and prayed, 'Lord Jesus, Lord of the thunder, lightning and rain, I pray Thee drive it away that I may go on my journey in Thy Gospel today.' The storm ceased almost instantly. In half an hour the moon came out. I got up at 3:30, called Solomon, my native assistant, and prepared to start."

The major faced another serious difficulty from the muddy roads. But he prayed again, and the Lord sent "an exceeding strong wind," and soon the storm ceased, and shortly thereafter the road dried. An infidel asked if the major supposed this to be an answer to his prayers, to which the missionary answered quietly in confident faith, "Yes, God sent the wind to dry the road."

Later, on the same journey, the traveling missionary met a lady engaged in gospel work, who said, "I hope we shall soon have rain." For there had been a long drought in the Transkei.

Replied Major Malan, "I believe the Lord is holding off the rain until I have passed the Orange River."

The lady laughed when Major Malan said this, but the major's faith was verified. He crossed the Orange River at about 11:00 a.m. that day. After another hour it began to rain, and by night the river was impassable for the first time that entire summer.

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31 -- A MIGHTY DISPLAY OF GOD'S POWER DURING A THUNDERSTORM

From hdm1526 -- *Pioneers Of Methodism In North Carolina And Virginia* By Matthew H. Moore

On Sunday evening, after Brother Ormand's sermon, under prayer, the Lord displayed his power in an increasing manner. The heavens were black with clouds, the thunder and lightning were awful, and the ground seemed covered with sinners. The wounded were taken to the tents, but some staid at the stand in the hardest rain, and pleaded with the Lord, and about midnight they were delivered. The storm of rain was so powerful that the wicked were obliged to keep close to the tents, and the Lord mowed them down on every hand. Mr. Hall, Mr. King, and myself continued the whole night in prayer for the mourners. Next morning I preached, and notwithstanding the rain they heard with the greatest attention. Among the subjects of this work was a doctor who came with salts of hartshorn to apply to those who fell, but the Lord brought him down, and many others with him, who went home praising God. This is a little of what I have seen in Yadkin Circuit. I am more than ever bound for glory.

"Yours, -- Daniel Asbury"

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32 -- HOW SHE FINALLY BECAME UNAFRAID DURING THUNDERSTORMS

From hdm0949 -- *"Bible Morning Glories"* -- By Abbie C. Morrow Brown

A little girl who suffered greatly during thunderstorms was told by her mother to pray when she felt afraid. One day, at the close of a fearful storm, she told her mother that praying during the danger brought her no relief. "Then," said her mother, "try praying while the sun shines, and see if that will take away the fear." The child did so, and when another storm was

raging, she said sweetly: " Praying while the sun shines is the best way, for I am not the least bit afraid now."

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33 -- WHEN GOD THUNDERED MARVELOUSLY WITH HIS VOICE

From hdm0322 -- The Wesleyan Methodist Magazine -- February 1823

During his residence in the West Indies, Mr. Brownell experienced many signal interferences of divine providence. One of these, which occurred in the month of May, 1796, he thus describes:

"Yesterday, being at the estate of John Taylor, there fell in the afternoon a heavy shower of rain, accompanied by thunder and lightning. The natives took shelter in a wind-mill, the top of which was struck at the time by a large ball of fire. The destructive fluid shivered the neckbeam, descended among the terrified natives, killed two of them on the spot, and burnt, scorched, or wounded thirty more. It also penetrated into the dungeon, where was a small cask of gunpowder, and involved Mr. Taylor, his lady, and me, in the sulfurous flame. Had the gunpowder taken fire, we should in all probability, have lost our lives. The cries of the natives were dreadful beyond description; and it would have pierced the hardest heart to have seen many of them, to all appearance, dead with fear, and others who had been deprived of the use of their limbs. One of them was so severely burnt, that she afterwards died. The day after this melancholy occurrence, I buried the two men who were instantaneously killed, and then preached on the following impressive text of Scripture: 'At this also my heart trembleth, and is moved out of this place. Hear attentively the noise of his voice, and the sound that goeth out of his mouth. He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth. After it a voice roareth; he thundereth with the voice of his excellency; and he will not stay them when his voice is heard. God thundereth marvelously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend!' (Job 37:1-5.)

