

were arranged; and consultation was held on all matters connected with the promotion of the work of God, in which they were engaged. Every thing went on, however, not on preconceived plans, but "step by step," as circumstances suggested, and led the way. To the great principle of *doing good* to the souls of men, every thing was subordinated; not excepting even their prejudices and fears, as appears from the Minutes of the first Conference, which was held in London, as now stated. The ultimate separation of the Societies from the Church, after the death of the first agents in the work, was at that early period contemplated as a *possibility*, and made a subject of conversation; and the resolution was, "We do and will do all we can to prevent those consequences which are supposed to be likely to happen after our death; but we cannot, in good conscience, neglect the present opportunity of saving souls while we live, for fear of consequences which may possibly, or probably happen after we are dead." To this principle Mr. Wesley was "faithful unto death;" and it is the true key to his public conduct. Nothing, however, can be more clear, than that Mr. Wesley, feeling that a case of necessity had arisen, calling upon him to provide a ministry and a government for the people who had been raised up; a necessity which rested upon the obvious alternative, that they must either be furnished with pastors of their own, or be left without sufficient aid in the affairs of their souls, laid the groundwork of his future proceedings, after much deliberation at this early stage of his progress. For consequences, arising out of circumstances he could not controul, he should not be held accountable, and much less should his successors who acting under the influence of principles ever maintained in his career of pious endeavour, have not pushed them beyond their legitimate and necessary extent.

Mr. Wesley first visited Ireland in August 1747, and was allowed to preach once at St. Mary's in Dublin. The state of the Catholics excited his peculiar sympathy; and as he could have little access to them by preaching, he published an address especially for their use. In his journal he makes a remark on the religious neglect of this class of our fellow-subjects by Protestants, which contains a reproof, the force of which has unhappily extended to our own times:—"Nor is it any wonder that those who are born Papists, generally live and die such; when the Protestants can find no better ways to convert them, than penal laws, and Acts of Parliament. Though here, as in other places, he and his brother suffered much persecution, yet their efforts were greatly honoured of the Lord.

*To be continued.*

