The year was 1823. Calvinism was entrenched in Massachusetts, and in most towns of any size there was a settled tax-supported minister. Methodists were regarded as a despised group of intruders upon a dignified and established order. There was neither a Methodist school of higher education nor Methodist newspaper published in America. The Baptists, intruders themselves, but greater in number, had little use for Methodists, especially their system. The growing movements of Unitarianism, Universalism, and rationalism were likewise inhospitable to the small but growing denomination. This was the environment in which New England Methodism, with only 20,024 members and 128 effective preachers, was struggling when *Zion's Herald* was launched.

There is no record of who first proposed a newspaper, but it was an idea that was promoted by both clergy and laity throughout the fall of 1822. The first issue appeared January 9, 1823. The Rev. John R. Cotting was editor for the first nine months, but the first editorial was written by Gerritt Forbes, a Congregational layman in poor standing with his own denomination. The paper was to be "devoted to religion and moral subjects," and was to be

the professed advocate of a particular sect of Christians, whose humility, zeal, Christian forebearance and perseverance to the cause of truth, have drawn from the real followers of the Redeemer the warmest panegyrics, while they have been stigmatized with opprobrious epithets by the lukewarm and nominal Christian. Their unaffected piety, their warmth in religious matters, their self-devotedness, their voluntary assumption and cheerful bearing of the cross, have all been branded with fanaticism and enthusiasm, and their followers have been accused to being infected with 'a zeal without knowledge.'

The paper was to detail missionary efforts of all denominations, point out "devious paths" and "abomination," and include selected secular news. There was to be no place for "party controversy and electioneering" while at the same time an effort would be made "to inculcate the principles of freedom and equal rights, and the duties of citizens towards those who are, under the providence of God, appointed to rule over us." The name

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of the paper was obvious. Zion, meaning "a monument raised up," was the citadel of Jerusalem, eventually symbolizing God's reign in the hearts of Israel. In Christian allegory the church was the new Zion. A "herald" was a messenger who proclaimed and advocated. The initial subscription was $2.50 ($2.00 if paid in advance) and the price remained the same until 1921.

During its first months a conference committee managed the concerns of the paper. From the beginning every minister was considered an agent and was urged to get parishioners to subscribe. By the end of 1824 there were 2500 subscribers. Still, the paper was in constant financial straits. To keep the Herald going, appeals for more subscribers appeared regularly. A great effort was made in 1826 to sell the paper to the church's book agents in New York City, but after lengthy negotiations the proposal failed because the parties could not agree on valuation. By May of 1828 the paper, now edited by Forbes, was in severe financial difficulties. More than $10,000 in unpaid subscriptions had accumulated. In August the paper was sold to the book agents. The readers were informed that New York had a greater commercial market and thus more patronage was possible. On the masthead would appear the title Christian Advocate and Journal and Zion's Herald. Barber Badger, a layman who edited the Herald for three years before Cotting and Forbes, was co-editor with Nathan Bangs.

However, many New England Methodists were unhappy about the merger and still felt a great need for their own journal. The first attempt came in October 1828 when the Gospel Balance appeared but was dissolved five months later. Then in October 1829 the New England Christian Herald was launched by the Rev. Aaron Lummus. A letter appeared in the January 1830 issue which expressed the attitudes of many:

The general sentiment and feeling among our people, especially in this region, in regard to a local paper, was too ardent, and strong, to be resisted.

The late Zion's Herald, in three or four years, gave the community at large more knowledge of us as a people than all the efforts of our preachers had done for thirty years. The influence of religious papers is felt in the community, and no Christian should be without one. . . No Methodist in New England, who is the head of a family, should be without your paper.  

On May 16, 1831, a momentous event occurred. The Boston Wesleyan Association was founded to establish a paper to disseminate Methodist doctrines and practices and to support Methodist institutions. In July the Association purchased the paper. Hereafter this dedicated group of responsible, fiscally conservative Christian laymen would control publication. On September 3, 1833, Zion's Herald reappeared in Boston, as a separate

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4 The meaning of the name has been carried in each issue of ZH since it became a supplement to the United Methodist Reporter.
5 New England Christian Herald, January 27, 1830, p. 66.
publication from the Advocate, and absorbed the New England Christian Herald. It would remain thus permanently, published to this day by the Boston Wesleyan Association.

The vision and tremendous financial support of these laymen were incalculable. In 1869 the laymen constructed a major building in Boston near the downtown, and then in 1913 the Association moved to more prestigious and better quarters on Copley Square and opened a gigantic Methodist headquarters. It was never the purpose of the Association to "make a profit" from the Herald but rather to support it financially. The rental income from the building supported the paper until 1941 when the entire subsidy was wiped out. For the better part of 110 years scores of publications went under. Because of the Boston Wesleyan Association the Herald survived and maintained both its quality of content and its evolving progressive looking appearance. During the major income producing years, 1888-1908, more than $50,000 was distributed to sponsoring conferences for the benefit of retired ministers and their families.⁶

Just as important to the entire future course of the paper, and thus its increasing influence, from the beginning these laymen always gave the editors absolute freedom of expression. Frequently the editors took stands on highly controversial matters—anti-slavery, equality of women, support of labor, support of the Negro, support of Chinese immigrants, support of conscientious objectors in World War II—even though this sometimes cut across the personal views of various members of the Association. But never in the entire history of Zion's Herald was there a shred of evidence that pressure was exerted on any editor to "back off" or "tone down" the editorial thrusts and direction of the paper. A paragraph from the annual meeting of the Association of 1896 expressed this succinctly:

