FROM RIGHT TO EXPEDIENCE:
LAY REPRESENTATION AND THOMAS EMERSON BOND

by Emora T. Brannan

In June, 1845, as the cherished national unity of Methodism in the United States was crumbling under the weight of slavery, Robert Paine, soon to be chosen as one of the bishops of the new Methodist Episcopal Church, South, wrote to his friend and sympathizer, Thomas B. Sargent of the Baltimore Conference. Fresh from the thrilling events of Louisville in the previous month, the Southern leader reported with pride that everyone was "delighted" with the Convention. The true subject of the letter, however, was revealed with the opening sentences.

You have doubtless seen that the old fox is out against me in a most furious tirade. I shall take the ground that his position was an equivocal one for some time after the Radical movement began in Baltimore, that in 1824 he joined with other Reformers in petitioning for a Lay Delegation--an ultra Radical measure; that it has been published by a responsible Methodist Preacher of the Ga. Conf. that he belonged to the Mutual Rights Association--that long after many of "the old side Methodists" of Bal. has [sic] came out & taken sides against Radicalism he was still "in dubio"--and that he did not take an open stand & begin the defence of the Church until pressed to do so, nor then did he go to work without the understanding of a "quid pro quo" for services--& finally that he has been richly compensated for All his services.

The individual to whom Paine attributed such guile and craft and upon whom he intended to lavish such thorough argumentation was Thomas Emerson Bond, Sr., M.D., editor of The Christian Advocate and Journal. Bond was at the time, next to the bishops, probably the most widely recognized Methodist spokesman in America. In a denomination governed by itinerant preachers, Bond was a layman.

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2 Ibid. This is a most significant letter and deals throughout with events and persons of the radical controversy as well as the 1844 division.
Elected to the prestigious editorship in 1840, the effectiveness of Bond's writing can be gauged by the fact that all sides dignified him with opposition. In the wake of the 1840 General Conference's seeming pro-slavery legislation, the choice of Bond, a Marylander, was interpreted by many abolitionists as part of the Southern strategy. Bond did not disappoint his critics, but promptly reaffirmed the, by that time, traditional position of practical neutrality regarding slavery. He then openly attacked abolitionism. 3

Southerners, on the other hand, learned that, while Bond might be empathetic with their peculiar situation, he did not wish to mitigate the claim that slavery was in fact a moral evil (even if not necessarily a sin), and that he had a genuine concern for the humane treatment of free Negroes. 4 When Southern churchmen acted under the terms of the Plan of Separation of 1844 to divide the church, Bond's opposition was vehement and he became the focal point of much abuse.

Yet in the stressful period when the outcome of the North-South split was still in doubt, it was to Thomas Bond, as perhaps to no other individual, that eyes turned with hope for a restoration of unity. Correspondence to the editor from all parts of the Nation was filled with talk of compromise and declarations that Bond could find a way to restore peace and harmony. Thus it was a layman who found himself standing in the breach created by the clerical delegates of 1844.

There could be no more ironic situation for the Methodist Episcopal Church than that this unlikely layman should be in such a pivotal position. Thomas E. Bond had risen to prominence as the acknowledged

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3 See the entire Thomas E. Bond Papers, Dickinson College, for extensive evidence of Bond's position on slavery and related issues. Bond was a colonizationist and anti-abolitionist, but at the same time sincerely opposed to slavery.

opponent of lay authority in Methodism. In 1844-45, he was, for a brief period at least, the single most influential leader in American Methodism. To understand Bond's rise to importance and also to view Bond's contribution to the shaping of nineteenth century Methodism, one must go back, as Paine had suggested, to the events of the tumultuous decade of the 1820's and the "Radical battle" within Methodism.

