Towards the Americanizing of Methodism

by Douglas R. Chandler *

The Americanizing of our transplanted European institutions and ideas has made a library of brave themes and good books. I recall with gratitude my long ago pleasure with The Americanization of Edward Bok, Jacob Riis', The Making of an American and Mary Antin's Promised Land—all required reading in high school days. Frederick Jackson Turner's "frontier thesis" was one popular explanation of what happened, and for decades we used comfortably W. W. Sweet's "creative forces" so that we thought easily of our churches as becoming characteristically American, more or less the end-products of the frontier, revivalism, nationalism, war, immigration, and so forth.

The search for an American church may now be about over, at least temporarily. John Smylie reminds us that "there is no such thing, organizationally, as the American church in the singular;" and Sydney Mead offers a description of an American religion in terms of "a nation with the soul of a church." Methodists, however, have a long habit (matched, it is true in many other denominations) of thinking that their church is the most characteristically American of all. This is, of course, highly debatable but there is enough truth in it to prompt some very good writing on the theme, "The 'Methodist Age' in American Church History." 3

The story of Methodism's peculiar identification with American thought and life is often presented as though that English transplant had a natural affinity for the ideas of the new age and the new world, a character within her, that is, which encouraged an easy and fortuitous acceptance of American idealism with all its accompanying impulses of democracy, freedom and "people power." In reality, however, the Americanization of Methodism was a painful process, slow and strife-ridden within its own ranks, and this to a greater degree than in almost all the other new churches in the new nation. Certainly she was slower than her Anglican mother in keeping pace with the political changes of those first fifty or so years.

It has been assumed that Methodism began early to take on an

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* This paper was presented as one of the Harris Franklin Rall Lectures at Garrett Theological Seminary, October 29-31, 1973.
2 Church History, Sept. 1967, p. 262.
3 See article by C. C. Goen in Religion in Life, Autumn 1965, pp. 552-72.
American coloring, when she was just becoming "a new church in a new nation." The "evidence" has been often repeated: Asbury cast his lot with the American cause exhibiting his new role by deciding not to return to England when war broke out, and by demanding later a conference vote to validate his superintendency designated by Wesley, and by openly regretting Wesley's unfortunate and misinformed position on the Revolution. Even Coke's and Asbury's two visits to George Washington have been offered as happy proofs of Methodism's early American leanings.

Also certain American features of Methodist organization have been named: the Conference itself, voting majority decisions and electing bishops (even) and, in imitation, eventually, of the national example, framing a Constitution (1808), such as every bona fide American institution should have, and creating a General Conference (1792), a "Congress" of elected delegates representing every section of the church.

Wesleyan Methodist, Free Methodist and Methodist Protestant historians usually downgrade these features as very small signs, indeed, of any democracy in American Episcopal Methodism. Their critical appraisal is harsh and often overstated but it should not be dismissed without examination.

The Conference, they point out, was in reality a governing body of the elite, chosen by ordination, a spiritually qualified cadre of itinerant preachers, self-perpetuating and self-empowered to discipline and/or expel remonstrants. By a curious disregard for the traditional colonial fear of bishops, the preachers came to regard episcopal authority as their own best security, even depriving themselves, in their infatuation with the "Wesleyan succession," of their own right of appeal over the Bishop's power to appoint them to their circuits. The preachers then created a General Conference, to protect themselves against a complete Episcopal monopoly of power, a monopoly which Asbury's Council plan aimed at. This General Conference, clergy only, of course, created a Constitution for the whole church, and at the same time practically forbade any future General Conference to change it.

Locally, so complained these critics, on circuits and districts there were but few signs of real lay authority or governing responsibility. For the most part Quarterly Conferences were composed of (and certainly dominated by) Presiding Elders and "preachers in charge." Some local preachers, exhorters and class leaders attended conference occasionally but many who were Quarterly Conference members were regularly absent. In general the people had, as Wesley intended (and as Hans Küng has
worded it), “Participation in the life not the decisions of the church.”

Back in 1928 Alice Baldwin showed us the close relationship between the reading and sermons of the New England colonial clergy and those concepts which were fundamental in the making of this new nation: Natural rights, the social compact, the right of resistance, the law of nature binding upon both God and man, etc. Of course the New England clergy had no monopoly on those ideas for the colonial clergy generally were “a major force in arousing the spirit of independence after 1761.” Sydney Mead says that dominant in this era was the thought that “Sovereign power lies in the people who by a first compact agree to have a government and by a second compact agree upon the kind of government they want.”