T. W. Wentworth, the lay visitor from the East Maine Conference, said that he could not tell the editor how to make a paper. His theories might be sincere, but very impracticable. If the editor should come to him and tell him how to manage his law office or farm, he should suggest that it would be much more fitting for him to devote himself to his paper. He believed from what he heard that the Herald had a strong hold upon the people; they believe in the honesty, ability, aggressiveness and independence of its editor. He believed in a free lance; some people might not enjoy such editors, but as he read history, it was the free lance that laid truth bare, that bravely met exigences as they came, and that helped to mold a right and dominating public opinion.⁷

The importance of this editorial freedom to the effectiveness of Zion's Herald can never be overestimated. In 1921 Bishop Edwin Holt Hughes expressed this as well as anyone ever has in the entire history of the paper. Speaking about the "Unique Position of Zion's Herald," he said:

Zion's Herald occupies a unique and peculiarly favorable position. While it is essentially the product of New England and has the smack and tang of Yankeedom,

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it is not the organ of a section . . . it has never been provincial in its outlook and message. It has been the organ of the whole church . . .

When I listened to that excerpt that was read from *The Continent*, in which it was stated that a denominational paper was not free to oppose the plans and projects of the official leaders of the denomination, I thought how *Zion's Herald*, by its very independence had always opposed whenever it felt necessary to do so, the plans of officiodom in the church. Indeed, the greatest reform in Methodist polity in a half-century—the area system of episcopal supervision—was made possible when the entire episcopacy was against the innovation.

With a fine insight into the future, the *Herald* has ever been pioneering the way for reform . . . Its whole history has been one of remarkable freedom from those influences that oftentimes control the religious and secular press . . . and that freedom and independence must be maintained. There must be no interference with the sacred right of the editor to speak as a prophet of God rather than as the mouthpiece of men.

*Zion's Herald* is especially free from the dictates and demands of commercialism. It is not responsible to the Book Committee; it is not even responsible to the General Conference. There is no official body, outside the Wesleyan Association, which controls its policies . . . The *Herald* by virtue of its freedom is not obligated to bow down to either its subscribers or its advertisers . . . Its values are not measured by its deficits or by its profits, but by the free and untrammeled contribution that it makes to the thought of the church.8

Thus, throughout the years the *Herald* pursued a totally independent policy, the independent and free voice of Methodism. Whether critical or supportive, the editors and the laity of the Association maintained the highest degree of loyalty to Methodism and organized Christianity.

One of the greatest feuds in Methodist journalistic history followed the return of the paper to Boston. Beginning in 1873 and intensifying in the 1880s and 1890s, the *Advocate* and the *Herald* fought a furious verbal battle over which of the two was the older, and therefore truly the oldest existing Methodist publication in America. In a major editorial of January 1880 the *Advocate* contended that the *Herald*'s true date of continuity was not 1823 but 1833 when it returned to Boston. When *Zion's Herald* in 1873 celebrated its “semi-centennial,” the *Advocate* editor said that Dr. Daniel Curry, one of the great and honored men of New York Methodism, stated, “Let Boston have her tea party in peace; but it is the first time I’ve ever heard an old maid try to prove herself older than she is.”9 However, the crux of the matter for every editor of the *Herald* ever involved in the controversy, and especially Daniel Wise and Charles Parkhurst, was that the *Herald* never relinquished its name when it moved to New York. Every single issue carried the title *Christian Advocate and Journal* and *Zion's Herald*.10

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10See “The Magnanimous New York Advocate,” ZH, October 12, 1898, pp. 1296-1297, the ablest reply by Parkhurst, who also cites previous editors.
The earliest issues of the *Herald* were little more than "doctrinal tracts." Editorials and articles abounded with attacks upon Calvinist doctrine and defense of Wesleyan theology, as the *Herald* espoused an earnest declaration of universal redemption and an impartial offer of grace to every sinner willing to embrace it. For two decades the *Herald* and *The Puritan*, the journal of New England Congregationalism, fought many battles over polity and doctrine. From its inception *Zion's Herald* and the Baptists came to blows over many issues but particularly infant baptism and the Methodist connectional system. The major Baptist publication of Massachusetts accused the Methodists of having framed a set of articles and a system of government that was not scriptural and of "virtually claim[ing] the right of legislating the affairs of the kingdom."11

From the beginning the *Herald* also waged a fierce battle against both Unitarianism and Universalism. When in July 1828 the *Olive Branch and Christian Inquirer*, published by Abner Kneeland, contained a lengthy article which detailed the "influence of superstition and enthusiasm" of Methodists,12 the editors of the *Herald* thereafter targeted Kneeland for periodic attacks. Probably more editorials and articles in the *Herald* attacked Unitarianism than any other denomination during the whole of the nineteenth century concerning questions of the miracles, the divinity of Christ, supernaturalism, sin, and salvation. This criticism of Unitarianism continued well into the 1920s. Editor Charles Parkhurst (1888-1919) probably was more antagonistic of President Eliot of Harvard than any other single person. Every speech Eliot gave on liberalism was denounced vigorously by Parkhurst. The editor considered Harvard so full of Unitarianism that he deplored the action of the Boston University Trustees in 1915 which allowed graduate students in their last year of the Theological School to take two courses at Harvard. He warned of the "[in]advisable[ity] of having men in the formative period of their theological career under the influence of the peculiar theological atmosphere which admittedly predominates at Harvard. . . . What would our Methodist fathers say to such a combination?"13

During the formative period of the *Herald*, the editors feared Roman Catholicism and were in the vanguard of the Protestant attacks on Catholicism. The Maria Monk saga, *Foreign Conspiracy in the West*, and other works were excerpted and praised. Of all the *Herald* editors, the Rev. Benjamin Kingsbury, Jr. (1834-1836), was the bitterest critic of Roman Catholicism. While he deplored mob violence, which led to the

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11 "Strictures on Methodism," *Christian Watchman*, December 4, 1830, p. 191, and December 24, 1830, p. 205. Also see "Difficulties of Methodism," *Christian Watchman*, April 30, 1841, p. 70. ZH's most appropriate answer was "No Logic," ZH, May 5, 1841, p. 2.

