DEFENSE OF THE FAITH: FUNDAMENTALIST

CONTROVERSY IN TEXAS, 1920-1929

THESIS

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This work examines the fundamentalist controversy in Texas from 1920 until 1929. Stressing the role of J. Frank Norris as the state's fundamentalist leader, it studies the manifestations of the controversy in both the religious and the secular institutions of the state. Since the movement met little organized resistance in Texas, the fundamentalists won significant victories.

The study is organized topically. The first part is a general introduction to the controversy on both the national and state level. The second part portrays Norris as the leader of fundamentalist forces. The third and fourth parts examine the conflict within the Protestant denominations especially among the Baptists and Methodists and its impact upon secular institutions.

Arising after World War I, the fundamentalist movement was one of several conservative reactions to the rapid changes taking place in American society. The religious movement was basically a reaction to scientific discoveries and theological developments which seemed to threaten the
old order. Since fundamentalism was primarily a rural, Protestant movement, Texas, like other southern and western states, provided fertile territory for its development. Nevertheless, controversy would have probably remained mild in the state if J. Frank Norris had not emerged as the fundamentalist leader. Concentrating his attacks on Baptist leaders, he agitated intense conflict, apparently to increase his own power.

The controversy influenced both secular and religious institutions. The Southern Baptist denomination in Texas was torn apart, with the more adament fundamentalists following Norris, although the denomination itself remained extremely orthodox. The controversy affected, although less seriously, other denominations, notably the Methodists and Episcopalians. For the most part, Texas denominations adhered strictly to the fundamentals, expressing their orthodoxy through resolutions and investigations of their schools.

Fundamentalism significantly influenced secular institutions also. In the state legislature several bills and resolutions prohibiting public schools from teaching evolution, requiring Bible reading in the schools and forbidding atheists and agnostics to teach in the schools were introduced. Though none of these bills passed both
Houses, fundamentalism won a significant victory when the textbook committee deleted references to evolution from the state's textbooks. In addition Bible reading was common, although not required; and numerous schools, including the University of Texas refused to employ atheists or agnostics. Thus fundamentalism indirectly helped determine what was taught in the schools.

In developing this study the author relied largely upon primary sources. To establish the facts, both legislative and church records were used for the ten year period. In an attempt to understand the climate of the controversy, the author studied statements of belief by both modernists and fundamentalists. The most significant sources for the work were the various periodicals and newspapers used. An attempt was made to review a selection of secular newspapers from each section of the state, including newspapers from Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Denton, Tyler, Gilmer, El Paso, Lubbock, Waco, San Antonio, Houston, and Corpus Christi. Other secular publications, such as the Texas Outlook, The American Mercury, and the New York Times were also helpful. Various religious publications were important in studying both the facts and the temper of the controversy. The most significant of these was The Fundamentalist, J. Frank Norris' church paper. It covers the controversy in Texas more
thoroughly than any other source, but the *Baptist Standard* and the *Texas Christian Advocate*, a Methodist publication, were also useful. While secondary sources covering the national movement are abundant, none deal adequately with the controversy in Texas.

In Texas, the controversy was primarily one between ultra-conservatives and conservatives. Since the controversy suppressed expression of unorthodox opinions, few modernists spoke out. Those who did often suffered harsh reprisals, being forced from the ministry or losing teaching positions. In short, the movement slowed intellectual development in the state during the decade.
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CHAPTER I

THE SETTING

During the 1920's new ideas and ways of life came into sharp conflict and clashed, sometimes violently, with old, traditional values. The nation was changing rapidly, becoming industrialized, with the centers of influence and population shifting from rural areas to the cities. In 1920 for the first time in United States history the majority of the population lived in cities rather than on farms or in small towns. America was rapidly becoming a country of cities rather than farms, and with the emerging cities came secularism, materialism, increased crime, slums, and loss of individualism. All that America had stood for, all the traditional values of a rural nation, seemed to be breaking down. Necessary readjustments to these changes proved most difficult in rural areas. Texas, like other western and southern states, experienced reactionary movements against the new developments.

These were the most prosperous times that America had ever know, and the widespread presence of new luxuries

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caused everyone to strive to own them, making values more materialistic. Such inventions as the movies, the radio, and the automobile had the effect of bringing the new, developing society into direct confrontation with the old. In the new social order people seemed to be turning from religious and spiritual values and seeking fulfillment in the present moment. As the young abandoned the moral codes of their parents, sex became a dominant theme in movies, books, and daily conversations.  

Those who championed the old order could find some justification for their contention that society was degenerating. Not only were moral values changing, but the crime rate was also rising rapidly, with gangsters actually controlling some cities. The newspapers capitalized on this situation by widely publicizing the most bizarre crimes, which seemed especially shocking to a nation that had so recently been predominantly agrarian. Radical political ideas which seemed to challenge the very existence of democratic government were also being widely circulated. Accelerating the rapid changes in the nation were large numbers of immigrants, mostly from Southern and Eastern Europe. Since the culture of these people differed greatly

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2David A. Shannon, Between the Wars: America, 1919-1941 (Boston, 1965), pp. 91-93; Leuchtenburg, Perils of Prosperity, pp. 158-159.
from that of the United States, their presence too seemed to threaten the old order.  

In the midst of such rapid and unprecedented change, it is not surprising that large numbers of people reacted with panic. Seeking a single cause of the rapid change and apparent degeneration of society, these people endeavored to find a single remedy for America's ills. Some interpreted the dangers of liquor as the major contributing factor and believed Prohibition would end all social ills. Others saw the greatest social dangers in immigration, Catholicism, radical political ideas, new moral values, or scientific discoveries such as evolution. To correct these evils, halt the transition of American society, and maintain former values, such groups as the Ku Klux Klan developed, and in such shameful episodes as the Red Scare people reacted violently to the ideas that contradicted established American beliefs. The Klan stood for white supremacy, opposed immigration, and espoused belief in a staunch moral code. Often in attempting to attain these goals Klansmen resorted to violence; floggings, lynchings, and "tar and feather" parties followed the Klan's organization across the country.  

During the Red Scare thousands of aliens were arrested and about 600 deported as the entire country quaked in fear of a communist overthrow of the government. 4

Rural areas generally accept new social trends slower than urban centers, and rural America was the champion of the traditional value system during the 1920's. The staunchest Klan support, the harshest opponents of immigration, liquor, and radical ideas, as well as the most adamant religious fundamentalists hailed from the rural areas. While fundamentalists and Klansmen were not necessarily the same people, both groups had the same goal in mind: preserving the old order against the new. 5 The leader of the Klan could have been speaking for the fundamentalist movement when he wrote,

We are a movement of the plain people, very weak in the matter of culture, intellectual support and trained leadership. We are demanding, and we expect to win a return of power into the hands of the everyday,

4Shannon, Between the Wars, pp. 65-83; John Donald Hicks, Republican Ascendancy, 1921-1933 (New York, 1960), pp. 168, 177-184; Leuchtenburg, Perils of Prosperity, pp. 66-83.

not highly cultured, not overly intellectualized, but entirely unspoiled and not de-Americanized average citizens of the old stock.  

Like the Klan, the fundamentalists represented the "growing sentiment against radicalism, cosmopolitanism, and alienism of all kinds." Since the South and West were the most rural areas, loss of the old value system seemed most immediate to the people of those regions, and reactionary groups won their greatest support from them.

Developing into a nationwide movement during a period of rapid change, the fundamentalist crusade was basically a reaction against liberal theology and modern science. Elements of liberalism or modernism had been making inroads into American religion since before the turn of the century, with some leading theologians attempting to reconcile science and religion by rejecting those aspects of Christianity which scientific discoveries contradicted and by emphasizing the moral teachings of Christianity. The liberal theology which developed from these teachings taught that every man was divine and stressed the natural goodness and perfectibility of mankind. According to modernistic beliefs, Christ was not the son of a virgin, nor did he perform miracles,

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7 Ibid., p. 35.
or rise from the dead. He was a savior only in that he was conscious of God and guided by God. Modernism held that specific doctrine was unnecessary to religion, that all religions were basically different forms of one religion, and that Christianity was unique only in that it was the highest form of these. Since liberals contended that God did not directly inspire the Bible, which was merely a human statement of religion, they denied Biblical miracles and especially attacked the stories of the Old Testament. Contending that the Bible could not be accepted literally, modernists commenced to point out its inconsistencies, giving it their own interpretations.  

Because of their beliefs liberal theologians were able to incorporate the doctrine of evolution as a workable part of religion. In theological terms, evolution meant that man had risen and was still rising, rather than that he had fallen and was doomed. This doctrine indicated that man could improve his condition on earth and led to the social

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8 Although these doctrines are all tenets of liberal theology, various modernists interpreted religion differently so that each accepted these beliefs to different extents; hence no specific summation of modernism can be given. For explanations of the modernist faith, however, see Harry Emerson Fosdick, Christianity and Progress, (New York, 1922); Shailer Mathews, The Faith of Modernism (New York, 1924); and ibid., "Ten Years of American Protestantism," North American Review, CCXVII (May, 1923), 577-593.
gospel movement, which concentrated on man's social and economic betterment, rather than on his eternal soul. Thus liberal theology stressed the more optimistic aspects of religion and interpreted much of the Bible as allegorical and figurative.9

Following World War I a strong reaction to such liberal teachings developed. The war had been charged with highly optimistic goals, such as making the world safe for democracy and ending all wars. Yet when it ended Americans soon awoke to the reality that such ends had not been accomplished, and a period of pessimism and isolationism followed. The war seemed to contradict the idea that people were bettering themselves and to verify the old beliefs that mankind was doomed. The bloody conflict and the pessimism that followed left Americans with a desire for a more solid and exacting religion.10

The war also intensified the controversy by engendering a fighting spirit that remained after the actual battles.

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were over. As Frederick Louis Allen noted in *Only Yesterday*, "The nation at war had formed the habit of summary action, and it was not soon unlearned." During the war Americans had been stirred to despise the Germans, and a large residue of hate remained after the war had ended. Now the residual hate was vented upon such groups as the socialists, immigrants, Bolsheviks, and modernists. People could be stirred not only to oppose new ideas and values but also to fight in opposition.

A war-time temper was certainly evident in the fundamentalist-modernist controversy. Fundamentalists frequently capitalized upon the hate and fear engendered by the war by stressing the relationship between evolution and liberal thought to German materialism and German theologians had been the most outspoken exponents of liberal theology, and fundamentalists now claimed that deviation from the old-time religion had actually been responsible for the war. 


12 Maynard Shipley, "The Fundamentalists' Case," *American Mercury*, XIII (February, 1928), 226; William Bell Riley, *Inspiration or Evolution*, (Cleveland, 1926), pp. 45, 62, 138; *The Fundamentalist*, April 6, 1923, p. 8; July 28, 1922, p. 3. The title of this paper, John Frank Norris' church paper, varied. It was *The Fence Rail* from January until March of 1917, when the title was changed to *The Searchlight*. On April 15, 1927, the title became *The Fundamentalist*. 
While a religious controversy probably would have arisen had the war not occurred, the war served to intensify the conflict.

A certain amount of tension has always existed between science and religion, and with science enjoying a period of tremendous growth in the 1920's, not surprisingly religion's supporters launched a counter-attack. In the late 1800's religious forces had battled the developing sciences, but by 1918 most scientists and many theologians thought the war was over. However, during the 1920's the strife was revived with fresh vigor; scientists and theologians soon discovered that the majority of people, especially rural inhabitants, had accepted neither scientific discoveries nor liberal theology, and the conflict which had previously been waged largely among intellectuals now had to be fought among the common people.

In 1910 a series of pamphlets appeared which formed the framework of the fundamentalist movement. Titled The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth, the booklets were published and distributed free of charge to clergymen, evangelists, missionaries, Sunday School teachers, theological students, and other interested parties at the expense of

Lyman and Milton Stewart, wealthy Los Angeles businessmen. The purpose of the project was to stem the tide of liberalism in religion, yet the booklets had little influence until after World War I when they became the doctrinal basis of religious orthodoxy. The Fundamentals set forth five tenets which the various authors regarded as the basis of Christianity. These were the infallibility of the scriptures, the virgin birth of Christ, His substitutionary atonement for man's sins, His resurrection, and His literal second coming.14 Necessary to the validity of the other four doctrines and therefore most important in their crusade was the belief in the infallibility of the scriptures, and the fundamentalists' most significant characteristic became their literal interpretation of the Bible.

Fundamentalists believed that the most serious obstacle to such an interpretation was the doctrine of evolution. This concept denied the Biblical account of creation; and, to the fundamentalists, denial of any one part of the gospel meant rejection of Christianity. They contended that the earth was created in six days, that Adam was the first man, that man had been civilized since the beginning of time, and

that the species had remained the same since God created them. Some were so adamant in their beliefs that they insisted that dinosaurs and mammoths died out, not because of evolution, but because they were too large for the ark to transport.

Convinced that all manner of evil resulted from a knowledge of evolution, fundamentalists pointed out that it connected man with brute animals and destroyed his divine nature. They even related the high divorce rate to evolution. Since monkeys often swapped mates, a man who believed himself related to them would tend to follow their example, the fundamentalists argued. Evolution, according to the contenders for the faith, caused a materialistic outlook on life and led to crimes even more horrible than divorce, such as the malicious deeds of the Loeb-Leopold murder case.

As was true of the other reactionary movements of the decade, the fundamentalist movement was charged with fear. When mankind lost faith in the Bible, the fundamentalist explained, reverence for all authority would break down and


16 Dallas Morning News, December 15, 1925, p. 5.
civilization would collapse. Fundamentalists interpreted their part in the conflict as a defense of their homes and families. They felt that the public schools systems were destroying the faith of their children and thus condemning their souls to eternal damnation in hell. Blaming the apparent moral decay of American society upon the infiltration of modernism into American religion, they envisioned their struggle as one against the mighty forces of Satan.

The fundamentalists were dogmatic in their beliefs, but excessive accusations occurred on both sides of the conflict. At times those defending evolution seemed almost as dogmatic as those opposing it. As the New York Times observed, "Almost daily some one is called a 'son of an ape,' while as often somebody on the other side is taunted with enjoying the notion of being descended from an ancestor made of mud." Cries of "infidel" from the fundamentalists were hardly more frequent than cries of "moron" from the modernists. Apparently neither side attempted to understand

17William Jennings Bryan, In His Image (New York, 1922), pp. 111-116; Houston Post Dispatch, October 6, 1924, p. 7; Conant, The Church, the Schools and Evolution, p. 2; The Fundamentalist, April 6, 1923, p. 8.


or to compromise with the other. Some evolutionists openly declared that the theory did indeed destroy all need for religion, with a few even attempting to establish a new religion centering around the evolutionary doctrine.20 While the fundamentalists precipitated the conflict, evidence does indicate that once it got underway they had some justification for considering evolution a religious doctrine. Some of their opponents accepted it as such, but most people who understood and accepted evolution felt that it did not destroy or interfere with religion.

Fundamentalists also had some justification for their contention that science was replacing religion in the 1920's. During this decade of prosperity Americans were so engrossed in business--in getting and spending--that most had little time for serious spiritual activities. The church, obviously losing its hold on modern man, was no longer the center of the community or the center of individual lives. Science seemed to be the new religion of the materialistic age, as people turned away from the church for an explanation of the universe. No longer awed by natural occurrences, since science seemed to explain everything, many ceased

20Knight Dunlap, "Evolution or What Have You?" American Mercury, XII (December, 1927), 458; New York Times, April 28, 1924, p. 10.
to believe in the supernatural. Science gained tremendous prestige as people increasingly turned to the scientist rather than the preacher to solve their daily problems and to provide them with desired luxuries. As one fundamentalist leader pointed out, "To call a thing scientific is to establish it forever."\(^{21}\)

The new science of psychology seemed even to explain the human soul, while various other sciences were challenging the authority of the Bible. Thus while church attendance generally did not decrease during this period, the church did begin to lose its traditional place as a central institution, at least in urban communities.\(^{22}\) While fundamentalists' fears grew beyond reasonable proportions, their concern did have some basis in fact.

In their campaign against evolution the fundamentalists often lost all sense of reason. Their arguments were characterized largely by ignorance and their failure to understand scientific doctrines. As the *Honey Grove Signal*, an East Texas newspaper, proudly declared, "We don't know anything about evolution, and cherish no hope of ever

\(^{21}\)Riley, *Inspiration or Evolution*, p. 34.

\(^{22}\)Allen, *Only Yesterday*, p. 197.
learning anything about it." To most of the fundamentalists, evolution meant only that man evolved from monkeys, and they never attempted to understand the process by which species developed. When a Virginia pastor in his attack on evolution carried a monkey into the pulpit, the New York Times pointed out that most fundamentalists seemed to have no more insight into evolution than to assume that it meant man was the direct descendant of monkey.

