

This at first appeared somewhat feasible, but the committee were induced to abandon it, upon considering the vastness of the effort which would be required on the part of Wesleyan ministers. They would feel themselves to be giving up ministerial powers which they believe that they have acquired; and that, without any immediate prospect of Episcopal Ordination.

"Or, *fourthly*, by consenting to confer Episcopal Ordination on any Wesleyan minister who might desire it, and, in the judgment of the Bishop, be qualified to receive it—such minister being allowed to retain his connection with the Wesleyan body, and to officiate in a Wesleyan chapel, provided that he use the liturgy of the Church of England.

But this also was beset with difficulties, owing to the number of points which the discussion of it brought to light, involving patronage, trusteeship, and property. Moreover, the Wesleyan system does not admit of fixity of tenure in chapels. A minister thus episcopally ordained might in a year or two be succeeded by one not episcopally ordained. To demand his continuance in the same sphere of ministry would be, in effect, to demand the surrender of this or that chapel absolutely, during his life, to the Church of England. And unless this point were secured, it seemed that all efforts towards uniting church-people and Wesleyans in the same town or village would be illusory.

"From these considerations, with others of less moment, which need not be stated at length, it seemed to the committee impracticable to approach the Wesleyans as a body by means of direct offers to the conference.

"They therefore felt unable to recommend any petition to convocation, praying that this course may be adopted.

"The committee next addressed themselves to the second question—viz., whether it is possible

to clear away difficulties which hamper the consciences of individual ministers, or other members of the Wesleyan body, or otherwise discourage their movement towards the church.

"The chief of these difficulties appeared to resolve themselves into the four mentioned in the petition.

"It appeared to the committee that if, in a spirit of love, resolutions could be drawn up calculated to meet these difficulties, such resolutions, if they became in any way the expression of the Church's mind, would do much towards turning the hearts of individual ministers, and other members of the Wesleyan body, to the church from which their founder never separated himself.

"After many meetings, and much anxious thought, not without prayer for Divine guidance, they agreed to a series of resolutions, which were afterwards embodied in the petition given below.

"J. E. KEMPE, Chairman.

"March 3, 1856."

The above report was communicated to a large meeting at St. James' Rectory, Picca-

dilly, on Thursday evening, March 6. The result of the conversation that ensued was the proposal of the following petition to Convocation, founded mainly on the report, and expanding the resolutions contained in it. It was then numerously signed, and will lie at Messrs. Rivington's, 3, Waterloo-place, for general signature:—

*"The humble Petition of the undersigned Clergy and Laity of the Church of England to the Most Rev. the Archbishop, the Right Rev. the Bishops, and the Rev. the Clergy of the Province of Canterbury, in Convocation assembled, sheweth:*

"That your petitioners, seriously laying 'to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions,' and earnestly desiring a closer union among christians, have been led in the first instance to review the causes which impede the restoration to the Church of England of one particular religious community, namely, the Wesleyan Methodists.

"That your petitioners are given to understand that among the chief difficulties in the way of such reunion are the following:—

"1. An impression on the part of the Wesleyans that the Church of England is not sufficiently careful with respect to the ordination of candidates for the ministry, or sufficiently jealous of the personal holiness of her ministers and other members.

"2. A persuasion that the Wesleyan system of 'class-meetings' would be formally disapproved by the Church of England.

"3. A strong objection to the imposition of a three years' silence on a Wesleyan minister before he can be episcopally ordained.

"4. A suspicion that in promoting union the Church of England desires to obtain patronage, or temporal influence."

"That your petitioners desire to meet these difficulties in the spirit of christian candour and christian charity.

"They beg leave, therefore, humbly to represent to your two houses as follows:—

"That they desire most earnestly that every precaution should be taken to ensure personal holiness and other necessary qualifications in candidates for the sacred ministry of the church, and that none should be admitted to holy orders but such as can answer conscientiously the questions put to every candidate in the Ordination Service—a test which, if faithfully applied, they are satisfied would secure, so far as human means can be expected to secure, an efficient and godly ministry.

"That with reference to the personal holiness of the clergy and other members of the Church of England, they would cordially rejoice if better means could be devised than at present exist for the exercise of godly discipline.

"That in the opinion of your petitioners the retention by the Wesleyans of their system of 'class-meetings' need not be an insuperable obstacle to their reunion with the Church.