

To the Public.

It cannot be more unpleasant for you to read, than it is for me to write on a subject, which is so disgraceful and disagreeable as the present; but as A. Walker's comment in the Georgia Journal of the 19th inst. has no doubt deeply injured, perhaps totally destroyed, my character abroad, I must beg your indulgence while I attempt to vindicate myself from the charges and insinuations of that comment. Neither resentment nor revenge have any influence upon me at this moment; higher principles than those of the former, and better principles than those of the latter, impel me to this public act of justice to myself and friends.

Now, will the public believe that A. Walker has not "in his possession written testimony, positive, full, clear and unquestionable, of the guilt of that lady alluded to" and myself. I requested him through the Church session to bring his charges and proofs against me, but he refused to make any accusations, and left the session to act upon public rumor. I know not what evidence he may endeavor to produce against me, but I know it to be impossible that he can have proof of guilt against an innocent man, and I know the truth and dare meet it. It is true, as he states, that I made and subscribed a solemn oath, before a civil officer, that I was innocent and the lady guiltless so far as I was concerned; and it is equally true, that I acted in concert with N. H. Beal and John Gilbert; but the public must and will bear this fact in mind, that Gilbert had affirmed to Mr. Beal and myself, positively and unequivocally before his God, as an honest and honorable man, (and we had then no reason to doubt his veracity,) that he was innocent of any criminal intercourse with Mrs. W. Not until he made that affirmation, and consented to take an oath to that effect, did we agree to act together.— Though Mr. Beal and myself were deceived as to his and Mrs. W.'s innocence, we have the satisfaction of knowing that nearly this whole community, and particularly those who were most intimate at A. Walker's house, were also deceived; for up to the moment her confessions were made public, they believed with us that she was guiltless.

As soon as their guilt was made known here by her confessions, which was on the same day the notes appeared in the Athenian, I went with the publisher to the Post Office, and took therefrom the packages directed to Augusta, Milledgeville, Savannah and Macon, and in order to do A. Walker that justice which he had then a right to claim, I attempted to suppress the republication in the Augusta Courier and Constitutionalist, Savannah Georgian, Georgia Journal and Macon Messenger, by cutting from each paper directed to those offices, the request to republish said notes. The editors of said papers had therefore no authority to extract them, as the paper received at each office, from the Athenian or any other office, (as I am told,) is the only one on which a publisher should act. The editors of the Journal must, therefore, have published the notes on A. Walker's responsibility.

Notwithstanding A. Walker has considered me to be guilty, as he himself has stated, for the last eighteen months, he has in the same invited me repeatedly to his house, and treated me with the greatest hospitality. No longer back than the 26th of Dec. last, he met me in the street, and very cordially invited me to a dinner party on the next day, which invitation I accepted, and partook of his hospitality, at a moment when he inwardly believed me an adulterer.

I leave these facts before you without any comment; and as Mr. Beal in his preceding address has gone fully into the whole matter, it is unnecessary for me to enter into a repetition. It has been my misfortune to act with a man, who was apparently and openly a gentleman, but who in secret was a rake and a libertine; and it has been and still is fortunate for me, that I have acted and yet act with a gentleman, whose character will, I believe, stand the test of all these aspersions.

J. C. EDWARDS.

Athens, Jan 21, 1832.