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34 -- GOD PARTED A THUNDERSTORM IN ANSWER TO JOHN EASTER'S PRAYER

From hdm0563 -- "Life And Times Of William McKendree" By Robert Paine

When Mr. Easter came to Brunswick Circuit, there was very little appearance of religion in our neighborhood. Upon his coming, a revival took place, and in the course of the year about two hundred and fifty joined the Church within ten miles of where we resided, and about eighteen hundred were added in the circuit. Mr. Easter possessed an uncommon degree of faith. It was objected to him that "instead of praying, he commanded God, as if the Lord was to obey man."

The following is a specimen of what I was an eyewitness. While preaching to a large concourse of people in the open air, at a time of considerable drought, it began to thunder, a cloud approached, and drops of rain fell. He stopped preaching and besought the Lord to withhold the rain until evening, to pour out his Spirit, convert the people, and then water the

earth. He then resumed his subject. The appearance of rain increased, the people began to get uneasy, some moved to take off their saddles; when, in his peculiar manner, he told the Lord that there were "sinners there that must be converted or be damned," and prayed that he would "stop the bottles of heaven until the evening." He closed his prayer and assured us in the most confident manner that we might keep our seats, that it would not rain to wet us; that "souls are to be converted here today, my God assures me of it, and you may believe it." The congregation became composed, and we did not get wet; for the clouds parted, and although there was a fine rain on both sides of us, there was none where we were until night. The Lord's Spirit was poured out in an uncommon degree, many were convicted, and a considerable number professed to be converted that day.

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35 -- HOW GOD SENT A THUNDERSTORM IN ANSWER TO MISS ESTER'S PRAYER From hdm0878 -- "George Washington Ivey" By Marion T. Plyler

Some minister preached on Sunday previous to the Wednesday night dance, and Miss Ester Morgan, who was an expert in dancing, was convicted. But she concealed her state of mind even from her father, who was a member of the church, and also an exhorter. The Wednesday night dance came on, when several young men called at Mr. Morgan's to gallant the girls to the frolic. Miss Ester, however, manifested an unwillingness to go, but being importuned and pressed, she consented and went.

The party having assembled and ready to commence, the young men began to select their partners, but Miss Ester refused to dance with any. This doubtless was surprising to all, but when they commenced their exercise and the music began, she dropped upon her knees and began praying aloud. This was to the party as a clap of thunder in a clear sky, and perhaps, if an earthquake had shaken the house, the alarm would not have been greater, for a greater part of them left the house and fled as for life. The fiddler fled for home and some two or three with him, and one that was with him made the following statement to me: "We went over fences and through cornfields, taking the nearest way for home, and as I heard the blades of corn cracking behind me, I felt certain the Devil was right after me, and on reaching the door of the house, we didn't wait for any one to open, but broke down the door and jumped into bed and covered up head and ears without pulling shoes, hat, coat or a rag of clothes off, and were almost afraid to breathe, lest the Devil should hear us in our concealment." Only a few had courage enough to stand their ground. These sent for the young lady's father and some other members of the church and so the dance frolic was turned into a prayer-meeting, and just before day the young lady was converted.

So dance frolics ended and prayer-meetings began. A revival of religion spread over all that community, and nearly all the young people of both sexes professed religion and joined the church.

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36 -- HOW GOD WATERED FRED POWELL'S PASTURE WITH A THUNDERSTORM

From hdm0143 -- "The Singing Pioneer" By Fred A. Powell

This first year of my ministry, God answered many prayers for me. Of course I made many blunders, but God was always there with mercy. One incident which I would like to call to your attention was how He answered one of my prayers. It was a pretty dry year and we depended on a creek in our lower pasture for water for our stock. But the creek dried up. (You remember about Elijah's creek drying up, don't you?) We had over a hundred head of cattle and no water. A man may have grass knee high but if he has no water, what can he do?

