

ELECTING ELDERS AND DEACONS

IT WAS a slip of the pen on the part of the Editor when he recently intimated that the only ones who would properly be entitled to a vote at Church meetings would be those believers in the Atonement who had made full consecration and who had symbolized that consecration. The error was in including the symbolization. Many of us were truly Christians, truly accepted of the Lord, truly members of "the Church of the Firstborns whose names are written in Heaven" (Hebrews 12:23), before we saw the real force and significance of water immersion. We have always held (See Vol. 6, STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES) that all such are entitled to vote at Church elections – yea, that it is their duty to vote – to express the Lord's will in respect to the servants of the Church, according to their judgment.

But what we meant to emphasize is that any brother who had not as yet accepted the Bible teachings respecting the proper symbolization of his consecration would not be far enough advanced to be properly appointed to be either a Deacon or an Elder in the Church. It was altogether by an inadvertence that we included with this the thought that such should not vote.

Difficulty has been experienced by some classes in respect to *nominations*. When a call for nomination is made, a brother is nominated as an Elder or as a Deacon, without proper consideration of his qualifications. His nomination is seconded; and the whole class, loving the brother, feels disinclined to vote against him lest they should be misunderstood.

There should always be a reason for the choice of anybody to any service in the Church. An elder should be an able teacher, of a broad mind, able to give assistful advice to those who need it, of deep insight into the Word of God, of good influence in the Church, and a

wise counselor. No one, probably, could have all of these good qualifications in equal measure. Some might possess more of one, and some more of another qualification; but all should possess some of them or there would be no excuse for his election. Likewise a Deacon should have time at his disposal and some aptitude as a prospective Elder, and also an inclination to serve the Church.

What seems to us a very good plan of nominating Elders, Deacons, etc., is by ballot, particularly if there has been any difficulty or if to a majority such a nomination might seem desirable. To put this plan into operation pieces of paper and pencils would be required. Each one entitled to a vote should write, "I nominate the following to be Elders of the _____ Class for the ensuing _____ months." Then should follow as many names as there are Elders at the time the election was taken. If the Class desire to either increase or decrease the number it can be done after the nomination at election time.

After the ballots have been collected the results should be tabulated and announced publicly to the Ecclesia. The Class should then decide how many Elders it would properly need. If it decided that the number should be three, then the six brethren receiving the largest number of nominating ballots should be voted for. The three receiving the largest number of votes with outstretched hands should be considered the choice of the Class. Or another way would be to accept all the nominated ones who received ballots equal to one-third of the entire number of voters and to elect all such by, as nearly as possible, a unanimous vote, this arrangement being intended to give minorities a representation amongst the Elders.

The thought always to be borne in mind is that, so far as possible, the judgment of all the Class should have recognition. While a majority might rule, it is always preferable that they yield something to the minority, so that the eldership of a Class might reflect the sentiment of the entire membership. No matter how this

result be reached, we are doing wisely; and no matter how any other result be reached it would be unwise, as endangering the peace and harmony of the Class. Brotherly love always represents sympathy, kindness, love and a desire to yield something wherever no vital principle is involved.

