

tares our only guide. The principal cases of Discipline which they appear to us to notice, may be comprehended under the following classes, viz. *private offences, neglect of duty, immorality of conduct, and error in sentiment.* On each of these, permit us to make a few remarks.

1st. *Private offences.*—The rule relative to this case is laid down by our Lord, Matt. 18. 15, 17. *Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.* No case of this kind should ever be admitted to a hearing before the church until the first steps have been regularly taken. The church must then decide upon the testimony of the persons who were first called to hear and settle the matter: and if they find the accused party guilty, they should admonish him; and if that prove unavailing, they must exclude him. Entire secrecy should be observed until the affair is laid before the church: and if it can be settled by either of the former measures, the whole matter should be buried in eternal silence. Incalculable evils arise from the indulgence of a tattling and back-biting spirit. The practice ought to be frowned into contempt and disuse by all serious people.

2d. *Neglect of duty.*—If one brother deem himself injured by another, and, instead of obeying the directions above given, disclose the matter, or withdraw fellowship from his brethren, he should be admonished, being a disorderly person, who neglects his duty, and, if he be not thereby reclaimed, he ought to be excluded. 1 Thess. 5. 14. *Warn them that are unruly.* 2. Thes. 3. 6. *Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly.* From these passages of Scripture it is obvious, that though a church member be not guilty of the commission of any act of immorality, yet if he refuse, or neglect, to walk with the church according to God's commands, or live in the wilful neglect of any known duty, he is a subject of reproof; and if that produce not the desired effect, of exclusion. See also Heb. 10. 25. and 2 Thes. 3. 11, 12, 14.

3d. *Immorality of conduct.*—There are some things which though not flagitious crimes, are nevertheless inexpedient and unbecoming in professors of religion. Eph. 5. 4. 1 Cor. 10. 23. Every church-member ought to admonish, in love and in the spirit of meekness, any brother or sister whom he knows to indulge in such things. Would to God such freedom and faithfulness generally prevailed in our churches. 1 Heb. 3. 13. *But exhort one another daily.* One may excuse himself by saying, "I so frequently fall into like improprieties of conduct myself, that I cannot reprove another." For that very reason you should be the more faithful and punctual in the discharge of this duty, requesting your brother, and by your faithfulness laying him under obligation to shew the same kindness to you.

Furthermore, he who knows his brother to be guilty of immoral conduct which is not made public, ought not to disclose it, but should ardently strive to reclaim him. James 5. 19. 20. *Brethren if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall*

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