Putting early American Methodism into any real affinity with such ideas as this is not easy. By its very nature and by its stated *raison d’être* it had several built in hindrances to American Revolutionary idealism. John Wesley disqualified himself at the outset by his embarrassing tracts against the noble American experiment and became the first effective barrier to independency and popular rights within Methodism itself. Against almost every known new American idea he took a contrariwise position: convention, conference, delegates, representation, voting, natural rights, the origin of power, political independency, to name several of the most important ideas of the Revolutionary era. An advocate of these Wesley was not, and he was quick to rebuke his preachers if they showed leanings in these directions.

Wesley’s “Calm Address” was plain and it became at once inflammatory:

... would a republican government give you more liberty, either religious or civil? By no means. No governments under heaven are so despotic as the republican; no subjects are governed in so arbitrary a manner as those of a commonwealth... Let us put away our sins! The real ground of all our calamities, which never will or can be thoroughly removed till we fear God and honor the king!

In his “Observations on Liberty” (1776) Wesley becomes in-

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7 See *Church History*, Sept. 1967, pp. 262-83.
credibly archaic for a later reading. After a long argument showing the difference between liberty and independency, the first of which the colonies already have and the second they have no right to, he attacks "the supposition that the people are the origin of power or that 'all government is the creature of the people'—a principle which though Mr. Locke himself should attempt to defend it, is utterly indefensible." Why? Because if the right of choosing his Governors belongs to every partaker of human nature then it belongs not to men only but to women also, and to those under twenty-one and to those who have lived threescore.

But none did ever maintain this nor probably ever will; therefore this boasted principle falls to the ground . . . so common sense brings us back to the grand truth, "There is no power but of God" . . . . government is a trust but not from the people. . . . It is a delegation, namely from God for rulers are God's ministers or delegates.9

Wesley's missionaries, we know, faithfully represented his views in these matters. They were increasingly suspect and in danger, and withdrew from the American scene. Asbury by the force of necessity continued the Wesley voice, mind and leadership in the societies and, as we shall see, won an almost complete and almost permanent victory for the "old Methodist plan." Coke ineffectually fostered this idea but his "in and out" relationship to the country, his Anglican status and manners, and his general inability to win much more than grudging tolerance among those he never could regard as his equals, all left the door wide open for Asbury's almost single superintendency (in effect) especially after his two great victories—the sacramental in 1781 and the episcopal (over O'Kelly) in 1792.

The war itself made a pretty clear issue. The preachers were to stay out of it. Asbury (and of course Wesley) warned them that in the military life they might lose their souls. Army and navy maneuvers frightened the people, distracting their minds, and reducing attendance at the society meetings. They should be fighting the devil and not the British. Most of the itinerants were out and out pacifists or objectors to military service as inconsistent with their calling. State loyalty oaths were refused and the usual penalties and fines endured. Many flaunted the law and went to jail, or were mobbed and harassed into hiding. Asbury said he was "pent up in a corner." This was at Judge White's in Delaware where he stayed, mostly in hiding, for two years until the general

The unpopularity of the Maryland oath made its enforcement practically impossible.

I am inclined to believe that the closest Asbury ever came to taking Revolutionary politics into the pulpit was in a Lord's Day Sermon he preached in Baltimore in March of 1776.

Adapting my discourse to the occasion (this was the arrival of the British sloop "Otter" in Baltimore harbor which almost caused an exodus from the city) I preached this evening from Isaiah 1:19, 20 'If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.'

This was not a good text for a sermon in support of the patriots' cause.

The Revolution was hardly more disruptive among Methodists than their own "war" over the sacraments—particularly in Virginia and Maryland. This controversy is important as a description, so early, of the way Wesley's position and what was commonly called "the old Methodist plan" triumphed over new ideas and the winds of change. As Anglicans, accustomed to Episcopal authority and sacramental usage (and long without either) several of the preachers (like Strawbridge) sought to provide baptism and the Lord's supper by an action, independent of episcopacy, such as they may have expected Wesley to support. Asbury knew better and was grieved at this "strange infatuation." "Why will he run before Providence?" he asked of Strawbridge, and when Strawbridge died in the summer of 1781 Asbury wrote:

... pride is a busy sin. He is now no more; upon the whole, I am inclined to think that the Lord took him away in judgement, because he was in a way to do hurt to his cause...

