

"The Richmond Christian Advocate: 1832-1840"

By Joseph Mitchell *

THE METHODISTS of Virginia, who have been pioneers in many movements within the Church, gave early leadership to the development of the religious press. Since 1832, a paper has been published in Richmond, Virginia, under Methodist auspices. Though its name and legal ownership have changed more than a half dozen times, "Old Richmond," as it came to be affectionately known in the late eighteen-forties, has, with few interruptions in its weekly publication schedule, continued to bring news and views to the Methodists of Virginia, the South, and the nation.

"Old Richmond" was neither the first Methodist paper established in the United States nor the first religious paper published in Virginia. Its Methodist predecessors include *Zion's Herald* published in Boston in 1823; the *Wesleyan Journal* begun in Charleston, South Carolina in 1825; and *The Christian Advocate* started in New York in 1826. Some of its predecessors in Virginia were the short-lived *Virginia Religious Magazine* (Presbyterian, 1804-1807), the *Lynchburg Evangelical Magazine* (non-Sectarian, but "Wesleyan" in emphasis, 1810-1811), the *Lay-Man's Magazine* (Episcopalian, 1815-1816), and the longer-lasting *Religious Herald* (Baptist, 1828-1865).

The prospectus for a paper to be published under Methodist auspices in Richmond, Virginia, first appeared in some of the Virginia papers in December, 1831. It merely stated that certain members of the Methodist Episcopal Church proposed to publish a weekly Journal which would promote the interests of truth generally and of Methodism especially, and invited subscriptions. The name under which it was to be published was the *Richmond Evangelist*.

The first issue of this paper, which was now called *The Christian Sentinel*, appeared six months later, on June 8, 1832. Like most other papers of that day, the *Sentinel* was folio size, with six columns of print to each of its four pages. It was published every Friday morning "four doors above the Columbian Hotel, Cary Street, Richmond, Virginia" by Robert Nesbitt and James C. Walker, and edited by Ethelbert Drake. It cost \$2.50 per year, payable in advance.

What was this first issue like? It was a mixture of original material and articles copied from a number of contemporary journals;

* A member of the Virginia Conference, now serving as Campus Minister and Assistant Professor of Religion, Union College, Barbourville, Ky. Mitchell won the Ph.D. degree at Duke University in 1961. The subject of his dissertation was, "The Virginia Methodist Conference and Social Issues in the Twentieth Century."

it carried two paid advertisements and the Richmond market reports; it included a long statement from the editor and an even longer one from the publishers. On page one was a four-column excerpt from a speech on Methodist missions made by William A. Smith, pastor of the Methodist Church in Norfolk; an article entitled "Remarks on Modern Infidelity" by Robert Hall; and "A Dying Man's God" copied from the *Pastor's Journal*. On the inside were original articles on "How to Promote Revivals" and "To Serious Christians," and copied articles entitled "Wesleyan Missionary Society, South Africa," and "Colony of Free Blacks at Liberia." Fillers included notes on "Fire in Manchester," "Revival at Williamsburg," "To Excite Interest in Preaching," "Mr. Whitefield's Opinion of Mr. Wesley," "Sickness at Salisbury, North Carolina," and "New Steam Boat Patrick Henry." The publishers announced they would soon undertake job printing and needed an apprentice "of good moral habits, not over sixteen years of age."

Page four included an assortment of articles taken from such publications as *Christian Index*, *Essex Gazette*, *Quarterly Register*, *Temperance Recorder*, and *Hingham Gazette*; it printed two original poems, "The Stranger and His Friend," and "An Evening Hymn." The last article on the page, signed "E," which might have stood for Ethelbert Drake, told of a bishop who would not take a steamboat on Sunday, even though he had not seen his family in nine or ten months and could have saved two dollars on the fare, because to do so would be to violate the section of the *Discipline* on "The Profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work therein, or by buying or selling."