12 *Olive Branch and Christian Inquirer*, July 5, 1828, p. 117.

burning of the Ursuline Convent, he nonetheless concluded his editorial with the words: "Brethren! We are lost unless we rouse up! Remember one article in the Catholic creed is—'No faith with heretics!' Let us pray, preach, and write against Popery until it is destroyed." For Kingsbury, Roman Catholicism was "sanctified infidelity," as well as "a child of the Devil," and Abel Stevens labeled a convert to Catholicism a "pervert." The three great editors after the Civil War, Gilbert Haven, Bradford Pierce, and Charles Parkhurst attacked Catholicism regularly. They believed that Catholicism was out to destroy the public school system and that the papacy was so violently anti-democratic that no Catholic could ever embrace true republican government in America. The Herald and the Jesuit battled each other for years. One of the bitterest editorials to appear in the Jesuit was an attack upon Kingsbury, which concluded that "to expect candor, honor, or decorum to pervade the columns of the Herald would be to expect that poisoned reptiles could resist balm and honey, as they crawl over the vultures which they blast and smear with their malignant mucus." Herald editor Lewis Hartman (1920-1944) was always concerned over state-church issues involving Roman Catholicism. Truman's appointment of a personal envoy to the Vatican and the dogma of Mary's assumption brought forth from Emory Bucke (1944-1952) some of the strongest of Zions Herald's religious editorials in the World War II and post-war eras. The apostrophe was dropped from the paper's name from October 1936 to December 1970.

It may well be that no publication in America was more violently anti-Mormon than the Herald. In the entire history of the paper only two sentences of approval or praise of Mormonism can be found. Parkhurst in 1898, while condemning the movement and predicting its disappearance, admitted that "it was strong in its leaders, strong in its knowledge of the immense advantages of irrigation, strong in its executive ability. . . ." In 1939 an article cautiously praised the "verve" but "not the method" of Mormon missionaries, "and of course not the content—but certainly the zeal!"

An early issue of the New England Christian Herald, absorbed by Zion's Herald, called Mormonism a "barefaced and outrageous delusion . . . silly and egregiously absurd." For eighty-eight years scores of

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16"Popery, a Child of the Devil," ZH, June 24, 1835, p. 98.
17"Another Pervert," ZH, November 10, 1847, p. 179.
19See e.g., "Roman Catholicism and the Presidency," ZH, April 6, 1927, p. 422; "Protest the Vatican Relationship," ZH, December 6, 1944, p. 774; and "Hail Mary, Mother of Jesus," ZH, August 23, 1950, p. 791.
editorials and articles castigated the sect. Charles Parkhurst, in one of his last and strongest editorials in the *Herald*, denounced the Mormons as "a menace to Christian Democracy—It is necessary to bring this sect into step with Christianity and modern ideals." The focal point for most of these years had been the doctrine of polygamy, described, for example, as "a degredation," "a Sodom-like abomination," and "a hideous deformity." However, Parkhurst centered most of his attacks in his final editorial upon "the slavish obedience of members of the church to the despotic rule of a political priesthood." There is no record in the files of the *Herald* that any Mormon ever wrote replies to the paper’s multitude of attacks.

The two greatest issues with which Methodism wrestled internally during the first thirty-seven years of the *Herald*’s existence (other than the split of the Methodist Protestants over lay representation) were theological education and slavery. The dynamic leadership and influence of *Zion’s Herald* in these two matters was enormous.

Originally the *Herald* opposed theological training for the ministry. The General Conference of 1820 had passed a resolution supporting the proposition that each annual conference have a seminary of learning, meaning an academy for young people, including those for the ministry, not a graduate theological school. The *Herald* vigorously supported this stance and renewed its support of Wesleyan Academy, which had already been founded at Wilbraham, Massachusetts. Graduate theological training was another matter. In March 1826 the paper gave its endorsement to a Philadelphia article: "... it is certain that we, as a church, have never been the advocates or friends of Theological Seminaries ... we believe they are not essential to qualify men for the gospel ministry ... there is no discrepancy of opinion among us ... Our theological schools are only to be found in the closet, with the student on his knees." Six months later editor Badger wrote that "books" are "seducers of college life" and that while "Divinity colleges, in some measure, may counteract the evil" nonetheless "it is certainly a waste of time to spend three years unlearning what has been acquired in four." A week later the editor wrote that "the lovely youth, who would acceptably serve at the altar," unlike lawyers, politicians, and physicians, "must be kept far from the unholy influences of worldly associations." When the New England Conference established a society in 1834 to help fund the education of young men and women...