The arguments and the agony in the sacramental controversy need not be recited here. The climax came in 1780 when Asbury, William Watters and Freeborn Garrettson took the old demands to the southern agitators at their conference in Manakintown. They all wept, prayed, preached and debated two days. Asbury thought some talked "out of doors." In despair he left the conference, prayed that night "as with a broken heart." Watters and Garrettson prayed, too, and in the morning all found they had been brought to an agreement not only with Asbury on the sacrament

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11 FAJL, I, p. 411.
question but demanding "also that Mr. Asbury should be requested to ride through the different circuits and superintend the work at large." Whatever their differences they all wanted Asbury! 12 So the division was healed. "Afterwards," said Asbury "we had a love feast," and the next year (1781) at the conference in Baltimore he wrote: "All but one agreed to return to the old plan, and give up the administration of the ordinances; our troubles now seem to be over from that quarter . . . all was conducted in peace and love." 13

"All but one." Was this James O'Kelly? His name was conspicuously absent from the thirty-nine preachers listed in the Minutes of 1781 who "now determined to preach the old Methodist doctrine and strictly enforce the discipline." It was this Irish "maverick" (as Fred Norwood calls him) who threw a bomb into the Conference proceedings a decade later against Asbury's sovereignty and supremacy—and for preachers' rights. With his bomb quickly defused, O'Kelly and three or four others walked out forsaking the Wesley-Asbury "old plan" for what Wesley, then in his London grave, could no longer denounce: a Republican Methodism!

Meanwhile the peace between England and America confirmed in November 1782 was encouraging new voices of democracy which increasingly plagued the Methodists—voices now heard against bishops, against Asbury's own authority, against Wesley even and, soon, against the itinerants themselves. At Fluvanna, Manakin-town, Choptank and Baltimore earlier skirmishes had held the line but now all Methodists were looking to their English "father" with new problems. As always Wesley was prompt with a solution sending them (again) his own authority, the sacraments they wanted and the ordained men necessary for their administration: ordained, that is, in a manner Wesley thought far preferable to that improvised by Gatch and the Virginia radicals at their Broken Back meeting house in 1779. Thus the threat of that much presbyterianism was done away and the real Anglican character of the new church confirmed—even to an episcopacy (or reasonable facsimile thereof) under a temporary alias, "superintendency." Asbury could see what was happening and he liked it.

On Christmas Eve, 1783, Asbury received a reassuring letter from John Wesley. With obvious satisfaction he wrote: "He (Wesley) directs me to act as a general assistant and to receive no preachers from Europe that are not recommended by him, nor any in America who will not submit to me and to the minutes of the Conference." This letter Asbury produced the next spring

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(May 1784) to whip James O’Kelly and William Glendenning into line. The latter, he said, “had been devising a plan to lay me aside or at least to abridge my powers (but) Mr. Wesley’s letter settled the point and all was happy.” 14

Well, not quite all was happy. There were some uncertainties at least. Coke’s arrival with documents, “the plan” and a task force raised questions about Asbury’s peculiar standing, his tenure, and his relationship to a whole new structure.

On Sunday, November 14, 1784 Asbury came to Barratt’s Chapel in Delaware. The preacher that morning was Dr. Coke and his meeting with Asbury was deeply moving. The two embraced: the little doctor who wanted more than anything else to become the American Wesley, and the itinerant preacher who more than anyone else had had that status de facto for years.

After the sermon that November morning Coke says he administered the sacrament to 500 to 600 people, held a love feast and baptised 30 or 40 infants and seven adults—such was the accumulated backlog of sacramental need in the past three years.

Asbury says he was “surprised” and “shocked”—surprised when he saw Whatcoat (without Anglican ordination) assist in the sacrament and shocked at the plan for a separate church with himself as a joint superintendent in it. But he would comply if the preachers unanimously chose him. This and the whole scheme obviously would require a Conference. The date was set for Christmas Eve, a little over a month away, the place, Lovely Lane Chapel in Baltimore. Freeborn Garrettson was dispatched “like an arrow” to summon the preachers, it never entering anyone’s head to invite any who were not preachers.

