

him to make full provision for the spiritual wants of his people, as being in fact in a state of real and hopeless separation from the church; and he did some years afterwards so far relax, as to allow of preaching in church hours under certain circumstances, as 1. When the minister was wicked; or held pernicious doctrine; 2. When the churches would not contain the population of a town; or where the church was distant. In that case he prescribed reading the Psalms and Lessons and part of the Liturgy. And for this purpose, as well as for the use of the American Societies, he published his abridgement of the Common Prayer, under the title of the "*Sunday Service of the Methodists.*"

In the following year he printed an Address to the Clergy, plain, affectionate and powerful; breathing at once the spirit of an Apostle, and the feeling of a brother—Happy if that call had been heard! He might perhaps be influenced in this by a still lingering hope of a revival of the spirit of zeal and piety among the ministers of the Established Church; in which case that separation of his people from the church, which he began to foresee as otherwise inevitable, he thought might be prevented; and this he had undoubtedly much at heart. Under the same view it probably was that in 1764, he addressed a circular to all the serious clergy whom he knew, inviting them to a closer co-operation in promoting the influence of religion in the land, without any sacrifice of opinion, and being still at liberty, as to outward order, to remain "quite regular, or quite irregular, or partly regular and partly irregular." Of the thirty-four clergymen addressed, only three returned any answer. From this time he gave up all hope of a formal connexion with even the pious clergy; and he therefore set himself with deep seriousness to perpetuate the union of his preachers. At the Conference of 1769, he read a paper the object of which was to bind the preachers together by a closer tie, and to provide for the continuance of their union after his death. They were to engage solemnly to devote themselves to God, to preach the old Methodist doctrine, and to maintain the old Methodist discipline; after Mr. Wesley's death, they were to repair to London, and those who chose to act in concert were to draw up articles of agreement; whilst such as did not so agree were to be dismissed "in the most friendly way possible." They were then to choose a committee by vote, each of the members of which was to be Moderator in his turn, and this committee was to enjoy Mr. Wesley's power of proposing preachers to be admitted or excluded, of appointing their stations for the ensuing year, and of fixing the time of the next Conference. This appears to have been the first sketch of an ecclesiastical constitution for the body, and it mainly consisted in the entire delegation of the power which Mr. Wesley had always exercised, to a committee of preachers to be chosen by the rest when assembled in Conference. Another and more eligible provision was subsequently made; but this sufficiently shows that Mr. Wesley had given up all hope of union with the church; and his efforts were henceforth directed merely to prevent any thing like formal separation, and the open renunciation of her communion, during his life, by allowing his preachers to administer the sacraments.