

Cautions and Directions,

GIVEN TO THE

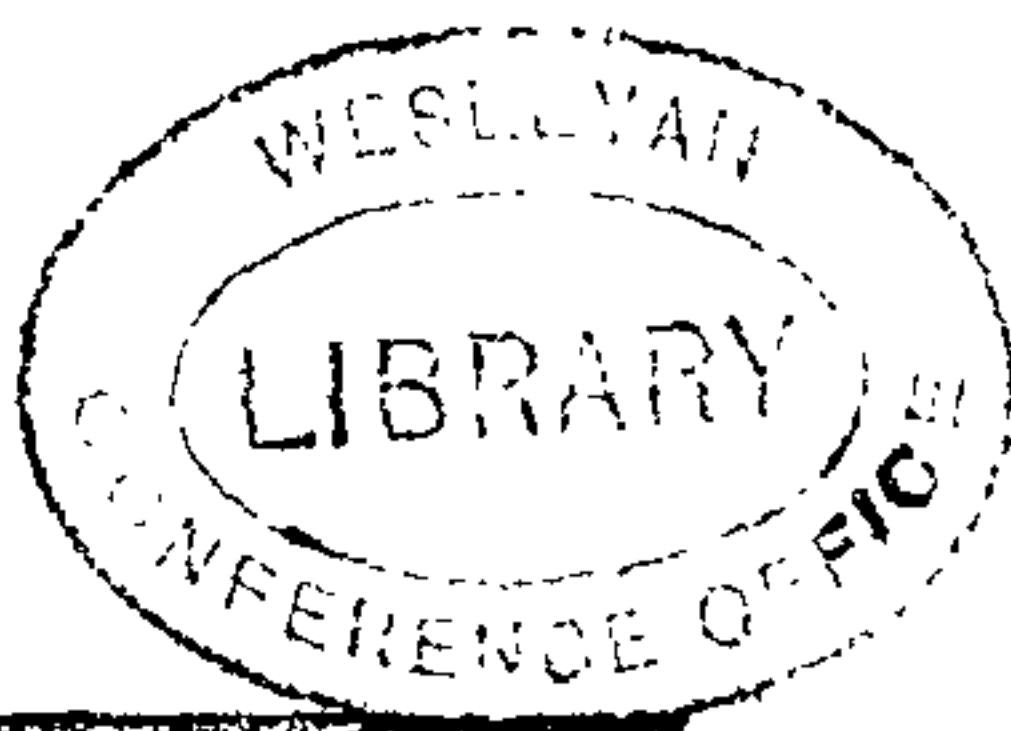
Greatest PROFESSORS

IN THE

METHODIST SOCIETIES.

*“ Set the False Witnesses aside,
“ Yet hold the Truth for ever fast.*

Rev. Mr. C. WESLEY'S Scrip. Hymns.



L O N D O N :

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Cautions and Directions

Given to the

Greatest Professors, &c.

WHAT is the first Advice which you would give to those who are really renew'd in Love ?

A. Watch and pray continually gainst *Pride*, against every kind and degree of it. If God has cast it out, see that it enter no more. It is full as dangerous as Desire. And you may slide back into it unawares especially if you think you are in no Danger of it. "Nay, but I ascribe all I have to God." So you may, and be proud nevertheless. For it is Pride, not only to ascribe what we have to ourselves, but to think we have, what we really have not. Mr. *Lazv*, for instance ascribed all the light he had to God : and so far he was humble. But then he thought he had *more Light* than any Man living. And this was palpable Pride. So you ascribe all the knowledge you have to God ; and in this respect you are humble. But if you think you have more Knowledge than you really have ; if you think you are so *taught of God*, as no longer to need Man's Teaching, Pride lieth at the Door,

Door. Yes, you have need to be taught, not only by Mr. Maxfield, by one another, by Mr. Morgan or me, but by the weakest Preacher in *London* : yea by all men ; for God sendeth by whom he *will* send.