The story of the Christmas Conference needs no telling here. We all know what the preachers there did. They created a “new” church—mostly out of the old but re-worked lumber they were familiar with—a church episcopal in government, ruled by ordained elders and superintendents (bishops), with sacraments, articles of religion, a liturgy and a discipline. One event, not often mentioned and usually regarded as of marginal interest, has some fascination for me. I hope to learn more about it.

While the preachers at the Christmas Conference were organizing a new Methodist Church two Episcopal clergymen, John Andrews of the St. Thomas and St. James Parishes, and William West, rector of St. Paul’s in Baltimore, invited Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury to tea to protest the Conference actions and to urge the Methodists to remain in the Episcopal Church. Andrews describes

14 FAJL, I, p. 460.
the meeting, which seems to have taken place December 31, 1784.

Coke came at six in the evening and brought with him a "Mr. Goff" (Henry Dorsey Gough) and Mr. Asbury. The Episcopalians suggested the possibility of special bishops consecrated for the Methodists, Coke to be one of these should he and they so desire. Furthermore the Garrison (St. Thomas) Church vestry, through Mr. Thomas Worthington, was prepared to invite Mr. Asbury to become its rector. This was an invitation which apparently had already been extended seven years before and which Asbury had declined. He, obviously, had no interest in the offer; and Coke seems to have been cool and reserved. He said they would have to consult Wesley, and Andrews concluded that Methodists in America must have Mr. Wesley for "the first link in the chain upon which their church is suspended." 15

During their conversations Dr. Andrews observed that there were no real differences between them in liturgy, articles of faith and form of government. Their government, (the Episcopal), he said was "very simple" and a "very rational plan" to be exercised by a convention consisting of an equal number of laity and clergy; and having as their president a bishop elected by the whole body of the clergy—"such an episcopacy," he added, "as could not be said to entangle man more than Mr. Wesley's episcopacy entangled them." Coke replied that the new system of the Methodists "was of greater advantage than a more traditional system."

It is hard to locate real motives in these sketchily reported interviews (Andrews had a private talk with Coke two days later) but Drinkhouse, the Methodist Protestant historian, goes so far as to say that Coke and Asbury could not go along with Andrews and the Episcopalians on the matter of equal lay and clerical representation in Church Councils, that this was a degree of democracy unacceptable to Wesley as well as to Coke, Asbury and many others in the Lovely Lane Conference. This is a matter for study lest "the wish become the father of the thought," but there seems to be some truth in it.

But there was some democracy. Reflecting after adjournment Asbury wrote, "We spent the whole week in Conference, debating freely, and determining all things by a majority of votes." 16—a procedure he could not yet take for granted. His autocratic tendencies and his own immense popularity, his wisdom and benevolence, and the weight of a conservative ministerial tradition all combined to create within Methodism this lag in democracy. Prayerfully

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15 John Andrews' letter is in the Garner Ranney collection at the Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Md.
(and often tearfully) Asbury opposed at great length all attempts to increase representation in the church conferences or to give a voice in church government to more than the itinerant clergy. This he regarded as a dangerous imitation of the national politics. Very few national interests, he said, carry over well into church government. "Here," he wrote, "are some similitudes of form but not of nature." For example, civil governments should change their elected leaders from time to time; spiritual governments do not. In church governments, since they are spiritual, "one election to office is sufficient during life."

Strawbridge and O'Kelly were the first recalcitrants to be dealt with. The former took his independent spirit into retirement on the farm of a friend in Baltimore county. He died in 1781 and his party, if it can be called that, was silenced. O'Kelly was voted down at the Conference in 1792 and the preachers added to the Discipline a warning article:

> If a member of our Church shall be clearly convicted of endeavoring to sow dissensions in any of our societies, by inveighing against either our doctrines or discipline, such person so offending shall be first reproved by the senior Minister or Preacher of his circuit; and if he afterwards persist in such pernicious practices he shall be expelled the society.¹⁷

Jesse Lee, our first historian, said the southern local preachers showed an "uneasy and restless Spirit" contending "that (they) ought to have a seat and vote in all our conferences" and that "there ought to be a delegation of lay members." When they complained that taxation without representation was as wrong in churches as in nations, the older men replied that Methodists did not tax anyone therefore representation was no issue.¹⁸ In 1816 the local preachers' petition to General Conference was rejected although, at that time, they outnumbered the itinerant elders three to one.

