



Donald Townsley
Box 162
Tompkinsville, Ky. 42167

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HERESIES AMONG YOU

Wayne Moore

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:19-21.)

This brief article will not deal with all the works of the flesh, but it is intended to deal with "heresies" (divisions, dissensions arising from diversity of opinions and aims). Division in the church of Christ is wrong. They which bring in such things that cause division "shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

There are those who "serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." (Romans 16:18.) One thing that the Lord hates is "he that soweth discord among brethren." (Proverbs 6:19.) The Christians are encouraged to "mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye learned; and avoid them." (Romans 16:17.) This comes after the teaching and admonishing. "A man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition reject." (Titus 3:10.) Every Christian must endeavor to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:3.) This is not "peace at any price." This is the "unity of the Spirit"--as the Spirit directs. There will be "false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." (2 Peter 2:1,2.)

Division exists in the church today. Who is causing it? Why is it here? "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." (1 Corinthians 11:19.) One thing is sure--the one who teaches a "thus saith the

Lord," book, chapter and verse, is right. Whoever teaches anything else is wrong. Paul taught that the Lord would not come back until after there was a "falling away." (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3.) He told the Ephesus elders that grievous wolves would enter in among them, not sparing the flock; that of their own selves men would arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them; and that they should watch. (Acts 20:28-31.) Those who have no love for the truth will be sent a strong delusion that they might believe a lie and be condemned. (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12.) In every generation there has been division. It must come. Divisions will show who will stand for the Lord and who will not.

The falling away that Paul spoke of did come. Men did follow the falling away. Later men came and advocated a return to the New Testament order; and men followed the return. The churches of Christ grew, until some of the "educated progressives" thought of a way through which all the churches could work in evangelizing the world--the missionary society. Yes, this was another organization--an organization in addition to the one body the Lord gave: the church. (Ephesians 1:22,23; 4:4.) Men followed this idea. They argued that the society did good work, and one cannot condemn a "good work." "Good men are in charge," they said. "It is only an expedient." "The society systematizes the work." "Souls are being saved." "We must have cooperatives to do the job." "The Scriptures do not say, Thou shalt not." "Those who oppose the society do very little." "It is just a method, a means, a way." "There is no method prescribed in the New Testament." "Many great men favor the society." "The society does not interfere with congregational independence." "The society is in harmony with the spirit of the New Testament." "The contributions to the society are voluntary." "God organized the local church, but did not organize the universal church (all the churches to-

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gether); therefore, we are free to organize any way we see fit. "

This society--this other organization--divided the church of the Lord. Who was responsible: the ones who stood for what the Scriptures taught, or the ones who brought in something God did not command? Division came. The churches were divided. Somebody caused the division. But who?

Who is causing the division in the church of the Lord today? Who caused the division when the missionary society started in 1849? The ones who brought it in, or the ones who opposed its existence? Who divided the churches when instrumental music entered in 1859? The ones who introduced it, or the ones who opposed it? Who, today, are causing division in the body of Christ? The ones who have brought into existence human organizations to do the work of benevolence with the support of the church or those who oppose the church's using its resources in such a way? Somebody is causing the division. Who?

The man who speaks as the oracles of God does not divide the body of Christ. (1 Peter 4: 11.) The man who teaches another gospel is condemned in the Scriptures. (Galatians 1:8, 9.) -- The Sword of Peace.