Don't therefore say to any who would advise or reprove you, " You are blind : you cannot teach me. This is your *Wisdom* ; this is your *car-nal Reasoning* " : but calmly weigh the thing before God. O let there be in you that lowly *Mind* which was in Christ Jesus. And be ye clothed likewise with *Humility*. Let it not only fill, but cover you all over. Let *Modesty* and *Self-diffidence* appear in all your Words, and Actions. Let all you speak and do, shew that you are little and base and mean and vile in your own Eyes.

II. What is the second Advice which you would give them ?

A. Beware of that Daughter of Pride, *Enthu-siasm*. Sometimes likewise it is the Parent of Pride. O keep at the utmost Distance from it. Give no place to an heated Imagination. Do not ascribe to God, what is not of God. Do not easily suppose Dreams, Voices, Impressions, Visions or Revelations to be from God, without sufficient Evidence. They may be purely Na-tural : they may be Diabolical. Therefore re-member the Caution of the Apostle, *Beloved be-lieve not every Spirit, but try the Spirits whether they be of God* . Try all things by the written Word, and let all bow down before it. You are in danger of *Enthusiasm* every Hour, if you de-part ever so little from Scripture : yea or from the plain literal Meaning of any Text, taken in
con-

connection with the Context. And so you are if you despise or lightly esteem, Reason, Knowledge or human Learning : Every one of which, is an excellent Gift of God, and may serve to the noblest Purposes.

One general Inlet to Enthusiasm is, the expecting the End without the Means : the expecting Knowledge, for Instance, without searching the Scripture, and consulting the Children of God ; the expecting spiritual Strength, without constant Prayer : The expecting Growth in Grace, without steady Watchfulness, and deep Self-examination : the expecting any Blessing, without Hearing the Word of God at every Opportunity.

The very Desire of *growing in Grace* is sometimes an Inlet to Enthusiasm. As it continually leads us to seek *new Grace*, it may possibly lead unawares, to seek something else New, beside *new Degrees* of Love to God and Man. So it has in fact led some, to seek and imagine they had received Gifts of a *new Kind*, after a clean Heart : As 1. the loving God with all *our Mind*, 2. With all *our Soul*, 3. With all *our Strength*, 4. Oneness with God. 5. Oneness with CHRIST. 6. Having our Life hid with CHRIST in GOD. 7. Being dead with CHRIST. 8. The rising with Him. 9, The sitting with him in heavenly Places. 10. The being taken up into his Throne. 11. The being in the New Jerufalem. 12. The seeing the Tabernacle of God come down among Men. 13. The being dead to all Works. 14. The not being liable to bodily Death, or Pain. 15. Or Grief. 16. Or Temptation.

One Ground of many of these Mistakes is the taking every fresh and strong Application of any of these Scriptures to the Heart to be a Gift of a *new Kind* : Another the not knowing that some of these Scriptures are not fulfilled yet. Most of the others are fulfilled when we are justified, the rest the Moment we are sanctified. It remains only that they be fulfilled in *higher Degrees* : this is all we have to expect. Another Ground of these and a thousand Mistakes, is the not considering deeply, That Love is the highest Gift of God, humble, gentle, patient Love : That all Visions. Revelations, Manifestations whatever, are little things compared to Love : And that all the Gifts above mentioned, are either the same with, or infinitely inferior to it.

III. What is the Third ?

A. Beware of Antinomianism, making void the Law or any Part of it, thro' Faith. Enthusiasm naturally leads to this. Indeed they can hardly be seperated. This may steal upon you in a thousand Forms, so that you can never be too watchful against it. Take heed of every thing whether in Principle or Practice, which has any Tendency thereto. Even that great Truth that *Christ is the End of the Law*, may betray us into it, if we do not consider that he has adopted every Point of the Moral law, and grafted it into the Law of Love.

