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statement, defense and propagation of the
Gospel, the faith which was once for
all delivered unto the saints.*

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REPLY TO OVERTURE FROM THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN U. S. CONCERNING DOCTRINAL BASIS OF THE FEDERAL COUNCIL

HEARTS THAT BURN

By Rev. J. Kenton Parker

TWICE KING

By Rev. Samuel McPheeters Glasgow, D.D.

"AN EVANGELIST"

By Rev. J. E. Flow, D.D.

THE ADVANCE BEGINS AT THE CROSS

By R. A. Lapsley, Jr.

WOMAN'S WORK

Edited By Mrs. R. T. Faucette

THE BIBLE . A CHRISTIAN . AND WAR

By Tom Glasgow

CONVERSION AND THE PULPIT

By Thomas C. Pollock

BAPTISM

By Rev. John Scott Johnson, Ph.D.

MEAN THINGS THEY SAID ABOUT JESUS

By Rev. W. W. Sprouse, D.D.

BROADCASTING OUR MESSAGE

By Samuel M. Zwemer, D.D.

The Advance Begins At The Cross

By R. A. Lapsley, Jr.*

If the Religious Education Advance is to mean what we hope it will mean to our Church, it must begin at the Cross. If it is to accomplish its high aim, and "reach every person in the community with Christian teaching," it must start with a new understanding, a new appreciation, and a new experience of Redemption through the sacrificial death of the Son of God. If the home is to be made holy, and the church vigorous, and the community Christian, Christ's followers must have a new realization of the transcendent importance of something that took place on a hill called Calvary nineteen hundred years ago.

The gospel story begins with a Babe in a manger in Bethlehem. But the highest symbol of the Christian religion is not a manger but a cross! The gospel message is found in the Bible, the most remarkable book in all the world. But the highest symbol of the Christian religion is not a book but a cross! The gospel revelation leads men to a heaven of perfect peace and perfect bliss. But the highest symbol of the Christian religion is not a crown but a cross! The supreme tragedy in the Christianity of our day, so efficiently planned, so perfectly organized, so educationally sound, is its failure to recognize the dynamic power of the simple yet sublime fact that Christ died for our sins. It is imperative that this new and welcome trumpet call, the Religious Education Advance, contain this powerful persuasive note, the voice that sounds aloud from Calvary.

"Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus going on before."

The great danger in this movement is that this fundamental emphasis may be sidetracked by things of secondary importance. If we put the supreme emphasis on the glaring defects in our social and political and economic structure; if our chief concern is for better housing, better food, better wages, better health; if our prime interest is in men's bodies rather than their souls; this great movement that has in it so much promise will be foredoomed to failure. It will be like the later novels of H. G. Wells. Some critic said of them: "These books begin strong, go like fury for a third of their course, and then sit down like a baked apple." Movements and men as well as novels sometimes sit down like baked apples!

Christians should be in sympathy with every movement to make the world a better place to live in. Christians should support wholeheartedly every effort to give underprivileged people a chance, to abolish economic injustice and racial prejudice and international hatreds. But such things will only come in a world whose individuals have been redeemed from sin by the precious blood of Christ, and who have been changed by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. There is no lasting dynamic for social service outside of the Cross.

A young woman of brilliant mental endowment, an honor graduate of a great university, was giving her life in service in a hospital in China. There she came in daily contact with disease and dirt and sin in their most repulsive forms. A friend could not understand how a person of refinement could be content to spend her life amid such degradation and squalor. She said to her: "You must have

a wonderful passion for humanity to spend your life in such surroundings!" And the young woman answered: "Passion for humanity! It wouldn't keep me here a day! I am here because of one 'Who loved me, and gave Himself for me!'"

Sunday School teachers should recognize the inseparable connection between justification and sanctification, faith and works, creed and life. Suppose you were asked, "What is the greatest verse on the atonement in the Bible?" Many would answer at once, "I. Peter 2:24." That is indeed a wonderful statement of what Christ did for us on the cross, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." But how often we quote the first part of this verse and forget the last part! And how tremendously important the last part is! "That we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness." If we are truly Christians, if we have been truly saved from our sins through the mysterious and yet wonderful event that took place at the cross, we shall live clean and unselfish and useful lives.

The same close and vital connection between the Cross and Christian living is seen in many of our hymns. Suppose you were asked to name the greatest of all the great hymns of the Cross! Many would say:

"When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died."

But don't forget the last part of the stanza! We are prone to do that!

"My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride."

And don't forget the last stanza. It's a most compelling expression of the constraining power of the Cross.

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present for too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

Those who planned the Religious Education Advance for our Church desire to magnify the Cross and its saving message. The Advance is described as an effort to "reach every person with Christian teaching." And the heart of "Christian teaching" is the Cross. The purpose of the Advance is defined "To confront every person outside the church with Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour." One of the ultimate objectives is "reaching more people for commitment to Christ and membership in the church." Plans for doing this include "making a list of those to be reached; personal effort by pastor, officers, teachers, parents, and others; communicants' class, special services, and personal workers' class." All these are ways by which people who are not Christians are brought to the foot of the Cross.