But why should such a paper be started by a group of Methodists in Richmond, Virginia in 1832? After all, there was an official paper of the Methodist Episcopal Church, *The Christian Advocate and Journal and Zion's Herald*, with a circulation of more than fifteen thousand as early as 1828; it carried news and articles of interest to all American Methodism. In addition, the Church looked with disfavor upon the publication of "local" papers, giving expression to its intent to publish only one paper for the whole Church by absorbing two such local papers, *The Wesleyan Journal* (Charleston, S.C.) and *Zion's Herald* (Boston, Mass.) into the body of the *Christian Advocate*, thus creating the awkward title under which this paper was published for five years. But these "local" Methodist papers continued to spring up all around the country; about the same time the *Sentinel* was started, four other papers were being published in various parts of the country: *The Georgia Christian Repertory* (Macon, Georgia); *The Maine Wesleyan Journal* (Portland, Maine); *The New England Herald* (Boston, Mass.), and *The Gospel Herald* (Lexington, Kentucky).

Some would claim that the sheer size of Methodism in America was the main cause of this publishing boom; certainly there is some truth in this claim, for by 1832 there were almost a half million Methodists in the United States, divided into twenty-one conferences stretching from Maine in the north to Georgia and Mississippi in the south and Missouri in the west. But size alone does not explain this outburst of printing; the main cause, it would seem, was the growing sectionalism which was sweeping the country. One paper, given not only the great distances which separated the Methodist in Mississippi from the Methodist in Maine, but also the great divergence in viewpoint, especially on slavery, could not be expected to satisfy all the people.

Of course, Ethelbert Drake, in his first editorial on the purpose of the *Sentinel* did not aspire to become a spokesman for the south. Rather, he said he intended to publish a paper devoted to matters of religious and moral character, providing the earliest intelligence of all matters connected with the Church of Christ. While disclaiming any desire to be sectarian (for two years "Methodist" did not appear in the title of the paper), Drake did say that he would be "particularly careful to disseminate those doctrines and experimental truths of the Holy Scriptures, as taught and published by the denomination of Christians called 'Methodists,' and which were so successfully preached, ably defended and supported by Wesley, Fletcher, and others, their sons in the Gospel. . . ." Drake also said that the *Sentinel* would provide a convenient place for printing the obituaries of the departed "saints" of the Church, something which a church paper published in far-off New York City could hardly be expected to do with any degree of fullness or regularity. In addition, the *Sentinel* would provide an opportunity for publicizing the newly-created institution of higher learning at Boydton, Virginia, Randolph-Macon College, of which Drake was one of the original trustees.

In keeping with these purposes the editor declared he would make truth his guide, love, both to God and man, his motto, and the good of all men his constant design and hope. Knowing that he would not be able to carry the editorial and reportorial responsibilities by himself, Drake appealed to the Methodists of the Virginia Conference (which at that time included most of North Carolina as well as Virginia) to contribute original matter to the *Sentinel*, "giving us at all times the interesting accounts of revivals of religion, memoirs of Christians, obituary notices, together with the progress of Bible, Missionary, Tract, Sunday School, and Temperance Societies, and any domestic, agricultural, literary or scientific improvements in our country." Showing some awareness of the rising tides of sectionalism and sectarianism, he promised to ex-

clude from his columns political and religious controversy not connected with the cause of truth, leaving "the noisy waters of contention and strife to those who are fond of stirring up the mud of human infirmity"; as for the *Sentinel*, it would glide "along upon the tranquil and limpid streams of evangelical truth 'following peace with all men and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.'"

Still another motive prompted the starting of the *Christian Sentinel* in 1832: the editor and publishers hoped to make money on it, not for themselves alone, but also for the married members of the Virginia Conference. Drake had good reason for being concerned about family men who were traveling elders in the Conference, trying to eke out a living on about \$200 a year; for he had once ridden with them, being forced to locate in 1826 because he simply could not support his family on the money he was receiving from the Church. The publishers of the *Sentinel* proposed to alleviate part of this suffering by turning over the profits from their paper to the Conference for distribution to such families. All the Conference had to do was to find one thousand persons who were willing to put up ten dollars annually for ten years; for each ten dollars the paper would be sent to four people. This would bring the circulation to 4,000, providing not only a salary for the publishers and editor, but resulting in a sizable profit which could be used to supplement the salaries of the married ministers. However, this plan was never put into operation because the thousand persons who would be willing to put up this much money were never found.

