The writer of the book of Proverbs said, "Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set" (Prov. 22:28). The landmarks which marked the border lines of tribal territory in ancient Israel were sacred. Deuteronomy 27:17 says, "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen". Landmarks are valuable today in helping settle disputes over land, but in this article we are concerned about the spiritual landmarks that are being removed in spiritual Israel today. Just as a man was cursed in Israel of old for removing the landmark, so is a man today who removes the spiritual landmarks in spiritual Israel. Paul said in Galatians 1:9, "As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed". Let us look at some of the landmarks, established for man by God, that men are trying to remove today.

The Mosaic account of creation as we have it in Genesis chapters one and two is being removed by the theory of evolution. The people who believe this theory are growing in number by the year, and too many who are members of the body of Christ are indifferent to the problem. Evolution is the theory that this universe and all things herein just evolved, and that life is the result of "spontaneous generation". "Spontaneous generation" is the theory that living things came from lifeless matter. God, in the account of Genesis chapters one and two, tells us He is the creator of the universe and is the giver of life. The real disturbing thing is that some who claim to be gospel preachers and teachers of young people in colleges operated by members of the church believe the theory. Robert Meyers, preacher for the Riverside church of Christ in Wichita, Kansas, said "There are men in our colleges, including the big one in Texas, who believe that evolution and faith in God are reconcilable. Why do they not speak out right now?" Mr. Meyers is a modernist on many things, as he also said, "It is becoming increasingly clear to many in the church of Christ that our arguments against the instrument are for the most part not arguments at all, but quibbles. I can say this without a trace of embarrassment. I now know of no arguments strong enough to permit disfellowship over an instrument." Brethren, it is already later than some of you think! This man preaches for the church that has operated Maude Carpenter Children's Home in Wichita until recently. Bro. Barney Keith, in the EAST FLORENCE CONTENDER, commenting on Meyer's statement concerning evolution, gives further evidence that Meyer's statements are true. "Now I wonder even more about his charges, for a recent United Press International release from Atlanta, Georgia, reports a speech made by a HARDING COLLEGE professor that seems to give substance to Meyer's claim. Dr. W. Norman Hughes is referred to in the article as "a specialist in evolution" and is represented as having said that the Biblical account of creation is compatible with evolution. He does not, it said, subscribe to the completely naturalistic philosophy of atheism which denies God and the supernatural. He must be some sort of "theistic evolutionist" (Barney Keith). Brother, if things like this do not disturb you, you cannot be disturbed!

Modernism is removing many landmarks in the church today. Some ask the question, "What is modernism?". It is a hard word to define because it is not a single system of ideas, it is an attitude toward things divine. In varying degrees, it consists in irreverence for that which is holy and sacred, and puts trust in and reliance upon human wisdom. A modernist will never tell you he is a modernist, nor will he tell you he doubts the Bible. How then do you recognize a modernist? Here are some things that betray him: (1) He will call a man a "legalist" because he insists on believing
exactly what the Bible says; (2) He will call you an "anti", for he is against nothing but divine truth; (3) He will tell you that the Bible does not tell one how to do a work, for he does not believe the Bible to be a complete revelation (Il Tim. 3: 16 - 17); (4) He will preach on subjects such as "Where there is no Pattern"; (5) He dislikes having to defend his views; and (6) He will always make a misapplication of II Cor. 3:6. The compromisers who find good in every false man and way are on their way to a seat among the modernists. Brethren, never forget that one modernist can do more damage to the church from within than the devil and all his ministers can do from without!!

We might ask what causes people to become modernists or unbelievers. I believe we can list the basic causes under four headings: (1) The thing pleases the individual; (2) It appeals to the emotions; (3) The thing is popular; and (4) It seems best from the standpoint of human wisdom.

What are some of the results of modernism? People who are afflicted with modernism lose deep convictions about God's plan for lost man, so they do not hesitate to direct the church from its God-given mission of saving souls to do work just to better man in this life. These people make of the church nothing more than a social club to furnish fun and frolic. The preaching of a man afflicted with modernism is soft, it has no backbone. Members influenced by modernism lose zeal and courage to "fight the good fight of faith". A result of modernism is to minimize the authority of the written word of God.

Some landmarks that modernism has removed in the church today: (1) The mission of the church has been removed by man, they have gone all the way with "the social gospel". They have the church doing social work such as working with juveniles. For example, the Madison church of Christ in Madison, Tennessee sponsors Clayton Pepper to work with boys and girls who are brought into Nashville's Juvenile Court. Many churches today have their kitchens and fellowship halls for their fun and frolic; (2) The landmark of congregational independence has been removed by modernism, and (3) The landmark of the New Testament being a pattern in all things has been removed (Heb. 8: 5; Il Tim. 3: 16 - 17).

Brethren, we hope this article will help you to start getting your eyes open to the fact that the issue is not over helping orphan children, but the issue is unbelief or modernism. And this unbelief is destroying many churches of our Lord.

Donald Townsley

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