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The systematic and determined effort to achieve a measure of lay participation in the governmental structures of American Methodism began in 1820. The opening shots of the decade-long battle were fired in the City of Philadelphia and in a non-Methodist periodical. In April, 1820, the first of a series of articles signed simply "A Methodist" appeared in a new, non-denominational magazine, The Reformer. 5 Noting that the polity of Methodism excludes "the members from any participation in the government of the church whatever," the author declares:

> It is demonstrated, from the experience of all ages, that corruption naturally generates around any man, or set of men, either in church or state, entrusted with unbounded power. Therefore, as an unfeigned friend to the cause of Methodism, in these United States, I would recommend a restriction of the present absolute power of our General and Annual Conferences, and the adoption of a LAY REPRESENTATION. 6

It is probable that this was the first American appearance of the term "lay representation." 7


6 A Methodist [pseud.], "For the Reformer," Reformer, I, 4 (April 1, 1820), 93-94.

7 It is true that Coke and Asbury in their Notes on the Discipline of 1796 had discussed the idea of "delegates" being sent from the circuits to the Conferences. They do not, however, use the term "lay delegation" or "lay representation." See Appendix to Robert Emory, History of the Discipline, pp. 283-284. Jesse Lee in 1810 had described a "restless spirit" in 1794 which included talk of "a delegation of lay members." Short History of the Methodists, p. 213.
article was a prelude to presentation in the General Conference at Baltimore in May, 1820, of a petition from the officials of the Philadelphia church in favor of a lay delegation. When the General Conference, preoccupied with disputes among the preachers, ignored the memorial, the Methodist correspondent ominously declared that it would "form an era in the history of Methodism, that will be productive of evils, which might have been foreseen and avoided." 8

The prophecy was not long in finding fulfillment. In February, 1821, William S. Stockton, an active Philadelphia layman, began publication of The Wesleyan Repository and Religious Intelligencer. The new periodical, avowedly Methodist in doctrine, actively solicited writings on "church governments, discipline, administration and usages." 9 In its three-year career the Repository attracted a host of able lay and clerical writers on a wide variety of topics. 10 Gradually, however, it became the preeminent organ for agitating lay representation in the conferences of Methodism.

In the earliest issues Stockton had to bear the polemical burden alone. In a pair of articles on "Church Government" which were designed to elicit responses, and which clearly resemble the works which had appeared earlier in the Reformer, the editor thundered:

8 The memorial is presumably one "from the official characters of Philadelphia, relating to the revision of the Discipline" which was read on May 5, 1820, and immediately tabled. Journal, 1, 188.

9 A Methodist [pseud.], "To the Reformer," Reformer, 1, 6 (June 1, 1820), 138.

10 William S. Stockton, "Address: To the Ministers, Members and Friends of the Methodist Episcopal Church," Wesleyan Repository, 1, 1 [Preliminary number] (February 15, 1821), 1-3.

11 Stockton's original personal copies of the first two volumes are in the library of Drew University. They contain notations identifying the various authors. For authors of vol. III, see: Stockton in Western Recorder, Feb.-Mar. 1850.
I will dismiss this figure [of family and home as analogies of the church] for the purpose of enquiring if it would not be marvellously strange to see a people whose political predelictions guided by an enlightened understanding, led them to prefer a republican form of civil government—if this people should be led to prefer, or be persuaded long to submit to a monarchical or aristocratical form of church government? ...I should be glad to be informed of any passage in the New Testament, if such passage there be, in which the laity were deprived of an elective or representative privilege. Such a deprivation is not found in the first chapter of Acts, nor in the 15th chapter of the same book. And if the people may be allowed to read the history of the early ages of the church, and after having read, to form an opinion of their own, they must be confirmed in their belief, that absolute power never was, as a sacred deposit, committed to the gospel ministry. (I call legislation, without representation, absolute power.) Every one knows that an extended, itinerant ministry cannot be governed as a local body. Nor can a large local body be governed as an itinerant ministry. There should be a representation of both, if an identity of interests is to be maintained. But it will be asked, why need the people burden themselves with a lay-representation? And then we are referred to our unexampled prosperity as a people! I cannot now take time to examine all that has been said against a lay-delegation, nor attempt to prove its necessity. This may be done hereafter, when it will, perhaps appear that no form of church government is adapted to our state of society, but such an one as will promote the general prosperity, by securing the rights and promoting the prosperity of each individual. We have much to be thankful for, many reasons to rejoice; and not a little to amend.12

Massing arguments from scripture, history, American political theory, and individual rights, Stockton laid claim to lay representation from a theoretical as well as a practical point of view.

Of all Stockton's associates in the Wesleyan Repository the most profound, stimulating, and prolific writer was the local preacher, Nicholas Snethen.