The list of Methodist "reformers" now increases; most to be silenced or driven out. William Hammett and his Primitive Methodists in Charleston, South Carolina; Pliny Brett and Elijah Bailey and their Reformed Methodists in New England; Samuel and William Stillwell (the Stillwellites or independent Methodists) in New York City—these all came and went quickly. Their chief energies were wasted in the ambition and popularity of their leaders and in their complaints with matters of property, assess-

¹⁷ Discipline, 1792, p. 56.
¹⁸ Jesse Lee, A Short History of the Methodists, Baltimore, 1810, p. 213.
ments and signs of "worldliness" in the church. Quick to secede in anger they soon and easily merged with (or were absorbed by) stronger groups like the Congregationalists, Baptists, Christians, and the Methodist Protestants whose ideas had survival value in their depth, intellectual respectability and a clearer articulation. The really genuine reform activity was deeper, within the life and structure of the church. It reflected new excitements and the new vocabulary of democracy, especially after 1812: constitutional changes, voting rights, representation, rotation in office, short terms, and the whole concept of a new place in government for common people against a power elite. By 1820 Methodists had a battle cry, "the election of presiding elders," and sixty of the eighty-nine delegates to General Conference were ready to vote for this small change. Conservatives were sure that lay representation and goodness knows what other dangerous innovations would follow. Bishop McKendree's opening episcopal address had one heavy line that ultimately determined the outcome. "It is assumed," he said, "that no radical change can be made for the better at present." The debacle of that General Conference of 1820, Joshua Soules' election to the episcopacy and his refusal to serve after the Conference took away his power to name his assistants (Presiding Elders), the days and days of angry debate, the political maneuvering in and out of the sessions and the bitter personal attacks on both sides make this year climactic in the confrontation of American Methodism with American democracy. The somewhat shocking story of the failure of reform in 1820 and the decade of internal "civil war" which followed has seldom been objectively told and for one hundred years Methodist historians remained strongly partisan. Nathan Bangs set the style of reporting for the conservatives when in 1840 he completely ignored the dreadful storm of 1820, referring to one of the ideas as "a startling innovation" and cavalierly dismissing the protest as "that spirit of radicalism which ended in the secession of the party who styled themselves 'Reformers' and who have since organized under the name of the Protestant Methodist Church." Any Methodist Protestant would be happy to tell Dr. Bangs that he misnamed their church and, furthermore, that they did not secede, they were expelled—and for the principles of democracy, not for a "startling innovation."

On the other side, the style of the reformers can be illustrated by Alexander McCaine's Letters on the Organization and Early

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History of the M. E. Church (Boston, 1850). McCaine says he “faithfully tells the most unpalatable truths” in an “unvarnished tale” of those “ecclesiastical frauds . . . practiced in the church in order to impose upon it a sort of episcopacy in the name of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism.”

Edward J. Drinkhouse, the chief historian of the reformers, perpetuated this technique of partisan history (as we shall notice shortly) in his two volumes on the Methodist Protestants published in 1899. What really happened must be briefly summarized.

When the General Conference of 1820 turned the tide against any wider representation and any lessening of ministerial and episcopal powers, every official Methodist publication went silent on the reform issues. Nathan Bangs, editor of the Methodist Magazine, spoke for all on the new policy of repression. According to his September 1823 preface, “nothing would be admitted (in the Magazine) of a controversial character which go to disturb the peace and harmony of the Church.” The reformers’ answer was to launch their own disturbing periodical, The Wesleyan Repository and Religious Intelligencer (April 12, 1821), edited by the able Philadelphian layman, William S. Stockton, and pledged to open debate. The title changed in 1824 to Mutual Rights, with variations, and after 1831 to the running title, The Methodist Protestant. The journal was regarded by the conservatives as extremely dangerous; its discovery in a preacher’s home made the possessor at once suspect in the Conference. To make matters worse union or reform societies, often meeting boldly in Methodist churches, multiplied in several Conferences. Eventually, came the expulsions beginning in 1827, followed by the rejected appeals, and the calling of the reform Conventions. In Baltimore the reformers purchased an Episcopal Church (St. Johns) and there in a General Convention in 1830 organized a new church—the Methodist Protestant—with almost all the reform demands written into its constitution: the election of presiding elders, lay representation, local preachers’ rights, the abolition of episcopacy, the right of appeal of appointments and safeguards on trials and appeals of ministers and members.

