

“Majority Rule”

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But here we are met with the question, “Ought not the majority to rule?” The answer must always be, “No; nor the minority either.” Neither the majority nor the minority are to rule in matters of religion. What did the Savior say? When there was a strife among His disciples, as to which of them should be the greatest, “He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called ‘benefactors.’ But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves” (Luke 22:25–26).

Again, when two of them were seeking for high position of authority, and the others were envious, Jesus said: “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:25–28).

In line with this statement are the words of the Apostle Paul: “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:3-7).

The same Spirit speaks thus through the Apostle Peter: “Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (1 Peter 5:5).

Again the Savior said: “But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Matt. 23:8–12).

Where the idea prevails that in matters of religion the majority must rule, whether it be a majority of numbers or a majority of influence, there must of necessity be judging, and the application of force to the minority, to compel compliance with the wishes of the majority. But here is what the Lord says will be the fate of those who interfere with their fellow-servants: “If that evil servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour

that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 24:48–51).

How is it that the evil servant says in his heart, "My master is delaying his coming"? It is by the very act of presuming to judge and smite his fellow-servant. God alone is Judge, and He has committed all judgment into the hands of His Son (John 5:22). The Divine injunction is, "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God" (1 Cor. 4:5). And again, "Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!" (James 5:9). And it is written, "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, says the Lord." Now those who take upon themselves the work of judging, and condemning their fellow-servants, say by their actions that the Lord is not coming to judge men, but that if such work is ever done they must attend to it themselves. Thus they virtually exclude the Lord from the affairs of His own church.

When God raised Jesus from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, He "gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Eph. 1:22–23). "And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell" (Col. 1:17–19).

Christ therefore is the source of all authority in the church. The State has no right to make laws for the church, for then it would be usurping the place of Christ as the head of the church. *And the church has no right to make laws for itself, nor for anybody else, for in that case the body would be assuming the functions of the head, and the result would be a monster. The business of the church, and of all in it, is to obey the Head, and not to rule.*

And so it may be said, after all, that the majority should rule in matters of religion, for the Lord alone is a majority. "Behold, the nations are as a drop in a bucket, and are counted as the small dust on the scales; look, He lifts up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor its beasts sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before Him are as nothing, and they are counted by Him less than nothing and worthless" (Isa. 40:15–17). Let puny men beware, therefore, how they venture to arrogate to themselves the work of the Lord.

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