Beware of thinking “ Because I have Faith and
 “ Love, I need not have *so much* Holiness : Be-
 “ cause I pray always, therefore I need no set
 “ Time for Private Prayer : because I watch al-
 “ ways, therefore I need no particular Self-exami-
 nation.”

nation." Let us *magnify the Law*, the whole written Word, and *make it honourable*: Let this be our Voice, *I prize thy Commandments above Gold or precious Stones. O what love have I unto thy Law! All the Day long is my Study in it.* Beware of *Moravianism*, the most refined Antinomianism that ever was under the Sun: And such as I think could only have sprung from the Abuse of true Christian Experience. I cannot doubt but many of them were once exactly as you are now: Feeling the living Power of Faith Divine, and experiencing CHRIST to be all in all. But they were not aware of Satan's Devices. They gave way to Pride and strong Imagination, and then to Antinomianism, into which they have fallen deeper and deeper ever since. You have unawares adopted some of their Words already; if not of their Sentiments. But why should we even *talk* in an exceptionable Manner? Let us not call ourselves *The Church*, Or affectedly stile this or that Doctrine *the Thing, the Point, the Matter*? Why should we pray to CHRIST more than to the Father? No scripture will justify this. But these are comparatively small Things. Beware of their *Bigotry*, I mean Bigotry to their own Party. Let not your Love be confined to *Methodists* only, much less to that very small Part of them who seem to be renew'd in Love. Count not those your Enemies who do not believe your Report. Make not this your *Shibboleth*. Above all beware of *Moravian Stillness*: *Ceasing* in a wrong Sense, *from their own Works*. To mention One Instance out of many. You had received says one of them a great Blessing. But you began to *talk* of it, and to *do* this and that. So you lost it. You should have been Still.

IV. What is the Fourth ?

A. Beware of Sins of Omission. Lose no Opportunity of doing Good in any kind. Be zealous of good Works. Willingly omit no Work either of Piety or Mercy. Do all the Good you possibly can, to the Bodies and Souls of all Men. Particularly, *thou shalt in any wise reprove thy Neighbour, and not suffer Sin upon him.* Be active. Give no Place to Indolence or Sloth. Give no Occasion to say, *ye are idle, ye are idle,* though they *will* say so still. Be always employed. Lose no shred of Time : And what you do, do with your Might. Do not talk, too much : Neither too long at a Time. Few can converse profitably above an Hour. Keep at the utmost Distance from pious Chit-chat and from religious Gossipping.

V. What is the Fifth ?

A. Beware of *desiring* any Thing but God. Now you desire nothing else. Every other desire is driven out : see that none enter again. *Keep thyself pure* : Let your Eye remain single and your whole Body shall be full of Light. Admit no Desire of pleasing Food, or of any other Pleasure of Sense. No Desire of pleasing the Eye or Imagination, by any thing Grand, or New, or Beautiful. No Desire of Money, of Praise or Esteem of Happiness in any Creature. You *may* bring these Desires back ; but you *need* not : You need feel them no more. O stand fast, in the Liberty wherewith CHRIST has made you free.

VI. What is the Sixth ?

A.

A. Above all beware of Schism of making a Rent in the Church of CHRIST. Beware of every thing tending thereto. Beware of a divisive Spirit. Shun whatever has the least Aspect that Way. Therefore say not, “ *I am of Paul or Apollos ;*” The very Thing which occasioned “ the Schism at *Corinth*, which *St. Paul* so sharply reproves. Say not *this is my Preacher ; the best Preacher in England !* Give me Him, and take the Rest.” All this tends to breed, or foment Division, to disunite those whom God has joined. Do not extoll or run down any Preacher, Mr. *Maxfield* in particular. Do not say “ What care I for Mr. *Wesley’s* Rules : Mr. *Maxfield* is sufficient to teach *me.*” Do not exalt him above all other Preachers, lest you hurt both him, and the Cause of God. On the other Hand, do not bear hard upon him, for some Incoherency, or Inaccuracy of Expression. No, nor even for some Mistakes in Judgment were they really such.

