

quy and persecution with which they followed an innocent and pious people, they perhaps did so. But the clergy, having made their election have no right as some of them continue to do, to censure either the Founders of Methodism or their people for making more ample provision for their spiritual wants. It was imperative upon the former to provide that pastoral care for the souls brought to God by their labours, which the Church could not or would not afford; and the people had a Christian liberty to follow that course which they seriously believed most conducive to their own edification, as well as a liberty by the very laws of their country. Mr. Wesley resisted all attempts at formal separation still hoping that a more friendly spirit would spring up among the Clergy; and though he relaxed his strictness in some instances resulting from circumstances which neither he nor his people could controul, yet as he did not sufficiently yield to meet the whole case, and perhaps could not do it without adopting such an ecclesiastical organization as his societies as would have contradicted the principles to which, as to their relation to the Church, he had, perhaps, overhastily and peremptorily committed himself; the effect was, that long before his death, the attendance of the Methodists at such parish Churches as had not pious Ministers was exceedingly scanty; and as they were not permitted public worship among themselves in the hours of Church Service, a great part of the Sabbath was lost to them, except as they employed it in family and private exercises. So also as to the Lord's Supper, as was not then administered by their own preachers it fell into neglect.

To meet the case in part, the two Brothers, and a few Clergymen who joined them, had public service in Church hours, in the Chapels in London and some other places, and administered the Lord's Supper to numerous communicants; a measure which like other inconsistencies of similar kind, grew out of a sense of duty, warring with, and restrained by strong prepossessions, and the very sincere but very unfounded hope just mentioned, that a more friendly spirit would be awakened among the Clergy, and that all the sheep gathered out of the wilderness would at length be kindly welcomed into the national fold. As ecclesiastical irregularities, these measures stood however, precisely on the same principle as those subsequent changes which have rendered the body of Methodists still more distinct and separate.

The field of labour expanded before Mr. W. and his associates. They had, however, to sustain many attacks from the press; and so many frowns from the authorities of the Church. By mobs they had occasionally been insulted both in England and in Wales. But in London, so riotous proceedings, of a somewhat violent character, occurred in the places of worship.* A current charge against Mr. W. about this time

*With respect to these, the following anecdote may show that Mr. Wesley was regarded with favour in a high quarter:—"On the last day of 1712, Sir B. Ganson called on Mr. Wesley, and said "Sir, you have no need to suffer from riotous mobs to molest you, as they have long done. I and all the other Middle