ATTEMPTS AT METHODIST AND MORAVIAN UNION

By Warren Thomas Smith

Ecumenicity is a dominant theme—if not an outright goal—in contemporary church life. The road leading to it, we are discovering, can be hazardous, fraught with manifold difficulties. An almost overlooked appendage to eighteenth century church history is the brief encounter in 1785-1786 between the Methodists and the Moravians with a view to possible union. The conversations were noticeably brief in duration and decidedly fragmented in scope, yet they point up a number of problems attendant on most church union conversations.

Wesleyan—Moravian Background

The Brethren’s tie with England dates from 1728 when Johann Töltschig, accompanied by David Nitschmann and Wenzel Neisser—all from Moravia—were dispatched to Britain bearing letters of introduction from Zinzendorf. John and Charles Wesley first experienced personal encounter with the Moravians aboard the Simmonds during the autumn of 1735, en route to Georgia. “I began to learn German, in order to converse [a little] with the Moravians,” wrote John on Friday, October 17, “six-and-twenty of whom we have on board...” Later, “... In the afternoon Mr. David Nitschmann, Bishop of the Moravians, ... began to learn English. Oh may we be not only of one tongue, but of one mind and of one heart!” Perhaps one of the best known references to the Moravians came during the storm, when Wesley addressed one of the Germans, “... ‘Was you not afraid?’ He answered, ‘I thank God, no.’ I asked, ‘But were not your women and children afraid?’ He replied mildly, ‘No; our women and children are not afraid to die.’” Once in America, the link between John Wesley and the Brethren became increasingly significant. His conversation with Spangenberg stands as a landmark in a spiritual quest, “I asked Mr. Spangenberg’s advice with regard to myself—to my own conduct. He told me he could say nothing till he had asked me two or three questions. ‘Do you know yourself? Have you the witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?’ I was surprised, and knew not what to answer. He observed it, and asked, ‘Do you know Jesus Christ?’ I paused, and said, ‘I know He is the Saviour of the world.’ ‘True,’ replied he;

'but do you know He has saved you?' I answered, 'I hope He has died to save me.' He only added, 'Do you know yourself?' I said, 'I do.' But I fear they were vain words. . . ." 5

One scene was indelibly etched on Wesley's mind. Replacements were needed for Spangenberg, who was going to Pennsylvania, and for Nitschmann, who was leaving for Germany. "After several hours spent in conference and prayer, they proceeded to the election and ordination of a bishop. The great simplicity, as well as solemnity, of the whole, almost made me forget the seventeen hundred years between, and imagine myself in one of those assemblies where form and state were not, but Paul the tent-maker or Peter the fisherman presided, yet with the demonstration of the Spirit and of power." 6

Close and mutually helpful relationships prevailed during the interim of the return to England. When Charles came home in 1736 he discovered a remarkable stirring among the dry bones, 7 due in no small measure to the Religious Societies. John's homecoming, almost simultaneous with the coming of Peter Böhler, was marked by the advice, "... 'Preach faith till you have it; and then, because you have it, you will preach faith.'" 8 Hard on the heels of this discussion came the formation of the Society, "This evening [May 1, 1738] our little society began, which afterwards met in Fetter Lane. . . ." 9 Events moved swiftly. First came Charles' experience of conversion, then John's. Lecky assessed the May 24th event, "It is however, scarcely an exaggeration to say that the scene which took place at that humble meeting in Aldersgate Street forms an epoch in English history. The conviction which then flashed upon one of the most powerful and most active intellects in England is the true source of English Methodism." 10

Three weeks after the Aldersgate experience, John Wesley, accompanied by Benjamin Ingham, Jöhann Toltschig, Richard Viney, 11 set out for Germany, hoping that "... the conversing with those holy men who were themselves living witnesses of the full power of faith, and yet able to bear with those that are weak, would be a means, under God, of so establishing my soul, that I might go on from faith to faith and 'from strength to strength.'" 12 Hersnhut impressed Wesley both favorably and negatively. On returning to London he joined some sixty people in a Love Feast on January 1,
1739, a "high-water mark of Methodist and Moravian fellowship...". From that point on, relationships deteriorated, culminating in the Sunday evening service of July 20, 1740 at Fetter Lane. Wesley delivered a paper, declaring that points of doctrine were so diverse from his own that, "... I believe these assertions to be flatly contrary to the Word of God. I have warned you hereof again and again, and besought you to turn back to the Law and the Testimony. I have borne with you long, hoping you would turn. But as I find you more and more confirmed in the error of your ways, nothing now remains but that I should give you up to God. You that are of the same judgment, follow me." Quite obviously, theological differences were combined with clashes of personality, "Wesley's suspicion of Zinzendorf's autocracy; ... and Moravian suspicion of Wesley's passion for power; ..." 15

