TOWARD MORE FREQUENT COMMUNION:
THE JOURNEY OF
THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH, 1858-1866

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American Methodists, north and south, did not follow John Wesley's advice to celebrate the Lord's Supper every Lord's Day. In the mid-nineteenth century, even quarterly celebrations were not standard practice. During the 1858 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, a resolution by three clergy delegates to change the Discipline "to secure the administration of the Lord's Supper in each society once a quarter, when practicable" was read and referred to the Committee on Revisals, but no further action was taken.¹ The church's Discipline contained no requirement or recommendation concerning the frequency of celebrating the Lord's Supper. It stated only that "on the days of administering the Lord's Supper, the two chapters [of scripture] in the morning service may be omitted."²

However, when the Civil War was over, recommendations for more frequent celebration were approved at the 1866 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which met in New Orleans. The Committee on Revisals, chaired by the Rev. Thomas O. Summers of the Alabama Conference, presented several lengthy reports of recommended changes in the Discipline which were adopted. One new directive dealt with public worship:

Let the Lord's Supper be administered monthly in every congregation, wherever it is practicable, and where it is not practicable, at every Quarterly Meeting. Let the service preceding the administration be so proportioned as to allow for due time for this solemn ordinance.³

¹Journal of the General Conference Minutes, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, May 12, 1858, 437. H. H. Montgomery, C. K. Marshall, and L. Pearce were recorded as offering this particular resolution.
²Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (Nashville, TN: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1859), 188. This instruction was part of Chapter 3, section 5, "Of Public Worship."
³Journal of the 1866 General Conference Minutes, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, May 2, 1866, 116-120. See also Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (Nashville, TN: A. H. Redford, 1866), 103-104. This instruction was part of Chapter 3, section 4, "Of Public Worship." The 1866 Daily Christian Advocate, does not report any discussion either when the report was submitted April 17, see #11, 81, or when the report was approved May 2, see #25, 199.
The proposals and action at the mid-century General Conference demonstrate a shift in attitude toward the importance of the Lord’s Supper among the southern Methodists. The liturgical practice changed from no required celebration of the Lord’s Supper to a quarterly requirement and a recommended monthly celebration.

The new rule was not greeted with enthusiasm in all local churches. Compliance with the Discipline was not universal. Aware of the uneven implementation of more frequent Communion, some delegates at the 1870 General Conference proposed legislation to enforce quarterly observance as a minimal standard. They recommended that the business of each Quarterly Conference include this question, “Has the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper been regularly administered?” The resolution was referred to the Committee on Revisals, no longer chaired by T. O. Summers, which later “non-concurred” and the resolution was dropped. However, the language of the rule in the Discipline was strengthened to read, “The Lord’s Supper shall be administered monthly, in every congregation, whenever it is practicable; and where it is not, at every quarterly meeting.” More frequent communions were becoming standard, but the change was obviously resisted.

This paper will examine some of the factors which contributed to more frequent celebration of the Lord’s Supper in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. First, the level of education among the clergy was increasing through a required course of study which included the sacramental theology in Watson’s Institutes. Second, the increasing educational level of the professional and mercantile class in towns and cities, it will be argued, meant a greater lay appreciation of more formal liturgy and pairing the Lord’s Supper with preaching in public worship. Third, changes can occur at General Conference only if there are leaders willing to press the cause, to do the committee work, and to publicize the position. The influence of Thomas O. Summers in these areas will be examined. All these factors worked together to bring more frequent celebration of the Lord’s Supper in the south.

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4 *Journal of the 1870 General Conference Minutes, Methodist Episcopal Church, South*, May 10, 1870, 184. The resolution was offered by W. A. McCarty, M. S. Andrews (both from Alabama) and W. Shepard (from Texas). The report of the Committee on Revisals was May 12, 1870, 208.

5 *Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South* (Nashville, TN: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1870), 107–108, emphasis mine. This instruction was part of Chapter 5, section 1, “Of Public Worship.” William Nash Wade, “A History of Public Worship in the Methodist Episcopal Church and Methodist Episcopal Church, South, from 1784 to 1905” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1981) 281, cites only, “The Lord’s Supper shall be administered monthly.” By not including the rest of the sentence, one erroneously concludes that every church in the south from 1870 celebrated the Lord’s Supper monthly. This was not the case.
During the middle years of the nineteenth century, a movement gained ground for more formal education of ministers among the Methodists. Decried by some like Peter Cartwright, it was celebrated and advocated by others. T. O. Summers fully supported more ministerial education believing that ministers should know languages, logic, rhetoric, philosophy, and science in addition to Bible, Christian history and theology. A course of study was first required for all Methodist ministerial candidates in 1816 when the General Conference directed the bishop or a committee appointed by the bishop of each Annual Conference to develop a two-year course of study leading to deacon’s orders. There was no uniformity since episcopal supervision and committee implementation were uneven. By 1844, sole authority was given to the bishops to develop a uniform church-wide four-year course of study, two years of study for deacons orders and two years of study for elders orders. Bishop Joshua Soule, in the name of all the Methodist Episcopal bishops, published the first course of study in the March 12, 1845 *Christian Advocate* (New York).

