

the body any day. If its laws irk him, or its methods oppress him, he took them on him freely—he may freely lay them down.

But all this goes for nothing. He is “bold,” “noble,” “large-hearted,” “Evangelical,” because he laughs at vows, and makes a mock of obligations voluntarily assumed and borne before God and man!

It is very curious. We confess we cannot understand the sectarian conscience. There is a twist in it here beyond us.

We should say, ourselves, that if a man voluntarily take membership, even in a debating club, he is to submit to the rules or withdraw. As honest people, we cannot see where the grandeur or the nobleness or the large-beartedness comes in, in the case of a gentleman who breaks obligations he freely assumed. In any other case than that of the Church, it would seem there could be no room in such a matter for difference of opinion. We should all say: “The way is open. You, of your own choice, assumed certain obligations. In consequence, you enjoy certain advantages. If you defy the obligations, and insist on going upon self-will as an honest man, in a free country, your only way is to resign the advantage.” It may be “Evangelical” and “large-hearted,” but in plain English, it is certainly shabby and dishonest, for a man to enjoy the place of a Church clergyman when he breaks the promises under which he was admitted to that place, or slanders the body to which he owes all his consideration, and from which he derives his official character.

Nevertheless, there is another way of looking at all this. According to a certain morality, discourtesy becomes holy zeal, law-breach Evangelic fever, and the disregard of solemn vows large-hearted Christian Charity!

And as these phrases are pretty phrases, and many men like to have them linked to their names, and as poor human nature is greedy of praise, from any source, it is no wonder if, now and then, a gentleman who is unable, by honest work at his own duty, to gratify his greed for publicity, will even venture on the easy and tried method of contempt or slander upon his own Mother.

To the poor Church Clergyman it is no doubt a grievous temptation, often. He is unknown. He struggles obscurely in his small field. The great even-handed Church flatters nobody. She spares him now and then a kindly word—that is all. She is always asking, not after him, but after his work; and he, here in his poor corner—why in a week he can have his name telegraphed from end to end of the country, and wake up some morning to find himself famous, with an artist from *Harper* or *Leslie* or the *Police Gazette*, asking for his photograph! And all this by just running his head against one of those laws he voluntarily swore to obey a few years ago, and defying his Bishop to try him; or by going to the nearest Congregational or Baptist Meeting-house, and delivering one glorious tear to delighted sectarian ears about the “coldness,” “formality,” or “lack of vital piety” in the Episcopal Church!

He needs to do it only once and defy his Bishop and his grieved brethren, and he is thenceforward the “noble” or the “bold” or the “Evangelical Mr. Diotrepes, the distinguished, eloquent, and popular Rector of the Church of St. Alexander the Coppersmith.”

That this cheap and easy way of securing to himself the incense of popular applause, and the excitement of personal notoriety, is not taken by any clergyman among us more than once or so in a generation, is the highest evidence of the soundness, modesty, good sense and honesty of the clergy of the Church, and of the present assistance to them in their high office of the guidance of Divine Grace.

—*American Churchman.*