Wesleys and Moravians went their separate ways, keeping apart rather than engaging in continued controversy. A few years saw contention, verbal for the most part, known as "the Battle of the Books." Wesley continued to label the Moravians "... with Antinomianism," and the Brethren attack Wesley's "... doctrine of Christian perfection." 16 There has been almost absurd exaggeration, however, as to the extent of the differences, as in the example of one author who blandly stated, "As everyone knows there was for many years a bitter quarrel between the Brethren and the Wesleyans." 17

Coke—La Trobe Conversations

In 1785 there arose a situation as interesting as it was unexpected. In his The Renewed Church of the United Brethren 1922-1930, 18 William George Addison provides a valuable collection of letters describing an attempted rapprochement between Methodism and the Unitas Fratrum. Charles Wesley was the progenitor of this fascinating dialogue. He sparked this discussion in an attempt to counteract his brother's move in regard to American Methodists. When John Wesley set apart Thomas Coke for the office of superintendent in 1784, no single individual reacted more strongly than Charles. The "Sweet Singer of Methodism" was by far the more high church of the two brothers, and he likewise nursed a sizable grudge against Coke. To Charles, the creation of the Methodist

15 Towlson, p. 77.
16 Towlson, p. 117.
17 Towlson, p. 173.
Episcopal Church at the Christmas Conference in Baltimore was tantamount to separation from the Established Church, not only for the Americans—which it was without doubt—but also for British Methodists. It was the stance of Methodism in England that concerned Charles. Would the Societies leave the Anglican fold? Charles vented his wrath in a series of quatrains quite unworthy of so gifted a personality:

So easily are Bishops made
   By man's, or woman's whim?
W—his hands on C—hath laid,
   But who laid hands on Him?

Hands on himself he laid, and took
   An Apostolic Chair;
And then ordain'd his Creature C—
   His Heir and Successor.

Episcopalian, now no more
   With Presbyterians fight,
But give your needless Contest o're,
   'Whose Ordination's right?'

It matter not, if Both are One,
   Or different in degree,
For lo! ye see contain'd in John
   The whole Presbytery! 19

Another poem, in almost identical bitterness, reflects Charles' anathema, pronounced on the entire procedure:

W—himself and friends betrays,
   By his good sense forsook,
While suddenly his hands he lays
   On the hot head of C—:

Yet we at least shou'd spare the weak,
   His weak Co-evals We,
Nor blame an hoary Schismatic,
   A Saint of Eighty-three! 20

Another bit of doggerel was directed at Coke's action in his consecration of Francis Asbury as Superintendent at the Christmas

---

19 Frank Baker, Representative Verse of Charles Wesley (London: The Epworth Press, 1962), p. 368. This poem is known by the title "Epigram."

20 Baker, p. 367. This poem is also entitled "Epigram."
Conference. Edward J. Drinkhouse correctly observes, "... he lost sight of Christian charity and was guilty of satirizing the act in the quatrain—an unpardonable allusion to the humble origin of Asbury:"

A Roman emperor, 'tis said,  
His favorite horse a counsul made;  
But Coke brings greater things to pass,  
He makes a bishop of an ass.21

Charles was sure that Coke was determined to create a Methodist Episcopal Church in Britain. To thwart such a move he set out to renew old ties with the Moravians. He sought out Benjamin La Trobe, in London, who was President of the Moravian Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel.22 La Trobe was originally a Baptist. Following his student days at the University of Glasgow, about 1745, he organized a Religious Society in Dublin, to which John Cennick was invited to come and assist. La Trobe soon "found a congenial sphere" in the Moravian fellowship. He served first at Fulneck in Ireland, then as pastor and head of Moravian work in England. He was "an eloquent preacher and a copious apologist for the Unitas."23 John Wesley in 1747 mentioned La Trobe as having "read from his pulpit part of the Short View of the Difference between the Moravians and us, with the addition of many bitter words ... giving an authentic proof that we have nothing to do with them."24