12 William S. Stockton [A Methodist], "Church Government No. 11," Wesleyan Repository, 1, 8 (July 10, 1821), 123-127.
A former traveling minister and companion of Francis Asbury, Snethen was located on his farm, Linganore, near Frederick, Maryland. For over ten years from this retreat he issued a steady stream of articles, sermons, pamphlets, and essays. No other writer seemed to grasp the theological implications of the lay representation debate so clearly. No other writer found so many unique approaches to the question.

An example of Snethen's perceptive analysis of the theoretical inconsistencies of American Methodism can be seen in an article entitled "The State of Our Affairs." He takes as his watchword the statement: "Patch work is very pretty in bed quilts, and divers other kinds of furniture; but in matters touching the rights of the church, it has somewhat of a disagreeable effect." The article is an examination of the shreds and patches which American Methodists claim to be fundamental to their church structure. He notes a definition of the church in the Articles of Religion as a "congregation of faithful men" and a church structure which excludes the faithful men from participation; another Article of Religion which says the church may change and alter to fit circumstances and a church which claims the circumstance of being an independent American church is not a circumstance calling for change; and a so-called "constitution" securing the members' rights but subject to revision at the will of the preachers. In exasperation Snethen concludes by declaring:

"...Far from wishing you," say the bishops [in the Preface to the Discipline], "to be ignorant of any part of our discipline, we desire you to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the whole." Unreasonable desire; rather leave us in happy ignorance; let us know nothing, that we may fear nothing. How is it possible for an American stomach, after reading, marking and learning the contents of the book of discipline, to digest it? Is there one pot or tittle of the pabulum of ecclesiastical liberty to be found in its pages? In what religious society or church in the

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13 Nicholas Snethen [Adynamus], "The State of Our Affairs," Wesleyan Repository, 1, 18 (December 6, 1821), 330.
whole world, or in the records of history, can an example of a more systematic exclusion of private members from all participation in social and religious rights be found! O! ye who have found our wills as fast as fate, in your wisdom and goodness you took it upon yourselves gratuitously to make a constitution, as you call it, and as if to hold us up to the ridicule of every body, you make a proviso, that a certain number of you must agree upon the measure, before you will do away the privileges of your members....How could you lose the recollection of the great practical maxims of the school of freedom, in which you have been educated, that tyranny consists in undivided, unlimited and uncontrollable power, in the hands of any number of men, as well as in the hands of a single individual....The state of our affairs in theory, and in practice, is plainly, as here set forth, without any inclination, or intention to exaggerate, or extenuate it. We have no legislative power; but have we, therefore no legislative rights? As men and as christians our rights may be neglected by ourselves, or suspended by others; but they can never be destroyed, while the New-Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ remains.\[14\]

Snethen insisted that American churchmen had to give as much thought to formulating ecclesiastical governmental structures as to the forms of civil government. Historical precedents, though better than unbridled ambition, would not do as substitutes for reason. Theological bases had to be found. He was certain that the same creator who endowed man with certain inalienable civil rights would not leave a believer without corresponding ecclesiastical rights. In an article entitled "On Church Freedom," he elaborated upon the text: "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."\[15\] Snethen declared that the text reveals a social as well as an individual dimension to freedom. While the words of Christ are usually applied to freedom from sin, guilt, and the moral freedom associated with experimental religion, Snethen

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14 Ibid., 279.
15 John 8:36.
states that if Jesus Christ intended his followers to have a social existence as a church, then the conclusion is unavoidable that he did not intend his followers to be ruled by "ecclesiastical masters" but rather to be socially free indeed.  

Snethen developed as a favorite theme the analogy between the civil and ecclesiastical orders. He does so with a measure of perceptivity seldom found in his contemporaries. The analogy does not rest in blind admiration of American political institutions. Indeed little time is spent praising American government; it is simply assumed—as an almost self-evident axiom—to be the best form of government extant. Snethen, in contrast, roots his theory of analogy in what he termed "science and experiment." His anthropology or view of man leads to the conclusion that what is learned in one sphere of human activity applies also in other human situations. Thus he declares:

Though nothing can be more hostile to our views and feelings than a union of church and state, yet as human nature is the same, and, like gravity, acts by uniform laws, we are fully persuaded that any means which are found, on experiment, sufficient to check and control the natural ambition of the human heart in one case, has strong claims to our attention in the other. 