Similarly fundamentalists failed to understand the scope of time involved in the evolutionary process. William Jennings Bryan, major spokesman for the fundamentalists, pointed out that because man had not changed since King Tut evolution could not be true; and fundamentalist minister Thomas Theodore Martin contended that if insects developed before birds, as evolution taught, they would have destroyed all vegetation before fowls appeared. Fundamentalists,

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24 For examples of fundamentalists' failure to understand evolution see such works as Riley, Inspiration or Evolution; Bryan, In His Image; and Alfred McCann, God or Gorilla? (New York, 1922).


26 Waco News Tribune, February 22, 1923, p. 1; Thomas Theodore Martin, The Inside of the Cup Turned Out ... (Jackson, Tennessee, 1932), p. 11.
fearing that the study of evolution endangered one's soul, made little attempt to learn the facts involved in the issue.

Since fundamentalists did not understand the intellectual concepts which were challenging their values, the movement became extremely anti-intellectual in nature. Their anti-intellectualism was most clearly revealed in the attack upon the colleges and teachers. Bryan, for example, contended that the country needed less education and more religion and that education without religion was worthless—even dangerous. Some fundamentalists condemned the colleges as instruments of evil while others regarded professors as the devil's henchmen. They consistently and repeatedly argued that public funds should not be extended to either public or private schools in which teachers contradicted the Bible.

Fundamentalists often expressed fear of being dominated by intellectuals. John Roach Stratton, a militant New York Baptist preacher, thought the real issue at stake in the controversy was whether or not the country was to be ruled

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27The best discussion of this aspect of the controversy is Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism*, pp. 117-141.

by an "'aristocracy' . . . of skeptical school men and agnostics." He regarded the teaching of evolution as an invasion by "outside agnostics, atheists, Unitarian preachers, skeptical scientists, and political revolutionists." Thus the conflict took on the appearance of a struggle of the masses against an evil force of intellectuals.

Most fundamentalists were convinced that evolutionists could not be saved, and that intellectuals could only cause souls to be lost to Satan. Billy Sunday announced unequivocally that Charles Darwin was in hell. Bryan answered the argument that intelligent men could not agree with his theology by pointing out that only 2 per cent of the people had a college education, while the other 98 per cent still had souls. To fundamentalists, spiritual experiences were much more significant than intellectual concepts; hence they viewed intellectualism with distrust and dislike.

In spite of their lack of intellectual support--perhaps because of it--the fundamentalists gained enough followers to become a major force in American life. More than mere

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individual expressions of orthodox belief, fundamentalism became a highly developed movement with effective leaders, organizations, and institutes to carry out its goals. Fundamentalist groups preceded the actual controversy--the first one, the Bible League of America appearing in 1902. This order attempted to restore faith through rational arguments and prepared the way for later organizations. Although its official publication, *Bible Student and Teacher*, criticized scientific discoveries, the group failed because it refused to use the emotional and coercive approach which became essential to fundamentalist success.\(^3\)

The most influential organization, and the one which lasted longest, was the World's Christian Fundamentals Association. Begun in 1916 as a meeting of a small group of orthodox churchmen, it spread its branches across the United States and into Canada. Most active among its leaders was William Bell Riley, a Minneapolis Baptist preacher, but other well-known fundamentalists, such as Straton and James M. Gray, dean of the Moody Bible Institute, were also instrumental in its operation and affairs. Almost all active fundamentalists were connected in some way with this association, which in 1919 declared war on evolution and modernism. In

\(^3\)Furniss, *The Fundamentalist Controversy*, p. 56.
the following decade, with Riley's magazine, *Christian Fundamentals in School and Church*, as its official publication, it took such steps toward preserving orthodoxy as investigating colleges, actively supporting anti-evolution bills, preparing conservative Sunday school lessons, issuing a list of safe textbooks, holding numerous conferences, and issuing countless pieces of literature.\(^{32}\)

Numerous lesser organizations developed. One of the most highly financed was the Bible Crusaders of America, which had the backing of George F. Washburn, a wealthy real estate dealer. This body published the magazine *Crusaders Champion*. The most interesting of the associations was the Supreme Kingdom, formed by Edward Young Clarke who had been a Ku Klux Klan leader until he was charged with several crimes, including adultery, theft, using the mails to defraud, and carrying whiskey. Modeled after the Klan and offering such inducements to membership as singing divisions, life insurance, and sick benefits, the Kingdom's primary goal was to enrich Clarke, and when this became evident the organization declined. The Research Science Bureau attempted to attack evolution on scientific grounds but had little influence. More effective in awakening the

public were groups like the Defenders of the Christian Faith, which dispatched evangelists called Flying Fundamentalists to hold anti-evolution rallies across the country. A rash of similar organizations appeared, including the Bryan Bible League, Anti-evolution League, Schoolbag Gospel League, National Reform Association, and National Association for the Promotion of Holiness. Such organizations helped produce the tons of written material espousing their cause and held thousands of meetings. Almost all of them printed their own newspaper or magazine, and undoubtedly they greatly influenced public opinion. However, as the fundamentalist movement subsided, the organizations lost force and most had disappeared by the end of the decade.

Another significant aspect of fundamentalist offensive was the support it got from orthodox institutes of higher education. It was in these institutions that theologians were trained to carry on the fight. The Moody Bible Institute became the center of fundamentalist activities, sponsoring conferences and conventions for the cause and using its press to produce numerous books and pamphlets.

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educational institutions also opposed modernism, notably the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, William Jewell College, Baylor College for Women, Des Moines University, and Wheaton College of Illinois. Such institutions even banned together to form the Association of Conservative Colleges. 34

More important than either the organizations or the institutes in gaining the fundamentalists nationwide attention was the effectiveness of their leaders. Men such as Straton, Riley, Thomas Theodore Martin of Mississippi, and John Frank Norris of Texas were accomplished orators and especially adept at stirring the emotions of their audiences. While modernists and scientists appealed only on rational grounds, the fundamentalists awakened their listeners' inner feelings. 35 Moreover, for the most part, the intellectual community failed to recognize and combat the dangers of fundamentalists' activities; while the preachers waged war against evolution relatively few opponents struck back. Advocates of fundamentalism exhibited amazing energy in writing and speaking. Riley alone wrote


a forty-volume series, The Bible of the Expositor and the Evangelist, as well as fifteen other religious books. Such works, in addition to the countless meetings that religious leaders held, won large followings to the cause.

By far the most significant fundamentalist leader was William Jennings Bryan. Some observers have even speculated that the movement would have never achieved national proportions had Bryan not become its champion. Throughout his public life Bryan had represented rural America, and he did not hesitate to express his constituency's reaction to modern trends. More than any other public figure he stood for traditional concepts and values. When he told his followers that their way of life was being threatened, they listened and believed. In his simple acceptance of the Bible, in his ignorance of modern science, and especially in his rural perspectives, Bryan embodied all of the essential features of the fundamentalists. As he wrote and spoke for orthodoxy he led his large following to fight for the cause.

Significantly, the climax of the anti-evolution movement, the Scopes trial, centered around Bryan. In Dayton, Tennessee, John Scopes, a high school biology teacher, and a group of

36Furniss, The Fundamentalist Controversy, pp. 31-32.

friends decided to test the state's anti-evolution law. The arrest and trial of Scopes that followed won national attention. The American Civil Liberties Union entered the case and engaged Clarence Darrow and other notable attorneys to defend Scopes while Bryan gave his services to the prosecution. The climax of the trial came when Darrow called Bryan as an expert on religion. Under the defense attorney's searching questions, the limitations of Bryan's mind were quickly revealed, and as a result, both he and the fundamentalist movement suffered an embarrassing exposure. A few days after the trial with Bryan's death, fundamentalism lost its greatest leader.38

The lower court found Scopes guilty, but a higher state court overturned the decision on a technicality and the law's constitutionality went untested. Nevertheless, the case tremendously weakened the anti-evolutionists' forces. Not only was Bryan discredited, but during the course of the trial the facts concerning evolution were brought to light, helping to inform the public and thus change their

38 The most complete account of Bryan's role in the fundamentalist controversy and especially in the Scopes trial is Lawrence W. Levine, Defender of the Faith, William Jennings Bryan: The Last Decade, 1915-1925 (New York, 1965); Ray Ginger, Six Days or Forever? Tennessee v. John Thomas Scopes (Boston, 1958) gives an account of the trial itself.
opinion concerning evolution. After Bryan's death, the prestige of fundamentalism declined rapidly so that by 1929, a survey reported in the New York Times indicated that 94 per cent of the divinity students questioned and 61 per cent of the ministers questioned believed that evolution was consistent with a belief in God.\textsuperscript{39} Although fundamentalism was no longer a national force, it remained influential on a local and regional level.

Before its demise, however, the fundamentalist movement achieved national proportions, winning notable victories in several states and in Protestant denominations. Especially affected by the conflict were the Baptists, Presbyterians, and Disciples of Christ, but arguments also became heated among other groups such as the Episcopalians and Methodists. Some denominations were torn apart with fundamentalists forming splinter groups.\textsuperscript{40} The fundamentalists, however, won some victories in state legislatures. During the decade of the 1920's all states experienced some fundamentalist agitation, and in almost half of the state legislatures

\textsuperscript{39}New York Times, April 13, 1929, p. 20.

\textsuperscript{40}Neibuhr, "Fundamentalism," p. 526; Rollin Lynde Hartt, "The War in the Churches, the Great Split in the Protestant Denominations Over the Issue of Fundamentalism," World's Work, XLVI (September, 1923), 469-477.
anti-evolution bills were introduced. In five states, Oklahoma, Florida, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Arkansas, bills prohibiting the teaching of evolution became law. In other states, such as Louisiana, North Carolina, and Texas, textbooks were censored, or the state board of education took action against evolution. Such measures proved just as effective as laws in hampering scientific development.

Across the nation numerous teachers either lost their jobs or remained silent on the issue. It is impossible to determine precisely the effect of fundamentalism on the academic world since no method can reveal how many teachers were intimidated or hampered in their work. Public opinion and local regulation certainly had more effect than statewide measures, and these cannot be measured exactly. However, judging from the extent of fundamentalist agitation, pressures must have been great.

As the controversy raged across the nation, Texas aligned with the more fundamentalist states. Primarily rural throughout the decade, Texas identified with the South and West where fundamentalism was strongest. The New York Times referred to the state as "fundamentalist-ridden," and

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both Clarence Darrow and Maynard Shipley, one of the leading evolutionists, singled it out as one of the states in which fundamentalism was most likely to succeed. 42

The religious constituency of the state reveals one reason for fundamentalism's success in Texas. The movement was strongest in the Protestant denominations, and Texas was predominantly Protestant. In 1926 the largest denomination in Texas was the Southern Baptist with approximately 465,000 members, while the Negro Baptists had about 234,000 members and the Primitive Baptist about 54,000. 43 The Baptists probably were the most fundamentalist major denomination, and among Texas Baptists such sentiments were especially strong; contemporaries claimed that at least 98 per cent were fundamentalists. 44 The second largest denomination was the Methodist Episcopal Church South which had over 380,000 affiliates, and about 108,000 Texans belonged to other Methodist bodies, including Negro organizations. While nationwide the Methodists were not as affected by the

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controversy as were the Baptists. Texas Methodists were predominantly fundamentalists. Other large denominations in Texas included the Presbyterians with about 79,000 members, the Disciples of Christ with about 77,000 members, and the Church of Christ with about 99,000 members. The denomination which opposed fundamentalism with the most vigor was the Unitarian church which had only 282 Texas members in 1926. \(^45\) Thus the denominations in which fundamentalism had its strongest expression predominated in Texas.

Most Texans' religious beliefs consisted of a simple, unquestioning acceptance of the Bible as literal truth; for the most part they remained indifferent to or ignorant of liberal theological developments. In 1926 the editor of *Texas Utility News* observed that Texans retained much of the pioneer spirit with its lack of culture and sophistication. For the most part they accepted whatever they were most often told about religion. \(^46\) Another contemporary observation of Texas religion appeared in the *American Mercury*. The "corn fed clergy," the author observed, was "the same yesterday, today and forever." Although Texans had accepted new methods

\(^{45}\) *Texas Almanac*, 1929, pp. 220-224. For evidence of Texas Methodists' fundamentalism see below, Chapter III.

\(^{46}\) Quoted in Shipley, *War on Modern Sciences*, p. 185.
of agriculture and other scientific developments, they still believed the "oldest and moldiest parts of the Old Testament." Modern theology had made no progress in Texas; Texans still interpreted the Bible literally and could not accept the kindly God of the modernists. Instead their God was as formidable and vengeful as the devil. 47 Judging from the large crowds fundamentalist preachers drew, from the actions in Texas church denominations, from newspaper accounts of Texas sermons, and from the activities of the Texas government, this article gave a rather accurate, if overdrawn, description of Texas religion. Because of such religious attitudes modernism made little headway in Texas, while fundamentalists drew large crowds. The religious climate of the state provided a perfect opportunity for men like J. Frank Norris to achieve fame and power.

47 Owen P. White, "Reminiscences of Texas Divines," American Mercury, IX (September, 1926), 95.
CHAPTER II

J. FRANK NORRIS: FUNDAMENTALIST CRUSADER

John Franklin Norris, pastor of the Fort Worth First Baptist Church for almost forty years, was the undisputed leader of the Texas fundamentalists during the controversy of the 1920's. He was to Texas fundamentalism what Bryan was to the national movement. In all probability, without Norris the controversy would have been mild in Texas, but his activities made it a major issue. Norris' genius lay in his ability to determine what would appeal to the greatest number of people, and it appears that his desire to attract a large following primarily motivated his staunch defense of the fundamentals. His ability to choose the popular side of such issues enabled him to gain much influence in Texas. His attitudes and methods set the fundamentalist mood in the state and caused the orthodox to battle for the faith with true fighting spirit. He was largely responsible for arousing many Texans' determination to quieten all modernist expression, and his methods of handling evolutionists and modernists helped prevent the development of such beliefs by prominent Texans.
Evangelist, sensationalist, and controversialist, Norris was constantly involved in a battle for some righteous cause against satanic forces that he envisioned were about to destroy civilization. Among the "evils" he fought were dancing, gambling, Sunday movies, Roman Catholicism, the sale of liquor, and modernism in religion. Actually he could find little basis in Texas for waging war against the latter, but when modernists were lacking he created them. He took the statements of prominent men, preferably prominent Baptists, and quoted them out of context, giving what might be a thoroughly orthodox statement a modernistic interpretation. Most Texans he attacked defended themselves, not by arguing in favor of modernism, but by demonstrating their own orthodoxy and fundamentalism.

J. Frank Norris was born in the slums of Birmingham, Alabama, where his father, Warner Norris, was a poorly paid steel worker. Warner Norris drank heavily, and the family was poverty-stricken. In an effort to start anew the family moved when Frank was eleven years old to Hubbard City, Texas.

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where his father became a tenant farmer. Neither the family's financial condition nor Warner Norris' drinking problem improved. Mary Norris, Frank's mother, found solace in religion and instilled her religious fanaticism in her young son. Always having intended for him to preach, she spent hours reading the Bible to him. Thus from his home life Norris got his hate for liquor, his desire to preach, and his belief in the fundamentals of Christianity.

In spite of extreme financial difficulties Norris earned degrees from Baylor and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, of Louisville, with high honors. After graduating from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, he became pastor of McKinney Baptist Church of Dallas, where he quickly demonstrated his unusual talents by building the congregation from thirteen to 1,000.

He quickly won recognition from the Baptist denominational leaders who requested that he become editor of the Baptist Standard. While editing this paper Norris learned the value of controversy to his ministership. Acquiring 51 per cent of the voting stock of the paper, he was able to use it in any way he chose. Through it he soon began his first big fight, an attack on race track gambling, and largely because of his agitation the state legislature passed a law prohibiting such activities. His methods of constantly attacking
the establishment and keeping some controversial issue before the readers of the Standard, however, antagonized the Baptist denominational leaders. Although under pressure he sold his interest in the paper, this experience indicated that controversy could gain him publicity and power.

In 1909 he left Dallas to fill the more prestigious position as pastor of the First Baptist Church of Fort Worth, a position he held until his death in 1952. Under his leadership the church grew to a membership of over 10,000 and acquired a large amount of property, including a newspaper and radio station. Through these media he carried his campaign for the fundamentals of the faith across the state. When his activities led to conflict with the Baptist denomination, Norris broke away and established his own following of fundamentalist churches.

Norris seemed to thrive on notoriety. Several times his church was either damaged or destroyed by fire. When he was indicted for arson concerning one of these fires, he succeeded in making it appear that the evil forces in Fort Worth had burned the church and attempted to frame him.2 In 1926 he was confronted with more serious publicity when he was indicted for murder in the shooting death of

2John Frank Norris, Inside the Cup or My 21 Years in Fort Worth (n. p., 1932), p. 3.
D. E. Chipps. A friend of the Fort Worth mayor whom Norris was attacking, Chipps came to the pastor's church study, where Norris, apparently frightened by his threats, shot him. Although Chipps was unarmed, Norris was acquitted on a plea of self defense. Again he showed little remorse and attempted to capitalize on the event by charging that evil forces had hired Chipps to assassinate him. Norris had an unusual ability to use such situations to his own advantage. He declared that he was "at home" in the midst of controversy and recognized that controversy caused his church to grow rapidly.

