

Original Contributions.

ONCE MORE.

Allow me, Bro. editor, to say a few more words on majorities, and I will promise you never to mar the columns of THE CHRISTIAN again with this question.

The only way to settle any question rightly is to discuss it freely and kindly, and to keep within the bounds of reason, and not get into the regions of "hot blood." It is not always best to be too sure in our ideas and notions. Cromwell's advice to the framers of the Westminster Confession of Faith was good: "Brethren, I beseech you in the mercy of God believe it possible you are mistaken." Our words and deeds should be like the ark-sent dove that returns from the troubled waters bearing the green olive branch of peace to the soul. It should be our aim to say something on this as well as on other questions that will not "freeze the genial current of the soul," but rather melt what ever frost and ice may be in our natures.

If we find a person whom we suppose is not sound in the faith we should not condemn him, and consider him an "innovator," but rather following the noble example of Paul, who loved and praised his Thessalonian brethren for their devotion to the cause of Christ — "their work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope" — notwithstanding "here was something deficient or unsound in their faith." For this reason he was very anxious to see them, "that he might perfect that which was lacking in their faith" I. Thess. iii:10.

We must have clear and honest facts when we attempt to let the light on to any subject. Unqualified denials will never convince any one, unless it is to convince them that we have no facts. To frame our position with blank denials and unkind thrusts can never cover our error, but "all the more it seeks to hide itself the bigger bulk it is."

We said in a former article that "there could not be found a church that was not governed by majorities in matters that are not legislated upon in the scriptures, and that the reason no such church could be found among us was, because no such church could exist." The denial of this has no weight whatever unless substantiated by facts. Such a church must be produced before the denial can have any force or bearing on the question. Not to govern by majorities is to put within the power of one person, be he pastor or elder, to control the affairs of a church, which would at once establish the rule of tyranny such as is found within the Roman hierarchy. This great brotherhood is invited to bow its neck and become servants to the opinions and notions of any minority that may see fit to mount the throne of opinions and "crack the whip" of authority. Our love of truth, and our interest in the grand plea of the Christian brotherhood are too great to allow this minority axe laid at the very root of the reformation. To see how utterly destructive of the churches this minority rule, or "one man power" is, we only need look at the late revelation of the cause of Christ in one of the counties of Texas. Where there were nine churches now there is only one!

It is said that this "majority rule" is not "hinted at in the New Testament." This is easy to say, but awfully hard to believe. We find that in the apostles' days, when the church needed deacons, it was left with the church to choose them, and not to two or three. The apostles, no doubt, might have chosen them, but they being blessed with good common sense did not consider it best to choose them in that way. It was, therefore, left with the multitude — the church. After the deacons were chosen the apostles laid their hands on them. Other places could be produced where such like work was left to the church and not to

the few. If a church to-day needs a deacon he is chosen in like manner — after the apostolic order. Let the preacher or elder arrogate the right, or prerogative, to attend to this kind of work without the wish or judgment of the church, and very soon he would be invited to step down and out. I am safe in saying, we have no such churches among us in these Provinces who would stoop to any such folly. Our elders are men with good sense in their heads and the love of the cause in their hearts. Let an elder teach or introduce something that others thought unscriptural, and see how quickly he would be branded "unsound" and unfit for his position. This shows very clearly that those who are claiming the elders should "rule" want themselves to be the judges of how they should rule and of what is right and scriptural. It is true that the elders are to rule, but not as lords over God's heritage but as the servants of the church, and in perfect harmony with the church.