I fell on this plan -- I would scrape in the sand in the creek and many times could find water seeping in under the sand. I hitched my team to the hack one morning, told my wife I was going to the lower pasture to scrape for water and maybe would not be back until late in the afternoon. I found a short bend in the creek where there was a large rock which hung out over the creek and decided that it looked like a good place to scrape for water. I took my mules from the hack, hooked them to the scraper and began to scrape. It was really hot for it was in July and both the teams and myself were soon hot. I had not gotten any water, so I stopped to give the team a little rest and then God spoke to me. He seemed to say, "Young man, you might make time a little better on your knees than scraping. Have you prayed yet?"

I was troubled by this so wrapping the lines around the scraper handle, I ran back under this rock and began to pray. God seemed to say, "Elijah got rain when there was no clouds." I said, "Yes, Lord, and if you desire you can give rain at once. " I seemed all at once to be hid away with God. How near God seemed to me that day down in the creek under a big ledge of rock. While I was still praying I heard a keen clap of thunder and God seemed to say, "If you don't want to get wet and lose your scraper you had better get out of here." I ran out from under the rock and looked up. There was a little cloud just off a short distance and it seemed to be twisting and whirling in the air. I obeyed God and literally ran to the team, threw the scraper back in the hack, hurriedly hitched the team to the hack, jumped in the hack and started out of the creek bed.

As I started up the creek banks I saw the cloud had spread and was striking. First it was dust and then rain. Just literally sheets of rain! Before I reached the top of the little hill, the water was rushing down the hill. The cows who had been standing around bawling and suffering for lack of water were now trying to find a spot where they could drink. What joy filled my soul as God had answered my prayer!

I drove home, reaching there just past the noon hour. My wife came out to see what could possibly have happened that I was back so soon. Why, I said, "We had rain in the lower pasture." She could hardly believe me. The next day I rode back to see how things looked. I had to ride up and look at the old rock where God had heard my cry and where I dared to believe Him and prove that the God of Elijah still lived. The hole that I had scraped the day before was full of water and the creek was running a little. As Abraham bowed his head and worshipped in reverence to the Great Jehovah, I did that day as I stood on the creek bank and looked at the cows standing around in the shade of the little mesquites, perfectly satisfied both with grass and water. What a day it was to my soul. He giveth power to the faint; and To them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall

utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall run, and not be weary, and they shall walk, and not faint. Praise God from all blessings flow! Amen.

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37 -- CLIFFORD B. BARRETT'S PRAYER ANSWERED IN A THUNDERSTORM

From hdm1530 -- "The Happy Alleghenian" The Story of Clifford B. Barrett By M. L. Rhodes

At the second camp-meeting held at Tionesta, Pennsylvania, in the year of 1880, a most remarkable answer to Mr. Barrett's prayer was exhibited, in which a severe and disastrous storm was dispersed. One afternoon the congregation had assembled for the 2:30 o'clock service. The stand was filled with preachers, and Rev. E. P. Hart was to deliver the sermon. Just as he announced his text and began to speak, large drops of rain began to fall. A storm had been gathering for some time, and was heading seemingly straight for the campground. Vivid lightning flashes, accompanied by loud peals of thunder, rent the air, and the alarming apprehension of a fierce electric storm seized the minds of the people. However, for some unknown reason, the large congregation were motionless, except as the rain began to fall they hoisted a good many umbrellas. At that moment Brother Hart said calmly, "I do not like to preach to umbrellas; Brother Barrett, please lead us in prayer."