For the Itinerant Probationers and Deacons of the M. E. Church to be uniformly observed in all the annual conferences, as provided by the late General Conference.

**First Year**

The Bible as to doctrines with reference to Wesley’s Notes, the Bible Dictionaries, and commentaries of our own publication; Concordance; and Gaston’s Collections of Sacred Scriptures. Wesley’s Sermons: Fletcher’s Appeal and Christian Perfection; English Grammar and Composition.

**Second Year**

The Bible as to Ordinances or Sacraments. . . . Watson’s Life of Wesley; Bishop Watson’s Apology; Fletcher’s Christian Perfection; Methodist Discipline; Geography and Composition.

**Third Year**

The Bible as to History and Chronology. . . . The first and second parts of Watson’s Institutes; Gregory’s Church History. Rhetoric. Written Essay or Sermon.

**Fourth Year**

The Bible generally. . . . The third and fourth part of Watson’s Institutes; Powell on Apostolic Succession; Old Christianity Contrasted with the novelties of Poetry, by Gideon Ousely. Logic. Written Essay or Sermon.

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8Patterson, 22.

9Patterson, 24.
The training of ministers included the study of the sacraments. Both the emphasis of the biblical foundation of the sacraments in the second year, and the use of the sacramental section of Watson's *Institutes* in the fourth year, were important in forming clergy minds. This marked a shift away from the days of Asbury who eschewed education and sacramental ministry. Rather than ordain more elders so that the sacraments could be administered, Asbury sent out lay preachers to preach.

From its inception at the Louisville Convention of 1845, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, gave the bishops the authority to "point out a [four year] course of reading and study" for the ministerial candidates. Although there were minor changes, the Methodist bishops of the south closely followed the northern church's course of study.

In the education of preachers, Watson's *Institutes* was part of the course of study until 1880. When in 1860, T. O. Summers edited and revised Watson's *Institutes* for use in the south, he left the section on "Sacraments" and "The Lord's Supper" untouched. First published in 1823 in England and in 1826 in America, Watson's systematic treatment of the theological motifs of Wesley and Fletcher "not only provided a norm for subsequent doctrinal studies, but gave direction to the whole theological enterprise within American Methodism—integrating Methodist theology into the polemic categories of contemporary anti-deistic, and anti-Calvin-

10 Patterson, 43.
11 Patterson, 278–279. Patterson lists the books from the 1846 Louisville Annual Conference, the 1851 Alabama Conference, and the 1855 course of study printed in *Annals of Southern Methodism*. The parallel to Soule's course of study is easily seen in the "Minutes of the Alabama Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South—Tuskegee, Alabama, December, 10, 1856" (Montgomery, AL: Advertiser and Gazette and Job Office, 1857), 29:

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Course of Study</th>
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<tr>
<td>First Year</td>
<td>Bible as to doctrine, Wesley's Sermons, Fletcher's Appeal, English Grammar and Composition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Year</td>
<td>Bible as to Sacraments and Ordinances, Watson's Life of Wesley, Watson's Apology, Fletcher's Christian Perfection, Ancient Geography, Discipline and Composition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Third Year</td>
<td>Bible as to History and Chronology, Ruter's Church History, Watson Institutes (parts 1 and 2), Rhetoric, Composition, or Sermon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fourth Year</td>
<td>Bible generally, Watson's Institutes (parts 3 and 4), Powell on Succession, Old Christianity by G. Ousley, Logic and Sermon</td>
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istic theology.”14 Samuel Luckey, in his 1859 book, The Lord's Supper,15 quoted extensively from Watson's Institutes. Nearly 40 years later, a graduating senior of Vanderbilt University gave this evaluation of the Methodist theologians: “Watson, of course, is the standard theologian of Methodism. . . . None [Pope, Miley, Summers] has varied much from the theology of Watson.”16 This showed the foundational status of Watson as late as 1895.