Thus Snethen can contend that since man is the same, and both church and state are human situations, principles which are operative in one area will also apply in the other even though the cases are different. On this basis he can maintain that the silence of scripture as to forms of church polity is not a sign that there are no principles of church government but rather that any form of government is subject to corruption by human nature which always requires checks and restraints. Americans should, therefore, seek a truly American church based on reason and experience. Snethen, to express this principle, coined a key phrase of the lay representation controversy.

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16 Nicholas Snethen [Adynasius], "On Church Freedom," Wesleyan Repository, I, 18 (December 6, 1821), 289.
17 Ibid., 290.
Any government which is founded on principles, which secure to the preachers and the members of the church their mutual rights and privileges, is scriptural enough for our faith and practice. Is it not remarkable that the American people who have a government sui generis of their own originating and making, should be so tenacious of the religious polity of the European churches from which their ancestors sprung?18

Nicholas Snethen had observed on more than one occasion that: "To reform and not divide, is much more difficult in church than in state."19 If social reform is desired, he insisted, the social relation must be maintained. To leave the church would kill reform in Snethen's view. The separated dissenters would not be viewed as part of the old society, but as an entirely new body, and those who did not participate in the exodus would view the new group as deserters from the cause.20 Above all Snethen was convinced that division was contrary to "the interests of experimental religion" which, he contended, was usually lost or weakened in any party division.21

Accordingly the self-conscious reformers chose the route of petition to the General Conference of 1824 to accomplish the desired changes of a lay representation. A few of the memorials came from larger city or regional groups of reform advocates but the vast majority were from quarterly-meeting conferences throughout the country. Snethen, for example, succeeded in carrying his own Frederick Circuit Quarterly Meeting Conference by a vote of seventeen to one in favor of a memorial "recommending the admission in the succeeding General Conference a Delegation of Local Preachers and Lay Members."22 The General Conference Journal of 1824

18 Ibid., 291.
21 Ibid.
22 Frederick Circuit Quarterly Meeting Conference, March 20, 1824, in Proceedings of the Quarterly Conference's hold in Frederick Circuit Commencing on the 14th Day of December 1805, MS, Wesley Theological Seminary.
reveals that a veritable flood of memorials were submitted.

The advocates of lay rights thought they had chosen a propitious time to request changes. In fact, there could hardly have been a less opportune moment. The petitions from laymen and local preachers came pouring into a conference of traveling preachers who had been deeply divided among themselves since 1820 respecting the nature of the presiding eldership and the relative roles and powers of the episcopacy and general conference in American Methodism. 23 There was open talk of division among the preachers. The bishops had taken opposite sides on the matter, quarreled, and became so hostile that they publicly avoided one another. In the face of such fragmentation, the leadership of the denomination saw in the strident calls for lay representation and the supposed threat to the itinerant ministry which accompanied it a second front which could make practical, if not theoretical, allies of the two clerical factions.

The Committee of Address to whom the lay representation petitions were referred was chaired by Nathan Bangs, General Book Agent and articulate spokesman for the faction advocating presbyterian government of the church through the General Conference. 24 The Committee contained among its members such advocates of high episcopal prerogative as Greenbury R. Jones of Ohio, Joseph Frye of Baltimore, and the ultra-episcopal spokesman, William Beauchamp of Missouri. 25 Twenty-two days after its appointment and on the final day of a session marked by contention among the clerical factions and achievement of a precarious compromise between them, the Committee on Addresses, Memorials, and Peti-

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23 For study of these matters see the writer's, "The Presiding Elder Question," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1974.


tions reported "that it is inexpedient to recommend a lay delegation." Furthermore the Report concluded by stating:

The Committee having been instructed to enquire into the expediency of the annual Conferences taking measures to ascertain the sentiments of our preachers travelling & local & the members of our Church on the subject of a lay delegation Report that in their opinion it is not expedient to adopt such measures.

Not only was the proposed lay delegation inexpedient, but even soliciting opinions regarding the matter was inexpedient.

The Committee composed a Circular to be signed by the bishops and sent forth by the Conference in reply to the petitioners. Carefully worded to avoid offending either of the clerical parties while at the same time asserting the authority of the General Conference to rule the church, the Circular specifically repudiated the argument from ecclesiastical rights. The clerical delegates solemnly declared: "But if by 'rights and privileges,' it is intended to signify something foreign from the institutions of the Church as we received them from our fathers, pardon us if we know no such rights, if we do not comprehend such privileges."