23“The Threat from the West,” ZH, February 12, 1919, p. 207.
24See, e.g., “Degradation of the Mormons,” ZH, December 14, 1853, p. 332; and “Editorial Comments,” ZH, October 17, 1883, p. 332, and January 6, 1886, p. 4.
25“The Threat from the West,” ZH, February 12, 1919, p. 207.
27“College Education,” ZH, September 20, 1826, p. 38.
28“College Education,” ZH, September 27, 1826, p. 49.
for missionary work, it was clearly stated in the *Herald*: "It is not the design of the society, let it be understood, to give their beneficiaries a theological education." 29

That fall LaRoy Sunderland, a member of the New England Conference, shook the Methodist Church. In an essay published in the *Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review*, he forced the Methodists to face reality as he made the first coherent and powerful plea for theological seminary training. In a previous work, it has been shown that Sunderland is the true father of Methodist theological education. 30 In December the *Herald* modified its original position and declared that "any man going into the ministry should obtain as much of an education as is consistent with his conscience and circumstances. . . . The amount of the matter is we are in favor of both modes of obtaining an education." 31 By the summer of 1838 the *Herald* had thrown its full weight behind the idea of theological training. Editor William Brown (1836-1840), a layman, heartily concurred with the New England Conference Committee on Education: "The necessity of an educated ministry in the future operations of the Church needs no demonstration." 32 A year later in the most forceful editorial yet, Brown hailed the call for a theological school in New England:

> We hail the project as a most noble enterprise—an enterprise destined to confer immeasurable benefits upon the Methodist Episcopal Church, and upon the cause of Christ. It will cost a good deal of money, but cannot we do anything but small things? . . .

> What was once a suitable preparation for the office of the gospel ministry has ceased to be so now. Times have changed. A new order of things has sprung up. . . . 33

The issue was now joined. The *Western Christian Advocate* attacked the *Herald* and the New England Conference for proposing a "School of the Prophets." While it would "not oppose theological education," nonetheless said the western journal, it is "our full conviction that a Theological Seminary will be only evil . . . and will greatly injure our schools and colleges all over the land." 34 The editor of the *Herald* replied that New England was only asking to employ its own methods of helping young men prepare themselves and was not trying to impose it upon the entire church. The *Herald* urged the western Methodists to take a position that the exigences of the cause in the West did not require a theological seminary rather than to cast aspersions of evil upon New England and

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32"The Convention and the Theological Seminary," *ZH*, April 17, 1839, p. 63
33"Theological Seminary," *ZH*, May 29, 1839, p. 86, citing the *Western Christian Advocate*. 
theological schools in general. The admonition was ignored. The Advocate editor replied that, "it is, verily, marvelous that any Conference should attempt such serious innovations on the economy of the Methodist Episcopal Church." Declaring a fear that it indicated a departure from "pure, evangelical religion" and was "bold and unconstitutional," the western editor concluded by saying, "For the present, however, we will ascribe it to the indiscretion of its advocate." A month later the western editor proclaimed the Herald guilty of being unscriptural and of supporting "ultraism" in the church for its support of theological education. The Herald editor then questioned, but received no reply, as to what the western Methodists would say if the late revered Dr. Wilbur Fisk were head of such an institution in which the "Pure, precious, scriptural doctrines of our own church" were taught.

Three years later in April 1841 the new Herald editor, Abel Stevens (1840-1852), wrote that the issue was now in abeyance, a condition to be expected, perhaps even desired. This would give the people time to think and to let prejudices abate. Therefore, he wrote, "We should keep it before the church. We should be collecting resources and following the way as it opens." A month later in his most forceful pronouncement on the matter, Stevens declared, "It is a project that must be prosecuted . . . it is . . . next to the purity of our doctrines and discipline, our great hope of the future."

For the next four years, as the church agonized and then split over slavery, the school issue was still in limbo. In 1845 Stevens wrote his first editorial in four years on the subject: "We cannot conceive of the church going five years longer without some more extensive provision of this kind." When the Boston school became a reality that year, Stevens hailed the final victory declaring that Zion's Herald had maintained that Methodists could provide a system suited to its peculiarities. Wesley, Adam Clarke, and others had been enlightened on this subject, he said. "Our leading minds have contemplated such a system," Stevens wrote, "The sweeping denunciation of all theological education which some among us utter, was not the language of our fathers." Three years later Stevens would write:

The times change, thank God! The men who struggled alone for a great improvement do not have to struggle forever . . . opposition fades away . . . In a few years theological education (on Methodist plans) will be approved through all the church; leading men will forget that they opposed it . . . all hands will be raised to vote it glorious . . . and heretical New England (God bless her) will again be found right side up.

35 Ibid.
37 "Zion's Herald and Theological Seminaries," ZH, October 2, 1839, p. 158.
In 1854 editor Daniel Wise (1852-1856) applauded the plans for a Methodist theological school in Chicago, and three years later he noted that “theological schools are now fairly initiated in the Methodist Episcopal Church. The pangs of their origin are over. They are now to be nursed and shaped.”43 Gilbert Haven (1867-1872) over a decade later urged every young man to go to seminary one or more years. “If he does,” wrote the editor, “he will never regret it; if he does not, he will be sensible of his errors and loss in all his future career.”44 Zion’s Herald had been a lone voice, a solitary beacon for many years. It had brought about the change in the thinking of American Methodism.

The greatest issue which the Herald faced in its first three and a half decades was the same that faced American Methodism—slavery. Here again, the influence of the paper upon the church was enormous.