Watson, a British Methodist, became president of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference in 1826. By the time of his death, in 1833, he “stood second only to Jabez Bunting in the estimation of the connection.”17 Watson, in the Institutes, relied on a broad range of sources, primarily the leaders and creeds of the Reformation and both the Anglican and Dissenter British theologians. His rare references to Wesley were from sermons. Watson’s work was primarily orderly and apologetic rather than experiential and confessional, but invariably in tune with Wesley’s work.18

Watson devoted three chapters of the ecclesiology section in the Institutes, to the sacraments. He defended the Protestant position that only Baptism and the Lord's Supper were instituted in the New Testament and only they “have the force of a perpetual renewal of the covenant.”19 He contrasted the “superstitious” Roman Catholic view of the sacraments with the “emblematic” Socinian view, where the only benefit “is to cherish pious sentiments.”20 Watson cited both the Heidelberg Catechism and the Church of England's Twenty-fifth Article as the basis for a correct sacramental theology. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are “the sign and seal of the covenant, and the acceptance of this sign and seal, is a solemn transaction between God and each individual: from which it follows, that to every one to whom the sign is exhibited, a seal and pledge of the invisible grace is also given. . . .”21 Watson affirmed Wesley's doctrine that the sacraments are a genuine means of grace, and showed that God's grace is mediated through the sacraments, although he did not quote Wesley.

20Watson, 386.
21Watson, 390.
In Watson's sacramental theology the sacraments were important and objectively made a difference because of God's action.

Watson, in his chapter on the Lord's Supper, was explicit about the benefits of God's grace and the need for monthly celebrations. He began by quoting from the Catechism of the Church of Scotland, "... the Lord's Supper is to be administered often, in the elements of bread and wine, to represent and exhibit Christ as spiritual nourishment to the soul, and to confirm our continuance and growth in him. ..." The Lord's Supper was to replace the Passover since "Christ in person became the true passover; and a new rite was necessary to commemorate the spiritual deliverance of men, and to convey and confirm its benefits." The Lord's Supper "conveys and confirms" the benefits of Christ's death and resurrection as often as it is received.\(^{22}\)

Watson reviewed the biblical material concerning the Lord's Supper, especially I Corinthians and drew several conclusions. The final one is that Paul "regarded the Lord's Supper as a rite to be often celebrated, and that in all the future time until the Lord himself should come to judge the world. The perpetual obligation of this ordinance cannot, therefore, be reasonably disputed."\(^{23}\)

On the tricky matter of Christ's eucharistic presence, Watson rejected as "monstrous" the eucharistic realism of Roman Catholic transubstantiation and Lutheran consubstantiation, as well as its opposite, the Zwinglian view of eucharistic symbolism. The latter, Watson said, "reduces it [the Lord's Supper] to a mere religious commemoration of the death of Christ. . . ." Watson advocated a middle route following after Calvin, Cranmer and Wesley where Christ is spiritually yet really present conveying "the same nourishment to their souls, the same quickening to the spiritual life, as bread and wine do to the natural life." The scriptural basis is John 6, especially 6:56, understood spiritually: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I in him" (RSV). This middle way also incorporated a social dimension, that one will live a more Christ-like life as a result of the spiritual union and grace given through the Lord's Supper. "The union between Christ and his people [through the Lord's Supper] is the consequence of faith, and that communication of grace and strength by which they are quickened in the well-doing and prepared for the discharge of every duty."\(^{24}\)

Watson presented the sacramental nature of the Lord's Supper as "a sign and seal of the covenant of our redemption." As a 'sign,' the benefits to the believer are remission of sins and "nourishment of the soul in spiritual life and vigor, by virtue of a vital communion with Christ, so that it [spiritual life] is advanced and perfected in holiness," until Christ

\(^{22}\)Watson, 465, emphasis mine.
\(^{23}\)Watson, 467, emphasis mine.
\(^{24}\)Watson, 473-475.
confers "the covenanted blessing of eternal life." Watson continued with several observations concerning who may and may not commune, concluding with, "All are welcome there who truly love Christ, and all who sincerely desire to love, serve, and obey him. All truly penitent persons; . . . all who take Christ as the sole foundation of their hope . . . are encouraged to 'draw near and to take this holy sacrament to their comfort.'" Watson addressed the issue of frequency of the Lord's Supper by noting that the early church celebrated it every Sabbath. "Perhaps the general custom in this country [England] of a monthly administration will come up to the spirit of the ancient institution." He firmly stated that there is no scriptural evidence of only receiving it annually and the ancient practice contradicts this notion.