The preachers all dropped upon their knees, and in a short, simple prayer, Brother Barrett asked the Lord to turn the storm aside, giving as reasons that the people had gathered to hear Brother Hart preach, and that much good might be done. As we arose from our knees, the rain ceased to fall on us. The storm divided and went on both sides of the camp-ground, devastating crops, trees, and bridges in its path on each side. The people remained in their seats and the sermon was resumed. But after speaking a few minutes, the astonished look on the faces of the people in the congregation, as they gazed at the storm on the right hand and on the left, and at the preachers, and especially at Brother Barrett, was noticed by him. He saw that he did not have their attention. Pausing a moment as he looked with his characteristic smile around on the people, he said softly, "Don't be alarmed; this is not the first time I have witnessed direct answer to Brother Barrett's prayers." From that time he had their attention, and preached one of the most powerful sermons to which I have ever listened. Many were the slain of the Lord that day, and eternity alone will reveal the good accomplished.

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38 -- HOW A BLASPHEMER WAS SLAIN OF GOD DURING A THUNDERSTORM

From hdm2029 -- "Dying Testimonies Of Saved And Unsaved" By Solomon Benjamin Shaw

A minister, while traveling one day, was overtaken by a thunderstorm and took refuge in what was called a tavern. His attention was soon directed towards a man who seemed to be trying to entertain himself and others by using profanity in its lowest degree. He claimed to be an atheist, and blasphemed the name of God with unusual recklessness.

Finally, while the storm was raging wildly, he said to those around him, "There is no God, and to prove to you that I am right about it, I will go out there on that little hill and dare

Him to strike me with His lightning." To the horror of that little company he went, and looking up toward heaven, his lips moved, and he brought his fists together with the appearance of doing what he said he would, though his voice could not be heard above the roar of the storm. In a short time he came back, saying as he did so, "You can see for yourselves that there is no God. If there were, He would have killed me while daring Him to do so." But God moves in a mysterious way, and his awful sin did not go long unpunished.

He took a chair and was quiet for some time. He had uttered his last oath, and when he again spoke it was in subdued tones, as follows, "There is a God, and He is going to teach me that He can take my life with a smaller instrument than a shaft of lightning. Soon after I came in here, a little insect lit upon my hand and stung it. It commenced to pain me and soon affected my arm and is fast doing its fatal work. The pain is almost unendurable, and I shall soon be a dead man, and my soul will be in hell. Yes, there is a God."

And so he died, in awful agony of body and mind, and his soul passed into the great beyond.

"Surely the fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."

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39 -- HOW GOD SPARED S.S. CHILDREN FROM A TRAIN-WRECK DURING A THUNDERSTORM

From hdm01565 -- "Effective Illustrations" By William Moses Tidwell

This most remarkable incident happened many years ago, and was told in a railroad magazine. One summer morning a twelve-car train containing the members of a Sunday school in eastern Missouri was bound for a picnic at a point about fifty miles distant. Although the sky was cloudless when the excursion started, the train had not proceeded more than half way when a thunderstorm broke. The rain fell in torrents. The engineer was worried for fear the terrific downpour might cause a washout or spreading of the rails, and he slowed down to about thirty-five miles an hour. As the train swung around a curve and approached a small station which it was to pass without stopping, the engineer, peering through the broken curtain of rain, saw that the switch ahead was open. It meant a terrible disaster. Instantly he closed the throttle and put on the brakes.

"Better stick to it," he shouted to the fireman, "hundreds of children are on board."

"I mean to," was the answer. "God help us all!"

His last words were drowned by a terrific crash of thunder which came with a flash of lightning that seemed to strike the ground just ahead of the engine. The next thing they knew they were past the station, still riding safely on the main-line rails.