Perhaps the cause that interested Norris most in the 1920's was the fundamentalist-modernist controversy. He saw, especially in the anti-evolution campaign, a chance to gain influence and power. Attuned to his Texas audience, he realized that it would be a popular cause. Although his church was located in a large city, his appeal was to those who identified with the country. Those who had recently migrated from rural areas and who still liked to think of themselves as "country folk" were drawn to Norris. He often


referred to himself as a "country Baptist preacher who lives in a cow town up here and fights the devil for a living."

Calling upon the "fork of the creek boys" to destroy modernism, his speeches were replete with allegorical references to farm animals and situations. Norris realized Texans valued the fundamentals of their faith highly. While they did not understand the evolution hypothesis, they distrusted anything that was a product of intellectualism. They constituted an emotional audience, still strongly influenced in the 1920's by the frontier spirit. Recognizing Texans' love of a good fight, Norris knew their suspicions could easily be aroused to hate against "frizzled headed professors." The same type of people who could be aroused to hang or flog a man for little reason could be made to fight a vigorous battle against evolution even where it was little believed or taught.

Few people have been more successful in gaining the support of Texans than Norris, largely because he designed his methods specifically to appeal to them. Among his favorite methods in the battle for fundamentalism, he identified himself with the audience against the suspicious forces of intellectualism by using such phrases as "we common, ordinary

\footnote{The Fundamentalist, October 5, 1923, p. 1; October 14, 1921, p. 4.}
\footnote{Ibid., September 29, 1922, p. 2.}
cornfield backwoods folk." He used humor and ridicule to make his followers feel they were laughing with Norris at intellectual snobs. For example, he defined an evolution professor as "an animal with Van Dyke whiskers, hair parted in the middle because every block has an alley through the center." He ridiculed the professors and the doctrine they taught, as in the following paragraph:

Away back yonder somewhere, nobody knows where--away back yonder some time--nobody konws [sic] when--away back yonder somehow, nobody knows how, one time from some unknown source, something moved in the universe, and that something moved just a little bit, and it was a little germ, and then it became a protoplasm, and that protoplasm moved, and then it began to move a little more, and then after a while began to climb, and then after while it got on ground, and it began to move again, and became enlongated, and got bumps on it, you understand, and these little bumps began to move, and to be used like arms and these bumps began to grow, and those arms became legs; and finally it got a little cartilage and a little backbone, and then it grew a tail, and then it had an eye, and then two eyes, and then got some holes, and then got two ears, and then after a while it grew hair, and after a while it got into the sea, and had fins, and had four legs, and after a while it got up in the trees and grew a wing, and then after a while it had a sweetheart and they began to live in the trees and the big ones began to eat up the smaller ones and some lived in caves and some dwelt in trees, and after a while one of them began to throw coconuts at another one, and bye and bye one of them looked up at the sky, and the rain came down, and washed all the hair off

7 Ibid., September 14, 1923, p. 1.
8 Ibid., November 20, 1925, p. 1.
of his face, and this one that had the hair off ran and stole a suit of clothes and became a professor in Baylor University or some other university.\textsuperscript{9}

Through such ridicule Norris could make the uneducated Texan identify with him and feel superior to the intellectuals. Frequently Norris portrayed himself and his followers as persecuted prophets struggling to overcome forces of evil usually led by the rich and powerful. He identified himself with the Biblical prophets saying he troubled the church "like Isaiah troubled the grafters of Jerusalem, John the Baptist troubled Herod's Court."\textsuperscript{10} Considering himself the representative of the weak and downtrodden, Norris was constantly publicizing how some group--the liquor interests, the Roman Catholics, or the Baptist denominational machine--was determined to destroy him. He always portrayed himself as victorious, however, and he was capable of illustrating his victories in graphic terms. When a district attorney who had opposed Norris was killed in an automobile accident, someone found a broken liquor bottle containing a part of the attorney's brain and carried it to Norris. Taking the exhibit into the pulpit, Norris preached a sermon titled "The Wages of Sin is Death" and used it to illustrate. Of

\textsuperscript{9}Ibid., September 29, 1922, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{10}Ibid., October 28, 1921, p. 3.
of course, this man's worst sin apparently was opposing Norris. The people were terrified and some even fainted, but they loved this kind of sensationalism.\textsuperscript{11}

This use of fear and emotion to enhance his cause was one of Norris' favorite techniques in the fundamentalist controversy. He insisted that modernism and especially the theory of evolution were destroying civilization. Realizing people still feared and hated Germany as an aftermath of the war, he connected evolution with that country. He contended that it was the theory of evolution that "led Germany to the brink" in the war and that this German rationalism was more to be feared than German militarism.\textsuperscript{12} In emotional terms Norris told his audience that if the doctrine of evolution were accepted religion would be destroyed and without religion people would degenerate to the status of the animals with which evolution connected them. Threatening all modernists with doom, he boasted, "I preach old fashioned hell-fire and damnation ... unadulterated repentance and mourners' bench faith gospel. I base all Christianity upon the Bible."\textsuperscript{13} Evidently this was

\textsuperscript{11}Entzminger, J. Frank Norris, p. 112.
\textsuperscript{12}The Fundamentalist, July 28, 1922, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., May 18, 1923, p. 1.
the type of religion that appealed to Texans because, as Norris pointed out, he drew large crowds while the modernists preached to "empty woodyards."^{14}

Determined to rid Texas of all traces of modernism, Norris began a heresy hunt in 1921 by attacking John A. Rice, professor of Bible in Southern Methodist University. Rice had written a book titled *The Old Testament in the Life of Today*, which gave a modernistic interpretation of that part of the Bible. He contended that the Old Testament consisted primarily of Hebrew folklore, which had been verbally repeated for generations before being written down, and referred to the prophets as "little more than roving dervishes." His book was an attempt to illustrate how the religion of the Hebrews had evolved into Christianity. For example, he interpreted Abraham's failure to sacrifice his son as a deviation from the old Hebrew faith which portrayed God as a hard, cruel master. To Norris, Rice's worst heresy was his rejection of the literal interpretation of the Genesis account of creation and the fall of man.^{15}

Norris and other fundamentalists, who failed to understand Rice's logic and intellect, saw in the book only that

^{14}Ibid., May 12, 1921, p. 1.

^{15}S. A. Steel, "From the Pelican Pines," *Texas Christian Advocate*, July 7, 1921, p. 3.
the author denied the infallibility of the Bible. Although Norris was a Baptist and Rice was teaching in a Methodist University, Norris joined wholeheartedly in the attack. In the Searchlight, his church paper, and from the pulpit he issued emotional calls for the people to demand Rice's resignation, calling him an "infidel" and accusing him of destroying the faith of young people. Methodist leaders naturally became disturbed about his attack and replied that they were "able to attend to our own affairs." Norris replied to such criticisms with allegories his audience could understand. He contended that saying such heresy was none of his business was comparable to a man building his hog pen near Norris' kitchen window and claiming it was none of his business.

Rice resigned under pressure, but before his resignation he published a statement replying to the charges made against him. His statement indicated he was not quite the modernist he had been represented as. He believed the Bible was

16 The Fundamentalist, May 12, 1921, pp. 1-2; May 19, 1921, p. 3; May 26, 1921, p. 2.


18 The Fundamentalist, May 12, 1921, p. 1.
inspired by God but revealed progressively to the Hebrew people rather than to individuals, as the fundamentalists contended. He did not openly defend evolution or any of the modernist doctrines.  

In November, 1921, after he resigned Rice was transferred to a pastorate in Oklahoma. During this controversy, Norris realized the popularity of the modernist issue. He received numerous letters and comments supporting his position, and, always looking for a new controversy, he declared he was ready to do full-scale battle for the fundamentals.

Having dealt a harsh blow to modernism in the Methodist church, Norris next turned to the Baptists, and a controversy developed that resulted in a complete break between Norris and the denomination. Some conflict between Norris and other Baptists had begun in December, 1920, when the First Baptist Church discontinued the Sunday school quarterlies and began using the Bible only as its text. Norris did not always agree with the interpretations in these quarterlies and

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19 John A. Rice, "Dr. Rice and the Bible," *Texas Christian Advocate*, July 7, 1921, p. 3.
20 *Texas Christian Advocate*, November 17, 1921, p. 8.
later denounced them as modernistic. Throughout the 1920's Norris tried to convict such prominent leaders as George Truett, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, L. R. Scarborough, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and S. P. Brooks, president of Baylor, of believing in evolution. Most of these leaders were as orthodox as Norris. If they had modernistic leanings they dared not express them for fear of attack from Norris and perhaps loss of their positions. In the beliefs of Truett and Scarborough, Norris could find little evidence of modernism. The most serious charge he could bring against them was that they associated with modernists. Truett invited Shailer Mathews, the heretical president of the University of Chicago, to speak in his pulpit, and Scarborough invited lecturers to the seminary who sympathized with modernism. Both men, however, attended the Baptist World Alliance, which Norris denounced as modernistic.

In reply to Norris' attacks these leaders denied that evolution was believed or taught by any Texas Baptists. They contended that in looking for modernists and evolutionists

\[\text{22 Ibid., December 16, 1920, p. 2; J. Frank Norris, The Norris-Wallace Debates (Fort Worth, 1935), pp. 189-190.}\]

\[\text{23 The Fundamentalist, August 17, 1923, p. 1; April 30, 1926, p. 3; August 3, 1923, p. 1.}\]
among Texas Baptists Norris was "setting up men of straw to knock down,"\textsuperscript{24} which was evidently true. The Baptist Standard, the official organ of the denomination, was almost as concerned with combating the theory of evolution as Norris, and nearly every issue had an article condemning that doctrine.\textsuperscript{25} Scarborough declared that any teacher would be dismissed from Southwestern who "had a streak of modernism or Darwinian or theistic evolution in his teachings as big as the finest feather on an angel's wing."\textsuperscript{26} However, in his accusations against Baylor and Samuel Palmer Brooks Norris enjoyed more success; thus Baylor became his major target during the 1920's. His attacks on Baylor led to his being permanently ousted from the state convention in 1924 and to his final split with the denomination.\textsuperscript{27}

Norris began his assault on Baylor with an investigation of Samuel Dow, a sociology professor. In a book titled \textit{Understanding Sociology}, Dow made several comments which

\textsuperscript{24}The Baptist Standard, February 23, 1922, p. 9.

\textsuperscript{25}Ibid., January 12, 1922, p. 6; January 26, 1922, p. 7; February 3, 1922, p. 13; March 30, 1922, p. 14.

\textsuperscript{26}Ibid., May 17, 1923, p. 9.

Norris could at least represent as supporting the doctrine of evolution. In explaining the process by which man became a social and civilized being, Dow indicated that man had once been a much less intelligent creature, something akin to an anthropoid ape, and that it was only gradually through thousands of years of development that he began to establish family and community living. He did not say man had evolved from another species, but he did point out that the Bible was not clear concerning creation. 28

According to Norris such statements were heresy and worse than atheism. He contended that the Bible made it clear that Adam, the first man, was created instantaneously as a superior and intelligent being. Thus man's family and social life was immediately established. Advertising his intention to expose the teaching of evolution at Baylor, he preached an inflammatory sermon condemning Dow and the administration that allowed such heresy, printed the sermon in The Searchlight, and circulated 100,000 copies of it. 29 Like most of Norris' victims, Dow answered his criticism by trying to prove his orthodoxy rather than trying to defend his position. He contended that he had never believed or

29 Ibid.
taught that man came from another species. He could not convince Norris of his orthodoxy, however, and the attacks continued.

Just as relentless were Norris' attacks on the president of Baylor, S. P. Brooks, who had approved Dow's book and refused to demand his resignation. Norris made his attack retroactive, contending that evolution had been taught at Baylor for fifteen years. He claimed that J. L. Kesler, who had resigned several years prior to Norris' attacks, had been a known evolutionist and that Brooks had defended him also. Norris declared there would be "NO PEACE AHEAD UNTIL THE TEACHING OF RATIONALISTIC AND CHRIST-DENYING THEORIES ARE . . . THROWN OUT OF OUR BAPTIST SCHOOLS."

As in the Rice controversy the fundamentalists were victorious. Dow, whose ideas had actually only bordered on modernism, found the criticism too harsh to be tolerated. He resigned, saying his critics had taken his words out of context and warped their meanings. Brooks expressed regret

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30 The Baptist Standard, November 3, 1921, pp. 6-7.
31 The Fundamentalist, November 11, 1921, p. 1.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid., December 2, 1921, p. 4.
at losing Dow, but Norris jubilantly took credit for the resignation.\textsuperscript{34}

Norris managed also to connect the evolution issue with the financial campaign of the denomination. The Southern Baptist Convention determined that, in order to pay its debts and expand its work, $75,000,000 was needed. The association assigned each church a quota to raise over a period of five years. When Norris, who was conducting a building program of his own, failed to raise his share, he justified his failure by hinting that funds were being mishandled and by pointing out that a large portion of the money supported institutions where evolution was being taught. He vowed his church would not contribute any more money until the Baptists cleaned the teaching of evolution out of their colleges.\textsuperscript{35} Apparently Norris' attacks did damage this fund-raising campaign. Texas denominational leaders announced that the churches were not paying their pledges and that the association faced a serious debt.\textsuperscript{36} Cheerfully taking credit for this situation, Norris claimed that people had refused to support the association because

\textsuperscript{34}Ibid., December 16, 1921, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{35}Entzminger, J. Frank Norris, pp. 179-180; The Fundamentalist, April 7, 1922, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{36}The Baptist Standard, March 15, 1923, p. 1.
it tolerated evolution. People realized, he said, that they could not give to worthy causes like foreign missions without supporting heresy such as evolution since most of the donations were distributed to the colleges.³⁷

During the Dow controversy Norris' following had grown rapidly. He reported that his audiences were larger than ever and that The Searchlight's circulation was increasing rapidly.³⁸ Since Norris had no intention of giving up a cause in which he was enjoying so much success, Dow's resignation did not satisfy him. He declared "those who teach we came from anthropoid apes are still teaching in Baylor."³⁹

Largely because of Pastor Norris' agitation, the 1921 state convention voted to hold an investigation of Texas denominational schools. President Brooks' statement to this committee indicated the dilemma of those who might under other circumstances have accepted evolution. Although Norris had continuously accused him of being a theistic evolutionist, in his statement he disavowed any belief in the doctrine saying, "If we discredit the Scriptures, or if

³⁷The Fundamentalist, April 20, 1923, p. 1.
³⁸Ibid., December 9, 1921, p. 1; December 30, 1921, p. 1.
³⁹Ibid., January 27, 1922, p. 2.
we are Darwinian evolutionists tracing the ancestry of man to monkeys or any other species, then we are unworthy of the highly responsible positions we hold. Brooks said that after reading Dow's book he had questioned him concerning his Christian beliefs and was convinced Dow was not an evolutionist. Before the attack on his book started, Dow had already agreed that the statements that might lead to trouble would be omitted in the next edition.

Members of the investigating committee circulated a petition asking professors whether they believed in such fundamentals as the inspiration of the Scriptures, the Genesis account of creation, and the miracles of the Bible. The committee members began their report by asserting their own belief in these fundamentals in no uncertain terms.

We most uncompromisingly affirm our belief in the Divine inspiration and integrity of the Holy Scriptures in their entirety, and we unqualifiedly accept the Genesis account as the true and inspired account of God's creative hand in the world's making.

In general the report was favorable to Baylor and other Texas colleges. It stated that no teacher was found to believe or

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41 Ibid., pp. 154-155.
42 Ibid., p. 160.
43 Ibid., p. 152.
teach Darwin's theory as fact, although it was presented in the science department as a theory. One teacher did admit his belief in evolution but he had resigned. Two Baylor teachers, Lula Pace and O. C. Bradbury, expressed a belief in some phases of this doctrine, and the committee felt it necessary to print these teachers' own statement regarding their beliefs. Although their position was basically orthodox, the teachers' statement furnished Norris with more ammunition for his attacks. They expressed belief in the Genesis account of creation as "historical and literal facts" but qualified this interpretation by adding that these facts were expressed in "allegorical or figurative language." For example, the "day" spoken of in Genesis could refer to any length of time.44 The report ended by asserting that Baylor University did not make infidels of the students but actually strengthened their faith.45

Of course, the committee's report did not satisfy Norris. He launched a harsh attack on Pace and Bradbury, saying that in denying the Genesis account of creation they were destroying the entire Bible.46 He also attacked Brooks

44Ibid., p. 157.
46The Fundamentalist, September 29, 1922, p. 2.
and the convention for endorsing this report and made Brooks' most orthodox statements seem modernistic. For example, when Brooks said he would not accept any theory of evolution that omitted God, Norris called this theistic evolution, contending that evidently Brooks could accept evolution if God were included in the process. When Brooks declared his fidelity to Biblical truth, Norris interpreted this to mean he believed such a thing as Bible error existed.  

