

PASTORAL ADVICE OF THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, M. A.

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Extracts from the works of the Rev. John Wesley, M. A., some time Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, third edition, with the last corrections of the author, London, 1829.

"In the year 1743, I published the Rules of the Society, one of which was that all the members thereof should constantly attend the Church and Sacrament."—Vol. xiii, p. 236.

June, 1744.—"At the first meeting of all our preachers in conference, in June, 1834, I exhorted them to keep to the Church."—Vol. xiii, p. 239.

June 17, 1749.—"I dare not renounce communion with the Church of England. As a minister, I teach her doctrines; I use her offices; I conform to her rubrics; I suffer reproach for my attachment to her."—Vol. viii, p. 444.

Sept. 1, 1751.—"I read [the Church] prayers myself and found an uncommon blessing therein."—Vol. ii, p. 442.

June, 1752.—Wesley quotes approvingly the dying words of Katherine Wytaker: "Desire them all to go to Church. When I was most diligent in going to church, I always found the greatest blessings."—Vol. ii, p. 267.

April 30, 1755.—"We began reading together 'A Gentleman's Reasons for his Dissent from the Church of England.' It is an elaborate and lively tract, and contains the strength of the cause; but it did not yield us one proof that it is lawful for us (much less our duty) to separate from it."—Vol. ii, p. 328.

May, 1755.—"I spake to the members of the society severally, and found far fewer than I expected prejudiced against the Church. I think not above forty in all. And I trust the plague is now stayed."—Vol. ii, p. 329.

June 28, 1755.—Writing to his brother Charles, he said: "Go to Ireland, if you think so, and save Ireland. Wherever I have been in England, the societies are more firmly and rationally attached to the Church than ever they were before. I have no fear about this matter. * * * We have not one preacher who either proposed, or desires, or designs (that I know), to separate from the Church at all."—Vol. xii, p. 112.

July 25, 1756.—"After dinner, one of our brethren asked if I was ready to go to a meeting. I told him, 'I never go to a meeting.' He seemed as much astonished as the old Scot at Newcastle, who left us because we were mere Church of England men."—Vol. ii, p. 381.

Aug. 26, 1756.—"My brother and I closed the conference by a solemn declaration of our purpose never to separate from the Church, and all our brethren cheerfully concurred therein."—Vol. xiii, p. 305.

1758.—The first of Wesley's "Reasons against a separation from the Church of England, written in the year 1758," was "because it would be a contradiction to the solemn and repeated declarations which we have made, in all manner of ways—in preaching, in print, and in private conversation."—Vol. xiii, p. 193.

July 5, 1760.—Of a conference at Limerick, Wesley says: "By the blessing of God we were all of one mind, particularly with regard to the Church. Even J—D— has not now the least thought of leaving it, but attends there, be the minister good or bad."—Vol. iii, p. 9.

Aug. 4, 1760.—"Whoever separates from the Church, will separate from the Methodists."—Vol. ii, p. 260.

Sept. 7, 1760.—"In examining this society, I found much reason to bless God on their behalf. They diligently observe all the rules of the society with or without a preacher. They constantly attend the Church and Sacrament."—Vol. iii, p. 16.

Dec. 12, 1760.—Wesley was asked: "Can you constantly charge your people to attend the worship of our Church and not Dissenters' meetings?" He replied: "I can; this is consistent with all I have written and all I have done for many years."—Vol. xiii, pp. 352-3.

Dec. 12, 1760.—When asked why he allowed the lay preachers to "debate whether they should separate from the Church," he answered: "To confirm their adherence to it. And they were so confirmed that only two of the whole number have since separated from it."—Vol. xiii, p. 353.

June 9, 1761.—"I then met the Society, and came just in time to prevent them all turning Dissenters, which they were on the point of doing, being quite disgusted with their curate, whose life was no better than his doctrine."—Vol. iii, p. 61.

June, 1761 (At Swaledale).—"I found an earnest, loving, simple people, whom I likewise exhorted not to leave the Church, they had not the best of ministers."—Vol. iii, p. 61.

June 17, 1767 (At Athlone).—"To this day they have not recovered the loss which they sustained when they left off going to Church. It is true they have long been convinced of their mistake, yet the fruit of it still remains; so that there are very few who retain that vigor of spirit which they before enjoyed."—Vol. iii, p. 283.

July 19, 1768.—"We are, in truth, so far from being enemies to the Church that we are rather bigots to it. I dare not, like Mr. Venn, leave the parish church where I am, to go to an Independent meeting. I dare not advise others to go thither rather than to church. I advise all over whom I have any influence, to keep steadily to church."—Vol. iii, p. 337.

July 13, 1769.—"Afterward I met the little society. I used to wonder they did not increase. Now I should wonder if they did, so exquisitely bitter are the chief of them against the Church. I solemnly warned them against this, and some of them had ears to hear."—Vol. iii, p. 372.