The 1820s and early 1830s were marked by relative calm. Then in a major editorial in July 1834 editor Kingsbury succinctly set forth his position on slavery. Quoting the Bible, Wesley, Coke, and Clarke, Kingsbury said that the Herald was “laying a broad and firm foundation upon which to base what remarks we may now, or shall hereafter make upon the subject.” Then, while stating that there were good men in the South, many of whom disliked the situation regarding slavery, Kingsbury declared that the slave traffic “is the most heartless, practical, and cruel [thing] that ever cursed a civilized nation.”45 Disregarding the advice of the bishops and the admonition of the General Conference, the Herald now opened its columns to a free discussion of the issue. It was the first and for a long time the only denominational paper to do so.46

The following year, 1835, saw the explosion. A veritable stream of articles and letters began to appear in the Herald, including two special issues, “The Appeal” and the “Counter Appeal.” On the activist side were men like Horton, Scott, Sunderland, and True, opposed by the “Gradualists,” men like Whedon and Bangs. In reply to Whedon’s inquiry if Zion’s Herald was taking an abolitionist stand, Kingsbury declared, “We would state explicitly that we design to maintain upon this question an editorial neutrality—at least for the present.”47 Kingsbury exhorted: “Calm, be calm brethren! . . . Argument—sober ARGUMENT—

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38"Theological Education," ZH, April 28, 1841, p. 66.
40"Theological School," ZH, January 15, 1845, p. 10.
41"The School of the Prophets," ZH, September 24, 1845, p. 154.
42"Theological Education," ZH, August 2, 1848, p. 122.
43"Theological Schools," ZH, July 15, 1857, p. 110.
44"Theological Education," AH, July 8, 1869, p. 319.
46See, e.g., “Zion’s Herald Semi-Centennial,” ZH, January 23, 1873, p. 26; and “What It Has Stood For,” ZH, September 7, 1898, p. 1126.
47“Reply to Whedon,” February 18, 1835, p. 35.
invulnerable ARGUMENT, is what the public demands. The less sarcasm the better . . . LOVE ONE ANOTHER.” In December the Herald had a lengthy editorial setting forth the entire slavery controversy. Criticizing the Christian Advocate and Journal and other Methodist papers for publishing only anti-abolitionist articles and for trying to close the Herald to discussion, Kingsbury condemned all mobs but said “we shall steadily resist all efforts to deprive us of our right to speak. . . .”

In January 1836 Sunderland launched Zion’s Watchman in New York. Other than The Liberator, the Watchman became the most violent anti-slavery publication in America. After eight years of strife and trials before the bishops, Sunderland left the church, having played a significant role in the eventual rupture of the church in 1844-1845. As events progressed the Herald had little sympathy with the Watchman because of Sunderland’s growing anti-episcopal tone.

By 1838 the Herald had abandoned all neutrality. When the Georgia Conference in January passed a resolution declaring that slavery “is not a moral evil,” the new editor William Brown responded that the New England Conference had the right to pass a resolution declaring “slavery to be a great evil, in accordance with the DISCIPLINE.” A month later Brown made a blistering attack on the New York Advocate for its total silence on the Georgia Resolution. That silence, wrote Brown, “is a source of deep mortification and grief to many thousands of our members, and is doing much, in our opinion, subversive of the dearest interests of our country . . . of immutable principles of justice, freedom, and truth.”

Two weeks later, having received many letters on the matter, Brown condemned all northerners who by their neutrality, if not sympathy, were abetting the southern cause, and he held them accountable “for the un-Christian, ruffian and murderous principles which they have infused in the church.”

The Herald was now in danger of becoming extinct. Throughout 1838, 1839, and 1840, many discontinued their subscriptions as many strongly abolitionist articles appeared in the paper. By early 1840 a “Radical-abolitionist” movement was forming, convinced that the Herald and the church were not yet radical enough. It was at this moment in December 1840 that Abel Stevens became the editor. There is little doubt that Stevens, later a great historian and bishop of Methodism, saved the Herald but also committed the paper more than ever in these trying times to the unity

48.”Slavery,” ZH, March 11, 1835, p. 28.
49.”Slavery,” ZH, December 30, 1835, p. 206.
51“Georgia Conference and Slavery,” ZH, January 24, 1838, p. 15.
of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In his first editorial Stevens told his readers bluntly that the discussion on slavery was not to be so extensive that it would characterize the *Herald* as a tract on the slavery issue. "The *Herald* is primarily, an organ of Methodism."\(^{54}\)

By 1843 Stevens was personally committed in the paper to the utter destruction of slavery in the church. He wrote: "Let us never utter another seeming apology! To every slaveholder, whether within or without the church, let us say—Repent. . . . May he speedily separate that church from all unhallowed connection with slavery."\(^ {55}\) When Horton, Scott, and Sunderland formed a separate movement, Stevens deplored this development, declaring that Methodists must adhere to the church and protest slavery vigorously from within. According to Stevens these "ultras" in seceding were sacrificing their enormous potential influence and leadership. Had these men stood up for the church, determined not to desert it, but to drive slavery out of it, then, said Stevens, "they would have become our heroes, dominant and laureled," recognized as bonafide Methodists and backed by all New England Methodists until victory would be won. But now, the tragedy of it all, said Stevens, was that they "turned the war from slavery to Episcopacy."\(^ {56}\) Thus it was, when the schism between northern and southern Methodism finally occurred in 1845, *Zion's Herald* and New England Methodists like Abel Stevens were recognized as having been the greatest forces in the church in the anti-slavery movement and yet at the same time having an absolute commitment to the integrity of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Thereafter, the *Herald* attempted to be the conscience of Methodism. Editor G. O. Haven (1856-1863) greeted Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation with, "Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."\(^ {57}\) When the war was over no man in northern Methodism fought for the rights of the Negro more than did Gilbert Haven. He was a militant proponent of the expansion of the Methodist Episcopal Church into the south in order to reach blacks, even to absorb the southern church if necessary. His frequent editorials castigated all of Methodism for its "caste system." "Build up the churches on Christ, not color," he wrote.\(^ {58}\) In 1872 Haven called for the election of a black bishop which he believed would be a "great deed for Christ, for humanity, for the church."\(^ {59}\) That would not finally be achieved until 1920.