Snethen had predicted that should the General Conference fail to act satisfactorily upon the requests for a lay delegation in 1824, then the organization of what he styled "a kind of patriotic societies" would be in order for the purpose of securing unity of views.
and increased numbers. 29 Anticipating the final reply of the Committee on Addresses, the reform leadership convened a meeting on May 21, 1824, in Baltimore which was attended by laymen, local preachers, and traveling ministers--among them some members of the General Conference itself. 30 As the 1824 General Conference drew near a dispute between Stockton and his Philadelphia associates in the cause of simple lay representation and a group of local preachers centered in Baltimore, who insisted that the locality required special representation distinct from the laity, had distracted and divided the reform forces. Furthermore, diversity of form in the numerous memorials sent to the General Conference was seen as a major disadvantage. To remedy these supposed defects, the May 21 meeting of the reform leaders decided to institute a new periodical and to establish societies throughout the nation in order "to disseminate the principles of a well-balanced church government, and to correspond with each other." 31 The result was--borrowing Snethen's phrase--The Mutual Rights of the Ministers and Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which was published in Baltimore and edited by a committee headed by the prominent local preacher and physician, Samuel Kennedy Jennings, and also the "Union Societies"--the first of which was organized in Baltimore.

The writers in The Mutual Rights continued to thunder away, ringing the changes on the reform arguments with vigor and increasing sarcasm. Resistance to reform led to considerable ad hominem argument, personal attack and counter-attack. Through all the wrangling, however, the commitment of the principal reform leaders to the claim of representation of the laity by right continued to be clearly articulated and evidenced. Perhaps the depth of this commitment

31 "Circular, addressed to the Ministers and Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church," Mutual Rights, I, 1 (August, 1824), 3.
can be grasped in the simple eloquence of Nicholas Snethen when, in what he probably sensed was to be one of his last utterances as a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, he chose a clearly ecclesiological text, Ephesians 5:30, for a sermon opening the Maryland Convention of Reformers in November, 1826. In his conclusion the veteran leader confessed before the delegates:

And now brethren, I declare to you, that there is no one action of my life, upon which I have reflected more deliberately, than the taking a part in this convention, and there is no one among them, within my recollection, of which I find a more conscientious approval in my own breast. That I am acting up to my privilege and my duty, and not beyond them, I have no doubt. As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ; as a christian, not to say a minister, I am fully persuaded in my own mind, that I have a right to be present personally, or by my representative, in the law making department of the church, of which I am a member.32

It is against this backdrop that the emergence of Thomas Emerson Bond's leadership can be understood. Bond was born in February, 1782, into one of the oldest and most prominent Maryland families.33 His father was among the first converts to Methodism and the family homes at Fell's Point in Baltimore and in the country of nearby Harford County became centers of denominational activity. Thomas' older brother, John Wesley Bond, was Asbury's final travel companion and a member of the Baltimore Annual Conference, while the youngest of the family of three children, Ann, married John Wood, a preacher in the New York Conference.

For all his Methodist pedigree, however, Thomas E. Bond does not appear to have been extraordinarily

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32 Nicholas Snethen, "An Abridgement of a Sermon delivered before the Maryland Convention of reformers, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the English Lutheran Church in Lexington street, Baltimore,..." Mutual Rights, III, 7(February, 1827), 175.
33 For treatment of the Bond family lineage, see Baltimore: Its History and Its People [By various contributors], (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1912), III, 929-932. See also Bond-McCulloch Family Papers, Maryland Historical Society.
active in church affairs before the coming of the reform controversy. Given a good basic education, he studied medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, where two of his relatives were professors, and began a very successful practice in Baltimore. His interest in the medical profession can be seen in his having been named in the charter of the University of Maryland Medical School and being nominated for a professorship in the school. He declined the honor for reasons of health, not feeling able to devote time to both his practice and teaching. He married Christiana Birkhead, daughter of one of Maryland's most eminent physicians. They had twelve children, and Christiana apparently outlived her husband.

Rather suddenly in 1822 and 1823 Thomas E. Bond surfaces in the midst of the agitation in Baltimore for a lay delegation. It appears that Bond was a subscriber to the Wesleyan Repository, which led some of the reformers to count him in their camp. He had even in October, 1822, contributed a short, pseudonymous article rather innocuously titled "The Duty of the Church to the Children of Members." Bond's position as an apparent associate in reform made him an ideal choice as an agent provocateur for the defenders of the old order.

