

Digression and Division

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A century ago, those who were determined to have what pleased them in religion (primarily musical instruments in worship and the missionary society) 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 and many of the schools and papers. It forced out those who were determined to observe the limits imposed by the Law of Christ. For the most part those who loved the Truth had to begin all over again.

Division in all 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, the church is once more undergoing a similar division because of a similar digression. One must be abysmally ignorant or unwilling to face reality to deny it. Liberals (many of them young and disgustingly impudent and irreverent) have come out of their "closets" in droves in the past few years. The move is on by this element to extend fellowship to the denominations (beginning with the Independent Christian Church). They are boldly challenging Biblical authority and the reliable principles 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.

Many congregations have already been captured (especially the large ones in metropolitan areas). These are "long gone" in their steady march toward full-blown denominationalism. In some churches a division has already occurred. Either the digressive element has left to seek its "freedom" or it has seized control, showing faithful brethren the door. 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.

The Lord's Church will be better off when this digression has run its course and the division is complete. Those who stand for the Truth will likely be in the minority again, but it will be a relief to be separated from 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!

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Edifier*, weekly bulletin of Pearl Street Church of Christ, Denton, TX, October 19, 1989, of which I was editor.]

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