

Shall We Kill Our Mission Boards, Seminaries, And Leaders? Shall We Take The Bankrupt Law? Shall We Remain Silent On The Norris Issue? 1936

By T. T. MARTIN, Evangelist.

There are two ways of dealing with those who are injuring the Lord's cause. One is to ignore them—the Gamaliel plan: "let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought. But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it."—Acts 5: 38-39. The other is the Paul plan: "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed."—Galatians 2:11. But Paul did it in such a spirit that Peter afterward referred to Paul as "our beloved Brother Paul." May our Father help me write in the same spirit.

For years our Baptist people have been pursuing the Gamaliel plan, the let-alone policy, with reference to Pastor J. Frank Norris of Fort Worth, Texas, and during those years he has continuously, persistently, worked against and undermined our organized work. I believe the time has come when the issue ought to be met by the Paul plan, in the Paul spirit.

He may not always have been treated right. For example, what he calls the "Hate Fest," when for a week brethren exposed him nightly over the radio, according to his account of it was not in the Spirit of Christ.

But for three years or more

Pastor Norris has kept up a most persistent, bitter "HATE FEST", aided by those whom he has influenced. And by constantly, week after week, month after month, referring to the one week only "Hate Fest," he turns attention from his THREE YEARS, and still going on, which he and his co-workers continue to carry on persistently. In a recent copy of his paper I counted over 200 flings and stabs at the organized work and men of the Convention. For instance, six times in this one issue of his paper, Editor F. M. McConnell of the Baptist Standard, whose work as evangelist, college president, state secretary of missions and editor, is known to the world, is referred to as "The Old Woman Who Does the Best She Can." Three times Geo. W. Truett is referred to as "The Holy Father;" and both are persistently held up to ridicule.

Persistently, over a long period, Pastor J. Frank Norris has sent special delivery letters or telegrams of the most insinuating, nagging nature to Pastor Geo. W. Truett on Sunday morning, to arrive just before preaching at eleven o'clock. Why send such at all? Why not on other days? Why just before 11 o'clock on Sunday? To put Pastor Truett out of spiritual condition

for preaching. Reader do you grasp that? Trying to destroy a preacher's effectiveness in preaching to build up Christians and to save sinners from hell. Trying to prevent Christians from being built up! Trying to prevent sinners from being saved from hell! The horror of it!

A lady who was in the party with Geo. W. Truett visiting South American Mission Fields, told me that repeatedly, at ports or cities where Pastor Truett was dated to preach, to lead the people on the mission fields to be saved, on arrival of his party, there would be a cablegram to Geo. W. Truett from Pastor J. Frank Norris, of the most insidious, insinuating, nagging nature, to destroy his spiritual condition so that he would not be able to preach effectively to reach the lost on the mission field to be saved—blocking them from being saved and leaving them to go to hell!

A brother told me that at Ridge Crest, N. C., he saw Pastor Geo. W. Truett receive such a telegram from Pastor J. Frank Norris to destroy his effectiveness in speaking there, to prevent his building up Christians to go out and lead the lost to be saved!

Another brother told me that during a protracted evangelistic meeting conducted by Geo. W. Truett, this brother entertained him; and that repeatedly bitter insinuating telegrams came to Geo. W. Truett from J. Frank Norris, to destroy his proper spiritual condition so that he could not preach effectively to reach the lost!

Should Charles Smith, president of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism, or Clarence Darrow, the Agnostic, hound a great, earnest preacher, week after week, month after month, with insinuating, exasperating, defamatory messages just before the preacher was to preach in order to destroy his effectiveness in preaching; follow him with cablegrams when he would go to the foreign field to preach to the lost, that were of such an exasperating nature as to unfit him to preach effectively in leading the lost to be saved; send insinuating, disturbing telegrams to the preacher where he is preaching or lecturing, trying to help others reach the lost; send the preacher repeated telegrams where he was holding meetings trying to save the lost, calculated to destroy the effectiveness of the preacher, even the infidels and Atheists would be outraged at such a course.

Pastor Norris is leading other men to line up with him in the work of tearing down men and institutions in our mission work; and his paper and radio are wide open to them as they join him in his work of destruction.