Suffer not one Thought of seperating from your Brethren, whether their Opinions agree with yours or not. Do not dream, that any Man Sins in not believing *you*, in not taking *your Word* : Or that this or that *Opinion* is essential to the Work, and both must stand or fall together. Beware of Impatience of Contradiction. Do not condemn or think hardly of those, who cannot see just as you see, or who judge it their Duty to contradict you, whether in a great Thing or a small. So I fear some of us may have condemned Silas Told, Benj. Smith, John Read, Mary Auson, Sar. Clay, John Jones ; Perhaps Sar. Crosby and John Hampson too. And why ? Because they contradicted what we affirmed,

affirmed. All this tend's to Division. And by every thing of this kind, we are teaching them an evil Lesson against ourselves.

O beware of Touchiness, of Testiness, not bearing to be spoken to : starting at the least Word, and flying from those who do not implicitly receive mine, or Mr. *Maxfield's* Sayings.

Expect Contradiction and Opposition, together with Sufferings of various kinds. Consider, *To you it is given, not only to believe, but also to suffer for Christ,* (Phil. i. 29.) *It is given!* God gives you this Opposition, or Reproach. It is a fresh Token of his Love. And will you disown the Giver, or spurn his Gift, and count it a Misfortune? Will you not rather say, "Father the Hour is come, that thou shouldst be glorified. Now thou givest thy Child, to suffer something for thee. And the Cup thou givest me, shall I not drink it?" Know that these Things, (far from being Hindrances to the Work of God, or to your Soul, unless thro' your own Fault) are not only unavoidable in the Course of Providence, but profitable, yea necessary for you. Therefore receive them from God, as a peculiar Mark of his Favour, with Willingness, with Thankfulness. Receive them from Men with Humility, Meekness, Yieldingness, Gentleness, Sweetness. And be free and open in acknowledging what has been amiss, either in your Judgement or Practice. Not listning to *carnal Reason*, which will tell you "This would hurt the Cause of God." No. It will forward the Cause of God, and remove a great Hindrance out of the Way.

And

And beware of tempting others to separate from you. Give no Offence which can possibly be avoided. See that your Practice be in all Things suitable to your Profession, adorning the Doctrine of God your Saviour. Be particularly careful in speaking of yourself. You may not indeed deny the work of God: But speak of it, when you are called thereto, in the most inoffensive Manner possible. Avoid all magnificent, pompous Words. Indeed you need give it no *General* Name, neither "Perfection, Sanctification, the second Blessing," nor "the having attain'd." Rather speak of the *Particulars* which God has wrought. You may say, "I then felt an unspeakable Change. And since that Time, I have not felt Pride, or Anger, or Unbelief: Nor any Thing but a Fulness of Love, to God and to all Mankind." And answer any other plain Question that is asked, with Modesty and Simplicity.

I would add but one Word more. If any of you should at any time fall from what you now are, do not deny, do not hide, do not disguise it at all, at the peril of your Soul. At all events come as soon as possible to your Leader, or to Mr. *Maxfield*, *Morgan*, or me, and speak just what you feel. God will then enable us, to speak a Word in Season. It shall be Health to your Soul. And He will soon lift up your Head, and cause the Bones that have been broken to rejoyce.

Suffer me to add,

That the *Propriety* and *Utility* of the above Remarks will appear to a Demonstration, when we consider,

1. That we have Persons among us, who believe they shall never die.

2. That we have Persons among us, who go from House to House, to persuade People to believe they are perfect, when God hath not persuaded them.

3. That we have those among us, who believe God has given them *the Gift of discerning Spirits*, and that indiscriminately, the Good as well as the Bad.

4. That there are several among us, who believe they cannot err.

5. That we have not a few, who believe it impossible for them to sin and fall.

6. That the Methodist Preachers who cannot subscribe the above Nostrums, are represented as being in the Dark, and leading the People in the Dark these twenty Years past; during which Time God hath taken thousands of their Children in the Gospel to himself, who have gone off the Stage triumphantly, tho' they knew nothing of these Extravagancies.