

ted to preach in most of the churches in London, yet, thanks be to God, there are others left, wherein we have liberty to speak the truth as it is in Jesus. Likewise every evening, and on set evenings in the week, at two several places, we publish the word of reconciliation, sometimes to twenty or thirty, sometimes to fifty or sixty, sometimes to three or four hundred persons, met together to hear it."

In the spring of the following year we find Mr. Wesley at Bristol, where Mr. Whitefield had preached with great success in the open air. The manner in which he there spent his time, may be seen from the following account of his weekly labours: "My ordinary employment in public was now as follows: Every morning I read prayers and preached at Newgate. Every evening I expounded a portion of scripture, at one or more of the societies.\* On Monday in the afternoon I preached abroad near Bristol. On Tuesday at Bath and Two Mile Hill, alternately. On Wednesday at Baptist Mills. Every other Thursday near Pensford. Every other Friday in another part of Kingswood. On Saturday in the afternoon, and Sunday morning, in the Bowling-Green. On Sunday at eleven, near Hamam Mount, at two, at Clifton, at five, at Rose-Green. And hitherto, as my day is, so is my strength."

\* The societies which Mr. Wesley mentions in his journals as visited by him, for the purpose of expounding the scriptures, in London and Bristol, were the remains of those which Dr. Woodward describes, in an account first published about 1690 or 1699. They began about 1667, among a few young men in London, who under Dr. Horneek's preaching, and the morning lectures in Cornhill, were brought to a very affecting sense of their sins, and began to apply themselves in a very serious way to religious thoughts and purposes." They were advised by their ministers to meet together weekly for "good discourse;" and rules were drawn up "for the better regulation of these meetings." They contributed weekly for the use of the poor, and stewards were appointed to take care of, and to disburse their charities. In the latter part of the reign of James II., they met with discouragement; but on the accession of William and Mary, they acquired new vigour. When Dr. Woodward wrote his account, there were about forty of these societies in activity within the Bills of mortality, a few in the country, and numbers in Ireland. Out of these societies about twenty associations arose in London for the prosecution and suppression of vice, and both these, and the private societies for religious edification, had for a time much encouragement from several bishops, and from the queen herself. By their rules they were obliged, at their weekly meetings, to discourse only on such subjects as tended to practical holiness, and to avoid all controversy; and besides relieving the poor, they were to promote schools, as the catechising of "young and ignorant persons in their respective families." These societies certainly opened a favourable prospect for the revival of religion in the church of England; but, whether they were cramped by clerical jealousy lest laymen should become too active in spiritual concerns; or that from their being bound by their orders to prosecute vice by calling in the aid of the magistrate, their moral influence among the populace was counteracted, they appear to have declined from about 1710; and although several societies still remained in London, Bristol, and a few other places at the time when Mr. Wesley commenced his labours, they were not in a state of growth and activity. They had, however, been the means of keeping the spark of piety from entire extinction. The sixth edition of Dr. Woodward's account of these societies was published in 1744; but from that time we hear no more of them; they either gradually died away, or were absorbed in the Methodist societies. This, at least, was the case with several of them in London and Bristol; and with that of St. Ives, in Cornwall."