

DIGRESSION AND DIVISION

A century ago, brethren who were determined to have what pleased them in religion (primarily musical instruments in worship and the use of missionary societies) were willing to sacrifice respect for both the statement and the silence of Scripture to have their idols. That digressive element eventually captured the majority of the congregations, almost all of the schools, and many of the papers published by brethren. Those “loving liberals” of yesteryear forced out those who were determined to observe the limits imposed by the law of Christ. Those who loved the Truth were in the minority, and in most cases they had to begin all over again by meeting in homes and rented facilities.

Universal division in the churches of Christ cannot come at once. There is no human head to order such simultaneous action. Thus, the division gradually took place over almost half a century, congregation by congregation. It was recognized as complete in 1906 by the federal census.

As sad as it is to admit, because of a similar digression in recent decades, the church has once more undergone a similar division that is almost complete.

One must be abysmally ignorant or unwilling to face reality to deny it. Liberals (many of them young and disgustingly elitist, impudent, and irreverent) have come out of their “closets” in droves in the past three or four decades. The move has been on for some time by this element to blend the Lord’s church in with the denominations (beginning with the Independent Christian Church). These false brethren are boldly challenging Biblical authority and the reliable Biblical hermeneutics (principles of interpretation) upon which it is ascertained for every belief or practice. They have brazenly announced their intent to stay among us and corrupt as many as possible with their heresies. They

have done an effective job, in large part because of the gross Biblical ignorance so prevalent in so many members in every congregation.

Almost all of the institutions of higher learning, including the “Christian Universities” and graduate schools founded and operated by brethren, are now totally controlled by the liberal element. Those that are not completely “gone” have already made major compromises in doctrine and practice and are headed in the same direction. The schools have been a major force in the latter digression just as they were in the former one. Many congregations have already been captured (especially the larger ones in metropolitan areas). These are “long gone” in their steady march toward full-blown denominationalism, and leopards are more likely to become spotless than these apostate schools and congregations are to repent. Many churches have already divided because of these matters. In some cases the digressive element has left to seek its “freedom” when unable to seize control. In more cases it has gained control of congregations, forcing all objectors either to compromise or to depart. In other cases, where the liberals have not yet made their move, two “congregations,” diametrically opposed in their attitudes toward Scripture, are still meeting under one roof; formal division is yet to come in such cases—and it will.

The Lord’s church will be better off when this digression has run its full course and the division is complete. Those who stand for the Truth are decidedly in the minority again, but it will be a relief to be rid of the detractors and the turmoil they have caused for so long. In the meantime, may those who are yet faithful do everything possible to help rescue naive and gullible brethren who do not realize what is happening.

—Dub McClish

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