Norris continued to find individual Baylor professors guilty of heresy. The Caskey case indicates Norris' understanding of human nature and the extent to which he was willing to push the evolution issue. He discovered that a young professor at Baylor, William Caskey, had deserted his wife and child for another woman. Never failing to take advantage of such an opportunity, and realizing how people love a scandal, especially one involving sex, Norris began publicizing the issue. Probably from the professor's estranged wife Norris got possession of some love poems and letters that Caskey had written his mistress. One poem titled "Milady's Stockings" expressed his preference for his love's wearing silk rather than wool stockings. This Norris printed on the front page of The Searchlight. He accused

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47 Ibid., November 24, 1922, p. 3; December 8, 1922, p. 1.
Caskey of believing in and teaching evolution although he never brought specific evidence of it. However, Norris claimed this was the sort of thing belief in evolution promoted. The apes in the trees swap mates freely, and evolution by connecting man with apes thus destroyed his moral nature. To the Fort Worth fundamentalist such men as Caskey were merely living according to the dictates of their animal ancestry.\textsuperscript{48} Even a professor's private affairs then formed the basis of an attack by Norris.

One did not necessarily need to teach subjects such as science or Bible, in which the evolution doctrine might be injected, to incur Norris' wrath. Nor did a professor's belief in evolution have to be expressed in the classroom. Even a professor of Spanish came under fire because he admitted his acceptance of evolution in an argument that occurred in his boarding house. Norris expected orthodoxy not only in the classroom but in all phases of a professor's life. Again Brooks defended the professor, saying he had discussed the matter with him, and he explained he had been arguing for argument's sake only. This explanation did not

\textsuperscript{48}Ibid., April 6, 1923, p. 1; April 13, 1923, p. 1; June 29, 1923, p. 1.
appease Norris, and he continued exerting pressure until the professor resigned.\(^{49}\)

In his anxiety to keep the controversy agitated, Norris offered a reward of $100 to any student who would expose evolution in the denominational schools.\(^{50}\) Apparently this offer brought results in at least one instance and started one of the most bitter episodes of the controversy. In September, 1924, Dale Crowley, a young ministerial student at Baylor, brought accusations against Professor Fotergill, who, Crowley contended, had argued for evolution when the issue was brought up in class. When Crowley confronted him personally concerning this incident, the professor replied that he could not accept the Bible literally. Crowley then brought the issue to the attention of President Brooks, but according to Norris, Brooks replied that he did not believe in the instantaneous creation of man and described creation as a process. Crowley also notified Scarborough and Truett of this heresy but no action was taken.\(^{51}\)

Norris portrayed Crowley as a lone, courageous crusader against the evil of evolution. A cartoon of Crowley slaying a huge snake labeled "Evolution in Baylor" appeared in The Searchlight. Another cartoon pictured the student as David

\(^{49}\)Ibid., November 24, 1922, p. 1; December 8, 1922, p. 1.

\(^{50}\)The Fundamentalist, April 25, 1924, p. 1.

\(^{51}\)Ibid., September 26, 1924, pp. 1-3.
reciting Scripture and portrayed President Brooks as Goliath defending evolution and Baylor. The university gave Norris the opportunity to make this portrayal appear more realistic by expelling Crowley. Nothing could have advanced Norris' position more. He began to insist upon academic freedom and freedom of speech, apparently not realizing the inconsistency of his position. Crowley was not allowed a hearing before his expulsion, and to make matters worse for Baylor, the resolution expelling him was signed by Caskey, the "infidel" Norris had accused of wife desertion. When Crowley appealed to the Texas Baptist Convention to reinstate him, Norris gave his complete support in an article under the headline, "WILL BAPTIST CONVENTION OF TEXAS PERMIT MINISTERIAL STUDENT DALE CROWLEY TO BE SACRIFICED TO THE PAGAN GOD OF EVOLUTION?"

The fundamentalists won this battle. Although Crowley was not reinstated, he was called to a large church in Texas City while Fothergill resigned. In his resignation Fothergill stated he had been "misunderstood and unscrupulously maligned by designing persons." Although he did not openly admit

52 Ibid., October 10, 1924, p. 1; November 21, 1924, p. 1.
53 Ibid., October 31, 1924, pp. 1-2.
54 Ibid., December 4, 1925, p. 1.
his belief in evolution, he did have the courage to admit that he questioned the story of Noah's ark since the ark could not possibly have been large enough for all the animals. This was evidently a brave statement for a Texas Baptist, and Norris assailed him for it, saying to deny the ark was to "call Jesus a liar."56

Norris insisted that professors should be required to sign a statement rejecting belief in evolution and that the Southern Baptist Convention should take an unequivocal stand on the issue. In 1925 the Convention passed a resolution affirming its belief in the Genesis account of creation. However, Norris and other fundamentalists felt this was not strong enough and demanded a statement directly refuting the evolution hypothesis. In 1926 the convention, meeting in Houston, accepted the opening statement of the president as its official stand on the issue. He asserted belief in the Genesis story of creation and refuted any theory such as evolution that denied the validity of this account. A second resolution was passed that requested all Baptist boards and institutions to endorse this statement of belief.57 When Brooks refused to sign it, Norris used this as the basis for

56 Ibid.
another bitter attack. He quoted Brooks as saying, "I would die and rot in my grave before I would sign the Houston resolution." Brooks' hesitation indicated that he probably did sympathize to some extent with the modernists.

In the summer of 1927, while the controversy concerning the 1926 resolution was raging, Norris embarrassed the denomination again by discovering further evidence of belief in evolution at Baylor. He wrote the trustees of Baylor informing them of the heresy of W. P. Meroney, the professor who had replaced Dow. When they failed to remedy the situation, Norris published excerpts from a book by Meroney. Actually much that Norris objected to was quoted material. Merony had stated that the origin of such things as the family, language, and religion was unknown. Norris insisted the Bible gave this information, and Baptists, he claimed, should not employ a man who doubted that Adam and Eve were the originators of the family. When Meroney contended that he did not teach evolution as a fact, Norris replied that no evolutionist claimed the theory could be proven and that it should not be taught at all. Like others before him,


59 Norris to the Trustees of Baylor University, August 16, 1927, The Papers of John Frank Norris, 1927-1952, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

60 The Fundamentalist, September 9, 1927, p. 1.
Meroney was unwilling to admit any modernistic beliefs and confirmed that he did not "BELIEVE OR TEACH THAT MAN WAS EVOLVED FROM LOWER FORMS OF LIFE." He insisted that he believed man "CAME INTO EXISTENCE BY THE DIRECT CREATIVE ACT OF GOD, AS STATED IN GENESIS 2:27."\(^{61}\)

The evolution issue had become so agitated among Texas Baptists by 1927 that traditional Baptist leaders realized that steps had to be taken to regain the confidence of the people. In the 1927 convention President Brooks and the Baylor faculty signed the Houston resolution repudiating evolution and Norris announced that the "SEVEN YEARS' WAR ON EVOLUTION AMONG TEXAS BAPTISTS [had been] BROUGHT TO A GLORIOUS END."\(^{62}\) After this settlement, Norris continued to attack the denomination, but modernism was no longer the central theme in his attack. He concentrated instead on the issues of institutionalism and machine domination of the church. The prominent Texas Baptists, whom Norris had been slandering for seven years, gave a radio broadcast in which they bitterly attacked Norris and pointed out the inaccuracies of his statements.\(^{63}\) The battle continued between Norris

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\(^{61}\) *The Baptist Standard*, October 16, 1924, p. 8.


\(^{63}\) Norris, *Inside the Cup*, pp. 50-51.
and the denomination for the rest of his life, but after the 1920's the fundamentalist movement began to lose importance as a national issue. Thus it ceased to be the all-important issue between Norris and the Baptists.

Norris did not confine himself to attacks on the Baptists, and outside the denomination he found more basis for his accusations. In 1924 he challenged Lee W. Heaton, Rector of the Trinity Episcopal Church and apparently one of the few real modernists in Texas. To the General Pastor's Association of Fort Worth Heaton read a paper in which he admitted he could not accept the Bible as literal truth. He explained that modernism was an attempt to express Christianity in a way acceptable to those who understood science and modern thought. After reading his paper he opened himself to questions. Replying to questions put to him by Norris and others, he admitted his belief that the Old Testament was largely myth and tradition. He and Norris argued, with Norris staunchly defending the fundamentals. The session became absurd, with the pastors arguing over such points as what became of Christ's body and how he got out of the tomb. Realizing that conduct in the meeting was not befitting ministers of the gospel, the members of the association passed a resolution that none of the proceedings were to be published. However, Norris' stenographer
had accompanied him and he, disregarding the resolution, published a full stenographic account. He also published a letter from Heaton requesting that the account not be printed and calling the session a "ridiculous heckling."

Heaton asked God to forgive Norris for the hatred he had brought to Fort Worth in God's name. However, Norris replied that Heaton should not be afraid for his congregation to know his views and proceeded to publish the account along with an attack on Heaton.

Apparently the religious climate in Texas was unfavorable to such men as Heaton as there were few of them, and in 1925 Heaton decided to give up preaching, become a salesman, and leave Texas. Although he declared his own congregation had been loyal to him, he evidently did not feel that remaining in the ministry was worth being confronted with attacks from men like Norris. The Heaton case illustrates one reason for fundamentalism's success in Texas. Like Heaton, most Texas modernists did not wage vigorous campaigns against fundamentalism, and their rational, unemotional arguments apparently did not appeal to Texas audiences.

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64 The Fundamentalist, April 11, 1924, pp. 1-4.
Norris was also a leader in the campaign to rid public schools of the teaching of evolution. In 1923 when a bill came before the state legislature that would have forbidden the teaching of evolution in state-supported schools, Norris spoke in the legislature in behalf of the bill. He argued that teaching this doctrine was contrary to the bill of rights because it was a tenet of faith rather than a scientific principle and teaching it would be forcing an unchristian faith upon the young people.66 Undoubtedly the agitation Norris caused was an important factor in the decision of the textbook committee in 1925 to order all references to evolution deleted from Texas textbooks.67

Through national and international fundamentalist organizations Norris' influence spread outside the state. He was said to be the only Southern Baptist who had an important part in shaping the policies of the World's Christian Fundamentalist Association. He served on a committee in that organization to write a Bible course of Sunday school lessons teaching the Bible only and remained


an important figure in it throughout the 1920's. He also became affiliated with the Baptist Bible Union, whose purpose it was to destroy modernism within the Baptist church. Through these organizations Norris was able to preach his gospel supporting the fundamentals of Christianity across the United States and to gain a nationwide reputation.

Since childhood Norris had been schooled in the fundamentals of Christianity and refused to reject these teachings. However, his part in the fundamentalist movement suggests his stand was motivated by more than a desire to defend what he believed to be right. When he failed to gain status and influence within the traditional denomination, he began agitation calculated to gain him a large following from its ranks. Although not all of his attacks were directed against Baptists, most of his battles were designed to embarrass the denomination. That he was interested in more than defending the faith is indicated by the fact that he often accused orthodox people of modernistic beliefs. He was more interested in using the controversy to his own advantage than in the fundamentalist cause itself, but he succeeded in making it a major issue in Texas.


The popularity of fundamentalism and Norris' large following reveal significant characteristics of Texans in the 1920's. Basically Texas was still a rural area; even many people who had migrated to cities for economic reasons yearned to return to the land. It was this provincial audience that found fundamentalism most appealing. Subscribing to the Jeffersonian belief that the simple farmer was the ideal man, they distrusted education and rejected new ideas. Their basic beliefs, they felt, were being threatened by the recent scientific discoveries, especially that of evolution.

Norris was the most influential Texas figure in perpetuating this narrow attitude in the 1920's. It is difficult to determine the extent of his influence in suppressing intellectual development. Norris credited himself with the resignation of seven college professors, but his influence cannot be measured solely in terms of the number of people he forced from their positions. He also undoubtedly caused many intelligent but sensitive people to suppress their beliefs. Such men as Brooks and Scarborough were forced to confirm repeatedly their fundamentalism and were not allowed to participate in the development of modern thought.

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70 Norris, Inside the Cup, p. 47.
Intellectuals in other parts of the country, who might otherwise have been interested in seeking positions in Texas, must have regarded the situation as intolerable. Thus what did not take place in Texas becomes an important measurement of Norris' influence and of Texans' attitudes. The rarity of modernistic expressions in Texas indicates that Norris' ability as a crusader, complemented by Texans' willingness to accept his cause, was largely successful in suppressing intellectual development in the 1920's.
CHAPTER III

CONTROVERSY IN THE PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS

In Texas, as in other states, the Protestant churches constituted the major battlefield for the fundamentalist-modernist controversy. Agitation both from modernists and from the extreme fundamentalists forced the various denominations to issue statements and resolutions giving their official positions. In Texas their stands were generally for the fundamentals of the faith. While Protestant bodies issued statements condemning evolution and opposing its being taught in the schools, committees investigated denominational schools and professors lost their positions. Several denominations came near splitting, and ironically the Baptist church, the most fundamentalist, was torn apart, with the extremists following J. Frank Norris.

The controversy hurt all of the denominations that became involved. The whole conflict shook the faith of the people in their churches as they became disillusioned by their leaders' inability to agree and by the intolerance on both sides. The result was a decrease in influence and in financial support. In addition, flagrant violations of
academic freedom discouraged able teachers from accepting positions in church schools and forced others out. Young people were discouraged by actions against men whom they knew to be fine teachers and profound thinkers. As the controversy developed it appeared that the churches were standing against science and progress—an unfavorable position in the modern world. Fundamentalism was foredoomed to failure; it could not win the battle against the overwhelming evidence of scientific research. In the end the denominations' support of it made them seem reactionary proponents of a former age. Today church leaders do not like to remember the controversy and frequently omit it from histories of their churches.

Texas Baptists gave vehement support to the fundamentalist sentiment that dominated the Southern Baptist denomination during the 1920's. The nature of the Baptist church, with its frequent adoption of creeds and statements of faith, made it susceptible to fundamentalism. As one preacher pointed out, no one could fail to accept the Bible literally and be a Baptist.¹ As a denomination the Southern Baptists stood adamantly for the fundamentals.

¹Dallas Morning News, January 7, 1923, p. 10; Baptist Standard, June 12, 1924, pp. 1, 9.
Nevertheless, Southern Baptists were not without their modernist heretics. Most notable exceptions to the rule of orthodoxy were William Poteat, president of Wake Forest College, North Carolina, Willis Weatherford, president of Southern College of the YMCA, and John White, president of Anderson College, South Carolina. Of these William Poteat, who openly admitted belief in evolution, was the most liberal minded and outspoken. However the majority made life uncomfortable for these more liberal leaders, discouraging less courageous potential modernists.\(^2\)

Although it had always opposed the theory of evolution, the Southern Baptist Convention first officially declared its orthodoxy in 1925. The convention of that year passed a resolution that "Man was created by the special act of God as recorded in Genesis," but aroused fundamentalists' ire by refusing to add "and not by evolution."\(^3\) The following year, after intense agitation from the fundamentalist camp, the convention rectified this mistake by accepting as the denomination's official stand the opening statement of the convention's president George McDaniel. He declared that the Baptists accepted "Genesis as teaching


\(^3\) *The Fundamentalist*, May 1, 1925, p. 1.
that man was the direct creation of God and reject [ed] every theory, evolution or other, which teaches that man originated in or came by way of a lower animal ancestry."\textsuperscript{4}

Just to insure that no modernist or evolutionist was hiding among them, the convention asked all Baptist boards and institutions to sign the McDaniel resolution.\textsuperscript{5} Such actions undoubtedly made the Southern Baptist denomination unappealing to many free thinkers, even those who did not accept evolution.

The majority of Texas Baptists were in complete accord with the Southern Baptists' most orthodox declarations. Prominent Texas Baptists frequently made public denunciations of evolution and condemned modernism. One Texas leader declared, "There aren't enough highbrow professors to drag me away from the religion I learned at my father's knee."\textsuperscript{6} Texas Baptists were forced into an even more fundamentalist stand than members of that denomination in other states because of Norris' constant agitation.

The traditional denomination took a stand between the extreme fundamentalism of Norris and modernism. Actually, modernists were practically non-existent among Texas Baptists,

\textsuperscript{4}Ibid., February 11, 1927, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{5}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{6}Waco News Tribune, March 2, 1923, p. 1.
so that the battle was between conservatives and ultra-conservatives, not modernists and fundamentalists. In Texas, controversy arose not over orthodoxy, but over the degree of orthodoxy. It is paradoxical that fundamentalist agitation became so intense within a denomination which agreed almost unanimously upon the fundamentals.