Immediately upon hearing from Charles Wesley, La Trobe dispatched an urgent epistle to Herrnhut, October 25, 1785, requesting advice on how to proceed. He was obviously a man of extreme caution and his letters indicate the great painstaking which seems so much a part of his makeup. He was always seeking advice as to the next move. In the copious correspondence which followed, La Trobe faithfully and laboriously recorded his conversations. These were sent to Johannes Loretz, a Swiss who had become a valued associate of Zinzendorf 25 and at the latter's death assumed the status of "Senior civilis." In 1763 he had been one of the committee to visit Russia for conversations with Catherine the Great regarding Unitas

---

22 See J. E. Hutton, A Short History of the Moravian Church, pp. 253-256, several interesting personal skatches of La Trobe.
23 Addison, p. 194.
24 John Wesley, Journal, III, p. 315, under the date August 18, 1747.
ATTEMPTS AT METHODIST AND MORAVIAN UNION 41

Fratrum immigration to her empire.26 In 1770 he visited America and the West Indies as part of his oversight of Moravian missions. Addison adds a note that Loretz may be the original Major L. in Goethe’s Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship.27 At the outset, as the Brethren sought to understand Methodism, they revealed their own quest for meaning and purpose. What were they to be: purely an ecclesiola within the established churches, or an independent denomination?

La Trobe felt the time propitious for a possible reconciliation with the Methodists. He was likewise extremely wary of the youthful Dr. Thomas Coke, lately returned from America, who exerted far too much influence over John Wesley. La Trobe gave a resume of Methodism’s status in England, the “... societies are very numerous and exceed in the three kingdoms more than can well be imagined.” 28 Coke was a major obstacle, for he had gained “... an ascendancy over him [Wesley] ... [and] ... has at length persuaded him that he is as truly an apostolic bishop as any now living. ...” 29 Coke’s going to America was shocking! La Thobe had read Coke’s sermon preached at Asbury’s “ordination [sic] as superintendent.” “Dr. Coke is returned and will not rest until he has formed a Methodist Episcopal Church in England.” 30 It is very easy to see that Charles Wesley had made his case; La Trobe is almost quoting Charles verbatim. La Trobe was not writing of Coke as though he were dealing with a stranger. The two had met three years earlier when the Doctor was contemplating missions in the East Indies. As for Charles Wesley, La Trobe noted, “... now he wishes that the Brethren might be of the use they were originally intended for, to nurse these souls who are truly awakened and who adhere to the Church of England. ...” 31

Loretz answered, November 27, 1785, advising caution. “The Wesleyan scheme comes from the Brethren, from Zinzendorf himself, viz., that we would not take people from the Church of England but build them up within the Church ... our Diaspora work.” 32 He gives a mild rebuke, that this plan has been abandoned by the Unitas in England; members had been taken away from other churches, except those who regularly went to Holy Communion. Wesley—and his followers—he insisted, were “... degenerating into a sect.” 33 Loretz continued, “Wesley’s pretentions to ordain cannot be maintained ... and therefore the Methodist ordinations

27 Addison, p. 194.
28 Addison, p. 195.
29 Addison, p. 196. La Thobe pictures Coke as “... very fiery. ...”
30 Addison, p. 196. Consecration is sometimes preferred to ordination.
31 Addison, p. 197.
32 Addison, p. 198.
33 Addison, p. 199.
and ministerial acts cannot be valid.” 34 He concluded with the admonition, “Another confidential conversation with Charles Wesley may help. . .” 35

The suggested meeting had, in fact, already taken place. Charles wrote La Trobe, in 1785, “My brother, and I, and the preachers were unanimous for continuing in the old ship [Church of England] . . . My desire and design, . . . is to leave them in the lap of their mother.” 36 La Trobe and Charles spent much time discussing the dangers of withdrawal from the Established Church. They likewise saw the hindrance of the Anglican episcopacy. “The bishops might, if they pleased, save the largest and soundest part of them back into the Church; . . . I fear, betwixt you and me, their lordships care for none of these things. . . .” 37

Mention of the Anglican hierarchy as a possible means whereby cleavage might be prevented shows thoroughness of consideration, but the consideration was unrealistic. “On the whole, Anglican writers [and Bishops] did not differentiate between Moravian and Methodist, regarding both schismatic and heretical.” 38

Indeed, La Trobe and Charles had “several solid conversations,” all described by La Trobe in eight pages of postscript entitled “Of the Movements relating to the Methodists.” Charles, according to the writer, was in deep affliction of mind and sickness of body “through the methodists [sic] setting up a new religion; John is being led away by young Coke.” 39

La Trobe was certainly surprised beyond measure to receive a letter, dated December 23, 1785, from none other than the one about whom he had been writing so extensively: Thomas Coke. Coke suggested, “why cannot the United Brethren and the Methodists unite. . . .” 40 A breakfast meeting was planned for the first of the year in Fetter Lane. Why, we cannot help inquiring, did a communication from Coke come at just this juncture? Undoubtedly word had reached him of Charles’ conversation. Coke was now entering the picture with proposals of his own.

