

If any man make an attack upon his reputation—for all men's reputations are of importance to them—I would defend him in some such way. When we vote for men in the solemn way in which we do, shall we abide by our covenants? Or shall we violate them? If we violate them we become covenant breakers. We break our faith before God and our brethren, in regard to the acts of men whom we have covenanted to sustain. But supposing he should do something wrong, supposing he should be found lying or cheating, or defrauding somebody; or stealing or anything else, or even become impure in his habits, would you still sustain him? It would be my duty then to talk with him as I would with anybody else, and tell him that I had understood that things were thus and so, and that under these circumstances I could not sustain him; and if I found that I had been misinformed I would withdraw the charge; but if not it would then be my duty to see that justice was administered to him, that he was brought before the proper tribunal to answer for the things he had done; and in the absence of that I would have no business to talk about him.

It is well for us to get at some of these little things; they are matters, however, of a good deal of importance. What I have said with regard to a teacher, would apply to the priest and the deacon.

Then, again, we have bishops. We vote for them; and they hold a portion of the priesthood which renders their duties many times very unpleasant; that is naturally they would be unpleasant; but no duty ought to be unpleasant to the servants of God. Now, supposing the bishop should do something that is wrong, what would be our duty?

It would be to go to him and say, "Bishop, I have reason to believe that things are thus and so, evidence having been presented to me, and it is of such a character that I am inclined to think that you have been taking a wrong course, and therefore I have come to talk to you, yourself, about the matter." Who ought to do this? Anybody. What, would not his position deprive us of that right of approaching him? No. Supposing you had been injured by him, or somebody else had been injured by him, or something had occurred that caused you to entertain feelings against him it would be much better to probe the thing to the bottom and have it straightened out than to foster it and allow it to corrode and interfere with your peace and happiness, because you have covenanted to sustain him; on the other hand, we cannot sustain anything that is unrighteous, impure or unholy. We go to him and say, Bishop so-and-so, I have come to see you on unpleasant business—you may be polite about it or you may not—but people can always afford to be polite; I have learned thus and so; I hope I am misinformed, can you explain that to me? If the matter could be explained to your satisfaction you would be glad of it; but whether it could be or not you would have the satisfaction of knowing that you had performed your duty. If not, however, and the matter be of such a character as to call for an investigation, it would be proper that it be inquired into by the proper authorities. Then you are free, and you have not violated any covenant. If any covenants have been violated, it is he that is guilty, and it is for him to account for his acts to the Lord and his brethren; and if no wrong shall