June 17, 1770.—"We had a poor sermon at church. However, I went again in the afternoon, remembering the words of Mr. Philip Henry—'If the preacher does not know his duty, I bless God that I know mine.'"—Vol. iii, p. 401.

May 10, 1772.—"I attended the Church of England service in the morning, and that of the Kirk (of Scotland) in the afternoon. Truly no man, having drunk old wine, straightaway desireth new! How dull and dry did the latter appear to me, who had been accustomed to the former!"—Vol. ii, p. 463.

May 16, 1772.—"Both read prayers and preached (in the church at Leith.) Here also the behavior of the congregation did honor to our Church."—Vol. iii, p. 463.

May 26, 1773.—"They told me another congregation was waiting, so I began preaching without delay, and warned them of the madness which was spreading among them, namely, leaving the Church. Most of them will, I believe, take my advice, I hope all that are of our society."—Vol. iii, p. 495.

About 1774.—"Nineteen years ago we considered the question in our public conference at Leeds—whether the Methodists ought to separate from the Church; and, after a long and candid enquiry, it was determined *nemine contradicente* (that is, 'without one dissenting voice'), that it was not expedient for them to separate. The reasons were set down at large, and they stand equally good at this day."—Vol. vii, pp. 175-6.

April 21, 1777.—"In a sermon on Numbers xxiii: 23, Wesley says: 'The Methodists at Oxford were all one body, and, as it were, one soul; zealous for the religion of the Bible, and of the primitive Church, and in consequence, of the Church of England, as they believed it to come nearer the Scriptural and primitive from

than any other upon earth. * * * But a good man, who met with us when we were at Oxford, while he was absent from us, conversed much with Dissenters, and contracted strong prejudices against the Church; I mean Whitfield; and not long after he totally separated from us. * * * Not let every impartial person judge whether we are accountable for any of these! None of these have any connection with the original Methodists. They are branches broken off from the tree; if they break from the Church also, we are not accountable for it. These, therefore, cannot make our glorying void that we do not, will not, form any separate sect, but from principle remain what we always have been, true members of the Church of England."—Vol. vii, p. 429.

April 22, 1778 (At Liverpool).—"I was much refreshed by two plain, useful sermons at St. Thomas' Church, as well as by the serious and decent behavior of the whole congregation. In the evening, I exhorted all of our society who had been bred in the Church, to continue therein."—Vol. iv, p. 117.

July 7, 1778.—"Our little conference began, at which about twenty preachers were present. On Wednesday, we heard one of our friends at large upon the duty of leaving the Church, but, after a full discussion of the point, we all remained firm in our judgment, that it is our duty not to leave the Church, wherein God has blessed us, and does bless us still."—Vol. iv, p. 131.

No date.—"Having had an opportunity of seeing several of the Churches abroad, and having deeply considered the several sorts of Dissenters at home, I am fully convinced that our Church, with all her blemishes, is nearer the Scriptural plan than any other in Europe."—Vol. xiii, p. 121.

Sept. 9, 1784.—"I believe there is no liturgy in the world, either in ancient or modern language, which breathes more of a solid, Scriptural, rational piety, than the Common Prayer of the Church of England."—Vol. xiv, p. 317.

Sept. 4, 1785.—"Finding a report had spread abroad [at Bristol] that I was just going to leave the Church, to satisfy those who were grieved concerning it, I openly declared in the evening, that I had now no more thought of separating from the Church than I had forty years ago."—Vol. iv, p. 320.

July, 1786.—"Our conference began; about eighty preachers attended. * * On Thursday, in the afternoon, we permitted any of the society to be present, and weighed what was said about separating from the Church; but we all determined to continue therein without one dissenting voice."—Vol. iv, p. 343.

Oct. 24, 1786.—"I met the classes at Deptford, and was vehemently importuned to order the Sunday service in our room at the same time with that of the Church. It is easy to see that this would be a formal separation from the Church. We fixed both our morning and evening service, all over England, at such hours as not to interfere with the Church."—Vol. iv, p. 353.

Oct. 25, 1786.—"I went to Brentford, but had little comfort there. The society is almost dwindled to nothing. What have we gained by separating from the Church here? Is not this a good lesson for others?"—Vol. iv, p. 353.

Jan. 2, 1787.—"I went over to Deptford, but it seemed I was got into a den of lions. Most of the leading men or the society were mad for separating from the Church. I endeavored to reason with them, but in vain; they had neither sense nor even good manners left. At length, after meeting the whole society, I told them: 'If you are resolved, you may have your service in Church hours; but remember, from that time you will see my face no more.' This struck deep, and from that hour I have heard no more of separating from the Church."—Vol. iv, p. 375.

Nov. 5, 1787.—"There is no increase in the