Watson concluded his Institutes with his last observation which summarized his view of the importance of frequently receiving the Lord's Supper:

The habitual neglect of this ordinance by persons who profess a true faith in Christ, is highly censurable. We speak not now of Quakers and Mystics, who reject it altogether, in the face of the letter of their Bibles; but of many who seldom or never communicate, principally from habits of inattention to an obligation which they do not profess to deny. In this case a plain command of Christ is violated, though not perhaps with direct intention; and the benefit of that singularly affecting means of grace is lost, in which our Saviour renewes to us the pledges of his love, repeats the promises of his covenant, and calls for invigorated exercises of our faith, only to feed us the more richly with the bread that comes down from heaven. If a peculiar condemnation falls upon them who partake unworthily, then a peculiar blessing must follow from partaking worthily; and it therefore becomes the duty of every minister to explain the obligation, and to show the advantages, of this sacrament, and earnestly to enforce this regular observance upon all those who give satisfactory evidence of "repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." By the sheer weight of repetition, Watson emphasized the importance and benefits of regular reception of the Lord's Supper. That this was required reading had to have an effect on the attitudes of the younger ministers toward the importance of more frequent celebrations of the Lord's Supper.

Not only were the sacraments infrequently administered, but the other general services of the church (rituals) were often ignored. To remedy this situation beginning in 1847, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South included the ritual in some editions of the hymnals. Bishop Early later wrote to Summers:

I have long cherished as important to our Church service the plan of issuing our Ritual in a form convenient to be used whenever the sacraments are administered, the burial-service read, or ministers ordained. . . . I take this occasion to advise our friends everywhere to get our Hymn-Book with the Ritual, and become familiar with all our services.

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25 Watson, 476-481.
26 Watson, 481.
27 Watson, 481-482.
as to use the Ritual whenever the sacraments are administered. . . . Our people are so much opposed to excessive forms that they neglect their own services, and it is high time that our ministers call their attention to the neglect, and by both precept and example correct the error. 28

Summers noted that Bishop Early, "expresses the views of his venerable colleagues in the episcopacy." 29 There was a consensus of the denomina­tional leadership concerning the importance of education and encouraging a more balanced use of ritual along with the free form of revival.

A second factor leading to more frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper was the increased education and cosmopolitan sophistication among the laity. The cultural shift which supported more education and greater use of ritual among the clergy also included the laity. The laity reflected the nineteenth century sensibilities of increasing gentility: the notion of keeping emotions balanced and the growing importance of rationality and reasonableness. This cultural shift became more pervasive with the rising importance of southern towns. In 1810 only 4 percent of the southerners lived in cities. By 1850, the percentage had doubled to 8 percent in some forty cities scattered throughout the region. However, there were an additional 130 towns with populations ranging from 500 to 2500. 30 It was in the towns that schools and academies, societies and forums for debates and lectures were formed. The towns and cities became regional cultural and educational centers. The ministers who could successfully serve there became denominational leaders, had their sermons published and became models of ministry. New churches were built on "Main Street" with more formal architecture, cushioned pews, stained glass windows, and grand organs which needed a liturgy to match the edifice.

One such community was Mobile, Alabama, “the second cotton port of the country,” with people from “almost every civilized nation” and “nearly every state of the Union.” The “urbane people” formed a society which was “excellent in hospitality, manners, social and intellectual culture, liberality of spirit, and a kindly temper.” 31 In this community was St. Francis Street Methodist Episcopal Church. Although its membership was only between 150 and 200, some of the most prominent ministers served there and it boasted as a member John A. Campbell who became a Justice

29“Brief Reviews,” 456.
31William H. Milburn, “Philip Neely and Alabama Five and Forty Years Ago,” Methodist Quarterly Review (Nashville), New Series, Vol. XV, No. 2 (January, 1894), 311. See also Wade, 277. Although Wade cites this article, he does not mention the role played by P. P. Neely in the St. Francis St. Church. Surely Neely who served five years was more influential than Summers who served only a few months.
of the Supreme Court. T. O. Summers served there for a few months in 1846, before moving to Charleston with his editorial appointment. From 1853 through 1854 and again from 1865 until his death, November 9, 1868, Philip P. Neely served as pastor. He was a prominent minister, who was founder and President of Columbia (TN) Female College, and a traveling agent for Transylvania University (KY) before transferring to the Alabama Conference where he "filled most of the important stations in the Conference, and traveled some of its large districts as presiding elder." He was well educated and published several volumes of sermons. While serving St. Francis Street Church, he was a delegate to the General Conference of 1866. Ritual was important to P. P. Neely. He worked with T. O. Summers and others at the General Conference to make ritual more accessible. He presented a ritual for receiving new members which on April 30, 1866, was ordered to be printed in an Appendix to the Discipline, to be used at the option of the minister.

On a motion of W. A. Smith, the form of receiving members presented by P. P. Neely was ordered to be printed in an Appendix to the Discipline, to be used at the option of the minister.

