

introduced to the notice of the church ought to come through the accredited organ of the community. Common prudence and good sense seem to dictate this much, as we see in every well-regulated society among men, even for worldly purposes. In a christian church this organ is the pastor or body of elders, to whom is entrusted as to a committee, the preparation of business for the assembled brethren, "the church;" and as the harmony, peace and even the safety of a church depend, in great measure, upon the orderly transaction of business, great care should be taken that no matters be introduced into a church-meeting in a crude, undigested shape, but that all things be arranged in as clear and orderly manner as possible, that they may be more easily apprehended. Of course, should the pastor or elders refuse to consider, prepare and lay any given piece of business before the church, they would thereby lay themselves open to impeachment before the brotherhood.

According then to this plain and obvious principle, the matter which the one or two brethren failed to settle comes before the pastor. We do not think that, ordinarily, he ought to hear of it until this stage; unless, indeed, his advice or direction in regard to any difficulty may be required. Now, however, he must hear it, at any rate, for the purpose of telling it to the church. Let the whole case then be now laid before him, with all necessary evidence on both sides. But in order to get a correct view of the whole case, a wise and prudent pastor will, most likely, find it necessary to see the parties interested, and, in doing so, it is not impossible that he may be able to have it amicably arranged even at this late stage; and who will say, looking at the spirit of the text, and even at the words—for "one or two" cannot be interpreted so as to prevent three being employed—who would say that he would be wrong in so settling it, and thus saving the necessity of its further publicity. No right-minded pastor will introduce into the meetings of the brotherhood more of such business than is absolutely necessary for the purity and peace of the community. And *if he* gain the offending brother, then there it will drop; for every judicious and prudent pastor ought to be the confidential friend, not of the church merely, as a body, but of every individual member; and every thing committed to him ought to be safe there, and assuredly will be.

With regard to such a case being properly disposed of by the church, I do not think it at all necessary in these pages to enter into minute details.* These will suggest themselves in different shapes to different minds. Two or three remarks, however, may not be altogether out of place here.

1. And first—No church is at liberty to take action in any case until all the evidence is ready to be laid before the assembled brethren. No reports, as reports, can be made known in church-meeting. It is too late. All such, to be made use of, must be examined, sifted, and their substance engrossed in the

* To any one wishing *wise* and *minute* counsel on this as well as on every other point bearing on the administration of Scriptural church orders I would most earnestly recommend a precious little work, a copy of which ought to be in the hands of every one of our church-members, viz. *The Constitution and Administration of the Kingdom of Christ*: by George Robertson, Minister of the Gospel, Thurso. Toronto: Andrew Hamilton, 322 Jarvis Street: Lovell & Gibson, Printers, Yonge Street, 1859. Edinburgh: A. & C. Black.