Here is an example from a brilliant young preacher, Pastor Sam Morris of the First Baptist Church of Stamford, Texas, who could have been so useful had his life been given up to building instead of destroying.

After two columns in the Norris paper of insinuations and flings and carping against Geo. W. Truett, trying to convict him of being a Modernist, he closed his

attack with this stab at and slander of, those who believe that Geo. W. Truett is not a Modernist; "No doubt there will be many votaries and priests of the Diana of denominationalism that will beat the tom-toms, a **meal ticket their chief motive** (a Norris ear-mark—italics mine. T. T. M.), and likewise endorse Modernism."

This almost beardless youth, this young Timothy who was told by the Holy Spirit, "Rebuke not an elder but entreat him as a father" to "speak evil of no man," brands as being bribed by a meal ticket not to believe that Geo. W. Truett is a Modernist, such men as Presidents John R. Sampey, W. W. Hamilton, J. D. Sandifer, W. S. Allen; such laymen as J. H. Anderson, Judge H. L. Anderton. R. E. Burt; such editors as V. I. Masters, Z. T. Cody R. K. Maiden, E. D. Soloman, John D. Freeman, P. I. Lipsey; such pastors as Chas. W. Daniels, J. W. Gillon, F. F. Brown, F. F. Gibson, Ellis A. Fuller, Benj. D. Hahn, W. R. White, M. E. Dodd, W. D. Nowlin; such Evangelists as Geo. W. McCall, A. D. Muse, J. C. Masee, John W. Ham, E. A. Petroff; not one of whom believes Pastor Truett to be a Modernist; as well as such secretaries as J. B. Lawrence, C. M. Thompson, O. E. Bryan and R. B. Gunter.

After the shamelessness of this almost stripling of a young preacher thus slandering these elders he ought to muster what few fragments of modesty and sense of propriety and good taste he has left and "tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown." In

my two months debates with Pres. Chas. Smith of the American Association for Advancement of Atheism, of New York, he showed me, another white-haired preacher, far more consideration than this young Baptist preacher has shown these 'earnest men of God. Not once did he hold the white haired preacher up to scorn and ridicule, and he was an Atheist. And Pastor J. Frank Norris gives it the widest publicity without one word of protest because it is a carbon copy of his own work and tactics.

But to Pastor Sam Morris' two columns of insinuations and flings at Geo. W. Truett (and he and his senior co-partner, Pastor J. Frank Norris, have made many deceptive, insidious, trumped up, unscrupulous attacks on Geo. W. Truett, L. R. Scarborough, our Boards and Institutions, and others), young Pastor Sam Morris adds a postscript; "The disillusionment has come. The thin veneer of assumed and self advertising humility is gone. The feet of clay are not only manifest, but are broken. The mask of holier-than-thou has given away to a deep angry scowl. The features of the countenance reveal what's the deepest down innermost of the soul. This is the inexorable law of the Creator. The once skilled hand that could play on the emotions—that key is gone, and the chord is lost. But it is only history repeating itself. Political bosses crack their whips but eventually the ward heelers learn to fear it no more. The Priests of the temple may lift their idol back on its pedestal a few times,

but at last when nothing but the stump is left they "leave it be."

And this from a young man, an almost beardless youth concerning this white-haired man of God, whose great work, for forty years, is open to the Baptists of the South, of America, of the world! Just forty years ago—he has forgotten it—I haven't—we knelt in my private room and prayed, each for the other's life work. This last winter I sat for a week, and heard him preach. That heart has not lost its warmth, nor that tongue its God given power to tell of the love of a Savior who died to redeem us from all iniquity, of His virgin birth, His resurrection, and His verbally inspired precious Word. I have not always agreed with him; sometimes I have been honestly misled and treated him wrong, and have told him so. Our young brother Sam Morris has misinterpreted the changed look on his face; it's not "A deep angry scowl"; but a saddened face, sadder than words can tell, from a heart bleeding for causes dearer to him than life and from persistent unscrupulous, innuendoes and insinuations, and defamations, such as have rarely been heaped upon any man.