In April, 1822, at the expressed direction of Bishop McKendree, Joshua Soule was transferred to the...
Baltimore Conference and placed in charge of the Baltimore City Station. From attempting to quell disturbances in the New York City churches in 1820-22, Soule, the Senior Bishop's protege and staunch supporter, was primarily needed at Baltimore in order to galvanize support among the preachers for McKendree's views of episcopal responsibility, but the Bishop also spoke of the need to combat "a Systematical opposition [sic] to our System of Govt." which involved "local" and "traveling preachers." Soule set about his work with customary vigor, and found Thomas E. Bond a useful coadjutor. In October, 1823, the Quarterly Meeting Conference at Baltimore City Station, with Joshua Soule presiding, recommended Bond to the "District Local Conference" to become a local preacher. Bond was now, with Soule's approval, moving into a position to subvert the reform efforts directed toward the General Conference of 1824. He would have access to and knowledge of the activities both of the membership at large and of the local preachers in particular.

The reform leaders had succeeded in securing a meeting of the lay members of the Baltimore City Station aimed at drafting a memorial to the General Conference. Bond, to use Samuel K. Jennings' term, "insisted" on being admitted to the session as a layman and was eventually chosen secretary of the body. The product of the efforts of the drafting committee was a memorial, the heart of which stated:

Under these views we have been led to turn our attention to the subject of a lay delegation to the General Conference. In presenting this subject to your consideration, we would wave [sic] all that might be urged on the natural or abstract right of the membership to this privilege. We are content to admit that all governments, whether civil or ecclesiastical,

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39 William McKendree to Joshua Soule, March 19, 1822, ALS, McKendree Papers, Vanderbilt University. See also Minutes, I, 388.
40 Ibid.
41 October 8, 1823, Proceedings of Quarterly Meeting Conference & Leaders Meeting of the Baltimore City Station of the Methodist Episcopal Church, MS, Lovely Lane Museum (Baltimore Conference Historical Society).
42 Jennings, Exposition, p. 8.
Bond was later to contend that the Memorial represented a solemn "Compromise" agreed upon by the Baltimore churchmen. Jennings, on the other hand, excluded from the deliberations as an ordained local elder, sensed immediate betrayal. "In the instant, when their report was read, which contained this fatal proposition, we considered it a known surrender of the cause of reform." Alexander McCaine, another of the Baltimore local elders, also recognized the danger implicit in Bond's move to abandon arguments from right in favor of expediency alone. Writing in the Mutual Rights, he charged the memorialists with:

Not considering, perhaps, that the General Conference must be the sole judge in this matter; and that if they thought that it was inexpedient to grant the prayer of the petition, the petitioners could not, in truth or reason, complain of any injustice being done them. The writer of this essay has long been of the opinion, that the claims of the laity to church representation, are founded upon other and stronger grounds than expediency, and are susceptible of being defended by less exceptionable and more forcible arguments.

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43 Citation from: Memorial agreed upon at "A numerous meeting of the male members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the city of Baltimore held by adjournment from time to time in the Conference Room, Light Street," Thomas Kelso, Chairman, Thomas E. Bond, secretary, 1824, quoted in, Thomas E. Bond, "A Narrative and Defence of the Proceedings of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore City Station, against Certain Local Preachers and Lay Members of Said Church," (1828), in, Bond, The Economy of Methodism Illustrated and Defended (New York: Lane & Scott, 1852), p.69.
44 Ibid.
45 Jennings, Exposition, p. 8.
From Right to Expedience

The carefully worded Memorial of the Baltimore Methodists met precisely the fate McCaine suggested. The General Conference acknowledged it with a declaration that lay representation was inexpedient and would, therefore, not be granted. Taking the lead given it by the Memorial itself, the General Conference Circular specifically repudiated any claim to rights outside the existing ecclesiastical usages of Methodism.