He also worked to recover the use of Wesley's Sunday Service. On the evening of May 2, two significant motions were adopted. First a resolution by Leroy M. Lee and A. L. P. Green was offered, read, and adopted:

Resolved, That the Book Agent be, and he is hereby, instructed to publish in a separate volume, and in large, open type, the Ritual of the church, including Mr. Wesley's Sunday Service, the form of dedicating Churches and the form of admission to the church, heretofore authorized to be published as an Appendix to the Discipline.

The second item was part of the second report of the Committee on Revisals, chaired by T. O. Summers. This report included action on the Memorial of St. Francis Church, Mobile [P. P. Neely, pastor] petitioning for permission for the "use of the Sunday Service of the Methodist Episcopal Church, prepared by Mr. Wesley. . . ." The committee submitted the following resolution which was subsequently adopted, "That the General Conference has no objection to the use of the Sunday Service prepared by Mr. Wesley for the Methodist Episcopal Church, or any part

32 Milburn, 313.
33 General Minutes and Yearbook, M. E. Church, South, 1845–1857, 557, 480. General Minutes and Yearbook, M. E. Church, South, 1866–1873, 42, 132. Neely's biography is on 233.
34 J. B. McFerrin, "Biographical Note," in Sermons, Philip P. Neely (Nashville, TN: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1884). During his lifetime his Discourses (New York & Mobile: S. H. Goetzel & Co., 1857) was published. J. K. Armstrong in the "Introduction" to this volume notes that Neely's preaching in 1848 at a protracted meeting in Greensborough, Alabama, "Commenced one of the most powerful revivals that was ever in the limits of the Alabama Conference," xvi. This community had not had a revival for 10 years, xiv.
35 Journal of the 1866 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 100.
36 Journal of the 1866 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 116.

The 1866 Daily Christian Advocate, #25, 198–199 in the report of the proceedings of the evening of May 2, makes no mention of this resolution.
of it, by any congregation that may choose to use it." The "reprint" did not include all of the Sunday Service that Wesley had sent over in 1784, but only the order for morning and evening prayer "for the Lord's Day" and the collects, epistles and gospels for each Sunday. The abbreviated sacramental rites of 1792 remained as successive General Conferences had amended them.

Although some southern Methodists favored a restoration of Wesley's liturgy, it was not widespread. The use of Wesley's liturgy was clearly optional and not even highly recommended. The tone of the resolution gave permission, nothing more. "One Southern writer speaks lightly of [the] 'attempt to restore the Prayer Book' at the 1866 Conference and was happy at its failure." However, the St. Francis Street Church under P. P. Neely did become more formal liturgically seeking to recover the Wesleyan love of the Prayer Book. In town and city churches with a more highly educated membership, worship was generally more formal liturgically. This may have been part of their desire to be more respectable or possibly a way of proclaiming that Methodists "had arrived" socially.

A third factor which worked in conjunction with the increasing ministerial education and the growing social sophistication of the laity was the dynamic leadership of T. O. Summers. During the period from 1858 to 1866, the Secretary of the church's General Conferences, the 1866 Chairman of its Revisals Committee, the church's chief Book Editor, and the editor of its Quarterly Review (South), was the same individual, Thomas O. Summers. He wielded considerable influence in the denomination and shaped the minds of the church's lay and clergy members through his committee work, publications and articles.

Summers' journey physically and spiritually was a long one. He was born in Dorset, England, in 1812. Orphaned by age six, he was raised by a staunch Calvinist great-aunt who made sure he attended an independent church several times a week. His education was informal, primarily from his pastors. Although he had occasionally stolen into a Wesleyan Methodist service, his connection with the Methodists was strengthened

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37 Journal of the 1866 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 116-117. The 1866 Daily Christian Advocate, #25, 199, does not report any discussion when the report was passed May 2, nor when the second report was submitted April 12; see #8.

38 T. O. Summers, "Preface," The Sunday Service of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (Nashville, TN: A. H. Redford, 1867). In addition to Wesley's prayer services, this volume contained P. P. Neely's "Form of Receiving Members into the Church" and the "Ritual, and General Rules, and Articles of Religion" of the M.E.C., South.


40 Holifield, 31-37.
when at age 16, after the death of his aunt, he rented a pew for morning
and evening Sunday services at the Wesleyan Chapel. He also attended
the Church of England in the afternoons and holidays. Both the British
Methodists and the Church of England used similar versions of the Book
of Common Prayer in their worship services. This early exposure may have
instilled an appreciation for liturgy which Summers was later to share
through his work in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The British
Methodists' worship was different from the informal services of the
American Methodists who under the influence of Asbury had dropped
Wesley's Sunday Service liturgy from the Discipline in 1792.