As long as Drake remained editor of the *Sentinel*, it was, to a large degree, non-controversial, and carried the sort of news and views which he had indicated it would publish, issue after issue being much like the first one. Each winter several columns would be devoted to the meeting of the Virginia Annual Conference, with occasional editorial comments about the important issues which were discussed and a complete listing of the appointments for the year. Each summer there was much news of camp meetings, those projected and those which had been successfully conducted. As the missionary outreach of the Methodist Episcopal Church began to develop, Virginia Methodists were told of the work among the Indians, of the sailing of missionaries for far places, and of the outstanding work done among the slaves by William Capers of South Carolina and others. One would find each week, on the back page, obituaries of the departed "saints," lay and ministerial. Most of the time, part of the front page would carry an explication of a particular Methodist doctrine or practice, with careful attention given to the differences between Methodists and other Christian groups, especially Calvinists. Occasionally a large part of the paper would be given to the publication of an important speech made by the Governor of

Virginia or the President of the United States. Almost every issue would contain some item about slavery, which is hardly surprising when one recalls that the Nat Turner uprising, in which sixty whites were killed, took place in Virginia in 1831, and that the great debates in the Virginia Convention, which marked a turning point in the handling of the slave problem, took place in the winter of 1831-32. However, during Drake's editorship, the *Sentinel* did not become an organ of the extreme "pro-southern, pro-slavery" position; this became the dominant tone of the paper under Drake's successors, Leroy M. Lee and William A. Smith.

Two issues which resulted in the spilling of much ink during the first four years of the *Sentinel's* existence were ministerial education and Roman Catholicism.

That Methodism in America was a movement launched by and among people who were poorly educated is well known; that most of the early ministers and bishops looked with actual suspicion upon a trained ministry is perhaps not so well known. By the eighteenth-thirties, however, even the Methodists had begun to establish schools throughout the country and the question of a trained ministry became important; educated laymen could hardly be expected to follow very enthusiastically untrained preachers. In 1834-36, hardly an issue of the *Sentinel* appeared without some comment for or against ministerial education, with an extended discussion between two prominent members of the Virginia Conference, William A. Smith and Thomas Crowder, filling column after column during the last six months of 1836. Drake was severely criticized for allowing this discussion to continue; but, while expressing neutrality on the issue itself, he replied that he would print articles on the matter as long as there was some possibility of light being shed on the problem.

With respect to Roman Catholicism, the position of the *Sentinel* was less open-minded. Notices which appeared in its columns about Catholics or Catholicism almost invariably ended with "anathemas" pronounced against them or it. Outstanding examples of this attitude are to be seen in a series of articles copied from *The New York Observer* entitled "Foreign Conspiracy Against the Liberties of the United States" (October 24, 1834—January 2, 1835), and one re-printed from *The Christian Advocate and Journal* called "The Crisis" (July 31, 1835—August 28, 1835). William A. Smith was even more violently opposed to Catholics than Drake and assured his readers that "Popery is an enemy to both civil and religious liberty, adopting, as it does the doctrine that incincerity [sic] and even lies, are virtues, if they advance its present interests. . . ."

In addition to daily decisions as to what news and which views should be published, the editors of the *Sentinel* faced other problems which would not be settled for years. One of these was the

problem of circulation. The paper began in 1832 with about 400 subscribers. In the hope of increasing this number, the first issue carried an offer of one free subscription for every seven paid ones. Almost every month the editor would say something about the need for a larger circulation. By the middle of 1834, Drake announced that he was printing about 1,900 copies with 150 of these being used for exchange. In March, 1838, circulation stood at about 2,600 with the editor urging each minister of the Virginia and North Carolina Conferences to get twenty new subscribers in order that the circulation might reach 5,000. It was not until the mid-fifties that the *Sentinel* was going into as many as 6,000 homes.