Another denial of a fact as plain as the shining sun is, that our schools are not governed by a majority. While it is true that the children have not a part in the government, it is not true that the school is not governed by a majority. How did Mr. A. get his school? By a majority of the trustees, two were for him and one against him. How did the trustees get their appointment? By a majority of the school meeting, etc., etc. Let the teacher violate the laws that are laid down, and he will soon find out that the school is ruled by a majority. It is needless to say more in reply to these denials that the schools and governments are controlled by majorities, as the mere child can see that the statements lack "the essential element." It is an unfortunate weakness, however, to assume that the majorities in our churches are boys and girls, in order to bring an odium upon majorities. Nothing could be farther from the truth. And what is still weaker, not to use a stronger term, is to insinuate that our young men and women in the churches are "frivolous," "ignorant," "vain," "light-top," "fickle," "worldly," "of unborn graces and ungrown piety," "and from the Babylonish camp." I exceedingly regret that any young people are the subjects of such implacable disgust. Let us sing, brethren, "Hark, from the tomb a doleful sound." How can any one help being in the dark who sits in such a shadow? But we will leave this dark picture with the old trite saying, "that whoever accuses others of corruption will be sure to convict only one." Let me scatter a little wheat among this chaff by giving my experience among our young people. I have been among all our churches in these Provinces, and know our young people well, and I can truthfully say, they are worthy the respect and confidence of the churches; and as we said in the October CHRISTIAN: "Our hearts rejoice over the noble band of young men and women who are so grandly filling the places of those who are dropping out of our ranks." Our Bro., W. S. Freeman, who wrote so concisely on "majorities" is one of our young men, who is an honor to his profession and to the church. Our troubles, and innovations, and corruptions do not come from our young brethren, but from those who have lost the purity and piety of their youth.

I want to extend my hand "with my heart in't" in commendation of the following: "We find there is still need — urgent need — that we earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints. The faith here means the gospel in all its parts. It includes the provisions which the Lord has made, the directions he has given for ruling in the churches." Italic mine. These are true, sound words. If ever there was a need that the lovers of pure Christianity should use their tongues and pens in behalf of the truth, now is that time of need. I have space only to

mention a few things that are being ignored and eliminated from the Christianity of the Bible. We look first at the commission, in which we find the commandment: "Go into ALL the world and preach the gospel to every creature." This commandment is second to none in the "directions given to the churches." To neglect this is a manifest departure from "the faith." To give our attention to only a portion, and a very small portion, of the world is to ignore the plain teaching of the Bible, as it is into ALL the world the gospel is to be sent and not a part of it. Here, then, is one essential truth that should be most earnestly contended for, lest we depart from the faith. It becomes us to be very careful that we keep the commandments before we condemn another, as it was only the man who was not guilty who was allowed to throw the stone.

We also find in the directions which govern our own Christian life the important duties of love, patience and kindness. We are commanded to "put away evil speaking;" "to speak evil of no man;" "to be of the same mind;" "to let the mind be in us that was in Christ Jesus;" "not to judge one another;" "to be kindly affectioned one to another;" "to be honest in the sight of all men;" "to follow peace with all men, and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." The apostle assures us that hatred and variance, and strife, and divisions, and such like are works of the flesh; and that those who do these things shall not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. We cannot be too earnest in contending for these essential principles of the faith of the gospel. It will never do for us to destroy the 12th chapter of Romans in our contentions for the 2nd chapter of Acts.

While we see the need of defending the truth, we see also just as great a need of construction. We lose sight of the important difference between defending the truth and establishing it. Nehemiah's men defended their position and built the walls of the city. Our defence of the truth is worthless unless we are building up the cause of God. We need, therefore, to speak the truth, and live the truth. Some one has said that "he who gives good advice builds with one hand, and he who gives good advice and good example builds with both hands; but he who gives good advice and poor example builds with one hand and pulls down with the other."

Let us build with both hands. We must have the gospel in our hearts, and in our words, and in our looks as well as in our heads. It is when the world can see and feel the beatitudes of Christianity that they will accept it. May we love the truth, and defend it, and live it, with head, heart, hand, pocket, and not spend our time in steadying the Lord's ark."

"In all things essential unity, in non-essentials liberty; in all alike sweet charity."

H. MURRAY.

FAITH.

BY E. C. FORD.

There is no one principle taught in the Bible of greater importance, and more central in our religion than that of faith. In the patriarchal as well as in the Jewish age it was a condition and means of salvation. And so also in the Christian age. "Without faith it is impossible to please God;" "for whatever is not of faith is sin." Neither can one come to God and enjoy the great salvation but by faith; "for he that comes to Him must believe that He is; and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." "Therefore, being justified we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord." A principle so vital, and upon which our eternal interest depends, should receive our most earnest and careful consideration.