Geo. Truett is no hypocrite; but note the derogatory insinuation in the postscript of our young Bro. Sam Morris: "Thin veneer"—hypocrite, "assumed, humility"—hypocrite; "self-advertised humility." I've seen, I've heard, I've read, no such advertisement, and I have read more papers than our young brother and I have also

seen Geo. Truett far more than he. "The mask of the holier-than-thou"; "The mask"—hypocrite, "holier-than-thou" — and this sneer, this jeer, from a young preacher concerning a white haired man of God! "Political bosses crack their whip but eventually the ward heelers learn to rear it no more"! Geo. Truett a political boss! But who are the "ward heelers"? Not those who still believe in Geo. W. Truett; for "to fear it no more" could not mean them. Evidently they are those who once believed in Geo. Truett, but have rebelled against him. Our young brother in this article in the Norris paper, confesses, "Only but yesterday did I sit at his feet in reverence and adoration. When I started in the ministry he was my ideal among all men." He no longer follows Geo. Truett's leadership. Are he and those he is now lined up with the ward heelers"? "The ward heelers learn to fear it no more." They have rejected his leadership but they have not changed their tactics; they are, according to his own words, still "ward heelers", but "fear it no more." If, by his own confession, he and those whom he now trains with are his "ward heelers," and have only changed "political bosses," then our Brother Frank Norris needs to pray, "Oh Lord deliver me from my friends."

Yet this young man, and others who are lined up with Pastor J. Frank Norris, join him over the radio and platform and in the Norris paper in persistently holding up two white-haired men of

God, Editor F. M. McConnell, and Pastor Geo. W. Truett, to ridicule with the jeers, "The Old Woman Who Does the Best She Can," and "The Holy Father." They are of a piece with the young men (for the Hebrew is youths, not little children,) who said to Elisha, "Go up thou bald head." "Go up, thou bald head."

And they are not the only ones, Pres. L. R. Scarborough remained with Pastor Norris in his church long after B. H. Carroll—nobilissime fratrum!!—and a large body of other brethren felt constrained to withdraw from Pastor Norris and his church; yet he has hounded and maligned Pres. Scarborough with the bitterness of Torquemada, and the cunning and keenness of Clarence Darrow, with the dogged obstinacy and persistence of the blood-sucking leech.

But to come to details:

First, attacks on our Seminaries. His continuous vicious attacks on the Southwestern Baptist Seminary and Pres. L. R. Scarborough for years are well known..

But Pastor Norris is a graduate of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Year after year by tongue, pen, and over radio, he has put it out that it has taken him ten years to unlearn what he learned in the Seminary, under such great men as the world renowned Greek scholar A. T. Robertson, the world renowned Hebraist, Pres. John R. Sampey, the great and godly Professors F. H. Kerfoot, E. C. Dargan, C. S. Gardner, and others. Did he unlearn what the

Seminary taught him about missions? If so, he unlearned it well; for during ten years his church of over 6000 members has not given to missions one fifth of what H. Boyce Taylor's church of Murray, Kentucky, with less than 500 members has given in ten years. No other large church in modern times has given in ten years, as little to missions as Pastor J. Frank Norris's church.

He compliments himself most highly in broadcasting it that for ten years he has unlearned what these great men taught him.

His attacks on our Mission Boards are persistent and well known. Yearly he times his attacks, and makes them of such a nature, that they may cut off the contributions of people to missions. As an example, this last spring, before the meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, when we were trying to raise money for our mission work, he came out in his paper with the flaring headline, "Bankrupt Foreign Mission Board Takes its Last Plunge into Modernism." And that, when they are dying a million a month in China alone who have never heard of Christ, and a New Testament in the Chinese language costs ten cents. For every ten cents he has turned from our mission work, he has dropped a Chinese family into hell without ever hearing of Christ. It is a fearful responsibility. But he now has eight or ten others and young preachers following in his footsteps.

