

5. The offended brother must not expect that the brethren, *whom he has selected*, will necessarily take the same view of the whole case as he does himself. The ills we ourselves have had to meet, we see more clearly, and feel more keenly, than others are likely to see and feel them. Others may very possibly think that what has offended us is scarcely worth notice. This *may* arise from taking a somewhat surface-view of the case. Let time be taken therefore to get the whole matter set fairly and fully before the brethren. If not satisfied, we do not see that others may not be selected, but we think it will generally be found wiser to abide by the first decision. The offended brother must not be surprised to find that he requires to make concessions too. Let him afford the one or two brethren every facility he can, in order to bring the matter to a successful termination, even if they should see it necessary to find him in the fault as well as the offender.

6. Here it seems necessary to add that the brethren will require also to hear the offender's view of the case. There may be a misunderstanding, by all means let it be cleared up. He may not be allowed to retaliate, nor to bring up any new matter, such as an offence done to himself by the brother dealing with him. If such exist let him be advised to take the necessary steps. (see v. 15) They are not at liberty to hear him until this be done, and without success. Unless great care be taken here, the interview may come to nothing, it will be a babel, a confusion of tongues. Let every cause be tried on its own merits, and every other circumstance that does not bear upon its elucidation, and which it is not necessary to know in order to its settlement, be resolutely kept out of the way. Settle one matter before entering upon, or hinting at, another, not necessarily connected with it.

7. The brethren selected will do well to enter upon their business *under a deep sense of the responsibility of their position*. Much for good or for evil may hang upon their decision. The world, the Church, and especially an immortal soul, may be seriously damaged or greatly benefited by their conduct in this matter. Let them enter upon their work in humble dependance on divine grace for wisdom profitable to direct. Let them individually ask grace to keep them in this time of need. Let them together (see verse 19) make this business subject of united special prayer. Then let them meet the brethren, who are at variance, and with them mingle their supplications, and if possible, their voices with theirs, at the Throne of Grace. If there is one spot more favourable than another on which to initiate such a business, it is on Calvary, under the droppings of that blood which all four need, which all are equally and alike welcome, which "cleanseth from all sin," and melteth the heart on which it falls from hatred to love. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth unto all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

Before proceeding farther in our exposition, it may not be altogether unnecessary to say here, first, that while the "one or two more" are investigating the case, they are not at liberty to divulge the matter. To them it is committed in confidence, let them keep it so; and second, that if they should succeed and gain their brother, then the whole matter must drop. It must be forgiven and forgotten, not to be brought up again on any future occasion as a cause of stumbling. The brethren must restore the offender to their confidence, and confirm their love to