Robert Paine had suggested that Bond became involved in the reform controversy on a "quid pro quo" basis. With whom might Dr. Bond have reached such an understanding? It is curious that Bond's "defection" to the "old side" coincides with the arrival of Joshua Soule at Baltimore. Furthermore, buried in the Memorial of the Baltimore Methodists in 1824 and linked to Bond's expediency argument is the following paragraph:

We are aware of the constitutional objections to this change [i.e., lay delegation] in our economy. We know that you are clearly prohibited by the very first article of the constitution under which you act from adding to the conference any delegation not provided for in that rule; but we believe that an opinion expressed by the Conference, and approved by the episcopacy, would induce the annual conferences to make the necessary alteration in the constitution, and we submit the consideration of the whole matter to the calm and deliberate attention which we are persuaded its importance demands, and which we do not doubt it will receive, determined cheerfully and cordially to submit to your decision.

The theory of the binding nature of the so-called "constitution" or restrictive rules of 1808, which is expounded and reinforced here as a barrier to lay delegation, is precisely the view of McKendree and Soule in their protracted dispute with many of the other preachers. If Soule needed it, he would carry

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48 See note 43 above.
49 See the writer's, "The Presiding Elder Question," Chapter V, "The Good Old Wesleyan Plan; McKendree before the Annual Conferences," for examination of this controversy.
this Memorial with him to General Conference and would make the granting of lay delegation contingent upon recognition of his and the Senior Bishop's position. As it turned out, this strategy did not prove useful at the General Conference. It is quite plausible, however, to think that Soule could have suggested he would not forget Bond's service in the matter. There is up to 1848 a curious link between Soule's seniority and growing authority and Bond's preferment in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

From 1824 onward, Thomas E. Bond was increasingly recognized by all parties as the chief opponent of reform and the principal agent of its suppression. His written grounds of opposition never fundamentally changed over a period of thirty years. The laity has no abstract right to representation and "EXPEDIENCY or probable utility" does not warrant the innovation.

In 1827, as the reformers were holding state meetings and eventually a national convention to draft a uniform and model memorial to the General Conference of 1828, Bond issued the first open attack on lay representation which became his most widely read work, An Appeal to the Methodists, in Opposition to the Changes Proposed in their Church Government. Here Bond aggressively attacked the idea of any such notion as ecclesiastical rights. After declaring that there is no scriptural warrant for particular forms of church government, the author moves on to dismiss "the argument drawn from NATURAL inherent rights of mankind." In Bond's view there is absolutely no analogy between civil and ecclesiastical relations. He declares, "No such analogy exists, or can exist."

While Bond adduces historical arguments as to the origin of itinerant power in the church, the heart of his argument rests upon a view of the Methodist Episcopal Church as a voluntary association directed toward a specific missionary goal of evangelization. As such its government should be shaped to that end not by any "metaphysical speculations" regarding natural rights. He declared:

50 Bond, "Appeal to the Methodists, in Opposition to the Changes Proposed in their Government," in Economy of Methodism, p. 25.
The rights which a Methodist, whether local preacher or layman, possesses, as such, are purely conventional. They are not natural, but acquired rights; and they are known and determined by the articles of association, contained in our book of government and Discipline. The Church is a voluntary association, entered into for religious purposes; whoever enters into its communion is entitled to all the privileges and immunities which the articles of association hold out to him, and to no more. If he finds, upon experiment, that the religious advantages he acquires, do not compensate him for the sacrifices he is required to make, he has an indefeasible right to withdraw from the community, and thereby release himself from the obligations imposed by his membership; but he has no right to demand of the Church to change her economy for his accommodation.\(^{51}\)

The remainder of the Appeal is devoted to showing that, once the plea of "rights" is dismissed, there is no practical reason on the grounds of expediency to grant the proposed change. In Bond's words it is "a bold and reckless innovation, for the adoption of which we have neither the plea of necessity, the prospect of utility, nor the sanction of experience."\(^{52}\)

Nicholas Snethen, to whom Bond had sarcastically dedicated the Appeal, in a review of that dedication expressed his fears regarding the effect of the new publication.

As a writer against the principles of reform, doctor Bond is not to be feared; but as a writer against reformers, he is to be dreaded. Upon principles, he soon gets out of his depth; upon men, he is quite at home....Let a hundred or two reformers be excluded from the church, and who will not think with the doctor himself that his book is unanswerable.\(^{53}\)

Snethen's fears were well founded. When in April, 1827, the Baltimore Conference suspended one of its preachers...
for recommending the Mutual Rights. Bond organized the Laymen of Baltimore City in support of the action. In January, 1828, proceedings were begun in Baltimore, largely under the guidance of Bond, which led to the expulsion of twenty-two laymen and the suspension and eventual expulsion of eleven local preachers. As a public justification for the action of the church leaders in Baltimore, Bond compiled A Narrative and Defence of the Proceedings of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore City Station, against Certain Local Preachers and Lay Members of Said Church, by the Persons Who Preferred and Sustained the Charges, which he published in 1828.

