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Elders and Bishops.

We have long refrained from saying that of which we were fully convinced with reference to the proper designation of the ruling officers of the church. Custom is hard to overcome and prejudice is also on the side of custom, so that he who would indicate a different course of action as better than that usually followed, has both custom and prejudice to meet.

Our proposition is that the ruling officers of the church are uniformly called Bishops in the New Testament and never Elders as an official title. Neither are these two terms used interchangeably but each carries a separate meaning. Our reasons for these conclusions are found first in the significance of the words from which each of these terms is derived in the original Greek, and secondly from the manner of their use in our own English version.

The word in the Greek from which our word Bishop is translated is *episkopos* and means an inspector, an overseer, a keeper, a guardian. These terms give just the work of the Bishops as laid down in the New Testament. The use of the term among the Athenians was generally in the plural and signified agents deputed by the authorities to keep watch over the dependent states. Hence the idea an overseer or guardian. This is the word used by the Spirit to designate the ones who were to "take the oversight" of the church and "watch for the souls" of its members.

The word Elder is translated from the Greek word *presbuteros* or *presbutera* and signifies an old person. By this word the members of the Jewish Sanhedrim were designated, and hence was used in a partly official sense, but the distinction between the use of *episkopos* and *presbuteros* in reference to the church is very marked.

As there is no doubt of the official signification of our word Bishop we wish to now look for the use of the term Elder as applied to persons in the church. As we have seen, the term *presbuteros* signifies an old person, but as the officers of the church were to be

selected from those who were older in the faith and "not novices," the officers of the church, including both Bishops and Deacons, were sometimes included under the common title of Elders as in Acts 14:23, where they "ordained them Elders in every church." That is, they ordained elders to the offices of Bishop and Deacon. Paul uses the term elders in the same manner precisely in Titus 1:5. In Acts 20:17, we are told that Paul "sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church." By this we understand that he called the officers of the church who were all elders, or old in the faith, and gave them his parting words.

We might, if necessary, take up each case in which the term elder is used and find it always refers to those long in the faith and not exclusively to those who held the office of Bishop. If, then, we as a people would call Bible things by Bible names, we should cease to speak of the Bishops as elders, but use the latter term only when we include all the officers, both Bishops and Deacons, or when we refer to the old brethren without reference to official standing.

If this view of the case is in any way incorrect, we shall be pleased to publish such criticisms as are in the spirit of brotherly love.

The Foreign Christian Missionary Convention.

It would have been the pleasure untold for us to have been able to attend this convention, but our great distance becomes an impassable barrier to a poor editor. To give a general idea of the work of the Convention, we quote from one of the editors of the *Christian Evangelist* who was present:

"This Society held its seventh annual Convention at Lexington, Ky., beginning at 2 P. M. Wednesday, the 18th inst. Isaac Errett, the President of the Society from its inception, being in the chair, and S. M. Jefferson, Secretary, at the table. A large number of the members were present from various States, and the house was packed with a large audience of attentive listeners. The report of the Board of Managers, presented through the Corresponding Secretary, A. McLean, showed a marked increase in the revenue of the Society for the past year. Indeed there has been an increase each year in the receipts of the Society, over the preceding year; but the percentage of increase the past year, over the preceding year, is very gratifying.

The Society is only seven years old. The receipts since the first are as follows:

In 1876.....	\$ 1,706 00
In 1877.....	2,174 00
In 1878.....	8,766 00
In 1879.....	8,287 00
In 1880.....	12,144 00
In 1881.....	13,478 46
In 1882.....	25,063 94

This shows a forward stride during the last year, which is accounted for by the increased interest in heathen missions, and the starting of eight missionaries to India to preach the Gospel to those who are in the shadow of death.

The missions in foreign lands already established, were reported to be in a reasonably prosperous condition, while the work in some of them is spreading so as to demand additional support both in the way of men and of means. This is notably true of the missions in France and Turkey, while the work in England promises ample reward for all the help we may be able to extend to it.

The present financial status is as follows:

Cash on hand for Heathen Missions.....	\$1,624 47
Cash on hand for General Missions.....	37 94
Bonds (Children's Heathen Mission Fund).....	758 86
Notes (interest bearing secured by Mortgage).....	4,020 00
Total on hand.....	\$6,441 27

It should be stated in connection with these figures that no financial agent has been in the field, with the exception of Bro. Norton, who visited the churches with a view of interesting them in his work as much as for collecting funds. Bro. McLean also very generously gave his time and labor to the society, as Corresponding Secretary, for a good part of the year, refusing all remuneration. This has made the current expenses of the society very low.

This shows only a small balance on hand for the missions non-heathen. But it is gratifying to know that there is no indebtedness against the society. It will be remembered that only three or four weeks prior to the Convention, in an appeal for collections for the foreign work, it was stated that \$2,000 would be required to close up the year out of debt. It is very encouraging to know that the response to this appeal, made through this and some of our other papers, was prompt and generous, the contributions pouring in at the rate of \$500 per week until all debts against the society were extinguished. Thanks to the brethren

for their timely aid.

On Wednesday evening, after a very able and eloquent address on "The Memory of Alexander Campbell," by R. T. Matthews, pastor of the Richmond Street Church of Christ, Cincinnati, the President of

the Society stated the growing needs of the work we had on hand, and made an appeal to the large audience for aid in the way of life-directorship and life-memberships in the society. The response was liberal beyond anything known before in the history of our mission work. It kept two or three secretaries busy to record the names of those volunteering to share the burden of those who had gone into foreign fields to "preach the Gospel to every creature." When individuals had pledged themselves, and their congregations, they began pledging for their wives and children. Many of these pledges showed that the spirit of self-denial was taking a deeper hold of our people. Women who had promised themselves a handsome dress this autumn gave up the luxury and pledged the amount for sending the Gospel abroad. Preachers divided their meagre salaries with the brave men and women who are bearing forward the banner of Jesus in distant lands. Business men looked at their balance sheets and struck off a handsome dividend for the cause of him who "though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor that we through his poverty might be made rich." It looked like the dawning of better days for us. A deep and earnest enthusiasm pervaded the whole assembly. It was good to be there.

The next day the work was taken up again and carried forward with the same enthusiasm until over \$16,000 was pledged on the spot. This kind of liberality only needs to become general among us, reaching the great mass of our people, to foot up magnificent totals for mission work. But the wave of liberality is widening as well as deepening, and it is only a question of time when the great body of the Disciples will be fully enlisted in this work, and when, as the result, nations that now sit in darkness will "see a great light," even the light of him who is the "light of the world."

The usual collection days for Foreign Missions, it is requested, will be observed, viz: the first Lord's days in March and Septem-