

solved that in the administration of Church affairs the lay element shall henceforth have a larger share than hitherto, and they have applied to the Central Conference to sanction this resolve. In the discussions that have ensued there has been manifested in some quarters an unwillingness to concede the contemplated change. It is perceived that if the constitution of the Wesleyans be thus altered in Ireland, a similar alteration must shortly be adopted in England as well; and it is contended by some authorities that as the original constitution of the Conference was clerical, such a change would revolutionize the body. As, however, this objection is more theoretical than practical, and none of a more substantial character seem to be alleged—since, moreover, many of the ministers in Conference strongly advocate the principle now sought to be applied,—it is more than probable that another twelve months will witness its adoption. Practically, even now the power of Wesleyan laymen is not small, but nevertheless they legitimately seek its extension and its formal recognition by the Conference. Committees have been appointed for the consideration of the whole subject, and so constituted as to obtain the fullest expression of the opinion both of the laity and the ministers. These committees will report to the next Conference, and the settlement of this question, so fraught with interest to the entire Methodist community, has been accordingly deferred until another year.

#### OLD CATHOLIC CONFERENCE.

Special interest attaches to the proceedings of the Old Catholic Conference at Bonn, its main object being to ascertain whether any satisfactory basis of union could be laid down, mainly in respect of Christian doc-

trine, between the Old Catholic and the Russo-Greek and Anglican communions. The chief result has been the adoption of a common formula on the doctrine of the Procession of the Holy Ghost, concerning which for nearly a thousand years the Eastern Church has been divided from the Western. Those who have read this formula and the debates by which it was preceded, may not improbably consider that the points discussed belong rather to the domain of scholastic and metaphysical theology than to that of practical and living union between communities of earnest Christian men. No one, of course, pretends that the questions between the Churches have been finally disposed of. The work thus begun is admitted by its friends to be very far indeed from its completion; but it is regarded by them as something for the official representatives of these various churches to have met together, to have recognized each other as Christian men, and to have agreed upon a common basis of doctrine as the foundation of their faith. The effect as regards the promotion of Christian union, will not, so far as we can judge, be very great. We learn that next year the promoters of the Conference will further prosecute the work they have begun. That the ultimate issue of their efforts might be, not union alone, but the purification of all the churches represented in this Conference from the errors and superstitions which may still obscure their faith, corrupt their worship, or prevent their spiritual growth, must be the hearty desire of every Evangelical Protestant who has read the report of their proceedings. Meanwhile, we need hardly point out that this "Church union" and the Christian union, of which the Evangelical Alliance is the best exponent, are very different things. The founders of the Alliance distinctly re-