The train came to a stop and the engineer and conductor hurried back to discover what had happened and how the train had passed the open switch. They found the lightning had struck

squarely between the switch and the rail and had closed the switch. "It was the act of God," said the engineer. -- J. M. Farrar

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40 -- A NEED WAS MIRACULOUSLY SUPPLIED WITH A THUNDERSTORM

From hdm01565 -- "Effective Illustrations" By William Moses Tidwell

It was far back in the country. In a certain home typhoid fever was raging. One daughter had died. One son was very low. The doctor came and said, "If we had ice we might save him but he will be gone before it can be obtained for it will require hours to get it." This was before the day of automobiles. The mother, who loved him devotedly and believed in God and prayer, felt that God could and would, in some way, send ice. She immediately found a secluded place and began to plead the promises. She prayed something like this, "Lord, Thou hast promised to supply our need. My son, unless ice is obtained immediately, will be gone." Then she reminded the Lord that she believed Him and would trust Him to send it in some way. They said, while no clouds were visible, at the time of the conversation, as she held on they heard a strange noise. They listened and it was thunder. In a very few minutes the heavens were black and the rain began to pour. Soon they heard something like hail on the roof. They looked again and the hail was falling. In a very few minutes it was piled up against the fences and thick over the ground. The old mother came out with a dishpan, scooped up a pan full and said, "Doctor here is ice. Here it is." She would shout, run out and fill her pan and say, "Doctor, here it is! God has sent it." The glory was filling the place. The doctor looked on in wonder, and said, "I never saw it like this before."

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41 -- CHARLES WESLEY AND THE THUNDERSTORM

From hdm2423 -- "Anecdotes Of The Wesleys" By Joseph Beaumont Wakeley

The 23d of June, 1747, Charles Wesley preached at Colham Chapel. He says, "While I was speaking of our Lord's appearing we were alarmed with the loudest clap of thunder I ever heard. I thought it must have cleft the house. Most of the congregation shrieked out as if the day of the Lord were come. A thought darted into my heart as quick as lightning, 'What if it should be the day of judgment!' I was filled with faith stronger than death, and rejoiced in hope of the glory of God. The same spirit rested on all the faithful while I broke into singing,

"So shall the Lord, the Saviour, come,
And lightnings round his chariot play!
Ye lightnings, fly to make him room;
Ye glorious storms, prepare his way.'

I went on for half an hour describing that scene The heart of every person present rejoiced or trembled. A mixed cry of horror and triumph was heard till I dismissed them with the blessing. Afterward we heard that a house on one side of our chapel was almost demolished,

both roof and walls, by the thunder-clap, the lead of the windows melted, and six persons struck to the ground. On the other side of us a gibbet was split into a thousand pieces."

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42 -- WHAT THE LITTLE GIRL WANTED DURING A THUNDERSTORM

From hdm1039 -- 2700-Plus Sermon Illustrations (B-Topics)

Frightened by the clamor of thunder in the night, a little child cried out. Holding her securely in his arms, her father explained that she needn't fear. God would take care of her because He loved her greatly.

"I know God will take care of me and love me," she replied. "But right now, Daddy, I want someone with skin on to love me."

We are to be God's love, with skin on!

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43 -- AN UNUSUAL JUDGMENT DURING A THUNDERSTORM

From hdm1883 -- 2700-Plus Sermon Illustrations (T-Topics)

One day, there happened a tremendous storm of lightning and thunder a cleric was going from Glasgow to Dunblane. He was recognized, when at a distance, by two men of bad character. They had not courage to rob him, but, wishing to fall on some method of extorting money from him, one said, "I will lie down by the wayside, as if I were dead, and you shall inform the archbishop that I was killed by the lightning, and beg money of him to bury me."

When the cleric arrived at the spot, the wicked wretch told him the fabricated story. The cleric sympathized with the survivor, gave him money, and proceeded on his journey. But when the man returned to his companion, he found him really lifeless!

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44 -- WHAT CARRADINE'S CHILD ASKED HIM DURING A THUNDERSTORM

From hdm0046 -- "People I Have Met" By Beverly Carradine

To our race has come the gift of children, and great as is the care, and multiplied as may be the anxiety they occasion, yet we can but see that they were intended as a blessing by the Almighty, and are indeed such.

From the very start, they make demands and draughts upon our love, patience and sacrifice, and hardly allow a hard, morose, selfish nature at home, because of their own brightness, sunniness and constant exactions upon our time, means and strength.