When Summers came to New York in 1830 at the age of 18 he carried
a collection of Charles Wesley's hymns in his pocket. Still unconverted,
he was convinced that Calvinism was unreasonable and that God could
not be the source of evil. A Methodist laywoman suggested that he read
Adam Clarke's Commentary on Romans. This book was a turning point
for afterward Summers intellectually affirmed that Arminianism was
reasonable. In 1832 he became an "earnest seeker" in a Washington, DC
Methodist class. He experienced a quiet conversion reading the sixth
chapter of John's gospel, January 16, 1833. Testing a call to ministry he
preached a sermon at the Quarterly Conference, November 9, 1834, which
was well received. In 1835, he was admitted on trial to the Baltimore
Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church and was appointed
together with another lay preacher to the Augusta Circuit, now near Staun-
ton, Virginia, in the Shenandoah Valley. Then it was a 25-station charge
with only 400 members which covered many miles in the Blue Ridge moun-
tains. Believing that ministers should be educated, he took every oppor-
tunity to read theology by borrowing books from his clergy elders. In 1837
he was ordained deacon and was appointed to a demanding Baltimore
City station which almost broke his health. He was then appointed to
a station outside Baltimore before being sent as a missionary to Texas,
serving four years in Galveston and Houston. Missions continued to be

41O. P. Fitzgerald, Dr. Summers: A Life-Study (Nashville, TN: Southern Methodist Publishing
House, 1884), 21–22.
42Fitzgerald, 45–46.
43L. Edward Phillips, "Thomas Osmond Summers, Methodist Liturgist of the Nineteenth
Century," Methodist History, 27:4, (July, 1989), 242; note #7, is incorrect in stating that
Summers was ordained deacon and elder in 1837. The Minutes of the Annual Conferences
of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the Years 1829–1839, vol. II (New York: T. Mason
& G. Lane, 1840), 446, 617, records that during the Baltimore Conference 1836–1837,
Summers was admitted into full-connection and ordained deacon and that during the
Baltimore Conference 1839, Summers was ordained an elder.
states that Summers was a missionary to Buenos Aires, Fitzgerald states that in 1840, Bishop
a life-long interest. One of his primary mission responsibilities was fund-raising which sent him crossing large portions of the United States. On one such trip he met his future bride. In 1844, he married, requested and received a pastoral appointment in the Alabama Conference where he remained a clergy member for the rest of his life.

Up to this point his experience paralleled that of many circuit riding Methodist ministers. At the 1844 General Conference in New York, American Methodists, north and south, parted company over the twin issues of slavery and episcopacy. Summers staunchly supported the southern position.

The focus of his ministry changed in 1845, when he began his career in the hierarchy of the new church as editor, author and educator. As a delegate to the Louisville Convention, at which the Methodist Episcopal Church, South was organized, he was elected Secretary. He continued as Secretary for each subsequent General Conference through 1882, when, in declining health, he died during its sessions.

In 1846, Summers had moved to Charleston, South Carolina when the General Conference had appointed him to be the assistant editor of the Southern Christian Advocate. Four years later he became the church's chief Book Editor. In 1851, he began the Sunday School Visitor, a denominational publication for Sunday Schools. In 1865 he moved to Nashville and the following year, in addition to his other responsibilities, became the editor of the church's weekly newspaper, The Christian Advocate, with headquarters in Nashville.45

The 1846 General Conference gave him another task, serving on the Hymn-Book Committee. With his considerable knowledge of Wesleyan hymns, Summers was elected chair. The new hymnal, published in 1847, reorganized the hymns in different categories from the Methodist Episcopal

Waugh of the Baltimore Conference appointed him to Buenos Aires and Bishop Andrew of the Mississippi Conference appointed him to Galveston. Bishop Waugh gave him his choice and Summers went to Texas. The major portion of the biographical information in this paper comes from Fitzgerald's biography. Information concerning committees on which Summers served also comes from the Alabama Conference minutes and the General Conference minutes. Wade, 271, citing Harmon, also reports that Summers was a missionary to Buenos Aires. Missions continued to be a life-long interest of Summers. He chaired the Missions Committee of the Alabama Conference, see “Minutes of the Alabama Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South — December 3, 1856” and “Minutes of the Alabama Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South — December 3, 1858.” He also served on the Board of Missions for the denomination; see S. T. Anderson, “Introduction,” Missions (Nashville, TN: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1864). The Board of Missions of the M. E. Church, South, May 10, 1873, offered $100 for “the best essays setting forth the principles, facts and obligations for missions.” Bishop Keener, Bishop McTyeire and T. O. Summers formed the Committee of Adjudication. Anderson was one of the winners.

