

same chapel for more than three years successively, thus binding an itinerant ministry upon the societies for ever. Whether this system of changing ministers be essential to the spiritual interests of the body or not, or whether it might not be usefully modified, will be matters of opinion; but the point ought perhaps to have been left more at liberty.

The state in which the separation of the United States from the Mother Country left the Methodist American Societies had become a matter of serious concern to Mr. Wesley, and presented to him a new case, for which it was imperative to make some provision. This however could not be done but by a proceeding which he foresaw would lay him open to much remark, and some censure, from the rigid English Episcopalians. But with him, the principle of making every thing indifferent give place to the necessity of doing good or preventing evil, was paramount; and when that necessity was clearly made out, he was not a man to hesitate. Mr. Wesley had continued to send occasional ministerial assistance to the Societies in America until with the native "Assistants" and "Helpers" the number of Preachers amounted in 1777 to 40, and the societies were greatly enlarged. These were scattered in towns and settlements so distant that it required constant and extensive travelling from the Preachers to supply them with the word of God. Two of the Preachers sent out from England returned, after employing themselves on the Mission for about five years; and Mr. Asbury, a true itinerant, who in this respect followed in America, the unwearied example of Mr. Wesley, gradually acquired a great and deserved influence, which supported as it was by his excellent sense, moderating temper, and entire devotedness to the service of God, increased rather than diminished to the end of a protracted life. The American preachers like those in England, were at first restrained by Mr. Wesley from administering either of the sacraments; but when through the war, and the acquisition of independence by the States most of the Clergy of the Church of England had left the country, neither the children of the members of the Methodist Societies could be baptized, nor the Lord's Supper administered among them, without a change of the original plan. Mr. Asbury's predilection for the former order of things prevented him from listening to the request of the American Societies to be formed into a regular Church, and furnished with all its spiritual privileges; and a division had already taken place among them. This breach, however, Mr. Asbury had the address to heal; and at the peace he laid the whole case before Mr. Wesley. The result will be seen in the following letter:—

"To Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our Brethren in North America.

*"Bristol, September 10, 1784.*

"By a very uncommon train of providences, many of the provinces of North America are totally disjoined from their Mother Country, and erected into independant States. The English Government has no authority over them either civil or ecclesiastical, any more than over the States of Holland. A civil authority is exercised over them, partly by the Congress, partly by the Provincial Assemblies. But no one either