In spite of its own fundamentalist stand, the denomination strongly opposed organized fundamentalism. Leaders repeatedly insisted that heresy must be fought from within the denomination and opposed such groups as the Baptist Bible Union and the World's Christian Fundamentals Association. They regarded the organized fundamentalist groups as inter-denominational and referred to their members as "Big (F) Fundamentalists."7 Scarborough declared that he had no quarrel with the theology of these groups since he had not "one drop of modernist blood" in his veins; yet he disapproved of their methods and felt that organizing against heresy across denominational lines would only weaken the churches.8 In Texas, the Baptist Standard clearly revealed this ambivalence with its frequent articles opposing evolution

7Baptist Standard, July 9, 1925, p. 10; July 16, 1925, p. 11.
8Ibid., July 20, 1922, p. 10.
and supporting the fundamentals, yet harshly criticising Norris and the fundamentalist organizations.  

The Texas Baptist General Convention took a similar position against modernism and against agitation from organized fundamentalism. Although the convention strongly opposed Norris, it did some heresy hunting itself and insisted, just as he did, that the schools remain free of all traces of modernism.

One of the major problems in stamping out heresy was the presence of evolution in textbooks and the apparent impossibility of finding science books that were free of it. Perhaps this should have indicated the theory's near universal acceptance in the scientific world; instead it made Baptists more determined to find or produce books reflecting their own views. In 1922 the Texas Baptist General Convention appointed a committee to cooperate with the Southern Baptist Convention in achieving more acceptable textbooks. The report of the committee's action appeared in 1925. Both the

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9 Ibid., February 23, 1922, pp. 1, 8; January 5, 1922, p. 8; September 28, 1922, pp. 1 and 9; April 19, 1923, p. 1; May 10, 1923, p. 1; May 17, 1923, p. 9; February 2, 1929, p. 4.

10 Ibid., April 20, 1922, p. 10; Annual of the Baptist Convention of Texas, Held at Dallas, Texas, December 1, 1921, Containing the Proceedings of the 73rd Annual Session (n. p., n. d.), p. 21.
Southern and the Texas Baptist committee recognized the difficulties involved and decided that since books could not be found, Baptist professors or other orthodox people should be engaged to produce them. The Sunday School Board would then publish them. Such problems as expense and time prevented completion of the project, but the attempt illustrates the extent of Baptist determination to destroy the heresy of evolution.

The Texas convention began refuting evolution in 1920 and continued to do so until the controversy ceased to be a major issue in the latter part of the decade. Norris' attacks and accusations continued unabated, forcing the convention into an unequivocal stand for the fundamentals but against extreme fundamentalist agitation. In 1921 the convention opposed rationalism and destructive criticism and placed personal evangelism above social service. To be sure that no one doubted Baptists' complete orthodoxy, they resolved that the convention "unqualifiedly accepts the Genesis account as the true and inspired account of God's creative hand in the world's making" and further affirmed that "we believe no teacher should be allowed to hold a

position in any of our Baptist schools who teaches in any form any of the above named heresies."\(^1\)\(^2\) It would be difficult to find a more dogmatic statement among the records of the world's Christian Fundamentals Association itself. Because of the Norris-inspired accusations against the schools, a committee was appointed to investigate and determine whether or not heresy was being taught.\(^1\)\(^3\)

In the 1922 convention, when their report uncovered the minor heresies of Pace and Bradbury—who accepted Genesis but thought that the language might be allegorical—a special committee of seven was appointed to report on the first committee's findings. Both committees returned the report that no Baylor teachers accepted Darwinian evolution as fact or taught it as such.\(^1\)\(^4\) Since attacks from Norris were becoming increasingly bitter, another resolution was passed disapproving of "indiscriminate and destructive criticism waged against this convention."\(^1\)\(^5\) Although the reports gave the schools a clean bill of health, the

\(^{12}\)Texas Baptist Annual, 1921, p. 172.

\(^{13}\)Ibid.


\(^{15}\)Ibid., pp. 15-16.
convention instructed their various institutions not to employ "anyone who denies the Deity of Jesus Christ or the inspiration of the Bible, or who holds to the Darwinian theory of evolution or any theory of evolution that contravenes the teaching of the Word of God." Not a dissenting vote was cast against this resolution. The President of Baylor along with other school officials affirmed belief in the fundamentals, including the Genesis account of creation and vowed that any teacher who violated these beliefs would be immediately dismissed.

Actions of the 1922 convention should have dispelled any doubts that Texas Baptists had a trace of modernism, but Norris, not being prone to logic, continued his attacks. Because of his opposition, the convention refused to seat him in 1922 and 1923 and permanently excluded him from membership in 1924. Nevertheless, he bragged that he still influenced the denomination more than any other man.

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16 Ibid., p. 19.


Judging from the convention's frequent attention to fundamentalism and objection to his activities, his boast undoubtedly contained some truth. In 1923 the convention urged unity while again expressing disapproval of the discord Norris was causing within Baptist ranks. Evidently he was hurting Baptist financial campaigns and destroying confidence among the people. The convention found it necessary to reaffirm the fundamentalism of their own members and to recondemn Darwinism.19

In 1924, evolution was still a major issue. When Norris delegates were again refused seats and his church permanently ousted, he sent a telegram saying that the convention endorsed evolution. Nothing could have been further from the truth, and the convention replied that the telegram was "an insult to this convention."20 Again the convention condemned Norris' attacks and declared that his activities deterred intelligent people from entering the teaching profession since no one was free from his abuse. A letter bearing the signatures of the entire Baylor faculty which denied acceptance of evolution as fact was calculated to restore Baptist confidence in the institution.21

19 Texas Baptist Annual, 1923, p. 42.
21 Ibid., pp. 57-61; 61-62.
for unity indicated the schismatic influence of Norris' activities.

Norris seemed quite pleased with his detrimental effect on the denomination. He indicated that the Baptist church was about to split, with the fundamentalists breaking away from the modernists. Nevertheless, modernism still had no significant following among Texas Baptists. The Baptist Standard vowed that the denomination was in every way as fundamentalist as Norris himself; real Baptists only objected to his methods.

In 1925, Norris and fundamentalism remained effective forces among Texas Baptists. Various schools still felt it necessary to declare their orthodoxy. The convention issued a statement that Baylor's acceptance of funds from the Rockefeller foundation did not mean that it taught modernism, as Norris claimed, while other schools declared their devotion to the fundamentals in even stronger terms. Rusk college was referred to as "a mighty break water against false teaching," while Carroll College declared, "we have written into the charter of this institution that no textbook shall ever be used in this school that in any way contradicts the

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22 Austin Statesman, July 4, 1925, pp. 1, 3.
23 Baptist Standard, July 2, 1925, p. 11.
24 Texas Baptist Annual, 1925, pp. 62, 94.
Word of God." After 1925, as fundamentalism subsided nationally it became less important among the Baptists although Norris continued to pester the denomination. However, it remained a strong force, especially in the schools. In 1926, one Baptist college still demanded that all teachers sign a statement declaring belief in all the fundamentals, including the Genesis account of creation. Baylor University reported that all new faculty members were required to endorse the fundamentalist declaration that the entire faculty had signed in 1924.

In 1927, the convention issued "A Statement and a Resolution" calculated to prove once and for all that Texas Baptists were orthodox, and especially that Baylor University and President Brooks were pure. The statement declared,

For a number of years a bitter, persistent and malicious attack has been made by a certain well known leadership in Texas on the causes, institutions and leaders of Texas and the Southern Baptists. These attacks are timed especially to hinder the campaigns for funds made by the co-operating forces of these causes.

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At that time Norris was assailing Professor Meroney and the statement was made so that "the brotherhood may understand the spirit of the attack and its baselessness." Belief in the Genesis account of creation was again affirmed and evolution rejected. "Of course, everybody at this present convention accepts the McDaniel statement," the statement vowed. Norris' various criticisms of Brooks and Baylor were denied and a review of their adherence to fundamentalism given. Even Norris accepted this move as the end of the war on evolution and declared that the fundamentalists had won. Norris' acceptance indicated that he realized that the issue was losing its popularity, not that he at last believed all heresy had been destroyed in the Baptist schools.

When Norris' agitation over evolution stopped, it ceased to be a major issue among Texas Baptists. Nevertheless, the convention again declared the orthodoxy of its schools in 1928, and in 1929 the emphasis was still on personal evangelism rather than on social work. Although evolution

28 Ibid.
29 Ibid., p. 25.
was no longer an issue in the state convention, the controversy continued on a local level for many years. As late as 1929, leaders still could not openly support evolution. The editor of the Baptist Standard, Edwin McConnell, wrote an editorial opposing the 1929 Texas anti-evolution bill.32 Previously the periodical had strongly supported bills to prohibit the teaching of evolution.33 Even in 1929, McConnell drew strong fire from his readers and was forced to write another editorial giving further explanation for his position. He explained that he did not believe in evolution and that he was convinced that it should not be taught in the schools. However, he pointed out that it was in all of the textbooks and that it was foolish to prohibit the teachers from teaching what was in the books they had to use. Contending that such laws hindered scientific research and inhibited progress, he claimed that existing statutes prevented the teachers from taking an atheistic approach in discussing the doctrine.34 The opposition that his editorial drew indicates that many Baptists were still demanding orthodoxy from their spokesmen.

32Baptist Standard, January 31, 1929, p. 4.
33Ibid., July 9, 1925, p. 6; July 16, 1925, p. 6; February 10, 1927, p. 9.
34Ibid., March 21, 1929, p. 5.
Undoubtedly Norris' loss of influence among the cooperating Baptists contributed to the decline in the evolution discussion within the denomination. He continued to have a very significant following of his own, his church remained large and powerful, and he continued to harass the denomination. But he now turned to issues other than evolution, and regular Baptists no longer took his accusations so seriously. A good indication of his loss of influence can be seen in the Dawson controversy. James M. Dawson was perhaps Texas Baptists' closest approximation to a modernist. Although he denied any belief in evolution and professed belief in the inspiration of the scriptures, he strongly supported freedom of thought and opposed the fundamentalists. In 1929, he wrote an article for Plain Talk, a New York magazine, in which he pointed out the inadequacies of southern education and blamed its shortcomings largely upon the influence of religious fundamentalism. 35

Norris launched a bitter attack on Dawson for his article and also accused him of modernism, pointing out that Dawson once said Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by volcanic fire, rather than by fire and brimstone from hell. 36


36 Ibid.; ibid., November 30, 1928, p. 6; June 14, 1929, p. 2.
Dawson replied to the accusations by denying that he was a modernist and ridiculing Norris' claims. Traditional Baptists now seemed to resent Norris' attacks, and even the ardent fundamentalist Thomas Theodore Martin accused Norris of insincerity and defended Dawson in the controversy. Since it now seemed obvious to more and more people that Norris was seeking out controversy, he apparently did not harm Dawson's reputation among the Baptists. Dawson continued writing for the *Baptist Standard* and maintained a position of influence. By the end of the 1920's Norris' following had broken ties with the Baptist denomination so that he had little influence within it. Basically the denomination remained fundamentalist although it no longer felt compelled to declare its position so frequently.

Although on the national scene the Methodist suffered less from fundamentalism than most of the other Protestant denominations, it became a controversial issue among Texas Methodists. The nature of the Methodist church, with its absence of specific doctrine, helped insure it against fundamentalist agitation. As one leading churchman pointed out, Methodism is a church of the spirit, not one of dogma;

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37 *Baptist Standard*, July 4, 1929, p. 2; Thomas Theodore Martin, *The Inside of the Cup Turned Out* . . . (Jackson, Tennessee, 1932), passim.
it emphasizes personal religion above established dogma. In addition, its founder, John Wesley, left a heritage of ideas which were easily reconciled with modern science. He did not insist that the Bible was free of error, believing that its validity did not depend upon its scientific accuracy. Writing that "The ape is a rough sketch of man," he had noted the similarity between man and animals and expressed belief that man had evolved. The Methodist Review, a northern Methodist publication, declared that the Methodist church was completely free from any fundamentalist agitation, largely because it emphasized freedom of thought and the social gospel.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, had in its ranks and among its leadership proponents of both modernism and fundamentalism; yet the leaders carefully avoided controversy within the denomination. The fundamentalists, like Warren Candler and Joseph Cannon, generally attacked modernism in abstract terms rather than directing criticism toward


39 Cited in Philip L. Frick, "Why the Methodist Church is so Little Disturbed by the Fundamentalist Controversy," Methodist Review, CVII (May, 1924), 422-423.

40 Ibid., pp. 425-426.
Methodist modernists such as Edwin Mouzon. For the first five years of the 1920's denominational publications opposed modernism and the teaching of evolution, but after 1925 articles appeared reconciling science and religion.\(^4\)

Probably the most significant effect of the controversy upon the denomination as a whole was that it was a significant factor in preventing merger of the northern and southern branches. Southerners feared that the modernistic views of the northerners would corrupt the denomination.\(^4\)

The controversy disturbed Texas Methodists more than it did the denomination as a whole. During the first half of the decade of the 1920's fundamentalist interpretations dominated the Texas church. Walter Vernon in *Methodism Moves Across North Texas* speculated that Texas Methodists, swayed by agitation within other denominations, remained fundamentalists largely because of their ignorance of their own church doctrines.\(^4\) At that time the church in Texas was divided into five conferences, the Texas Conference (East Texas), Central Texas Conference, North Texas Conference,


\(^4\)Dallas Morning News, March 1, 1925, p. 1; April 11, 1925, p. 3; April 17, 1925, p. 1.

Northwest Texas Conference, and West Texas Conference. All of these at some time during the years 1921 through 1925 expressed fundamentalist views, and the state publication, the Texas Christian Advocate, remained strongly fundamentalist until after 1925. Methodist schools were investigated with at least two professors losing their positions, while freedom of expression was inhibited on the local and state level.

Fundamentalism struck Texas Methodists first with the Rice controversy, the one in which Norris was a key figure. The Baptist preacher was not alone in his campaign against the Southern Methodist University professor; Rice's Methodist brethren also helped drive him from the state. The Texas Christian Advocate opened its pages to a discussion of Rice's teaching and his book, The Old Testament in the Life of Today. Although the editor announced that he was impartial in the controversy, the overwhelming majority of the letters and articles appearing condemned the professor. Rice's most significant supporter was Bishop Edwin Mouzon, an outstanding southern liberal theologian. In an article published in the Texas Christian Advocate Mouzon wrote that the New Testament and not the Old was the foundation of Christianity and that the Bible could be accepted as neither

44 Texas Christian Advocate, October 6, 1921, p. 8.
science nor history. He argued that Rice's book was a forward step in understanding the Scriptures. The volume also received praise from the northern Methodists while objections came primarily from Rice's own state. 

An article by Reverend R. A. Langston expressed the sentiments of most Texas Methodists. He accused Rice of destroying the Methodist faith by denying that Eve literally ate an apple and thus fell from grace. Although Rice made no mention of evolution, Langston found basis for accusing him of Darwinism in his statement that man once lived by instinct. S. A. Steal, writer of a regular column in the Texas Christian Advocate, devoted much of his space to assailing Rice. He accused the professor of reducing the Old Testament to the same level as "Mother Goose Rhymes" and of teaching that Adam was an ape. Methodists, pastors and laymen alike, joined the attack and by August


46 R. A. Langston, "Shall Methodists Retreat from their Doctrine of the Fall of Man and the Integrity of the Scriptures," ibid., August 4, 1921, p. 3.

47 S. A. Steel, "From the Pelican Pines," ibid., April 14, 1921, p. 1, July 7, 1921, p. 3, August 11, 1921, p. 2.
and September of 1921 were demanding his resignation.\textsuperscript{48} Although Methodist attacks usually were not as militant and bitter as Norris', they were, since they came from his own people, just as significant in causing Rice's resignation in November, 1921.

In 1921, as a result of this controversy, the various Texas conferences officially recorded their fundamentalist views. The Texas Conference reaffirmed its faith in the "authenticity of the Holy Scriptures" and opposed "ration- alistic teaching from any source."\textsuperscript{49} The North Texas Conference took an even stronger stand. It not only reaffirmed belief in the inspiration of the Bible but congratulated Southern Methodist University for Rice's resignation, asked church institutions to employ no more teachers who were disloyal, and urged the removal from Methodist schools of Rice's book and others that contained objectionable teachings.\textsuperscript{50}


\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Journal of the 81st Annual Session of the Texas Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Held at Beaumont, Texas, November 17-21, 1921} (n. p., n. d.), p. 52.

\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Journal of the 55th Annual Session of the North Texas Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Held at Dallas, Texas, October 26-31, 1921} (n. p., n. d.), p. 58.
Northwest Texas Conference took similar actions, instructing its representatives on the various boards to stand for the elimination from our schools and colleges from editorial control of any and all of our church and Sunday Schools for the withdrawal from all mission fields, as well as for the elimination from all connectional places and from all positions of influence or power among us all persons who held unorthodox views. The West Texas Conference, while it claimed to support authentic scholarship, repudiated "so-called scholarship" that assailed "the divine origin and integrity of the Holy Scriptures." Instead, the delegates called for wholesome teachings in the schools. Only the Central Conference, the group to which Rice had belonged, remained silent on the issue.