To complete the work of expulsion and final suppression of reform, Bond—a layman—traveled to Pittsburgh to be present at the session of the General Conference of 1828. 54 There he exercised a profound influence in the formulation of the "Report of the Committee on Petitions and Memorials," which was presented by John Emory and unanimously adopted by the Conference. 55 It set terms of restoration of the expelled which rendered the expulsions final and thus made the organization first of the Associated Methodist Churches and finally of the Methodist Protestant Church a practical necessity. 56 Bond then returned to Baltimore where he edited the periodical The Itinerant, 1830-1831, which continued the warfare with reform until it was considered safely dead or at least dormant.

Asเห็น had predicted, removal of reform was interpreted as moral and intellectual victory over its principles as well. William McKendree gave voice to

54 "Report on Facts and General, Rights, etc., and an Attempt to Settle the Church in the State of the Bac, etc., Same, etc., and a Letter to the Preach,," See Appendix, in the original, p. 49.
this attitude when he wrote:

For two or three years but little appeared in favour of the government or the attacked character & design of the itinerant ministers:...At length two pamphlets appeared in favour of the church; one exposing the weakness, impracticability and ruinous effects of their boasted improvements on our system:—The other in defence of the Fathers and their System of church government. The check was felt. Their conduct exposed to view, and some of them called to account before the church—....The Schism eventuated in a Secession. The number lost was very inconsiderable, perhaps not out of a hundred. [They were not missed (crossed out)] The church did not feel the loss, either as it respects weight of character, or Numbers, for their places were filled up so soon that the minutes shew no loss—and the business of the church proceeds more peacably & better since their departure than it did while they remained among us.57

Thomas E. Bond had not only developed a national reputation as the defender of the Methodist Episcopal Church but he also possessed what the Cyclopaedia of Methodism termed a "chaste, strong, nervous style."58 He was an excellent editor and journalist. Eventually he left his medical practice and his native Maryland to accept the election in 1840 to the editorship of the Christian Advocate and Journal at New York. Re-elected in 1844, he was discredited along with much of the leadership of the church after the debacle of that year, and was put out of the editor's chair in 1848. In 1852, however, danger from renewed agitation for lay representation prompted the General Conference to recall the veteran editor to service. The old leader republished his earlier works in a single volume entitled, The Economy of Methodism Illustrated and Defended. He hoped to save the rising generation of Methodists as he had done their fathers nearly thirty years before. In truth, however, Bond had won his victory by 1852. In that year the advocates of change

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57 William McKendree, Holograph MS [History of Reform and Events since 1824], [1842?], McKendree Papers, Emory University.
58 "Thomas E. Bond," Cyclopaedia of Methodism, p. 110.
put aside the question of right and argued on the grounds of utility. Expert expediency had replaced all other considerations as the Methodist criterion for polity. Thomas E. Bond by insisting on the abandonment of rights and urging only expediency, and then cogently persuading the bulk of his coreligionists of the merit of his point of view, had contributed to a lasting American Methodist attitude. He hastened the demise of any meaningful Methodist attempt to deal with the theological questions of ecclesiology.

By accident and ironically, Bond, the opponent of lay power, had by the tenacity of his character and persuasiveness of his pen succeeded in raising the level of respect for the laity within his church. When on March 14, 1856, he died in New York, Bishop Beverly Waugh captured the spirit of the moment when he said that, "He knew of no one, who, for the last half century, had rendered more valued service to Methodism, as developed by the peculiar organization, than Dr. Bond." 61

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59 See Stevens, Supplementary History, pp. 47-57. See also Printed Minutes of meeting of Members of M. E. Church in Philadelphia in favor of Methodism AS IT IS, March 15, 1852, Thomas E. Bond Papers, Dickinson College.

60 Stevens, The Centenary of American Methodism: A Sketch of Its History, Theology, Practical System, and Success (New York: Carlton, 1865), p. 123. "Basing all Church government on Christian expediency, American Methodism is ready for any modifications of its system which time may show to be desirable for its greater effectiveness."