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\(^{54}\) "Editorial," *ZH*, December 9, 1840, p. 206.  
\(^{55}\) "Editorial," *ZH*, February 15, 1843, p. 43.  
\(^{57}\) "The Proclamation," *ZH*, October 1, 1862, p. 158.  
With regularity the *Herald* challenged the southern church leaders to protest the lynchings and discrimination throughout the south, and the files of the *Herald* are filled with editorials and replies of southern critics who felt neither the *Herald* nor northerners in general could truly understand the southern situation. Not as much was said in the *Herald* about more subtle patterns of segregation in the north. But the riots of 1917 in Boston and St. Louis were a challenge. Said editor Parkhurst: "Shall we fight for [human freedom] abroad and deny it at home?"60

Throughout the lengthy discussions and meetings over unification, especially from 1916 to 1924, which failed, *Zion’s Herald*, at first optimistic about the prospects, never wavered in its commitment that “the Negro must have his full rights” and be an integral part of the church.61 Editor Lewis O. Hartman, who voted against unification because it included the creation of the Central Jurisdiction, told the readers of the *Herald* that “the Negro membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church huddled together in a separate jurisdiction [is] like the slaves in their little cabins on the great plantations of the South in the pre-war days.”62 After unification he and Emory Bucke in frequent editorials attacked the racially segregated jurisdictional system, hoping to see it obliterated and Methodism become whole and one. When the Supreme Court ruled that segregation was unconstitutional in 1954, *Herald* editor J. Tremayne Copplestone (1953-1955) wrote “Hallelujia,” and called it “one of the historic turning points of social history.” Then, in the tradition of all past editors of the *Herald*, Copplestone turned his wrath upon the church for the evil remaining therein: “Jim Crow is losing his standing in the labor union, in employment, in government, in art, in the military service, and in education. But nobody should feel too bad for him. When he is turned out of other quarters, he can depend upon finding sanctuary in the Methodist Church.”63 That same year the *Herald*, without success, conducted a campaign to get the New England churches to sign a pact to the effect that they would accept any minister regardless of color, race, or national origin. When only 13 signed, Copplestone wrote, “As a result of their spiritual indolence, *Zion’s Herald* no longer prints the pact, as it has been doing, and thus gives up, disgusted if not disillusioned.”64

In the history of *Zion’s Herald* the years of the editorship of Bradford Pierce, (1872-1887) were, in his words, “a period of peace and growth . . . [and] no burden to bear.”65 In March of 1888 Charles Parkhurst

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62“*At the Door of Conscience,*” ZH, March 4, 1936, p. 219.
65“*Exit,*” ZH, December 28, 1887, p. 412.
became editor. During his tenure of 31 years he made the *Herald* into one of the most respected religious journals in America, one quoted widely by the secular press. Bishop H. M. DuBose of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South called Parkhurst "easily one of the three greatest Methodist editors on the American continent... a soulful friend and true co-worker in all efforts of construction and sectional reconciliation." The editor of the *Western Christian Advocate* said that Parkhurst,

had a grasp upon American Methodism and its problems that was not equaled by any other editor during much of his lifetime... He succeeded in making of his journal a voice that not only spoke for the section of the country which it immediately served, but was heard across the land where Christian leaders take pleasure in first-class religious journalism.

Other than slavery, the issue that greatly disturbed the church was the issue of evolution and German Higher Criticism, a struggle that occupied the editorship of Parkhurst throughout his entire tenure. Two years before Darwin published his earth shaking book, *The Origin of Species*, *Zion's Herald* called for the detailed study of science and said that it was "the best ally of religion." Yet it took the *Herald* some time to come to terms with Darwin. A tremendous number of articles and sermons can be found in the *Herald* in the 1870s attacking Darwin and evolution. Editor Gilbert Haven in 1872 called Darwin an "Atheist" and said that "infidelity and apeishness are acknowledged twins by their own parents." A decade later, however, Bradford Pierce praised Darwin's works as a "lasting monument," and both Pierce and Parkhurst would henceforth deplore only those scientists who constructed a materialistic universe from their findings.

The dispute over Moses' authorship of the Pentateuch was the center of the early storm although the controversy would later widen considerably into New Testament criticism. The shock waves reverberated throughout Protestantism and Methodism was not immune. The *Herald* very quickly came to grips with the matter, and therein lay another of the journal's great contributions to Methodism. Dr. Edward Mills, editor of the *Pacific Christian Advocate*, expressed the tremendous significance of the *Herald* to the church during this crisis:

> Scientific research in biology and Biblical criticism profoundly affected popular thinking from 1870 on. The apologetic of an earlier day no longer sufficed. A new bridge had to be built and that without interrupting traffic... It is forever to the credit of Charles Parkhurst that in a period of transition he set himself to the task of furnishing guidance to the guides. To this end he printed in the columns of *Zion's Herald* the assured results of modern scholarship and interpreted them from the viewpoint of progressive conservatism.

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66“Tributes to a Great Editor,” ZH, March 9, 1921, p. 301.

67Ibid., p. 302.