La Trobe immediately rushed to Charles Wesley with Coke’s letter. Rather naturally, Charles suspected Coke’s motives, 41 and warned that both Coke and John Wesley might be planning “to spy out our liberty.” The two met as planned on January 4, 1786. Coke hoped the day was at hand for uniting “as the two bodies seem to agree in doctrine and discipline.” “Yes, it was a pity we separated,” 42

---

34 Addison, p. 199. 35 Addison, p. 200. 36 L. Tyerman, The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, MDCCCLXXX), III, p. 479. 37 Tyerman, p. 479. 38 Towlson, p. 159. As will be shown, the Bishop of Chester was a noted exception. 39 Addison, p. 204. 40 Addison, p. 204. 41 Towlson, p. 159. 42 Addison, p. 205.
replied La Trobe. Coke then went to some length to discuss Wesley's purpose in ordaining for America—a rather obvious rebuttal against Charles. La Trobe feared these new ministers might become independents. Coke agreed "... there were such symptoms" but unlikely. La Trobe challenged the Methodists as "closing the door of the national churches against you, ..." Coke reminded his friend that in America there was no national church. A lengthy discussion on national churches followed and Coke is reported as viewing them of the devil. Coke then insisted on an answer, "... Whether I believe there could be a Union?" La Trobe very clearly began to show signs of delay; things were moving too rapidly for him. Preliminaries, he insisted, were not yet settled. More time was necessary. Coke begged for another meeting and they "parted very friendly."

In sending the record of the Coke conversation, La Trobe added "a further postscript" dated January 11th telling of another visit with Charles Wesley who advised an interview with John. Such an encounter La Trobe had studiously avoided:

I told him candidly that I could not seek an interview with his brother, as I had never done it, for his Brother's method of publishing the conversations he had with anyone, and giving the other parties' words such a turn as suited his purpose, made it dangerous to converse with him.

La Trobe next called on Dr. Lort, "a prebend of St. Paul's and a good friend to the Brethren." Lort had heard of the Methodist ordinations. La Trobe gave the prebend his opinion as to the problem: the Bishops are the mischief-makers, "... for they ordain raw and inexperienced young men from college and will not ordain these other worthy persons—who thereupon join the Dissenters."

Mention is made of the house at Treveka [sic]—which operated "upon the Diaspora plan entirely." No meetings are held during the time of Church services, and all go to the Parish Church, "and though in good neighbourhood with Lady Huntingdon, yet they pass by her chapel in full view of the preacher every Sunday."

January 12, 1786 La Trobe wrote to Herrnhut that Coke and other Wesleyan preachers invited him to visit them. Quite smugly La Trobe points out that he "has made it a rule not to seek openings but to wait on the Saviour: thus, Coke, Charles Wesley, the Bishop of Chester, and others have sought him out, not he them." He has likewise kept far away from the new Chapel House—where

---

43 Addison, p. 206.
44 Addison, p. 206. Following the discussion Coke sent La Trobe his "Sermon on the Godhead of Christ," and La Trobe sent Coke on "Abstract of the Book of Common Prayer" by Franklin. 45 Addison, p. 206. This is La Trobe's great fear, constantly repeated.
46 Addison, pp. 206-207.
47 Addison, p. 207.
48 Addison, p. 207.
49 Addison, p. 207.
John Wesley lived, fearful that an interview might get into print. La Trobe was equally skeptical "As to a Union, we apprehend it cannot be thought of." He continues "... as John is accustomed to be Pope... Dr. Coke hopes to be his successor with full powers: this will make it hard for him to give the Brethren any power in his Societies though he now hopes for a Union." Several people are mentioned, one Mr. Atley [sic], Wesley's book steward, another is the Bishop of Chester. It is worthy of note that La Trobe is not going to wait for these people to be moved to come to him but rather he plans to initiate the visits.

