

but also that the offending brother may be inspired with confidence in their management of it. And, moreover, that in the event of the third step being necessary, the Church may have confidence in their decision.

2. These brethren should not be *particular friends*—or if the expression may be allowed and even in Christian Churches it is sometimes not inapplicable—*partizans* of the offended brother. Men may be otherwise qualified, but if there rests the suspicion in the mind of the offending brother, that they are interested or likely to be so in finding him in the wrong, then the likelihood is that they will not succeed. Even in our courts of law this principle is admitted. Within certain limits, jurymen may be challenged by the parties interested. If possible select *neutral men*, friends rather of the offending than of the offended brother. They will be the more likely to do him good by securing his confidence. If you are really anxious to have an impartial verdict you will employ impartial men, if not, you are not in the path of duty, and this rule is not intended for you. If you are really anxious to do your brother good—that is to “gain him” then you will use the most likely means to that end, and if not, you had better let it alone altogether, you cannot carry it out successfully.

3. Observe thirdly, that the Saviour does not say—*Tell it to one or two more, but take them with thee.* From which we gather that the Saviour meant that the two brethren be kept ignorant of the whole matter until in the presence of both parties. Then, with the full consent of the offending brother, every means likely to secure this must be employed, let a plain statement of the facts be laid before them. This may appear to some more particular than need be; but those who have studied human nature to purpose, will find no difficulty in seeing its propriety. Every one knows how apt an offended party is to give such a statement of an offence when alone with friends, as would require no small modification if given in presence of the offender. (*Proverbs xviii, 17.*) All temptation to colouring or exaggeration, is thus in great measure, taken away, at least, such is likely to be exposed by the opposite party. Besides, by hearing one side first, the brethren may become prejudiced, and adopt a one-sided and false view of the whole affair. We think it of great importance then that we say not a word to the “one or two more” until our brother has an opportunity of hearing us do so. By all means let the jury be in the presence of the accuser and the accused before the case is laid before them. The wisdom of the children of this world may guide us here.

4. Let the brethren selected beware of the influence of preconceived notions, for or against either of these parties, warping their minds and leading them to decide the case before investigation. Should any one feel himself unfit to be engaged in such a business by reason of any disturbing bias which he cannot control, let him at once decline entering upon it. The “one or two more” when selected, ought resolutely to refuse to hear any part of the case, from any quarter, until in the presence of both parties. We have known a case in which means have been used to gain the ear and warp the judgment of the brethren selected previous to their hearing the case in presence of both, thereby frustrating this wise law of Christ. Let brethren resist this firmly.