The writers of the stormy pieces in the Wesleyan Repository and Mutual Rights were usually anonymous “for prudential reasons” but they have since been identified. The ablest, by far, was Nicholas Snethen, Asbury’s “Silver Trumpet”—but shrill and emo-

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tional to extreme as a few sentences from an 1822 message to Editor Stockton will show:

I believe that every member of any individual church has a right to be judged by his peers. I believe that no body has a right to make laws for the government of a church without the consent of its members. . . . I love the church and I love the preachers—(but) to see that abomination which maketh desolate, ecclesiastical supremacy, standing in our holy place where it ought not. . . . O what a monstrous alliance to priestly despotism! What would America come to if all its legislatures should follow the example of our General Conference? . . . . But it will be said that no parallel can be run betwixt civil and sacred matters; that the cause of God is too important to be given up to any temporal consideration. . . . O ye of little faith! . . . . Am I an American? Are these Americans? How then is it possible that a whole church should be deprived of the right of suffrage, and none but the voices of masters and lords be heard in these halls of ecclesiastical legislation? Mysterious dispensation! Retrograde movement of mind! . . . . In all the United States our General Conference has only the Romish Church to keep them company in the supremacy.

This was not oil for troubled waters and when met by equally intemperate blasts from the other side, we begin to see the depth of the scars made by Methodism’s battle with American democratic ideas.

I think that Methodist Protestant history is coming into its rightful place of honor as the record of a remarkable people. No more just cause was ever more quickly crippled, and the why (as well as how) this was done opens up several intriguing questions, some central, some marginal.

For example, how do we explain the shifting of so many “greats” from the side of reform to the opposing conservative side? In the beginning Coke was no real enemy to the earliest moves toward democracy. McCaine, himself, admits this. And McKendree, on O'Kelly’s side in 1792, made a sharp reversal after conversations with Asbury (and Coke) and by 1796 was safely over on the Episcopal side.

Stephen G. Roszel, one of the strongest opponents of reform in the Baltimore conference after 1820, had advocated the election of Presiding elders in 1800.24

Also on the side of democracy in the church were Nathan Bangs, John Emory, Ezekiel Cooper, Elijah Hedding, Beverly Waugh, George Pickering, Thomas Kelso, Thomas E. Bond, Alfred Griffith,

Gerald Morgan, John Hanson, James Davis, J. Guest, and W. Ryland.

Ezekiel Cooper wrote a plan for lay delegation, a clear and logical defense of equal representation which furnished the foundation principles for the Constitution and Discipline of the M. P. Church. His strong support of the reformers in the melee of 1820 and his articles in the new reform periodicals (The Wesleyan Repository and Mutual Rights) show him as anything but an old Asbury-McKendree conservative. But something changed Cooper, and I think Lester Scherer has spotted at least one cause. It applies not only to Cooper but to Waugh, Emory and Hedding (who soon became bishops) and no doubt to some others. It is possible that a polarization, the disappearance of a middle ground, and the tying of the presiding elder question to lay representation, "women delegates and a dozen other dreadful bogeys," started a "drift over to the old side." Martin Ruter's estimate of the reform periodical could apply to all their writing: "The Repository appears so hostile to our church and every part of its government (that) I think it has a tendency to excite prejudice against all who wish for a change." 25

Whatever the real reasons for the falling away of so many who had hoped and worked for changes, no Methodist Protestant historians have tried to excuse the defections. Drinkhouse says that not one in ten of the itinerants found it possible to remain loyal to the principle of lay representation. Many had "the zeal of pervers and the ambition of ecclesiastics" and "not only cowered, but curried favor of Episcopacy by denying their opinions and repudiating Reform associations." Although perpetuating the language of contempt for the lapsed, Drinkhouse felt that charity compelled the admission that many with family burdens and facing the threat of poverty which accompanied the threat of discipline "accepted bread at the price of silence." 26 This is harsh "history."

John Wesley would have called the reformers "contentious disputants" as he had so done in his day, striking their names speedily from society membership rolls. His methods, when applied in the America of the 1820's, were anachronistic and although surprisingly effective for the moment the techniques of the "old Methodist plan" produced in the new climate a dreadful harvest of hate, hurt, fury and frustration which reseeded itself for almost a century.

There is no way that this chapter in the story of American Episcopal Methodism's confrontation with American democracy can be written as a love story. The reunion, at long last in 1939, was more the result of the forgetting rather than the remembrance of things past.