45 Fitzgerald, 408.
Church Hymnal. He also did extensive research to determine the original texts and included many that he considered to be consistent with the accepted doctrinal standards.\textsuperscript{46} His involvement with hymns continued the rest of his life. He compiled the 1851 \textit{Songs of Zion}, a supplement to the hymnal, which he helped revise and enlarge in 1873. He was also instrumental in the 1874 revision of \textit{A Collection [of] Hymns and Tunes for Public, Social, and Domestic Worship}.

In his various roles, Summers played an influential part in liturgical and sacramental reform in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.\textsuperscript{47} He enthusiastically supported more frequent celebration of the Lord’s Supper.\textsuperscript{48} For example, in the 1859 \textit{Quarterly Review} which he edited, Summers in his review of a new book, \textit{The Lord’s Supper} by Samuel Luckey, a northern Methodist,\textsuperscript{49} wrote:

\begin{quote}
We are alarmed at the startling fact as it presents itself in some sections of our own communion [MEC, South]. In some Churches the Lord’s Supper is rarely administered
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{46}Fitzgerald, 166–168. Dr. Whitefoord Smith who was a member of the committee cites another criteria for editing. A line of one of Watts’ hymns was changed from “He dies the heavenly lover dies,” to “He dies the Friend of sinners dies,” (emphasis mine). Smith states, “Dr. Summers was bitterly opposed to the use of such erotic expressions.” Gentility and reason were also underlying criteria for editing choices. Fitzgerald writes that the hymnbook was also free from, “inferior and faulty poetry as such—what is vague and mystical on the one hand, and puerile and weakly sentimental on the other,” 150.

\textsuperscript{47}L. Edward Phillips, 241–253. This article gives a more complete treatment of all of T. O. Summers, liturgical contributions.

\textsuperscript{48}Wade, 276.

\textsuperscript{49}Wade, 273. Wade notes that Samuel Luckey, a Methodist Episcopal Church minister, was editor of the \textit{Quarterly Review}, the \textit{Christian Advocate} and \textit{Journal} in New York. In the “Preface” to \textit{The Lord’s Supper}, (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1859), 3–5, Luckey states that one of the reasons for writing this book is:

\begin{quote}
As a means of grace eminently adapted to advance believers in piety and holiness, the primitive disciples of Christ devoutly observed it [the Lord’s Supper] as a part, and the principal part, of their service every time they met for worship; and no violence on the part of their enemies, not even the terrors of martyrdom, could induce them to neglect it. But it is not so now. Many members of churches make it a matter of mere convenience, rather than a principle and duty, whether they observe the ordinance or not. It evidently has so slight a hold upon the consciences and feelings of the masses of Church members in general, that the moral power it was designed to exert, and did exert in primitive times, is realized to only a very small extent, if realized at all, in edifying the body of Christ. . . . Since the commencement of the great revival which has spread over the country, many who have by means of it been brought to a knowledge of God have not connected themselves with any Church, and seem to have settled down in the opinion that they can serve God as acceptably, and be as useful in promoting the cause of Christ, in neglect of the ordinances which he has commanded all his followers to observe, as by observing them. Thus remaining outside the fold. . . . These unsuspecting wanderers, who disregard the voice of the good Shepherd, and refuse or neglect to come into the fold at his bidding, need instruction and admonition to rescue them from the dangers to which they are exposed.
\end{quote}
except on Quarterly-meeting occasions. According to our standard authors, and the heretofore almost universal usage of Methodism, the communion should be celebrated at least once a month in every congregation where it can conveniently be done.\textsuperscript{50}

A new form of ministry began in 1874 when he was appointed the head of Systematic Theology at Vanderbilt University. There he developed lectures organized around the Twenty-five Articles of Religion, the theological foundation used by John Wesley for Methodism. These were edited and published after his death by J. J. Tigert.\textsuperscript{51}

Summers through his editing of the hymnals, through his editorials in the \textit{Methodist Quarterly Review, South}, through his work on the Committee on Revisals, and his teaching at Vanderbilt, sought to champion the Wesleyan love of ritual and the importance of celebrating the Lord's Supper. His expressed purpose in publishing his \textit{Commentary on the Ritual}, was to document the scriptural basis of "these beautiful, appropriate and impressive forms."\textsuperscript{52} He was convinced that ministers did not use the rituals because they did not appreciate their scriptural foundation. Summers utilized every avenue available to him to increase the church's appreciation of Wesley for nearly 47 years.