Symposiums with leading ministers, articles by great scholars like Borden Parker Bowne and Hinckley Mitchell, and frequent editorials by Parkhurst championed the new thought patterns and repeatedly called for calm and for a realization that the new scholarship was not destroying the Bible. The Herald in its influential educational efforts stressed that this new scholarship was actually making the Bible more intelligible and proving its divine truths in the light of scientific findings. In regard to all of these scholars, wrote Parkhurst, "faith depends on the Bible, not on clouds and mists, nor on an anthill."72 "We do not want to have Methodism pilloried before the world," he wrote in 1900 in one of his most important editorials, "as afraid of the truth, as afraid of investigation." One of the worst things that could possibly happen, he concluded, would be to have "our ecclesiastical authorities, who are not authorities in theological scholarship, stampeded by the notion that they must do something for the honor of God and the defense of the faith into rushing violently down steep places of illiterate absurdity."73

However, Parkhurst would have absolutely no part of what he called "radical, destructive higher critics" who abandoned belief in the virgin birth and the physical resurrection of Christ, the miracles of Christ, and supernaturalism. Frequent and thundering editorials flowed from his pen defending these doctrines which he considered the foundations of Christianity and historical Methodist orthodoxy. Only biblical inerrancy did he assault, and no approved articles ever appeared in the Herald in which a thesis even implied that these other doctrines had questionable validity. Moreover, in regard to all of the scholarship, Parkhurst urged caution and an open mind: "We are firmly persuaded," he wrote in 1898, "that everything vitally connected with our holy religion will be found untouched when conclusive results are reached."74

Throughout this period there were a great number of teachers, especially at theological schools, who were accused of heresy, and in some cases brought to trial. This matter was always a concern of the Herald on the one hand because of the questions of orthodoxy being raised and on the other because of the pursuit of the truth of the Bible as Parkhurst saw it and the integrity of the various institutions involved. This was especially true of anything that involved the "School of the Prophets" at Boston University and the long and historic relationship which the Herald obviously had to this theological seminary. Parkhurst especially deplored the heresy trial of Borden Parker Bowne at the annual conference in New

70"Darwin," ZH, April 26, 1882.
71"Tributes to a Great Editor," ZH, March 9, 1921, p. 302.
72"Calm and Constructive Criticism," ZH, June 3, 1891, p. 172.
73"On Making Truth a Heretic," ZH, April 18, 1900, p. 486.
74"Dr. Cheyne's Destructive Criticism," ZH, October 5, 1898, p. 1265.
York. The editor considered Bowne to be one of the greatest professors in the history of the university. During the period of the investigation of Bowne, Parkhurst’s editorials, articles by Bowne and tributes from former students appeared. His exoneration brought rejoicing to the Herald and to most everyone who had ever sat at the foot of Bowne in his long and distinguished academic career. The case of Hinckley Mitchell ended less happily. During the decade long ordeal of Mitchell, which began when a group of his students accused him of heresy, the Herald defended his scholarship. At this time the bishops had the power to reappoint men to the seminaries, a power which was removed in 1908. When Mitchell failed to be reappointed in 1905 despite two votes of confidence by the trustees of the university, Parkhurst did not condemn the bishops but stated, rather, that the basic cause was in no small manner the “personality [of Mitchell]—ingenuous, hearty, frank, and unrestrained, breaking out now and then in criticism of traditional notions and of prominent officials in the church . . . [which] produced a conviction he was not a safe teacher and guide for immature and undeveloped minds.”

Professor C. W. Pearson at Methodism’s Northwestern University, however, was another matter altogether, and Parkhurst called for his immediate resignation. The problem was, said Parkhurst, he had “discarded all the miracles recorded in the Bible and everything supernatural concerning the person and work of Jesus Christ.” While constructive higher criticism had been acceptable, continued Parkhurst, and “marked tolerance in opinion is granted and desired,”

... it is not according to the genius and spirit of Methodism to secularize its institutions of learning, or ‘to allow freedom to think and to teach’ to the extent of retaining men who can publish such views as Professor Pearson has deliberately given to the public. If this is the price to be paid for imitating Yale and Harvard, the Methodist Episcopal Church will not pay it. The Methodist Episcopal Church has a right to exist only as it believes and magnifies the supernatural in the Bible, especially in Jesus Christ and in the superhuman conversion and reformation of sin-tainted humanity. All its institutions of learning are founded upon a Divine Christ, and on this rock they must stand. Here no change or modification is expected, or will ever be allowed. When instructors can no longer conform to the faith which the church holds, let them withdraw, and then proclaim their personal views as freely as they wish. No one is compelled to remain in our pulpits or to teach in our institutions; but while any one chooses to do so, he is expected to be loyal to the great body of truth which the church cherishes.”

Modification in the strident defense of orthodoxy came in the 1920s. Lewis Hartman attacked both the Nebraska Conference and the North Indiana Conference for “heresy hunting.” When the North Indiana Con-

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75See, e.g., “Let the Facts Be Known,” ZH, October 7, 1903, p. 1269; and “The Bishops and Dr. Mitchell,” ZH, November 15, 1905, p. 1448. For the Herald’s attitude towards Bowne see, e.g., “Let the Facts Be Known,” ZH, October 7, 1903, p. 1269.

ference went after Professor of the Bible, Walter Bundy, of DePauw University, Hartman wrote, “Heresy hunting is responsible business, and those who engage in it should be able to show the best of credentials as to their fitness to pronounce judgment upon someone who differs from them theologically.”

Hartman likewise had no use for the fundamentalist crusade of William Jennings Bryan. Frequent articles and editorials appeared in the Herald at this time attacking Fundamentalism in general, biblical inerrancy and premillenialism in particular. “Mr. Bryan,” wrote Hartman, “labors under the delusion that he can save the Bible and the whole Christian movement by closing his mind.” When the Scopes trial ended, Hartman wrote, “Nothing in the history of this country since the persecution of witches in Salem has presented quite such a nauseating spectacle as the trial of John Thomas Scopes at Dayton, Tennessee.” On this note the Herald just about ended its concern over heresy and orthodoxy and centered its attention in the times ahead on the social, economic, and political issues as well as the problems unique to Methodism.