Intimately related to the problem of circulation was the question of the relationship of the *Sentinel* to the *Christian Advocate* published in New York. For the first three years of its existence, Drake periodically reaffirmed the propriety of publishing the *Sentinel* to serve those needs which were peculiar to the Methodists of the region and which were not met by the paper published in New York. In July, 1835, he said he believed opposition to the *Sentinel* on the basis of its being a "competitor" of the national *Advocate* had finally begun to die down. Nevertheless, three years later, another editor, William A. Smith, was still explaining that "as an organ of general, and particularly *foreign* information, *we can hold no comparison with it [The Christian Advocate]*; and on the other hand, *it can hold no comparison with our paper*, as an organ of domestic or *home* information; whilst at the same time, our paper, ultimately—though not so early—gives the same foreign information." In effect Smith declared that "Old Richmond" was really a better paper—on all counts—than the national organ of the Church.

Before any official action by the Methodist Episcopal Church could be taken to solve the knotty problem of the *Sentinel* and the *Advocate*, the *Sentinel* had to become an official Methodist organ. For the first four years of its life, the *Sentinel* was unofficially related to the Virginia Conference; this relationship had been clearly stated in the resolution adopted by the Virginia Annual Conference in February, 1832, four months before the first issue of the *Sentinel* was published:

"Whereas, there is to be established in the City of Richmond, a paper called the 'Richmond Evangelist' (published by Nesbitt and Walker, and edited by E. Drake, all members of our Church), professedly to promote the interest of truth generally, and of Methodism especially, Therefore,

"Resolved, That so far as the above objects are kept in view, and so far as the interests of the above paper do not conflict with the interests of our periodicals and general Book Concern, we will favour the circulation of the above paper."

Of course, many members of the Conference considered the *Sentinel* their paper, even consenting to serve as agents in procuring subscribers and collecting money for it. They could not help but feel a strong attachment to it since its editor had served for seventeen years as a faithful member of their Conference.

In February, 1836, however, the connection between the *Sentinel* and the Virginia Annual Conference was made official when the Conference became its proprietor, appointing a committee of three to supervise its operation. The next year, when the North Carolina Conference was formed out of a part of the Virginia Conference, the paper was published by a committee of three for the benefit of the two conferences.

The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church meeting in 1836 sought to bring order out of the "paper chaos" by bringing at least some of these "local" Methodist papers under the direction of the General Conference itself. After hours of debate, both within the Committee on the Book Concern and on the floor of the Conference, the following resolution was finally adopted and incorporated into the new *Discipline*:

"That, in addition to the *Christian Advocate and Journal* [New York] and *Western Christian Advocate* [Cincinnati], there shall be similar papers established in the following places, viz., Charleston, Richmond, and Nashville, to be conducted under the direction and patronage of this conference; provided, that before any such paper shall be commenced three thousand subscribers shall be obtained, or subscriptions amounting to six thousand dollars."

Furthermore, the editors of the papers in Charleston and Richmond were to be elected by the General Conference, with the Virginia Conference being authorized to elect its own editor until the next meeting of the General Conference in 1840.

Of course, the General Conference was not *establishing* three new papers; it was merely incorporating into the structure of The Methodist Episcopal Church papers which had already been established. Charleston had published a paper in 1825, *The Wesleyan Journal* which, it is true, had disappeared as a separate entity a year later, becoming the *Journal* part of *The Christian Advocate and Journal*; but was awaiting such an action by the General Conference to blossom forth as the *Southern Christian Advocate*. A paper had been published in Nashville in 1833 entitled the *Western Methodist*; this action by the General Conference transformed it into the *South Western Christian Advocate*. "Old Richmond" had been a going concern for four years. In 1840, it was placed on the same basis as the other *Advocates*, becoming the property of the General Conference and having its editor elected by that body.

