

ADVERTISEMENT.

AN EXTRACT FROM MR. WESLEY'S WILL.

"I give all my manuscripts to Thomas Coke, Doctor Whitehead, and Henry Moore, to be burnt or published, as they see good."*

As the dispute between Dr. Coke, Mr. Moore, the Methodist Conference, and me, respecting the publication of Mr. J. Wesley's Life, has been very generally made known through the three kingdoms, it seems necessary to state to the public, what has been done on my part, and on the part of the committee united with me, to put an end to that dispute. After the Manchester Conference, in 1791, Mr. Rogers, Dr. Coke, Mr. Whitefield, &c. began the dispute, on the subject of money, or the division of the profits arising from the sale of the Life: they afterwards required, that I should publish nothing in the Life of Mr. J. Wesley, but what should be approved by a committee of the preachers. With respect to the first, I offered to give them the whole profits of the work, if they desired it, in order to put an end to the difference, as my printed letter of November of that year, will testify. With respect to the requisition, I could not in conscience submit to it. I offered to read the manuscript to them as friends, and to consult them on particular parts of Mr. Wesley's life; but insisted on the right of using my own judgment, if on any point we could not agree. Here then we differed, and in the printed letter above mentioned, I addressed the preachers on this subject, in the following words: "I therefore entreat you, for God's sake, for the sake of peace among the people, for the honor of religion in general, to desist from this arbitrary and illiberal requisition. If you still insist upon it, and make a breach on this account, I call the living God to witness between me and you this day, that I am clear; the mischief that may follow, will lie at your door, not mine; and you shall answer for it, at the awful tribunal of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

In August, 1792, when the Methodist preachers were assembled in conference, at London, the committee above mentioned, met, and resolved,

That, "When the members of the committee united themselves together, to support Dr. Whitehead in writing the life of Mr. Wesley, the following were the leading principles of their union: 1. That Dr. Whitehead having been solicited to write the life, by the executors, preachers, and others, had pledged himself to the public to execute the work; and his printed proposals had been signed by the executors, and admitted by the Conference. 2. That Dr. Whitehead had an undoubted right to use his own judgment without control, in writing a book to which his name must be prefixed, and for the contents of

* See Arminian Magazine for January, 1792, page 29.

which he only was responsible to the Methodist connection at large, and to the public. 3. That the three persons to whom Mr. Wesley had bequeathed his manuscripts, of whom Dr. Whitehead was one, having deliberately agreed that the doctor should have the use of them to assist him in executing the work, and they having been delivered unconditionally to him for that end, he had a right to the discretionary use of them, notwithstanding that two of those persons afterwards changed their mind on that subject. 4. When some of the preachers opposed Dr. Whitehead in the performance of his engagements to the public, the steps they took to injure his reputation, appeared to this committee unjustifiable, and if tolerated would take away all security for the character of every member of the Methodist society; the members of the committee, therefore, thought it their duty to oppose such proceedings, and to support an injured man who bore a public and respectable character, from the violent and unjust attacks made upon him. The committee are still persuaded of the justice and equity of these principles: but to show the disinterestedness of Dr. Whitehead and of this committee, and their desire of peace, they are willing to make some sacrifices for the sake thereof; and therefore, with the consent of Dr. Whitehead, make the following propositions:

FIRST. "That all the Manuscripts of Mr. Wesley shall be fairly and impartially examined, by Dr. Coke, Mr. Moore, and Dr. Whitehead. Such papers as they shall unanimously deem unfit for publication, shall be burnt immediately: out of the remainder Dr. Whitehead shall be at liberty to select such as he thinks necessary for his work; and the residue* to be given into the hands of Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore.

SECOND. "That the Life of Mr Wesley, written by Dr. Whitehead, shall be given up by the committee to the Conference, and become their entire property.

THIRD. "That one hundred and twenty-eight pages of the Life being already printed off, Dr. Whitehead will read them to a committee of the preachers, if desired, that they may judge of the spirit and manner, in which the Life will be written, before they come to any conclusion.

FOURTH. "That Dr. Whitehead will read his manuscript as the work goes on, to any person or persons the conference shall appoint; he will be glad of their opinion and advice, which he will follow in all cases, as far as he shall judge it consistent with the usefulness and reputation of his work.

FIFTH. "That the Conference shall defray all the expenses which the committee has been at up to the present time (the account to be made up by the treasurers of the committee) and take the expense of the work upon themselves: any consideration to be given Dr. Whitehead for his trouble, &c., in writing the Life, shall be wholly left to the determination of Conference in 1794, and if he never receives one shilling, he will not complain.

SIXTH. "The Life of Mr. Wesley, written by Dr. Whitehead, shall never be printed, in any form, without Dr. Whitehead's name, nor altered in any part of it without his consent.

SEVENTH. "Dr. Whitehead shall immediately take his place, as a preacher in the new chapel, if the trustees approve thereof, as he did before this dispute happened; and let all past differences be buried and forgotten.

EIGHTH. "The fifty copies of the Life which are printed on large fine paper, shall be finished in the same manner as the eight sheets of them which are already printed off; and these fifty copies shall then be hot-pressed, and be delivered to Dr. Whitehead in

* It was intended, and I believe sufficiently understood on both sides, that all the papers would be delivered up without reserve, as soon as the Life should be published.

boards at the common selling price of the book, to be distributed by him according to his original intention in printing them.

"In case these propositions are rejected, the committee will consider Dr. Whitehead and themselves, and the whole of this dispute, to be remaining in the same state as previous to the making these proposals.

"The committee consider as first principles, from which they can never recede; first, that Dr. Whitehead shall write the *Life*, subject to proposition No. 1. Secondly, That he use his own judgment therein without control. These two principles being admitted, the committee will, if the Conference prefer it, submit every other part of the difference to the decision of two persons, one to be chosen by the Conference, and the other by the committee; which two persons, in case of a difference in opinion, shall nominate a third person to decide by a majority.—If the Conference adopt either of these proposals, the parties to enter into satisfactory engagements for the fulfilment of them.

"That a copy of the proceedings of this meeting, signed by the secretary, be sent to Mr. Alexander Mather, the president of the Conference."—It must be observed, that Dr. Coke was secretary to the Conference, and Mr. Moore a member of it, and present at it. Our proposals were rejected.

Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore have published a *Life* of Mr. Wesley; and they inform the public, in their Preface, that, there is nothing material respecting him, that is not given in their volume. They assign, as an evidence of this, that, all his private papers were open to their inspection, for several years. According to their own declaration, therefore, they have suffered no loss or injury, on account of the papers being in my hands.