The controversy concerning Rice was only the beginning of fundamentalist agitation among Texas Methodists. Another milder controversy arose in 1923, one which revealed Texas Methodists' failure to conform to broader Methodist movements. In the summer of 1923, a training program for Sunday school workers convened at Lake Janaluska, North Carolina, where

51 Journal of the 12th Annual Session of the Northwest Texas Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Held at Amarillo, Texas, October 5-9, 1921 (n. p., n. d.), p. 49.

52 Journal of the 63rd Annual Session of the West Texas Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Held at San Antonio, Texas, October 19-21, 1921 (n. p., n. d.), p. 67.
orthodox Methodists were shocked by the modernistic leanings of one of the speakers. When Bishop Cannon and others criticized this speaker for doubting parts of the Old Testament, especially the book of Genesis, Texans lined up with the fundamentalists.  

Three of the five Texas conferences passed strong resolutions condemning the program, the North Texas Conference declaring that the teachings were out of harmony with Methodism. After adopting this resolution, the Northwest Conference further protested the Methodist Quarterly Review's defense of modernism, affirming belief in the inspiration of both the Old and New Testaments, and directly disavowing evolution. The conference resolved: "We firmly believe that man is the offspring of God and not of a gorilla nor of any other evolutionary process." The Central Conference also disavowed connection with the Lake Janaluiska speaker and


55 Journal of the 14th Annual Session of the Northwest Texas Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Held at Plainview, Texas, October 31-November 4, 1923 (n. p., n. d.), p. 33.
affirmed its belief in the Bible "book by book." Declaring that "We must not make a fetish of mere learning," it added that teaching in the Methodist schools must remain orthodox, thus compensating for its failure two years before to rebuke Rice. 56

In 1923, another feud concerning Methodist schools exploded, and, as in the Rice controversy, Norris was a leading crusader. W. E. Hawkins, Jr., an amateur J. Frank Norris, actually started agitation within the church. In early January, 1923, an explosive meeting took place in Fort Worth to investigate the charge that evolution was being taught in denominational schools, especially Texas Women's College and Southern Methodist University. Hawkins brought charges against Dr. Read, professor of Bible at Texas Women's College, while several others testified against the schools. Agreement was reached to form an investigating committee to review the situation. 57

Reporting the affair in his Searchlight, Norris, along with Hawkins and others, charged that the committee covered up the facts. Norris invited W. C. Pool, a farmer, into


57 The Fundamentalist, January 5, 1923, p. 4.
his pulpit to discuss the proceedings of the investigation. Pool, who had first become alarmed because his daughter was learning evolution at Texas Women's College, had been one of the major figures in bringing charges against Read. He now contended that the committee had operated in secret, refused to accept his testimony, and concealed Read's true character. Dissatisfaction with the schools led to further assaults, especially from Hawkins, who for a brief time even published a newspaper to expose Methodist infidelity.\(^{58}\)

The climax of agitation came in early May, 1923, when the World's Christian Fundamentals Convention met in Norris' church and included in its proceedings a sensational trial of the Methodist schools. Six young people, either students or former students, testified that they had been taught evolution at Texas Women's College, Southwestern University in Georgetown, and Southern Methodist University. In the mock trial, which lasted two and one-half hours Hawkins was the prosecutor and the schools were found guilty. Again the investigating committee was charged with not having fulfilled its duty.\(^{59}\)


Most Texas Methodists evidently resented this outside attack on their institutions and expressed confidence in their own leaders. Hawkins, threatened with being ousted from the ministry for his part in these attacks, however, continued his accusations. In 1925 the Central Convention denied his request to become an evangelist, and in 1926 he asked for and received a hearing on his request. From the convention floor he called the presiding Bishop, John Moore, a heretic and again accused the schools of teaching evolution. He contended that his exposure of heresy was the reason his request was denied. His statements were ruled out of order and his request denied on the grounds of "unacceptability," but the convention was careful to indicate that the objection to his appointment had nothing to do with doctrinal difference, fundamentalism, or evolution.\(^{60}\)

Agitation against Methodist schools continued throughout 1925. In that year another Southern Methodist University professor, M. T. Workman, lost his position because of doctrinal irregularities in his teaching. Workman had been questioned concerning his heretical views in 1922 and had been attacked during the World's Christian Fundamentals

\(^{60}\)Journal of the 61st Annual Session of the Central Texas Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Held at Waco, Texas, November 17-21, 1926 (n. p., n. d.), pp. 34-35.
trial in Fort Worth. In spite of criticism against his work he held his position as professor of Bible until 1925, when he spoke out against revivalistic tactics and gave his classes a rather modern interpretation of the Bible. When officials began questioning him about his teachings, his students signed a petition stating that he was a Christian influence in their lives. Nevertheless he lost his position because, according to Southern Methodist University President Charles Selecman, he "lacked maturity." 61 Actually, Selecman feared that the school's reputation was in danger and that Workman's teachings would reflect upon him and the institution. 62 Workman's lack of "maturity" made him unwilling to acquiesce in violations of academic freedom.

In the year 1925 fundamentalist agitation reached its peak among Texas Methodists. In addition to the Workman controversy, the conferences again expressed concern for their schools. In the West Texas Conference, a young man seeking admission into the ministry admitted holding doctrines that his superiors believed heretical. Not accepted into the ministry, further questioning revealed that he had


62 Vernon, Methodism Moves Across North Texas, p. 284.
learned the questionable doctrines at both Southern Methodist University and Southwestern University. Because of this incident, a resolution was passed requesting the conference president to appoint a committee of five to investigate the schools.63

The Northwest Texas Conference also took action against modernism in 1925. Rather than investigating, it drew up its own statement of faith and required endorsement from the various schools before granting funds. The president of each institution, the dean of each department, and teachers of science, sociology, and Bible had to sign a statement that to their knowledge no teacher in the school believed that man originated in a lower form of life and that

All teachers of our institution . . . believe without mental reservation, equivocation, or with interpretation other than that accepted by Methodists in the inspiration of both the Old and New Testaments and in every statement of the Apostles Creed.

Designated as Rule 9, this requirement was intended to become a permanent rule of the conference.64 The Texas Christian

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63Journal of the 67th Annual Session of the West Texas Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Held at San Antonio, Texas, October 28-November 1, 1925 (n. p., n. d.), p. 87.

64Journal of the 16th Annual Session of the Northwest Texas Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Held at Canyon, Texas, November 11-15, 1925 (n. p., n. d.), pp. 35-36.
Advocate defended the conference action, proclaiming that it meant that Texas Methodists did not want teachers in their schools who believed in evolution. 65

After 1925, however, fundamentalism practically ceased to be an issue among Texas Methodists. In 1926 the investigating committee of the West Texas Conference reported that teaching in the various schools was basically sound and that it reinforced rather than destroyed students' faith. The committee asked the faculty members to sign the most recent statement of faith passed by the General Conference. This document, stressing the divinity of Christ and the reality of God, was only a mildly orthodox statement. A modernist or even an evolutionist could have signed it without disturbing his conscience. Only one faculty member, Harold Gray of Southwestern, refused to endorse it and lost his position. 66 By 1926 the controversy had subsided so that it was no longer necessary to prove that no Methodist teacher believed in evolution.


The actions of the Northwest Texas Conference gave further evidence that the controversy's importance was decreasing. In 1926, it changed Rule 9, dropping the anti-evolution statement and requiring faculty members to sign the Methodist statement of faith; the following year the rule was discarded completely. While articles continued to appear in the Texas Christian Advocate opposing modernism, little mention of evolution was made after 1925. Instead, several articles appeared reconciling science and religion. After 1926, the periodical's policy seemed to be to avoid controversy over the issue and to leave scientific investigation to the scientists. The question did not again upset the Methodist Conference meetings.

One reason fundamentalism did not dominate Texas Methodism any longer or any more completely was that one of Texas' leading Bishops, John Moore, was an outspoken opponent

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of the movement. Although he could hardly be classified a modernist, Moore opposed restrictions on thought and education. Norris launched bitter attacks on "Bishop John Moore and His Modern Infidelity"69 but was apparently unable to destroy his image among Texas Methodists. Expressing the belief that "evolution is progress; fundamentalism is fixity," he contended that scientists not theologians, would ultimately determine the validity of the theory.70 In 1929, he wrote an article for the Christian Advocate strongly denouncing fundamentalism and opposing anti-evolution laws. Admitting that all biologists accepted the doctrine of evolution as truth, he insisted that it was in no way inconsistent with religion.71 Although Moore certainly was not able to keep fundamentalism from shaking the Methodist church, he was influential in guiding it away from extremist expressions, especially after 1925.

The Baptist and Methodist were the largest and most influential denominations in Texas, but fundamentalism was

69 The Fundamentalist, January 5, 1923, p. 4.


an important issue within other Protestant churches also.
One of the hottest controversies in the state developed
over the preaching of Lee Heaton, the young Episcopalian
minister whom Norris assailed. Containing staunch adherents
to both fundamentalism and modernism, Episcopalians were
torn by controversy on the national level. One of the most
widely publicized conflicts arose when Percy Grant of New
York questioned the fundamentals from his pulpit. He gained
national attention and was threatened with being tried for
heresy. A strong modernist following developed around
Grant and other liberals. In Texas Heaton attempted to join
forces with this faction by questioning the virgin birth and
accepting other modernist beliefs. Members of his congregation
protested to the Bishop of the diocese, Harry Moore, and
after several meetings of church officials an ecclesiastical
council was established to review the matter. Apparently
Moore and orthodox leaders intended to try Heaton for heresy.\(^7^2\)

Before the case could be settled, however, other more
prominent Episcopalians, notably William Lawrence, one of
the church's foremost Bishops, expressed modernistic outlooks
similar to Heaton's views, making it difficult to try the
younger man for heresy. To clarify the situation and establish

\(^7^2\) New York Times, January 21, 1923, p. 1; December 17,
1923, pp. 1, 2.
the church's position on various theological questions involved, the House of Bishops met in Dallas in November, 1923, and drafted a pastoral letter intended to end the controversy. Basically it was a fundamentalist document, insisting that belief in the virgin birth was a necessary prerequisite for the ministry.73

The letter only proved to be a further source of dissension. Liberal ministers across the nation proclaimed their defense of Heaton, rejected the doctrines set forth in the letter, and objected to the bishops' assumption of power. So strong was the opposition to the fundamentalist stand that the Episcopal Modern Churchman's Union took on new life in its opposition to excessive orthodoxy. Affirming the right of ministers to interpret the Bible in the light of modern science, it rallied to Heaton's defense, and offered $1,000 to aid in defending him in the upcoming heresy trial. The association brought him to New York, made preparations to defend him, and gave his case wide publicity.74

Outstanding New York liberals, such as Grant and Leighton Parks, spoke from their pulpits in Heaton's behalf and claimed

73Ibid., December 17, 1923, pp. 1, 2.
74Ibid., December 14, 1923, p. 16; December 16, 1923, p. 12; December 17, 1923, pp. 1, 2.
that the orthodox leaders were using him as a test case. Parks insisted that someone like Lawrence or himself should be tried instead of this young unknown man since they all held the same views. While in New York, Heaton brought attention to the Texas situation with his statement that he stood alone as an opponent of fundamentalism in Fort Worth and that all other ministers there were under the influence of J. Frank Norris. Bishop Moore reportedly said that Heaton's trial would be the beginning of a movement to cleanse the church of modernism. Evidently much modernism remained to be cleansed.75

A heresy trial in the midst of such controversy would have been disastrous for the denomination. Because the issue had drawn so much attention, Moore decided against bringing the accused to trial, although he announced that Heaton was indeed guilty, as the special council appointed to review the case had indicated. The Modern Churchmen's Union objected to this decision, maintaining that Moore was stigmatizing Heaton's name without giving him a chance to clear himself.76 Nevertheless, when the trial was dropped, the controversy subsided as a national issue. Heaton remained in Fort Worth,

75 Ibid., December 17, 1923, pp. 1, 2.
76 Austin Statesman, January 4, 1924, p. 3.
but Norris and others continued making life uncomfortable for him until he left the ministry in November, 1925.\footnote{The Fundamentalist, July 11, 1924, p. 1; January 16, 1926, p. 1.}

Most of the Protestant denominations in Texas adhered to the fundamentalist point of view. The Presbyterians, having produced the fundamentalist leader William Jennings Bryan, generally remained faithful to the "peerless leader's" teachings. Some controversy arose on the national level with leading churchmen opposing his point of view, but for the most part, Texans lined up with Bryan and supported the denomination's strongest actions against modernism.\footnote{George Paschal, Jr., and Judith Brenner, One Hundred Years of Challenge and Change; A History of the Synod of Texas of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (San Antonio, 1968), pp. 148-149.}

One leading Texas minister expressed the sentiments of many Texas Presbyterians when he said, "Evolution is the tool of the devil spewed up from out of the bottomless pit to destroy the Bible and drag God's people down to destruction."\footnote{Dallas Morning News, July 20, 1925, sec. 2, p. 1.}

Various Presbyterian groups took steps to eliminate modernism from their ranks. Meeting in San Antonio in 1924, the Presbyterian Church of the United States reaffirmed its acceptance of the fundamentals and voted to withdraw
financial support from missions, colleges, and other institutions where modernism was taught or believed.  

The Cumberland Presbyterian Church also took a strong stand against modernism. Meeting in Austin in 1924, it passed a resolution, proposed by the Presbytery of Weatherford, Texas, declaring that every member of the church "from president to janitor" opposed the "ape-man" idea. It declared itself "squarely, fixedly and unmoveably against these infidelic theories . . . poisoning the minds of the rising generation . . . with these dangerous and soul destroying doctrines." Texas Presbyterians expressed little opposition to such fundamentalist stands.

Controversy was not intense in most of the other Protestant denominations, largely because fundamentalism was unopposed. The Missionary Baptist Association, for example, adopted resolutions opposing evolution and modernism and stating that there was not a single modernist in the denomination. The Seventh-Day Adventists holding their annual conference in San Antonio in 1925, declared that the church had no place for evolution or other modernist theories

80 Austin Statesman, May 16, 1924, p. 3; May 20, 1924.
81 Ibid., May 11, 1924, p. 9; May 16, 1924, p. 1.
and appealed to the people to accept the infallibility of
the Bible. One speaker called the evolution controversy
the Christ and Anti-Christ struggle referred to in the Bible
and said that it was a sign pointing to the end of the
world. The Disciples of Christ were disturbed nationally
by the controversy, but apparently Texas ministers either
remained fundamentalist or kept their opinions quiet.

The only church group that argued consistently and
frequently in favor of evolution and modernism was the
Unitarian denomination. Frank Powell, a Unitarian minister
of Dallas, was one of the state's most outspoken evolutionists.
He contended that evolution clarified rather than destroyed
religion because it freed Christianity from superstition
and revealed God as a force that works through natural
rather than supernatural methods. However, the Unitarians,
reaching an audience of less than 300 Texans, led few to an
acceptance of evolution. Since most Texans sought a more
emotional religion, it was not a very influential denomination.

85 Ibid., March 25, 1923, sec. 2, p. 3; November 9, 1923, p. 2; November 30, 1925, sec. 2, p. 12.
With few exceptions the Texas Protestant denominations staunchly supported the fundamentals. Although, in general, church leaders disapproved of and refused to participate in the actual fundamentalist organizations, the movement strongly influenced the churches and their fundamentalist stand helped give the movement life. Modern scientific developments seemed to threaten the authority of the churches, and their fundamentalist resolutions and school investigations were attempts to regain religion's right to explain the universe. However, in taking a reactionary stand, the churches seemed to be standing in the way of progress and were frequently scorned by intellectuals. While the churches should have been acting to help man adjust to the modern world, they were reacting against it. The conservatism of the 1920's affected the churches by slowing down the reconciliation of science with theology, which had started before that period and continued after it.
CHAPTER IV

SECULAR ASPECTS OF THE CONTROVERSY

Although the fundamentalist-modernist controversy of the 1920's was primarily a religious feud, it directly influenced secular institutions and activities as well as the churches. The fundamentalist reaction to modern science and theology commanded as strong a following in Texas as it did in other southern states. The state still being predominantly rural, a large part of the citizenry remained uninformed concerning modern scientific and theological developments. When Texans felt that modernism was challenging their basic beliefs and destroying their traditional values, they rose with fighting pioneer spirit to defend their way of life. In the process of upholding their beliefs, Texans were not satisfied to combat modernism merely within their religious denominations, but were determined to root the evil out of every institution in which it manifested itself. Public schools, colleges, and universities became prime targets. Public officials were questioned concerning their orthodoxy and expected to remain true to the fundamentals of the faith. Fundamentalism thus became an issue in state
government and state institutions, as well as in the religious denominations.

Secular phases of the movement were closely tied to the religious agitation as church leaders stirred their followers to fight modernism wherever it appeared. Various churches expressed concern about state institutions' influence upon the religious beliefs of the community. The Baptist state convention announced that "State institutions of learning are busily engaged in weaning the coming generation of educated men from faith in the supernatural revelation of God . . ., through teaching atheistic evolution, rationalism, and radical socialism."\(^1\) Largely because of such official statements and because of the laity's demands, government officials, legislators, and school officials, feeling the results of the religious controversy, expressed a desire to control the spread of modernism.