Loretz answered, on February 17, 1786, again mildly reprimanding La Trobe that Moravians in England had erred in departing from the Diaspora plan. Clearly, Wesley and Coke were not moving in the correct way. Seven principles were necessary before union could be considered: I. Agreement concerning the Diaspora plan. II. Liberty to "form little societies for those who are fitted for them." III. Maintain "our principles and customs" for our people, and exclude those who do not abide by them. IV. Maintain communications with the Brethren. V. Methodists cannot participate in the training of our ministers. VI. No upsetting of our plan "in the work of souls." VII. "We cannot supply methodist [sic] chapels with ministers, still less, administer the sacraments in them." Loretz made his point clear, if union was to be considered, "we shall have further considerations to put forward. We are not meant for a great company; only men whom the Lord has chosen are our members, . . . Our relationship (Verbindung) is and must remain individual in character and is based on the gracious call of every individual member of the community." "... Their [Methodist] real purpose is an ecclesiastical union with us, . . . that we, . . . help them thereby to a legitimate and legal ordination and constitution. . . ." He was essentially against a union, basically because it would overthrow the Diaspora plan. "... We have no vocation to erect a new religious edifice in Christendom." Loretz went to great length to stress the Diaspora plan as the raison d'être for the Brethren. His fear was that the Methodists would establish a new church. He concluded with a note of mild expectancy, "We will wait upon your conversation with Mr. Coke. . . . if they will remain by their constitution . . . and will have a brotherly connection with us, we will . . . build them up in the Lord." Continued conversations followed. In a letter of April 22, 1786, La Trobe reported the discussion of "the spiritual state of members of national churches." Coke produced a proposal for union but was

---

50 Addison, p. 208.
51 Mr. John Atley. La Trobe's spelling is incorrect.
52 Addison, pp. 210-211.
53 Addison, p. 211.
54 Addison, p. 211.
55 Addison, pp. 211-212.
told the time was not yet ripe to speak upon that subject. Another breakfast meeting followed Coke's return from the Channel Islands. La Trobe insisted Wesley had gone about ordination for America in the wrong way, "... he should have called an Assembly of the whole body. ... Wesley's method is neither episcopal nor independent. ..." Again, the influence of Charles may be seen, although Charles was certainly not alone in holding that the ordination was neither Episcopal nor Presbyterian.

Who can the odd Phenomenon explain?
A Bishop new, doth himself ordain,
And hands extends beyond th' Atlantic main?

Sends his intrepid Suffragan before,
To found (for Presbyterians to adore)
His Church Episcopal at Baltimore!

Tis done! the deed adventurous is done!
The sword is drawn, the civil war begun,
And John at last has pass'd the Rubicon!

A troop of Jeroboam's priests appears
For, after a long life of fourscore years,
Poor John had Rehoboam's Counsellors.

But you who censure his ductility,
His hoary hairs with my compassion see,
And own—Twas Age yt made the breach, not He.  

After a discussion, comparing Wesley and Zinzendorf, La Trobe "bade Coke read the history of the Brethren ..." as the two parted. Their next meeting, breakfast at New Chapel House, centered on what direction Methodism would take following Wesley's death. Coke appreciated the Tropus and the Diaspora plan. At this point La Trobe arranged a conference with Mr. John Atlay, Book Steward for the Methodist Societies. "He is quite against their new scheme and thinks that Dr. Coke, through inexperience and zeal without knowledge, ... will be the means of pulling down all that has been reared and built up. ..."

At the next meeting with La Trobe, Coke produced another proposal for possible union "... upon the plan of the ... Diaspora."

---

56 Addison, p. 212. Coke answered La Trobe's objections "... Mr. Wesley did not come to a congregation but they all came to him: ... government ... was from the beginning in his hands."  
57 Baker, Representative Verse of Charles Wesley, pp. 369-370. This poem is given the title "A Self-Ordained Bishop."
58 Addison, p. 213.
59 Addison, p. 213.
Wesley and the Elders’ conference should appoint delegates to discuss union. La Trobe's problem was Wesley “as sole autocrat and the U. E. C. as responsible to the Synod.” 60 La Trobe returned the proposal to Coke who again urged a conference with John Wesley.

La Trobe then arranged an interview with the Bishop of Chester “about the Methodists, and the increase of Dissent.” The two discussed “Enthusiasm” and “they parted friendly.” 61

Charles Wesley next called on La Trobe, urging a consultation with John Wesley. 62 La Trobe insisted again “. . . there must be no publication of the conversation.” 63

