

## A PLAGUE AMONG US

*"They provoked him to anger with their inventions: and the plague brake in upon them" (Psalm 106:29).*

I recently awoke from a nightmare a few minutes after 12 a.m. and as I lay awake I began to mull over the problems in our churches that are a direct result of what has become known among us as *the liberal movement*. I soon turned on the light, reached for my Bible and opened it to the Book of Psalms. My eyes fell directly on the above verse and it forcefully occurred to me that it very amply describes what has happened among our people across the land in recent years—a plague has broken out upon us, and it is a result of the inventions that have been introduced among our Primitive Baptist churches. Some of our most gifted preachers have begun to preach and practice things that our faithful old forefathers and mothers never have tolerated nor believed and the Primitive Baptist family now stands divided as a result of it. The things I refer to are *inventions*. They are things which were never given to the church by its Lawgiver but have been added by men. "God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions" (Ecc. 7:29). These new measures, and their promoters, have not been opposed by the leadership of many of our churches as they should have been, and consequently they have been allowed to destroy the peace that should always characterize and pervade the Lord's house.

I have grieved much over this sad state of affairs and have wondered how anyone who truly loves the Lord's Church could allow themselves to become involved in a movement that they see is dividing our churches and destroying fellowship between brethren across the country. It does look to me like those who are the ringleaders could have very early on realized that what they were advocating and introducing was causing strife and confusion and immediately have ceased and desisted. It seems to be the attitude of all those that I know anything about that they simply do not care that it has caused such distress among the Lord's people. Those who have introduced the innovations take the position that it is those of us who oppose their unscriptural ventures who are the troublemakers. In this they follow the example of wicked Ahab when he accused the prophet Elijah of the same thing (I Kings 18:17-18). This has always been a favorite ploy and tactic of the innovators down through the centuries. It is an obvious effort to draw attention away from the true source of the trouble, namely, themselves.

One of the more obvious violations of God's word that we have seen has been the collecting of funds to finance missions to other countries. Again, it looks to me like those who have involved themselves in this faithless practice could realize that if the Lord sends a person on a mission He will see to it that their needs are supplied. And, if they set out and their needs are not met, then it becomes obvious that the Lord didn't send them on the mission in the first place. Where is their faith in God? If they honestly believe that the Lord is behind their desire to go, do they not likewise believe that He is able to supply their needs as they travel.

Any mission that I read of in the Bible on which the Lord sent a person, or persons, did not require the collecting of funds in advance of the journey. Does that not speak loudly that this should likewise be the practice today? One Elder has set up a foundation for the collection of funds for his undertakings in a foreign land. Again I ask, Where is his faith? And how can he have the kind of evidence of the Lord's blessing that the servants of old had when they went

trusting in the Lord to provide for their needs from the field in which they were sent to labor. God never told His servants to make up money in one field in order to labor in another field. For instance when He told Philip to arise and go toward the south, Philip did not go about raising funds for the trip, but simply arose and went (See Acts 8:26-27). And we do not find that he starved before he got back home.

When the Lord sent His servants out and they returned from their journey, He asked them, "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything, and they said, nothing" (Luke 22:35). What wonderful evidence those brethren were given that the Lord was blessing their labors and providing their needs. They could not have had that evidence if they had made up sufficient funds for their journey before they left home.

There are many departures from the faith once delivered to the saints that have been introduced among our people over the last few years. I will not attempt to mention all of them, but they have indeed proven to be a plague to our people. In some places there is some outward appearance of prosperity as a result of the departures, but this cannot be true spiritual growth and advancement, because it is based upon a false foundation. Ultimately this will be clearly proven to be the case. Departures from the old paths always result in further departures. Those who remove the ancient landmarks seldom if ever turn around at some point and go back to the original ground. At this point we can only hope that some of those who have been led off into error will eventually be delivered and find their way back to the Old Church in its original form as the Lord established it. Truly, man's inventions are nothing but a plague to God's people. It has always *been* that way and it always *will* be that way. ---Elder Ralph Harris