Of course, the state's religious newspapers, such as the Baptist Standard, the Texas Christian Advocate, and J. Frank Norris' The Fundamentalist, expressed opposition to teaching evolution, but perhaps the secular newspapers recorded a more adequate gage of Texas opinion of the subject.

\(^1\)Annual of the Baptist Convention of Texas, Held at El Paso, Texas, November 11-15, 1920, Containing the Proceedings of the 72nd Annual Session (n. p., n. d.), p. 43.
Evidence indicates that support for anti-evolution legislation was much stronger across the state than opposition to such laws. Most Texas newspapers openly opposed teaching evolution in public schools, and for the most part, those editors who refused to support laws to exclude evolution made only vague statements expressing their beliefs. Texas editorial opinions and newspaper stories demonstrate that the fundamentalist controversy of the 1920's was too extensive to be labeled merely a religious controversy; it permeated the various phases of secular as well as religious life.

Editorials indicate that anti-evolutionist sentiment was strong across the state. As the Tyler Daily Courier-Times noted, with few exceptions Texas editors opposed evolution. In support of this observation, the Times quoted a Brownwood Bulletin editorial declaring that of the dozens of Texas newspapers passing through their office each day, none supported the "scientific views" of evolution while almost every one expressed complete acceptance of the Biblical account of creation.\(^2\) The arguments of anti-evolution editors provide excellent examples of fundamentalists' reasoning, their failure to understand evolution, and their tactics in opposing the doctrine.

\(^2\)Tyler Daily Courier-Times, July 4, 1925, p. 2.
Although fundamentalism received support from all areas of the state, its strongest proponents hailed from Northeast Texas. The editor of the *Tyler Daily Courier-Times* expressed his belief in the Bible from "kiver to kiver" and denied any kinship to the monkey family. He claimed that skeletons indicating men were once lesser beings were remains of idiots or misshapen people of the past.\(^3\) The *Marshall News* believed that belief in evolution would destroy immature minds. The *Honey Grove Signal* declared a staunch belief in Genesis, pointing out that "We have known several monkeys in our day and not one ever gave evidence of losing its tail and joining the pants wearing tribe known as the genus homo."\(^4\) The *Gilmer Daily Mirror* felt that American denial of the Bible at Dayton, Tennessee, would cause the Soviets to declare a holiday, and "the flags in the vallhalla of the immortals will be at half mast."\(^5\)

Support also came from Central Texas, being especially strong in Waco, Austin, and Brownwood. The *Waco Times Herald* declared that scientists would never prove man's relation to other animals. The *Brownwood Bulletin* expressed "unfailing

\(^3\)Ibid.; ibid., March 24, 1925, p. 2.

\(^4\)Quoted in *Tyler Daily Courier-Times*, July 4, 1925, p. 2.

\(^5\)*Gilmer Daily Mirror*, July 2, 1925, p. 3.
belief in the Holy Bible" while opposing evolution. The *Austin Statesman* contended that in trying to explain creation and the development of man, science was interfering in the field of religion.

Although fundamentalist support seemed strongest in small towns, even the *Dallas Morning News* contended that although evolution might explain some forms of life it could not explain the development of man. The *Houston Post* reported that Norris drew large crowds there and called his meeting the largest revival in the city's history. According to the *Austin Statesman*, one-fifth of the voters in Tarrant County belonged to Norris' Fort Worth church in 1924.

Although historians generally label the fundamentalist movement a rural one, this does not seem entirely true in Texas. A large number of Texas city dwellers, however, were recent migrants from the country and undoubtedly still identified with their former neighbors.

Tyler and Brownwood editors were not entirely correct in their assumptions that all Texas editors were fundamentalists.

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6 Quoted in *Tyler Daily Courier-Times*, July 4, 1925, p. 2.

7 *Austin Statesman*, March 6, 1923, p. 4.

8 *Dallas Morning News*, January 9, 1925, p. 10; *Houston Post Dispatch*, October 6, 1924, p. 7; *Austin Statesman*, November 12, 1927, p. 1.
Opposition to the anti-evolution laws was strongest in West Texas, although significant support for the movement also came from that area. The Abilene Reporter, for example, printed numerous editorials opposing evolution and supported Bryan in his fight for the fundamentals of the faith.\(^9\)

The El Paso Times probably expressed stronger opposition to religious legislation than any other Texas newspaper. The Times declared that the anti-evolution laws denied young people the privilege of participating in scientific discoveries and violated the constitutional principle of separation of church and state. When the Scopes trial started the Times bitterly opposed Bryan. A daily column satirized his activities in the trial, calling his face a "panorama of curdled egotism" and saying he had been eulogized and pampered so long that he expected "a steamer basket full of fruits and flowers every time he jumps into a bath tub."\(^{10}\) Anti-Bryan editorials appeared almost daily during the trial and continued even after his death.\(^{11}\) Although the El Paso paper presented the

\(^9\) Abilene Reporter, July 5, 1925, p. 4; July 12, 1925, p. 6; July 7, 1925, p. 4.

\(^{10}\) El Paso Times, March 25, 1925, p. 4; April 30, 1925, p. 4; July 15, 1925, p. 1.

\(^{11}\) Ibid., July 20, 1925, p. 4; July 21, 1925, p. 4; July 22, 1925, p. 4; July 23, 1925, p. 4; July 25, 1925, p. 4; July 27, 1925, p. 4; August 21, 1925, p. 4.
state's strongest argument for evolution, opinion even in that city remained divided, as several local ministers expressed fundamentalist beliefs. Other western newspapers were not as ardent in their opposition to anti-evolution laws as the El Paso Times, but the Lubbock Morning Avalanche also occasionally expressed similar sentiments, calling the jury that convicted Scopes "illiterate backwoodsmen." South Texas also voiced some opposition to the anti-evolution measures. The Corpus Christi Caller editorialized that any law prohibiting the explanation of a theory in a classroom was a violation of free speech and free thought. Also criticizing anti-evolution laws, the San Antonio Express said that excluding the teaching of evolution would cause Texas young people to grow up in ignorance of one of the greatest discoveries of all times. Regarding the Scopes trial, the Express contended that the law involved was against the spirit of the Constitution and that the Supreme Court would overturn it. It also referred to the trial as an anachronism belonging to the seventeenth rather than the

12 Ibid., June 1, 1925, p. 1; January 12, 1925, p. 10.
13 Lubbock Morning Avalanche, July 23, 1925, p. 4.
twentieth century. Opposing Bryan, the paper declared that he sought to destroy freedom of thinking.\(^{14}\)

Nationwide, the fundamentalists received strongest support from the South, and since East Texas was more closely aligned with the southern states, the movement won more Texas followers from that area. In no part of Texas, however, was opposition to fundamentalism thoroughly organized, while no section of the state was completely devoid of fundamentalists. Thus the crusaders for the faith were strong enough to influence the Texas legislature during the 1920's.

Across the nation, religious zealots attempted to use state governments to force the people back to the fundamentals of the gospel. They sought to legislate against teaching evolution or any doctrine that contradicted their narrow, literal interpretation of the Bible. Texas was only one of the many states to consider such legislation. In fact, from 1921 until 1929 at least thirty-seven anti-evolution bills appeared before twenty state legislatures.\(^{15}\) Although Texas never actually legislated against evolution, other methods succeeded in hindering academic freedom in state schools.

\(^{14}\) Corpus Christi Caller, July 6, 1925, p. 6; San Antonio Express, January 19, 1923, p. 6; July 23, 1925, p. 12; June 8, 1925, p. 6; July 18, 1925, p. 8.

In executing their campaign the fundamentalists identified evolution, not as a scientific doctrine, but as religious dogma and argued that to teach it in the public schools was to teach a religion, which the Constitution prohibited. Their major legal argument was that the majority of the people disapproved of evolution and felt that it would destroy Christianity. Since the majority's tax money supported the schools, they reasoned that it was illegal to teach anything that opposed their beliefs. Several bills came before the Texas legislature during the 1920's, and debates on these measures revealed the most significant arguments on both sides of the issue.

J. T. Stroder, from Navarro County, and S. J. Howeth, from Johnson County, sponsored the first Texas anti-evolution bill. Introduced in the House in January, 1923, it prohibited teaching any phase of evolution in public schools or state colleges and universities. It also forbade the textbook committee to adopt books that taught the theory, either directly or indirectly. The bill was referred to the

16 The Fundamentalist, February 23, 1923, pp. 1-4; Dallas Morning News, July 9, 1925, p. 1; July 26, 1925, sec. 5, p. 7; March 4, 1923, p. 10.
committee on state affairs which returned an unfavorable report on January 17. 17

On January 18 a motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Education touched off a heated debate. Stroder spoke ardently in favor of the bill, denouncing that "vicious and infamous doctrine . . . that mankind sprang from pollywog, to a frog, to an ape, to a monkey, to baboon, to a Jap, to a negro, to a Chinaman, to a man" and calling evolution "the most abominable thing that ever cursed our American continent." Stroder received loud applause, and although the legislature refused to recommit the bill, the minority committee report was ordered printed. 18

Joining the representatives in speaking for the bill was Texas' fundamentalist leader, J. Frank Norris. On February 16 Norris went to Austin to address the legislature and, according to him, to "skin the chimpanzee theory." 19

In his speech he summed up fundamentalist objections to


having the theory taught in public schools. Referring to it as a tenet of faith or a dogma, he concluded that teaching evolution was therefore unconstitutional. According to him the theory originated in Germany and was more dangerous than German militarism. It would destroy faith in the Bible, bring an end to authority of all kinds, and eventually destroy civilization. Teaching evolution was equivalent to teaching Bolshevism, Mohammedanism, Buddhism, or Catholicism in public schools,\(^\text{20}\) he averred.

The bill received its second reading on February 12 and the House debated it again on February 24. The *Austin Statesman* referred to these proceedings as the most heated and bitter debates of the Thirty-Eighth Legislature. Stroder again denounced evolution relating it to such evils as free love, socialism, anarchism, and bolshevism. He called anyone who believed in the doctrine "an atheist of the worst form."\(^\text{21}\) Representative Howeth, a Baptist minister, argued emotionally that the theory would eventually destroy the Bible and cause the downfall of civilization.\(^\text{22}\)


\(^{22}\) *Austin Statesman*, February 25, 1923, p. 1.
During the debate several representatives strongly opposed the bill. Strongest opposition came from Lloyd E. Price, of Morris County, who attempted to kill the measure, saying the legislature's defense of the Bible was as logical as its sending the Texas Rangers to defend Jerusalem would be. He called the bill fanatical and compared it to witchcraft and the Spanish Inquisition. Also opposing the measure was Eugene Miller, of Parker County, who called it the most radical piece of legislation that had ever appeared before the Texas House of Representatives and pointed out that it would mean abolishing the state medical college.\textsuperscript{23}

The bill passed to engrossment on March 3 by a vote of sixty-nine to thirty-two. Joining Stroder in speaking for the legislation were L. C. Stewart, of Reeves County, and J. A. Dodd, of Texarkana. Dodd brought out the fundamentalists' constitutional argument, saying it was unjust to allow teaching evolution and prohibit teaching Christian doctrines in the schools. He pointed out that the state forced his children to attend schools where he believed they were shown "the road to hell through teaching them the hellish infidelity of evolution." He preferred having his

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
children remain totally ignorant to having them spend eternity in hell because they accepted evolution.24

The only representative speaking out against the measure was J. R. Hardin, of Kaufman. He argued that evolution and religion were completely unrelated and that the legislature had no right to prescribe what teachers should teach. He contended that such foolish measures as this only proved that man did indeed descend from monkeys. In spite of his opposition, the bill passed by a large majority. Even some who voted against it did so not because they opposed the ideals of the measure. For example, Wright Patman of Linden, stated that he opposed the bill because no one had yet proved that the theory was being taught in Texas. If it were taught he agreed that it should be prevented and said he would vote for a measure providing adequate penalties.25 The Senate referred the bill to the Committee on Education, which returned a favorable report on March 12. In spite of the committee recommendation that the legislation pass, the Senate allowed it to die on the calendar.26


The Stroder-Howeth bill's failure did not dishearten the anti-evolutionists, and when the Third Called Session of the Thirty-Eighth Legislature met in May, the House struck another blow at evolution, this time by passing a House Concurrent Resolution. This resolution pointed out that the state constitution provided that the government would not interfere in religious matters and that no one could be forced to support a place of worship. Since tax money supported the school systems, then teaching atheism, agnosticism, or any theory that linked man to other life forms was unconstitutional and against the best interests of the state's citizens. On May 28 the House adopted this resolution by a vote of eighty-one to nine. This vote clearly indicated the strength of the anti-evolution sentiment in the House. The Senate, however, allowed the resolution to die in committee.\(^27\) The year 1923 was marked by intense fundamentalist agitation in the House, and during that year an anti-evolution bill came nearer passage than at any other time. The anti-evolutionists, however, were unsuccessful because they lacked the necessary strength in the Senate.

The year of the Scopes trial, 1925, was the climatic year for the fundamentalist-modernist controversy, and in

that year the conflict again agitated the Texas legislature. On February 5, 1925, Representative James W. Harper, from Mount Pleasant, introduced House Bill Number 378, which forbade any school supported partially or completely by tax money to teach any phase of evolution. Unlike the 1923 bill, this one contained provisions for punishment of violators. Any instructor who taught the theory was to lose his position immediately and receive no further salary. A provision of the bill entitled any two people in a community to make a written complaint to the school board and required an investigation of the charge within five days. Not only must a guilty party be discharged, but the bill also stipulated that officials could then fine him from 50 to 500 dollars.

The Committee on Education reported the bill favorably on February 16. Nevertheless, on March 17, 1925, a motion to take the bill up again lost, and the measure never passed the House. During debate on this bill the *El Paso Times* editorialized that the controversy set groups to spying on Texas teachers and meant that teachers had to work in constant fear. Debate concerning this bill was evidently not as

28 H. B. No. 378, "A Bill to be Entitled an act prohibiting the teaching of evolution in any of its phases . . .," typed copy, Legislative Library, Austin, Texas.

fervent as it had been in 1923, however, since the newspapers did not report it in any detail.

Although anti-evolution support had diminished by 1929, the Texas legislature continued to debate the question. During that year two more bills were introduced in the House and one narrowly failed to pass. On January 10 Representative James W. Harper, of Mount Pleasant, a missionary minister, introduced House Bill Number 90. Actually this bill was even more stringent than the others had been. It prohibited teaching that "mankind evolved from a lower order of animals" and made it illegal for groups selecting books for use in the classrooms to adopt any that taught evolution. It stipulated that teachers or other officials proven guilty were to be discharged and fined not over 500 dollars. The bill also declared that evolution had created an emergency and stated that the measure was so important to the public welfare that it was necessary to suspend the constitutional rule requiring a bill to be read on three separate days in each house. The bill was referred to the Committee on Criminal Jurisprudence, which returned an adverse report on January 24. In spite of the adverse report the bill was ordered printed by a vote of sixty-four to forty.\(^{30}\)

\(^{30}\)H. B. No. 90, "A Bill to be Entitled an act making it unlawful for any teacher . . . to teach as a fact that mankind evolved from a lower order of animals . . . ," typed copy, Legislative Library, Austin, Texas; House Journal, Forty-First Legislature, Regular Session (1929), pp. 67, 248, 252.
On February 16, the bill failed to pass only because a quorum was not present, since the vote taken at that time favored engrossment by fifty to thirty-five. On that day Harper argued for his bill, connecting evolution with moral degeneracy and saying that if one teaches young people that they are brutes, they will commit brutish deeds. Schools were teaching the doctrine, which he interpreted as a religious belief, at public expense, whereas modernists should maintain their own schools as other denominations did. W. R. Wigg, of Paris, contended that if his forefathers hung, it was by the neck not the tail. Several representatives opposed the bill. Roland Bradly, of Houston, pointed out that such an act would restrict teachers unnecessarily, while other representatives attacking the bill referred to the failure of the Tennessee act under which Scopes was tried.31

On March 1 the bill failed to pass to engrossment by the narrow vote of fifty to fifty-nine.32 This 1929 bill was a culmination of the bills that had appeared previously. The 1923 bill had not provided punishment for violators, and the 1925 bill had not restricted the activities of the textbook committee, but the 1929 bill did both.

31 Fort Worth Star Telegram, February 16, 1929, p. 7.
Still hoping for success, the anti-evolutionists made further efforts in 1929. When the Second Called Session of the Forty-First Legislature met, the last anti-evolution bill, a measure similar to the earlier bill, was introduced. First coming before the legislature on June 5, the bill made it illegal to teach evolution or to teach that the Genesis account of creation was untrue. It also stipulated that the textbook commission was not to adopt books that contradicted the Genesis account. The bill was referred to the Committee on Education, which reported it unfavorable on June 10, 1929. It was ordered printed by sixty-nine to thirty-nine, but a motion to vote on it as a special order lost by thirty-eight to sixty-one, and the House did not consider it again.  