Many factors coalesced, each contributed to the growing importance of the Lord's Supper: the adoption of a standard theology presented in Watson's \textit{Institutes}, the changing cultural role of the cities and towns with the increasing level of education, and the influence of respected personalities. These factors were all reflected in the 1866 \textit{Discipline}'s stronger emphasis on the Lord's Supper. A more subtle factor was the influence of Wesleyan thought through the hymns. One reason Summers recounted for becoming a Methodist was the Wesleyan psalmody which contains "orthodoxy, spirituality, culture, and zeal. . . ."\textsuperscript{53} Although the American Methodists lost the Wesleyan regard for the sacraments, they retained the hymns rich in Wesleyan theology.

One of many examples is the hymn "Jesus at whose supreme command" by Charles Wesley, which appeared in various forms in the 1802 \textit{Methodist Pocket Hymn Book}, the 1821 \textit{Collection of Hymns for the use of the Methodist Episcopal Church}, the 1847 Methodist Episcopal Church South, Hymnal, and the 1849 Methodist Episcopal Church Hymnal. In this hymn much of the Wesleyan eucharistic theology is present: a commemoration of Christ's sacrifice done in obedience to Christ, a covenantal


\textsuperscript{52}T. O. Summers, \textit{Commentary on The Ritual of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South} (Nashville, TN: A. H. Redford, Agent, for the M. E. Church, South, 1873), 7-8.

seal, a mystical union with Christ through his body and blood which nourishes the soul, a mediation of God's grace and life. This theology would permeate the church as the hymn was sung.\textsuperscript{54}

1 Jesus at whose supreme command,
We now approach to God.
Before us in thy vesture stand,
Thy vesture dipt in blood.

Obedient to thy gracious word,
We break the hallow'd bread,
Commemorate our dying Lord,
And trust on thee to feed.

2 Now, Saviour, now thy self reveal,
And make thy nature known,
Affix the sacramental seal,
And stamp us for thine own.

The tokens of thy dying love,
O let us all receive!
And feel the quick'ning Spirit move,
And sensibly believe.

3 The cup of blessing blest by thee,
Let it thy blood impart;
The bread thy mystic body be,
And cheer each languid heart.

The grace which sure salvation brings,
Let us herewith receive,
Satiate the hungry with good things,
The hidden manna give.

4 The living bread sent down from heaven,
In us vouch safe to be;
Thy flesh for all the world is given,
And all may live by thee.

\textsuperscript{54}Paul E. Sanders, "An Appraisal of John Wesley's Sacramentalism in the Evolution of Early American Methodism," (Ph.D. dissertation, Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1954), 447-450 has a comprehensive discussion on the Wesleyan hymns and their influence. Sanders focuses on the period from 1792 to 1844 and is comprehensive in his discussion of this period. However, he focuses his theological discussion of the Lord's Supper primarily from Adam Clarke's \textit{A Discourse on the Nature, Design, and Institution of the Holy Eucharist} (NY, 1812), 440-445. A stronger case could be made for the inclusion of Watson's theology since it became available during this time. Clarke's text was not listed on any of the courses of study which all included Watson.
Now, Lord, on us thy flesh bestow,
And let us drink thy blood,
Till all our souls are fill'd below,
With all the life of God.  

Watson's Institutes explained the theology hidden in the hymns sung by Methodists and underscored their significance. This underlying foundation facilitated liturgical reform for change.

T. O. Summers loved liturgy and the sacraments and worked to share that love with others. This is obvious from the books and articles he published over a long lifetime. Yet none of the nineteenth century biographers acknowledged in any way this aspect of his ministry. His preaching, the churches he served, and his conference and general church assignments are praised, yet there is silence concerning his liturgical and sacramental contributions. Although he and others made some inroads to recover the richness of Wesley's sacramental theology, the free church revivalism planted so firmly by Asbury, would not allow the Wesleyan liturgical tradition to take root. This task begun by Summers, would remain for a later generation to complete.

55 "Jesus at whose supreme command," Hymn #221, A Collection of Hymns for the use of the Methodist Episcopal Church (New York: Published for the Methodist Episcopal Church by N. Bangs and J. Emory at the Conference Office, printed 1828), 202. This hymn appeared in the "Sacramental" section. It was Hymn CCXCV in The Methodist Pocket Hymn-Book (Philadelphia: Solomon W. Conrad, printed 1803), 273. It did not include stanza 4 and in stanza 2 "dying Lord" was "redeeming love." It was Hymn #265 in the 1849 Hymns for the use of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 161, appearing in the "Lord's Supper" section. Verses 1b and 4b were eliminated and "sacramental seal" in verse 2a appeared as "blessed Spirit's seal." It was Hymn #298 in the 1847 Collection of Hymns for Public, Social, and Domestic Worship (Richmond: John Early for the Methodist Episcopal Church, South), 217. It suffered from T. O. Summers' theological editing since verses 1b, 2a, 3a, and 3b were eliminated.