The action of the General Conferences of 1836 and 1840, while

bringing structural order out of chaos, did little to calm the storms of sectionalism which finally resulted in the division of the Church in 1844. The editors of the papers in Richmond, Charleston, and Nashville might be elected by the same General Conference that picked the editors of the papers in New York and Cincinnati; but when they edited, they wrote not for the General Conference but for their constituents in Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee.

A minor issue which helps to illuminate the conflicts over the role of the *Sentinel* was the name of the paper. The original prospectus announced that a paper called the *Richmond Evangelist* was to be published, but when the first issue came out, it had been renamed the *Christian Sentinel*. While this name did not suggest location, it did suggest, in a more positive fashion than "Evangelist," a publication that would assume the role of guardian of truth, or defender of the faith. Two years after the first issue, one of the publishers having died, Ethelbert Drake became both publisher and editor and changed the name of his paper to the *Methodist Christian Sentinel*, thus underscoring its relationship to the Methodists. As a matter of fact, this use of the name of the denomination in the title was characteristic of the eighteen-thirties; in this way editors paraded before all the world their own particular bias. In 1836, when ownership passed into the hands of the Virginia Conference, the name was changed a third time to the *Virginia Conference Sentinel*, signifying its official relationship to the Conference. Just one year later, the Virginia Conference having been divided into the Virginia and North Carolina Conferences, with the paper being published by a committee for both of the Conferences, the name was changed to *The Virginia and North Carolina Conference Journal*.

When the 1840 General Conference assumed control of *The Virginia and North Carolina Conference Journal*, the question of what this paper should be called came up again. In the original resolutions from the Virginia and North Carolina Conferences offering the paper to the General Conference, the name *Virginia Christian Advocate* was recommended. However, when these resolutions came up for action on the floor of the General Conference a week later, John Early, head of the Virginia delegation, moved that the paper's name become *Central Christian Advocate*. Hopefully this name would not only bring it into line with the names of the other papers, but would also broaden its appeal beyond the Commonwealth of Virginia. Before this name could be made official, Early moved reconsideration and recommended that the name become the *Richmond Christian Advocate*; and it was by this name, or a slight variation of it in the early part of the twentieth century, that it was known for a hundred years.

Not only was the name of "Old Richmond" changed in the first eight years of its existence, but so also were its editors. In that short span of time, three men sat in the editor's chair: Ethelbert Drake, 1832-1836; Leroy Madison Lee, 1836-37, 1839—; and William A. Smith, 1837-1839.

Ethelbert Drake, the son of Richard and Louisa Drake, was born in Chatham, North Carolina in 1787; his father, a distant relative of Sir Francis Drake, was a Revolutionary War veteran and a local preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Ethelbert Drake was admitted on trial in the Virginia Conference in 1809; his first appointment was as Junior Preacher on the Banks and Islands Circuit in North Carolina. The following year he traveled with John Early (later Bishop) on the Caswell Circuit in North Carolina. In 1811 he was ordained deacon and admitted into full connection; during the next fifteen years he served the following appointments: Iredell Circuit; Guilford; Norfolk; Richmond; Presiding Elder, James River District (1815-16); Lynchburg; Presiding Elder, Norfolk District (1818-21); Newbern; Richmond; and Gloucester. During his last year in the ministry, Drake had as his assistant William A. Smith, who had just been admitted on trial in the Virginia Conference. In 1826, Drake's family responsibilities (he had married Mary G. Green of Norfolk on January 9, 1818) forced him to locate. Drake was elected to the General Conferences of 1816, 1820, and 1824; while he rarely spoke on the floor of the Conference, he served on such committees as Ways and Means, State of the Itinerancy, and the Episcopacy.

While serving as editor of the *Sentinel*, Drake was involved in a number of organizations. He was second vice-president of the Bible Society of Virginia, secretary of the Richmond Education Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, treasurer of the Society for Promoting the Observance of the Christian Sabbath, and a member of a Temperance Society and a Colonization Society. His interest in two of these organizations caused him to propose to publish the *Methodist Sunday School Reporter* (one issue of which was published in September, 1834), and the *Southern Temperance Star*, which never moved beyond the proposal stage.