It is ours to see that these plans are carried out and these objectives reached in the local church. In our individual church the advance must begin at the Cross. We can as Sunday School teachers do nothing more worthwhile than to help the children, the young people and the grown people in our classes to understand the divine purpose in

the Cross. For at this point every genuine Christian experience must begin.

Years ago Sherwood Eddy, at the first meeting of the laymen of the Northern Methodist Church in New York City, made a memorable statement. Speaking of the great need of the heathen world he said: "I would not go across the street to give India a new theology, India already has too much theology; I would not go across the street to give Japan a new religion, Japan already has too many religions; I would not go across the street to give China a new code of ethics, China has today a far higher ethical code than ethical life. But I would go round the world again and again to tell India and China and Japan that

"There is a fountain filled with blood

Drawn from Emmanuel's veins;

And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,

Lose all their guilty stains."

These words should strike a responsive chord in our hearts. We wouldn't cross the street to interest and amuse our neighbor's children, a nursemaid could do that better; we wouldn't cross the street to train our neighbor's children in good manners, that is the business of their parents and Emily Post; we wouldn't cross the street to educate our neighbor's children in literature and music and art, the day school can do that far better. But we will pray and work and sacrifice that every child and youth and adult within reach of our churches may know in its wonderfulness that "God so loved the world . . . that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life!" That is the high purpose of our Southern Presbyterian Religious Advance. It should have our loyal allegiance and our enthusiastic support.

—The Earnest Worker.

*Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Roanoke, Va.

Giants And Grasshoppers

By Rev. M. E. Melvin, D.D.

Possession of the Land of Promise was once denied Israel because a majority of the investigating committee magnified their difficulties and minimized their God. "The inhabitants of the land are as giants and we are as grasshoppers." Faith and courage were both lacking in spite of God's order to advance.

Time moves on. Human nature changes little. Today our Church faces a veritable Land of Promise. The call to advance is loud and clear. **But the giants!** "Untimely." "Difficulties too great." "The cost." Not since Adam has unconsecrated human nature been ready to respond to a call from God to move out and on.

In all the history of our Church we have never faced an opportunity such as we have today. Into whatever State we turn there are many communities swarming with newcomers, unreached, unchurched, unsettled. Church buildings and chapels are needed. Baltimore, Washington, Birmingham, Corpus Christi, Fort Worth, Houston, Kansas City, Kanawha Valley of West Virginia, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Oklahoma City, Savannah, are a few areas mentioned only to illustrate.

Permanent industrial plants involving millions of dollars of investment are drawing skilled and technical workers from all over the Nation. Local churches, Presbyteries and even Synods are un-

able to take advantage of these opportunities. **It must be a denominational advance!**

This vision so stirred the General Assembly that a campaign for \$250,000.00 per year for five years was authorized for a **Home Mission Denominational Advance**. To this must be added \$70,000.00, the usual Home Mission Week Offering the Church gives for the **sustaining work** of Assembly's Home Missions.

Are there not fifty individuals in our Church each of whom will give \$2,500.00 for a Chapel in one of these promising sections? Are there not 2,500 individuals each of whom will give \$100.00 towards the Home Mission Emergency Fund?

Method! Cash or pledges payable in thirty days. The Annual Home Mission Season: October 4 to November 8. **"This is the Home Mission Hour!"**

The Evening Service

By Rev. Wm. C. Robinson, D.D.

Discerning Christians are awakening to the importance of the evening worship on the Lord's Day. The secretary of a committee appointed to nominate a pastor for one of our most strategic congregations recently remarked that he did not think he could recommend any minister who was not having evening services in his present field.

This article is a tribute to a bonny, big-hearted Nova Scotian who came to Montgomery, Ala., seventeen years ago this month with a determination to worship God at the time of the evening as well as of the morning sacrifice. Dr. Donald C. Macguire decided that an up-town church had an obligation to the city, to the travelling men, and to the soldiers, as well as its own congregation.

Therefore, the doors of the Church were kept open and the preacher continued to preach whether the benches were occupied or not. Perhaps preaching to wooden benches at times made a wooden note creep into the preaching, but a stalwart heart refused to give up. How long does it take to build up a night congregation? In this case about fifteen years. About two years ago the tide turned. The evening congregations began to increase and this year the increase continued even through the summer months. Indeed, the summer was still hot in Montgomery when I visited the Church the middle of September and that day the evening congregation in this down-town congregation could compare with the morning congregation in a larger church in the residential section. The number of young people and children was impressive, the young people were there to sing and lead others in singing a goodly number of the hymns of the Church. There seemed no effort to cramp the service into a short period. Indeed, after the benediction these same young people gathered in the lecture room with one of their loved leaders at the piano for a songfest. In the Church it was the Church Hymnal, here it was the Premier Hymnal, with a verse from every kind of hymn in that book. Every boy or girl, young person or soldier had his favorite and each was sung. Finally the doors of the adjoining classroom were opened and from **God Bless America** we went to enjoy a cool glass of grape-juice and a cookie.

There are some great reasons for evening worship. The first is the worship of the ever blessed God, the praise of the glory of His grace. "Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, which by night stand in the house of the Lord."

It is not easy to preach to a small congregation,