On July 7, 1786, La Trobe wrote Loretz, enclosing two letters: one from Coke to La Trobe, written from Dublin, May 8, 1786 “. . . I wrote Mr. Wesley a letter, a copy whereof . . . I send you underneath.” Coke’s letter to Wesley, also from Dublin, is dated May 6th. He recommended that a Conference “of an equal number of both Societies” meet to discuss proposals to be given to Wesley and “our General Conference” and through La Trobe to the Elders’ Conference of the Brethren. If needed, separate Conferences may be held for England, Ireland, and America. Coke’s letter continues, “. . . two whole mornings” were spent with La Trobe discussing “the Validity, Expediency and Admissibility of our Ordination, . . .” and now La Trobe's personal view is “that it shall not be . . . an hindrance to our union.” 64 Coke then urged “. . . I know not a desire in my soul that is stronger than that of uniting all religious Societies in love and in the closest union that the circumstances of things will admit of. I think the desire of my own salvation is not superior . . .” 65

La Trobe answered Coke on May 24, 1786 that “matters did not seem to me sufficiently ripe for such a conference.” He was willing —reluctantly—to see Wesley. The main problem, “throughout the whole of our conversation” regarding union: National Churches “and the proposed new Methodist Episcopal Church.” 66 “. . . National Churches have been a work of God’s . . . providence,” insisted La Trobe.

Coke reported, from Ballinrobe, Ireland, on June 7, 1786, John Wesley’s answer, “I see no possible objection to Mr. La Trobe's proposal so far as you have gone yet. . . . I am exceedingly willing to have a private Conference with Mr. La Trobe; . . . Undoubtedly nothing is more desirable than a cordial union among the children of God. . . .” 67

60 Addison, p. 214.
61 Addison, p. 215.
62 Addison, p. 215.
63 Baker, p. 375, uses the phrase, “. . . that very summer Charles Wesley had been in correspondence with Benjamin La Trobe about . . . Moravians uniting with the Church of England, . . .”
64 Addison, p. 215, he closed, “Thus far we are come, . . . all preliminary!”
65 Addison, p. 218.
66 Addison, p. 218.
67 Addison, p. 221.
68 Addison, pp. 221-222. Wesley wrote from Edinburgh, May 17, 1786.
On July 12, 1786, Loretz answered La Trobe, saying that good could come from the conversations with Coke and the Bishop of Chester. "But as long as John Wesley lives and rules we have little hope." Coke, he said was "right in believing that the Tropus and Diaspora are our essential foundations upon which to build a Union." The Methodists must permit the Brethren to care for souls in their accustomed way; we only seek to win souls for the Saviour and bring them into intimate relations with him and we would not upset the church-constitution in which they are." He raised again the issue of Wesley’s authority and the course of Methodism after his death. "They must either remain connected with the church or make their own church—that we must leave to the Will of God; we have no call to help or hinder."

Before another meeting between Coke and La Trobe, or the much discussed meeting between Wesley and La Trobe could be arranged, La Trobe died, "sincerely lamented." An obituary appeared in the Gentleman’s Magazine for December, 1786, under the date of November 29: "In Fetter-lane, in his 59th year, the rev [sic] Mi. La Trobe, who succeeded the late worthy Mr. Gambold as archbishop of the Moravians." He was buried at Chelsea.

Charles Wesley wrote "a poetical tribute to him..."

With poverty of spirit bless’d,
Rest, happy Saint, in Jesus rest;
A Sinner sav’d, through grace forgiv’n,
Redeem’d from earth to reign in heav’n!
Thy labours of unwearied love,
By thee forgot, are crown’d above;
Crown’d, through the mercy of thy Lord,
With a free, full, immense reward!

By interesting circumstances, these became the very lines used on Charles’ own tombstone, in the churchyard of St. Marylebone.

Thomas Coke was called to make a return visit to America, during which trip he was to be introduced to the new mission field in the West Indies. In these islands he encountered Moravian missionaries and had a number of beneficial relationships with them. For the remainder of his years he continued as the peripatetic Foreign Minister of Methodism, crossing and recrossing the Atlantic.

---

58 Addison, p. 222.
60 Addison, p. 222.
69 Addison, pp. 222-223.
71 Addison, p. 224. Loretz expressed gratitude for the Bishop of Chester.
72 Baker, p. 375.
73 Baker, p. 375, the poem is entitled "Rest, Happy Saint."
74 Baker, p. 375.
75 Coke sailed from England on Sunday, September 24, 1786.
He likewise continued his interest in church union, engaging in a conversation with the Episcopal Church in America.

Discussions regarding union of Methodism and the United Brethren came to a halt. Hours spent in tedious dialogue, and page after page of wearisome letters, need not be considered wasted. For those who took part it had deep meaning. For those who study the two year experience it can have significance. This venture in ecumenicity failed, but it shows the involved process that a contemplated union so often requires.