His attacks on the Sunday School Board are as persistent as on our Mission Boards. Some

things do get into our Sunday School literature that are wrong. It is a shame that men who are trusted to prepare the Sunday School literature do occasionally turn traitors to their trusts and take advantage of the faith Secretaries I. J. Van Ness and Hight C. Moore have in them and unethically slip in or inject some Modernistic and unsound sentences and teachings. Every time it is a betrayal of a sacred trust. These two secretaries are sound, and men they trust take advantage of them. Overcrowded with work, sometimes articles get in that have not been read carefully. But these two secretaries are trying to guard sacredly the Sunday School literature. But not withstanding these advantages that are sometimes taken of them, there is no Sunday School literature known to me that is superior to that which is being put out by our Sunday School Board. I know of no man among us that has wider, more accurate knowledge of Sunday School literature and literature for young people than Evangelist A. D. Muse; and after a careful survey of the entire field, he says that there is no other literature equal to it.

The specious deceptive slogan against the Sunday School Board's literature is: "The Bible only in our Sunday School" It is being worked to the limit by Pastor J. Frank Norris and the pastors who are lining up with him to turn schools and churches from our Sunday School Board literature. Pastor Norris and the others teach their teachers. They

simply put their own spoken helps for the teachers in the place of the printed helps printed in the Sunday School Teacher, and it simply means that Pastor Norris and these others think that they are superior in their knowledge of the Scriptures to those who prepare the helps for the Sunday School Teacher; that the teachers who teach the Bible only are superior in their knowledge of the Scriptures to those who prepare the lesson helps for our Sunday School literature. They thus recommend themselves very highly. To use the "Bible only" would mean simply to read the Bible only without one word of explanation; for the spoken explanation is no more the "Bible only" than the printed explanation of the Bible. But it is consistent at least, for one who for years has repeatedly broadcast that it took him ten years to unlearn what he learned from the great theological teachers of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary to set himself up as superior to all other teachers of the Scriptures. But some of the imitators! Superior to all the teachers the Sunday School Board can secure!

What ought to be done is for teachers and pupils to get all the help they can on the lesson in studying it, and then leave all helps at home and bring "the Bible only" to Sunday School, and this the Sunday School Board urges.

But Pastor J. Frank Norris and those lining up with him are now organizing "Fundamentalist" Baptist churches in different cities and it is spreading. The half

truth is the meanest of lies. The deceptive plea is "Haven't Baptists the right to organize churches anywhere"? Yes and no. But for me to organize in Cooke Springs, Ala., another Baptist church and call it "**Fundamentalist Baptist Church**" would mean that our church there and its noble pastor are not "**Fundamentalists**. Every "**Fundamentalist**" Baptist church organized where there are already Baptist churches means that those churches and their pastors are not "**Fundamentalist**" and that is not true.

And to drive in their divisive wedge Pastor Norris and those lined up with him are branding as "Modernist" many earnest ministers of the Gospel who believe in the virgin birth, real redemption and the resurrection of the Saviour. No man is a Modernist who believes these three things. The term Modernist has a definite meaning, and for any one to give the term his own special meaning and brand brethren with it is base trickery and down right dishonest and is deliberately to deceive and mislead the people.

Another matter; these brethren are persistently misleading the people by the charge that we are raising money for missions and using it to pay debts. Is not money raised for missions and used to pay for mission work already done, used just as much for missions as if to pay for mission work yet to be done?

Those debts are honest debts; and for any Southern Baptist of the Southern Baptist Convention to raise any issue about the raising of money to pay those debts

is as dishonest as for him to take the bankrupt law to avoid paying any other honest debt. And for anyone to hide behind these false issues and not help pay these debts is as dishonest as to take the bankrupt law to keep from paying his own honest debts.

Pastor Norris is a man of unusual ability and I thank God for all the good he has done. He has done as much for prohibition as any other man in Texas; he has done and is doing, a great and glorious and needed work in proclaiming the second coming of the Savior; he has built up a wonderful Sunday School. When I supplied for him some years ago I saw around forty-five hundred come from the Sunday School to the eleven o'clock preaching services for 7 Sundays. He has built up a great church, one of the greatest churches I have ever known. He has done great work in fighting Evolution and Modernism. I think he has sometimes fought unfairly and has thereby injured the cause.

But we must face the issue! Shall we take the bankrupt law and repudiate our debts? Shall we destroy, or stand by and see destroyed our leaders, our Seminaries, and our Boards?—American School of Evangelism, Cooke Springs, Ala.

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