The fundamentalists made a final effort on June 28, when Harper offered a resolution for consideration. This measure asked the boards of regents of colleges and universities to prevent the teaching of evolution and requested the textbook committee not to adopt books that taught the doctrine. The resolution was referred to the Committee on Education but never emerged from committee.  

These bills and this resolution indicate that even in 1929, when fervor for the

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fundamentalist movement had largely subsided, some determined anti-evolutionists still tried to capture the Texas legislature.

Although the fundamentalists' most significant proposals were the anti-evolution bills, they also attempted to pass other measures to control modernist tendencies in the state. Throughout the 1920's they agitated for legislation to require Bible reading in the public schools and even formed a Bible in the Public Schools Association to accomplish this goal. The association's president led considerable agitation for passage of such a bill in January, 1923. Proponents of the measure claimed it had the support of the attorney general, the governor, the state Baptist association, three Methodist conferences, and the state teachers' association. 35

The bill, soon introduced in the House by W. T. McDonald, of Huntsville, and Lee J. Rountree, of Bryan, provided for opening exercises in all public school classrooms which would consist of readings from the Bible without comment. Officials who failed to carry out these duties were to be discharged and fined. On January 23, the House ordered the bill printed by a vote of seventy-nine to forty-three. On February 14

the bill was read the second time but tabled, and the House never voted on it.\textsuperscript{36}

Agitation for a similar bill developed in 1925. Both the \textit{Austin Statesman} and the \textit{Dallas Morning News} editorialized that the Bible should be read in public schools. The \textit{Statesman} wanted it used in such subjects as history, literature, civics, mathematics, and psychology. Various government officials such as Judge B. F. Looney, an associate justice of the Court of Civil Appeals, also supported reading and studying the Bible in public schools. Nevertheless, the legislature did not act on the bill. Probably because of the Scopes trial, the education committee postponed the question.\textsuperscript{37} Although the state government never passed an act making Bible study mandatory, it was a fairly common practice in Texas. A survey of 547 schools taken in 1927 indicated that 259 had formal Bible reading. However, 370 felt that the state legislature should not require it.\textsuperscript{38}

Another bill inspired by the fundamentalist movement prohibited atheists or agnostics from teaching in public

\textsuperscript{36}House Journal, Thirty-Eighth Legislature, Regular Session, (1923), pp. 32, 271, 693.

\textsuperscript{37}Dallas Morning News, July 11, 1925, p. 12; Austin Statesman, September 17, 1925, p. 4; Dallas Morning News, July 9, 1925, p. 3; June 21, 1925, p. 11.

\textsuperscript{38}Texas Outlook, April, 1927, p. 46.
schools or colleges. Representative Eugene Miller, of Gainer, introduced the first such measure on March 1, 1923. It required all school officials, such as teachers, professors, instructors, and superintendents, to take an oath asserting their belief in a supreme being. The bill was reported favorably on March 5, but the House never took action on it.\textsuperscript{39}

Representatives Harper and Robinson introduced a similar bill in February, 1925, but it too failed to pass. The \textit{Austin Statesman} argued that this bill was constitutional since the bill of rights was worded in a manner that excluded atheists from public office. The \textit{Statesman} contended that the main thing the bill would accomplish would be "placing on record of an official condemnation of an opinion few persons hold." Its major purpose was to prove the religious nature of the Texas government and Texas schools since few atheists were involved in these institutions anyway.\textsuperscript{40}

Although the fundamentalists were unable to convince the state legislature to enact laws prohibiting modernistic teaching, the Texas textbook committee in 1925 ordered all references to evolution removed from books used in state schools, an action which proved to be almost as effective.

\textsuperscript{39}\textit{House Journal, Thirty-Eighth Legislature, Regular Session} (1923), pp. 1082, 1275.

\textsuperscript{40}\textit{Austin Statesman}, February 21, 1925, p. 4.
as the proposed laws would have been. In fact, Maynard Shipley, one of the leading foes of fundamentalism, said such steps were actually more direct and faster than passing prohibitive legislation. Largely because of this measure, Norman Furniss in *The Fundamentalist Controversy, 1918-1931*, the most extensive work on the subject, lists Texas as one of the eight states in which fundamentalists were most successful. Undoubtedly this was their most successful effort in the state. That Texas teachers failed to oppose either the anti-evolution laws or the textbook committee's action indicated that few of them accepted and taught evolution anyway. Thus textbooks provided almost the only means for Texas young people to become acquainted with the doctrine. Censorship of these books, therefore, was a major victory for fundamentalism and succeeded in temporarily banning the doctrine from the state.

For several years various individuals, organizations, and church groups had expressed dissatisfaction with state books and exerted pressure upon the state to adopt books that did not contradict the Genesis account of creation. One of the most influential groups expressing concern was the

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Baptist state convention. In 1922 the convention formed a committee to investigate texts used in public schools. It concluded that while some texts were objectionable, the state committee chose the ones most in agreement with Biblical teachings. Texas Governor Pat Neff (1921-1925) assured the committee that books selected would not contradict the Bible. The Baptist investigating committee insisted that since the majority of the tax payers were Christians, the state was obligated to insure that books did not destroy students' faith. In 1924 another Baptist committee expressed greater alarm at the results of their investigations of textbooks, for they found all science books to be based on evolution. The Norris group had also been concerned about the nature of textbooks used, and when the state textbook committee acted, Norris took credit for having influenced them. Concern of Methodist pastors and other church leaders also undoubtedly helped prompt the action of the state committee.


The committee that responded to fundamentalist agitation consisted largely of Texas educators. Ida Mae Murray was a University of Texas graduate and a San Antonio public school teacher; F. M. Black, supervisor of Houston public schools; A. W. Bridwell, president of Nacogdoches State Teachers College; T. J. Yoe, Brownsville school superintendent; R. L. Paschall, a Fort Worth high school principal; and F. W. Chudej, who had five years teaching experience in grades below the high school level. The law establishing the committee required that one member be from outside the field of education. Appointment of H. A. Wroe, a businessman, fulfilled this requirement, while Governor Miriam Ferguson (1925-1927) headed the committee. The committee consisted of leading educators, not ignorant backwoodsmen, indicating the extent of the fundamentalist influence in the state.

Having decided to remove all mention of evolution from textbooks, the committee proceeded to a thorough accomplishment of its task. Refusing to make contracts with publishers until revisions were made, the committee ordered extensive changes in some books and refused to adopt others. Truman J. Moon's *Biology for Beginners* the committee declared unacceptable until the publishers deleted three chapters.

44 *Graham Leader*, July 9, 1925, p. 10.
dealing with evolution. The expunged chapters were titled "Development of Man," "The Method of Evolution," and "The Development of Civilized Man." The committee objected to such statements in the book as, "With an egotism which is entirely unwarranted, we are accustomed to speak of 'man and animals' whereas we ought to say 'man and other animals,' for certainly man is an animal." The same book made the heretical claim that man was related to all living organisms and that man, plants, and animals "actually descended from common ancestors." The committee even excised the statements attempting to reconcile science and religion. In his book Moon pointed out that evolution did not teach that man descended from monkey nor did it teach that "God can be left out of the scheme of creation." Instead he concluded that God was still at work improving the world and the living things in it through evolution. Failing to convince the committee that evolution and religion could harmonize, however, these statements were omitted.

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45 Dallas Morning News, October 6, 1925, p. 10.
46 Ibid.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid.
The extent of the committee's determination to uphold the literal Biblical account is indicated by their omission of the chapter on the development of civilized man. This chapter reviewed man's development from the stone age hunter, to the herdsman, to the farmer, and told how man gradually settled down to a permanent home. Since fundamentalists would not concede that man had ever lived in an uncivilized state, this chapter was deleted.

Although Moon's book received the most complete revisions, similar changes were made in other texts. In Jesse Feiren's *Healthful Living*, the Macmillan Company changed "Evolution is a slow and gradual process and the skeleton of man is the result of centuries of development," to read "The skeleton of the higher forms of animals represents many centuries of development." At the committee's request, Ginn and Company made changes in Benjamin Charles Gruneberg's *Biology and Human Life*. In the phrase, "some curious but useless relics" the word "relics" was changed to "structures." The committee also deleted the sentence, "Mutations give rise to new species," and ordered the phrase "at last" omitted before "four-chamber heart." In all books

49 Ibid.

the word "evolution" was changed to "development." 51 One committee member went so far as to suggest that the word "evolution" be stricken from dictionaries, but the group decided this was not actually a textbook. 52 These are only a few examples of the many extensive changes the committee made. So extensive were the revisions that publishers had to prepare separate school books for Texas children.

Little opposition to the committee's action arose. Texas politicians were, for the most part, either fundamentalist or noncommittal, for as Shipley pointed out, fundamentalism was a politically profitable position in Texas. Governor Miriam Ferguson said of the committee's action, "I am a Christian mother who believes Jesus Christ died to save humanity, and I am not going to let that kind of rot go into Texas textbooks." 53 Her successor, Dan Moody (1927-1931) was equally as fundamentalist. He contended,

I believe in the Bible from cover to cover. I believe that God created man in His own image and likeness, that the whale swallowed Jonah, and that the children of Israel passed through the Red Sea on dry land. 54

51 Ibid.
Even educators and teachers of the state did not voice significant protest against such violation of freedom in the classroom. The state superintendent of schools supported the action, declaring, "The old-time religion is good enough for me." The *Texas Outlook*, publication of the state teachers' association, printed only a few vague editorials supporting academic freedom in the classroom. This lack of opposition was one of the main reasons fundamentalists were able to expunge so thoroughly the concept of evolution from the state's textbooks.

Like the public schools, colleges and universities felt repercussions of the fundamentalist controversy. Fundamentalists especially regarded the University of Texas a hotbed of modernism and evolution and attempted various methods of controlling modernism there. Of course, the various legislative measures would have included the university if they had passed, but some believed more direct steps needed to be taken. In April, 1924, an Austin pastor presented a resolution to the Austin ministerial association objecting

55 Harbour Allen, "The Anti-Evolution Campaign in America," *Current History*, XXIV (September, 1926), 894.

to modernist speakers appearing on the university campus. The majority of the pastors, however, believed this was beyond their jurisdiction and the resolution did not pass.\(^5^7\)

In May, 1924, the fundamentalist controversy became an important issue in an administrative and political conflict concerning the university. When the position of university president became vacant, Lutcher Stark, the chairman of the Board of Regents, led a move to elect Governor Pat Neff to the position, and rather strong opposition to both men developed. Both men were fundamentalists, and Stark declared that their religious beliefs constituted one of the major reasons for opposition to them. Stark believed that religious radicals were trying to "get his scalp" because they believed his fundamentalism would cause him to hinder liberal teachings at the university. His statement that he would "oppose all those who are not God fearing men and we will not have any socialists up there," supported the modernists' accusations.\(^5^8\)

The Ex-Students Association, led by Will C. Hogg, opposed both Stark and Neff. Hogg accused Stark of trying to use the fundamentalist controversy to get Neff into the

\(^{57}\) *Austin Statesman*, April 8, 1924, p. 1.

\(^{58}\) Ibid., May 20, 1924, p. 1.
presidency. He contended that Stark realized when the educators from across the nation connected the fundamentalist question with the university they would not want to be involved in such a controversy and would therefore refuse the position. Then Neff could step into the presidency to "save the university." Although Neff was never appointed, Stark was using the controversy to frighten qualified people from the position, Hogg argued.59

Fundamentalism's most significant impact upon the university came in 1924 when the Board of Regents, led by fundamentalist Stark, acted to suppress modernism. The regents passed a resolution stating,

No infidel, atheist, or agnostic shall be employed in any capacity in the University of Texas . . . . No person who does not believe in God as the Supreme Being and Ruler of the Universe shall hereafter be employed. 60

This measure meant that all university employees from the president to the janitors had to be religious people. While the resolution did not prohibit teaching evolution, it did make one's religious affiliation an important concern for employment. Regardless of how well qualified a person might

60 Mirian Allen De Ford, "The War Against Evolution," The Nation, CXX (May 20, 1925), 566.
be, the university would not hire him unless he took an oath asserting his belief in God.

Few groups voiced opposition to this action. One might expect former university students to protest violations of academic freedom, but the Alcade, the alumni publication, contended that while atheists and agnostics had a right to teach their own kind, most Texas boys and girls came from religious homes and "should not be taught by men and women who deny the existence of God." Perhaps better than any other phase of the conflict the University of Texas action indicates fundamentalism's strength in the state. Some of the most educated and talented people in the state were connected with the university, and yet it succumbed to fundamentalism's influence too.

During the latter part of the 1920's fundamentalism gradually lost support in Texas as well as in the nation as a whole. In 1928 and 1929, only three anti-evolution bills appeared before state legislatures. Yet some opponents of the laws continued to express concern that the movement was still active. In 1929, for example, Shipley claimed that in over 70 per cent of the state schools instructors

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61 Quoted in "Americana," The American Mercury, III (October, 1924), 174.
could teach nothing disapproved by the fundamentalists. 62
Although the fundamentalists did maintain some strength
and influence, Shipley overstated the case, for the movement
gradually lost its force after the Scopes trial.

After 1925 in Texas public opinion gradually began to
oppose anti-evolution laws. Texas editors more frequently
opposed such legislation or remained silent concerning it.
In 1927, the Austin Statesman, which had earlier supported
anti-evolution measures, agreed with Edgar Mullins, a Baptist
denominational leader, that forcing certain interpretations
of the Bible was contrary to New Testament teachings. In
1929 the Fort Worth Record Telegram opposed restricting
freedom of education and contended that the Tennessee
legislature should repeal the anti-evolution law since it had
"made a monkey" of the state. 63 In the last half of the
decade even educators finally began to oppose religious
legislation. In 1927 an educator, in a speech to the Texas
State Teachers' Association, condemned the fundamentalists'
attitude toward science as well as interference with educational
freedom. 64

63 Austin Statesman, February 2, 1927, p. 4; Fort Worth
Record Telegram, January 4, 1929, p. 6; January 14, 1929, p. 6.
64 Marian J. Mayo, "Freedom in Education," Texas Outlook,
March, 1927, pp. 9-10.
Probably the most significant evidence that fundamentalists were losing power was the change in the position of the churches on the question. In 1929 the Episcopal Diocese of Texas passed a resolution that condemned anti-evolution laws, saying such legislation was contrary to religious truth. In 1927 the Methodist conference, meeting in Memphis, Tennessee, openly opposed legislative measures that interfered with teaching science. The president of the convention, a Texan, expressed the belief that most Methodists opposed religious legislation. The Southern Baptist denomination, which had earlier expressed so much concern, did not even debate the evolution issue in 1928 and 1929. Even Norris' opposition to evolution had quietened by 1929. In October he refused to publish the article, "The Doctor Bell Theorem vs. the Gods of Evolution," and wrote the author that his paper was not printing anything on evolution at that time.65

Although it has occasional revivals, fundamentalism has never again reached the proportions it knew in the 1920's. But its course during that decade illustrates significant

65Fort Worth Record Telegram, January 16, 1929, p. 13; Austin Statesman, February 11, 1927, p. 1; Furniss, The Fundamentalist Controversy, p. 125; Arthur C. Bell to J. Frank Norris, October 6, 1929; J. Frank Norris to Arthur C. Bell, October 9, 1929, The Papers of J. Frank Norris, 1927-1952, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.
social, philosophical, and political trends of the time. Attempting to reverse the trends in science and theology, fundamentalists sought to force a return to the religion of their forefathers. To do this they tried not only to control their religious denominations but also to influence state institutions. Just as the prohibitionists of the period wanted to legislate morality, the fundamentalists wanted to legislate religion. Thus the movement constitutes an important phase of secular as well as religious history.

Frequent agitation in the state legislature, censorship of textbooks, and the action of the University of Texas Board of Regents shows that the fundamentalist movement was especially intense in Texas. Most segments of the population, urban and rural, educated and uneducated, felt the effects of the controversy. The same forces shaping the rest of the nation were at work in Texas. Many Texans had recently migrated to the cities where they found life more complicated and newspapers filled with horrible stories of crime and disorder. Understandably, people longed for the simpler life of the past and sought to force reestablishment of this life.

Probably the most significant reason for fundamentalism's success in Texas was that little organized resistance to it arose. Although scattered individuals and newspapers voiced
protests, no one group united forces to combat it openly. Fundamentalism, on the other hand, controlled and worked through the major Protestant denominations. In J. Frank Norris it had a unique leader who could easily win huge followings to his point of view. Modernism had no one to compare with him. Evolution and modernist doctrines were not widely circulated in the state so that Texans learned what they knew about modernist concepts from fundamentalists. Largely because of this indifference to modern thought, fundamentalism won significant victories in Texas and exercised important controls over both secular and religious institutions during the 1920's.
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