One additional great contribution of the Herald to American Methodism lay in its significant influence in the changes of Methodist polity. Reference has been made to Bishop Hughes’ assessment of the Herald’s critical role in the “greatest reform in Methodist polity in a half-century,” the area system of episcopal supervision. Parkhurst warned that the episcopacy was a good thing “if we do not have too much of it.” In 1890 the Herald for the first time in Methodist journalism spoke out against the “Ecclesiastical Politician,” “the most harmful and dangerous factor in the church.” On another occasion Parkhurst called the person who campaigned for the office of bishop a “hydra-headed monster.” The response of readers was very positive to these editorials, and Parkhurst repeatedly called for the election of men to the episcopacy solely because of their exemplary qualifications. He then called for “not more bishops but more bishop” and for a plan that would place each bishop “in the territory not far distant from his official residence” and that would get rid of the “miscellaneous, dissipating, and necessarily non-effective manner at present in vogue.”

However, by the 1920s the entire concept of the episcopacy was under attack, and a move to limit the term to eight years was underway. This was largely because of what was felt to be the inefficiency and incompetency.

78“Mr. Bryan Works Injury to the Bible,” ZH, March 22, 1922, p. 358.
80“The Number of Bishops,” ZH, June 5, 1895, p. 360.
81“Ecclesiastical Politics,” ZH, July 2, 1890, p. 212.
82“Kill It Now,” ZH, July 5, 1911, p. 840.
83“Not More Bishops But More Bishop,” ZH, March 1, 1911, p. 265.
of some bishops, a state which in itself had been brought about, in part no doubt, by the "ecclesiastical politics" the *Herald* had attacked for so long. Editor Lewis Hartman opposed the term limit vigorously at first and cautioned the church not to overturn the system that had worked so long and so well without careful study. If some were not measuring up, "may the responsibility not lie largely with those who elected them?" Hartman questioned. As Parkhurst had before him, Hartman called for a much closer examination and exacting requirements of candidates, "a strenuous opposition to self-seekers, a wide advertisement of every indication of machine politics." Finally, he concluded, "if a few of our bishops are failures, why charge the shortcomings to the whole group and then seek to revolutionize the system? Why not invoke the retirement clause and be courageous enough to enforce it?" For the next decade the *Herald* dealt repeatedly with the issue. Hartman continued vigorously to oppose the abolition of the episcopacy, but he challenged the General Conference to vote every four years on the effectiveness of every bishop of the church and to retire those with a two-thirds adverse vote. By 1930 Hartman endorsed the idea of a twelve year time limit with the privilege of re-election for another four years, which would make "for the advancement of genuine democracy." While the methodology the *Herald* proposed was never adopted and politics never ceased, the paper's defense of the episcopacy itself more than likely helped to still the voices of all those who wanted to dismantle the system.

A major change, however, was directly due to Hartman's efforts, as Joseph Washington, in his study of the social ideals of Hartman, has shown. This was the empowering in 1928 of the Central Missionary Conferences to elect their own bishops. The church at large feared they would make mistakes, but Hartman, acknowledging they might, nevertheless wrote, "This is part of the price that must be paid for all human progress—Are we to forget the vision of a victorious world-wide Christianity?" When the legislation was enacted, he viewed it as the most important piece of legislation since 1844.

Finally, in regard to polity, the *Herald* early favored lay representation in the General Conference and later annual conferences. No editorial that ever appeared in the *Herald* ever opposed it, either on grounds of principle or practicality. Likewise the editors, especially Parkhurst, spoke out strongly for women's representation. The *Herald* very early in its

84"What Shall We Do with the Episcopacy?," ZH, November 21, 1923, pp. 1486-1487.
89"Methodism Launches Its New World Policy," ZH, March 5, 1930, p. 293.
The more thoroughly 'organized' Methodism becomes, the more we need independent journals. Our future official paper will have to adjust itself to some of the wishy-washy compromises which our General Conference adopts as the attitude of Methodism...and it will be under extreme pressure to be tender about all the powerful boards and commissions. We need an independent *Herald*.91

The depression brought tremendous financial difficulties to the *Herald* as to so many periodicals. While scores of publishing ventures failed the *Herald* continued to survive due to the Wesleyan Association subsidy. Throughout the period there was expressed many times a greatly felt need for the paper's survival. One layman stated this succinctly when he wrote to the editor as unification became a reality:

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In 1941 the financial crisis became acute. As the real estate market worsened, the subsidy for the paper was eliminated. "*Zions Herald Associates*" was organized, and this support saved the paper. Still, as labor costs soared in the post-war era and many periodicals disappeared, the *Herald* cut back gradually in pages and then to a monthly, beginning in April 1955. In 1971 the paper was named *The Methodist Churchman continuing Zions Herald* with the title *Zion's Herald* restored in 1975. During these difficult years John Bryan was editor (1971-1977), the first black to be so honored. The *Herald* was filled with much ecumenical news, and Bryan's editorials frequently were penetrating and challenging in regard to the many issues confronting the society and the church. Bryan was followed by the Rev. T. C. Whitehouse (1977-1982) who held the paper together by a great deal of personal perseverance. In 1979 the paper was published as a supplement to the *United Methodist Reporter*. This, according to its present editor, is what restored the *Herald* to health.92

The current editor, since 1982, is Mrs. Ann Greene Whiting, the first woman editor in the history of the paper. Now under her leadership the *Herald* is still "independent," not a "house organ" for Boston Area Methodism. Still free to praise or criticize as the situation may warrant,
the paper remains absolutely loyal to the historic tradition of Zion’s Herald, “promoting the mission and ministry of the United Methodist Church in the Boston Area.”

Today the Herald’s readership is confined almost totally to New England. Perhaps many Methodists have never heard of the paper, but in the past century and a half the independent Zion’s Herald played a magnificently courageous and significant role in the history of American Methodism.

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93“Meet the New Editor,” ZH, March 1982, p. 4.