What questions they ask, and how we find ourselves answering all we can, like so many hired servants, and they the owners of everything around! How we have to give up book, paper, visit and business because of the little curly head being tired, sleepy or sick.

To this day, after many years have passed, our lips smile or eyes grow misty over the sayings and doing of those wonderfully precocious beings in knee pants and sunbonnets.

One asked with solemn, inquiring eyes, when she heard it thunder, if the angels were moving the furniture around in Heaven.

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45 -- A CLOUD BLACKER THAN THE THUNDERSTORM OVERHUNG NEW ORLEANS AREA

From hdm0040 "Graphic Scenes" By Beverly Carradine

This was the year that the yellow fever scourged the city of New Orleans beyond all precedent; swept far beyond its usual bounds and devastated the cities of Natchez, Vicksburg and Memphis, and then, contrary to all past history, left the towns and penetrated the country.

Those who could not and did not take refuge in the North, fled in great numbers to the piney woods and to the remotest rural districts. But the plague in certain places followed even here and pulled down its victims with relentless ferocity. A Methodist preacher living deep in the country lost his wife and eight children. The sight in his garden of nine fresh made graves proved a shock to the stoniest-hearted observer. The minister himself hovered on the edge of the grave for days; and his friends feared that even if he recovered, the spectacle of his desolated household would madden and kill him.

All the towns in Mississippi were quarantined. The inhabitants were scattered to the four winds who were fortunate enough to escape in time. The population of these places became a mere corporal's guard, while countless thousands of city people boarded in farm houses, crowded the country churches on the Sabbath, and made the forests ring with their religious songs, hymns and anthems.

I stood at the union depot in Jackson one afternoon waiting for a train to go to Brandon. The town was quarantined, and had not yet been frightfully visited by the plague, as happened soon after. The whole land was filled with gloom. A great black thunder storm was gathering in the south. Just then a train from New Orleans, forbidden by the authorities to stop, swept by, sending forth a dismal roar from its whistle as it rushed past. The train had left the death-smitten city of New Orleans only a few hours before, and seemed almost to have escaped from the black, lowering cloud that was flashing and thundering in the distance, and was flying like a frightened fugitive northward with its note of alarm and distress.

Hundreds of people were at the station when this incident occurred. I have never forgotten the grave, troubled faces of that hour, the melancholy and awe produced by those

rushing, moaning cars, while the coming storm seemed prophetic of a greater, blacker tempest that overhung the land.

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IN CONCLUSION

I am completing this file on September 17, 2005 -- just days after "a greater, blacker tempest overhung" the New Orleans, Louisiana area than that contemplated by Beverly Carradine -- or, did God perhaps give him a Divine Premonition of the Hurricane Katrina disaster that has just struck New Orleans during September, 2005? That, we cannot know. However, if the past wickedness of that stricken city is revived with its rebuilding, perhaps an even blacker and greater tempest will soon strike it again. Regardless, a "blacker tempest" does "overhang" this entire world -- one that is darker than any thunderstorm or hurricane that has ever yet struck anywhere on this planet! -- and the Divine Fury of that storm shall utterly destroy this present, evil world as it now exists! Nevertheless, happy are all who have in Christ "a place of refuge.. a covert from storm and from rain" in this world (Isa. 4:6), and who have in the "world to come" the prospect of an eternally bright, storm-free bliss in the New Jerusalem.

Arthur F. Ingler put it thus regarding "The Pearly White City" where no dark and foreboding clouds of an earthly thunderstorm shall ever overhang and shroud the sky:

There's a holy and beautiful city,
Whose Builder and Ruler is God;
John saw it descending from heaven,
When Patmos, in exile, he trod.

Its high, massive wall is of jasper;
The City itself is pure gold
And when my frail tent here is folded,
Mine eyes shall its glory behold.

In that bright City, Pearly White City,
I have a mansion, a harp, and a crown,
Now I am watching, waiting and longing
For the White City John saw coming down!"

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THE END