From his writings, Drake would appear to have been basically a man of peace, certainly not given to entering into controversy as were his two immediate successors. After retiring from the editorship of the *Sentinel* in February, 1836, Drake returned to North Carolina, the place of his birth.

Drake was followed in the editorial chair in March, 1836, by Leroy Madison Lee. Lee (1808-1882), the younger brother of Jesse Lee, the founder of Methodism in New England, was converted in his native city of Petersburg under the ministry of William A. Smith in 1827

and joined the Virginia Conference the next year, serving the following appointments: Campbell Circuit, Va.; Washington, N. C.; Newbern, N. C.; Prince Edward, Va.; Brunswick, Va.; Elizabeth City, N. C.; Portsmouth, Va.; and Trinity, Richmond, Va. While he was at Trinity, the church burned down and shortly after this, in late 1835, ill health forced Lee to give up his pastorate. After a sea voyage south, cut short by Indian Wars in Florida, Lee returned to Norfolk in early 1836, to learn that a committee appointed by the Virginia Conference to assume control of the newly-acquired *Virginia Conference Sentinel* had picked him as its editor. This committee probably consisted of Lee's old friend, William A. Smith, John Early, and Moses Brock. Since an Annual Conference did not have the authority to appoint one of its members as editor of a religious paper, Lee was appointed as Smith's assistant at Trinity in Richmond, but his real responsibility was the *Sentinel*. After serving as editor for just over a year, ill health forced Lee to resign in April, 1837. Two years later, in February, 1839, he was able to take up his editorial pen again, and continued to edit "Old Richmond" until 1858, when he returned to the parish ministry, serving appointments in Norfolk, Lynchburg, Richmond, Petersburg, and Ashland.

Like Drake, Lee was a member of the General Conference, serving for the first time in 1844 and then in every General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, until 1878. In addition to editing the Richmond paper, Lee wrote a number of volumes, including *Life and Times of Jesse Lee* and *Advice to a Young Convert*. Unlike Drake, Lee welcomed controversy and participated vigorously, both orally and in writing, in the debates that led to the division of the Church in 1844. In fact, he became one of the leading spokesmen for the "pro-slavery" Methodists of the South.

In the interim caused by Lee's illness, April, 1837—January, 1839, the *Sentinel* was edited by William A. Smith (1802-1870). Smith assumed editorial responsibility while serving full time as pastor of Trinity Church, Richmond; the following year he took a lighter load, being appointed to the new charge of Manchester, and continued to edit the paper from the parsonage of Trinity Church on F. Street in Richmond. Smith, as indicated above, had served his first appointment as assistant to Ethelbert Drake, and had been the preacher under whose ministry Leroy Lee was converted. After a number of years in the pastorate, serving appointments in Amherst, Petersburg, Lynchburg, Richmond, and Norfolk, in 1846 Smith was elected President of Randolph-Macon College, a position he retained for almost twenty years.

Smith was first elected to the General Conference in 1832 and then served in each succeeding General Conference, first of the

Methodist Episcopal Church, and afterwards of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, until his death in 1870.

Always a controversial figure, Smith became one of the chief spokesmen for the southern Methodists in the forties and fifties. In 1856, a series of lectures which he delivered at Randolph-Macon was published under the title of *Lectures on the Philosophy and Practice of Slavery as Exhibited in the Institution of Domestic Slavery in the United States, with the Duties of Masters to Slaves*. In these lectures Smith sought to prove that philosophy, natural rights, and Holy Scripture all sustained domestic slavery, and that it would last forever.

Smith was apt to be sharp in debate and sarcastic in print; certainly his two years as editor of the *Sentinel* did nothing to soothe the cancerous sore that was eating away at the heart of Methodism.

Had efforts at conciliation been successful in the General Conference of 1840, the *Sentinel's* masthead might have been graced by a name other than Lee's that year, for the first nominee for the position of editor presented to that Conference was John A. Collins of the Baltimore Conference. This nomination, it would appear, was a part of the last-minute effort to settle the growing antagonism between "Old Richmond" and the northern *Advocates*. The election of an editor for the Virginia paper was delayed until the last session of the General Conference, when Thomas Crowder, of the Virginia Conference, speaking as a member of the Committee on the Book Concern, nominated Collins for the position. Collins had served for a brief time in 1836-37 as assistant editor of the *Christian Advocate*; although he was known for his efforts to sever any relationships which the Baltimore Conference had with slavery, he was also thought to be less radical than many of the abolitionists of the more northern conferences. Collins, however, would not consent to have his name placed before the Conference, so Crowder nominated Lee and he was elected. Had Collins been elected to this important position, the course of events during the next four years might have been changed, for it was the *Richmond Christian Advocate*, under Lee's editorship, that became one of the most powerful, and adamant, defenders of a southern position which moved more and more in the direction represented by William A. Smith's lectures of 1856.

After all these changes—in names, editors, and publishers—what was the *Richmond Christian Advocate* of 1840 like? It may be said that in content, a typical issue was not radically different from that first issue of the *Sentinel* in June, 1832. Take, for example, the issue for September 10, 1840. The front page was filled with articles on "Divinity," some of them original and some copied from other papers; included among the titles were: "Ecclesiastic Biography,"

"Some Account of Mr. Richard (afterward bishop) Whatcoat," "And the Books were Opened," "Marks or Characteristics of Perfect Love," and "The Christian's Sufferings."

Page two carried a missionary report from Galveston, Texas, and articles entitled "Industry," "Defense of Infants' Rights—Their Membership and Baptism," "The Bishop of Carlisle," "Interview between George the Third and Joseph Lancaster," "John Wesley," and "Descent of Spiders."

On the third page, the editor commented about subscribers who were three years in debt to the office, his unwillingness to print articles without proper names, and a new publication entitled *The Christian World*. One could read here about a dispute which had arisen between a curate of the Church of England and a Wesleyan minister over the interment of a child. One might learn about "Russia and Roman Catholics," "The New King of Prussia," "Intellect of Germany," "Romanism in England," and "Statistics on Education." Reports from the Richmond Market and five advertisements (hats, dry goods, books, a private school, and pianos) filled out the page.

The back page carried a poem, "Affliction," and columns labeled "Ministers," "Ladies," and "Youths [sic]." The "Fable of the Chickencocks and the Hens" and a note about "Tobacco" completed the news items. The last column of page four carried more advertisements: dry goods, books, pianos, school, two female teachers looking for jobs, and Dr. W. W. Marshall who promised effective treatment of cancer and fistula.

The paper was almost the same size as the first issue, and still sold for \$2.50 per year, payable in advance. On the masthead appeared these words: "Published weekly by W. A. Smith, M. Brock and J. Early, for the Methodist Episcopal Church. Leroy M. Lee, Editor." Evidently the publishers and editor did not think the first four years of the paper's existence should be counted as part of its official life, for the issue for September 10, 1840 was numbered "Vol. V., No. 37; Whole No. 236," and one figuring backward would be brought not to 1832 when the paper was first published but to 1836 when the paper became the property of the Virginia Conference.

If one should look only at the *Sentinel* for June 8, 1832 and the *Advocate* for September 10, 1840, one would never guess that trials and tribulations had been the lot of "Old Richmond" in the tumultuous years in between. In those years what had been a private enterprise became a church undertaking which grew from 400 subscribers to more than 3,000. During those years the peace-loving *Sentinel* was transformed into the warlike *Advocate*, as the mild

Drake gave way to the fiery Lee and Smith. They were years in which a united Methodist Episcopal Church had grown by leaps and bounds but had also moved inexorably toward division. And finally, they were years in which "for better or worse" "Old Richmond" had become a permanent part of Virginia Methodism.