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VINDICATION
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE
Presbyterian Church (O. S.), of 1866,

FROM THE ASPERSIONS OF REV. WILLIAM BROWN, D. D.

THE letter which makes the bulk of this *brochure*, addressed to Dr. Wm. Brown, of Richmond, Va., was intended for publication in the *Central Presbyterian*, of which he is the editor. As he declines to admit it to his columns, a brief statement, explanatory of its publication in its present form, becomes necessary.

On the 25th of November last, I published an article in the New York *Evangelist* (a portion of which also appeared in the *Independent* in two successive numbers), on "Presbyterian Fraternal Relations" between the Northern and Southern Presbyterian Churches. My article was called forth by the correspondence, on the same subject, then just published, between Dr. Henry A. Nelson, of Geneva, N. Y., and Dr. Benjamin M. Palmer, of New Orleans. Dr. Brown reviewed my article (without copying it) in two successive numbers of his paper, Dec. 1 and 8, occupying some five columns, misrepresenting certain portions of it, denying some of its facts and allegations and challenging me to the proof of them before the Christian world, or upon my failure to do

so, demanding an acknowledgment of my error and wrong, and charging me with dishonesty and a want of truthfulness for my representations in the article in question—all of which will sufficiently appear and be fully understood and duly appreciated, as set forth in my response, which he declines to publish—and also exhibiting to his readers a studied disparagement of me personally, in several flings and innuendos, to which no answer is made in my rejected letter.

Under these circumstances, feeling that I had some claim upon his columns for a reply, the following note was penned:

"CINCINNATI, December 11, 1875.

"REV. WILLIAM BROWN, D. D.

"Dear Sir: As you have seen fit to notice my recent article in the New York *Evangelist* on 'Presbyterian Fraternal Relations,' by a review of some four or five columns, and as you 'challenge' me to meet certain points of denial which you make, I infer that your paper is open to me to reply. If so, and if you are through with your notice of my

article, I will send you a reply as soon as my engagements will permit.

"That your readers may know that I am not unmindful of what you have written, I most respectfully request that you publish this note.

"Fraternally yours,

"R. L. STANTON."

In response to the above, Mrs. Brown addressed me a note, under date of December 14, stating that Dr. Brown had left home "for an absence of two months in Florida," and that "for that time controversial articles can not be admitted;" also, promising that my note of the 11th should appear in the *Central Presbyterian*. It was published in that paper, December 22.

My letter designed for publication in the *Central*, was put into printed form (as my article to the *Evangelist* had been, and for the same reason), and sent to Dr. Brown, with the following note:

"CINCINNATI, January 8, 1876.

"REV. WM. BROWN, D. D.

"Dear Sir: I send you, inclosed, my article in reply to your review, as promised in my note which you published. I trust you may find it convenient to give it an early insertion. In order to insure accuracy in the printing, I send it in printed slips. If for any reason its publication should be declined, please inform me as soon as practicable.

"Very truly yours,

"R. L. STANTON.

"P. S. In case Dr. Brown should be away from home, I beg leave to request Mrs. Brown to forward this letter and its inclosures to him, if she should think it advisable."

Under date of January 14, Mrs. Brown wrote me: "Mr. Brown is still in Florida, and your communication will be forwarded to him at once."

The next note, in order, is as follows:

"CINCINNATI, February 4, 1876.

"My Dear Sir: I presume, from a postal card received from you at this office, some time since, that you must be at home by this time, and I will thank you to state whether my article is to appear in your paper. The *Central* of the 2d has this moment come to hand, but I see nothing in it indicating your decision. You stated that you would be at home by the 1st of February. Please answer by return mail.

"Yours truly,

"R. L. STANTON.

"REV. WM. BROWN, D. D.,

"Richmond, Va."

Finally, after waiting so many weeks, the following letter from Dr. Brown was received to-day, declining to publish my reply to his review of my article:

"RICHMOND, VA., February 7, 1876.

"Dear Sir: My sojourn in Southern Florida was at a point where the mail was received only once a

week, and even then with much interruption and uncertainty. The printed slips of your reply to my criticisms upon your first article in the *New York Evangelist* and the *Independent* were sent on immediately after reaching this office, together with your note requesting a publication in the *Central Presbyterian*. But the communication did not reach me until just as I was leaving Florida on my return home. I arrived in Richmond late last Saturday night, and this morning (Monday) your note of the 4th inst. is received, in which inquiry is made whether it is my purpose to publish your article.

"From this statement you will please observe that the earliest opportunity is embraced for giving you an answer.

"I come to the conclusion not to accede to your request, and for the following reasons:

"1. There is no claim upon me arising (as you intimate) from the mere fact that I have challenged you, in the *Central Presbyterian*, to make good your accusations against the Southern Presbyterian Church, or certain statements connected therewith. I leave this, without further remark, to your own knowledge of editorial usage.

"2. Another reason (and giving additional force to the first), is that you intimate no purpose of opening the columns of the *HERALD AND PRESBYTER*, of which you are an associate editor, to any discussion on my part of the questions between us.

"3. The extraordinary length of your article would of itself be a sufficient objection to its insertion. I suppose it would cover about a page and a half of the *Central Presbyterian*.

"Upon a view of the whole case, I am unable to see that there is any claim upon the score of reason or propriety for acceding to your request, but the contrary. In making this decision I can at the same time truly affirm that no religious journal in the Presbyterian Church (North and South) has more freely and fairly published both sides of the controverted questions between us. I have no fear that our people should know to the fullest extent all the facts and arguments that belong to the matter. When your article appears, it is my purpose to give it such a review as I think may be demanded by what you advance in making good your extraordinary positions.

"Yours truly,

"WILLIAM BROWN.

"REV. R. L. STANTON, D. D."

This, then, must be taken as the best showing Dr. Brown can make for declining to publish my letter, rebutting his charges of dishonesty and untruthfulness. These reasons deserve a passing notice, and may be taken in reverse order.

1. As to the "length" of my letter, it will be seen that he had permission to divide it. Under that permission he might have subdivided it if he thought proper. So far, therefore, from this being "a sufficient objection to its insertion" it is of no force whatever.

2. As to intimating "no purpose of opening the

columns of the *HERALD AND PRESBYTER* to any discussion" by Dr. Brown of his "part of the questions between us," what on the face of the globe has this to do with the case? Not a word has been said in that paper upon this matter on either side, nor will there be.

3. In his first reason, Dr. Brown reaches his climax. There is "no claim" upon him; "arising from the mere fact" that he "challenged" me "to make good" my "accusations," etc.; and, to sustain this, he appeals to my "knowledge of editorial usage." If this "mere fact" were all, the case would not be altered; but in addition to this, the "challenge" is accompanied, as already stated, with the most base charges of a personal character—as a want of "common honesty," and a "shameful perversion of the truth," and the like, and a total misrepresentation of my sentiments "on the controverted questions of the day"—besides which, Dr. Brown is so confident of his positions, as against mine, that he taunts me, saying: "He will scarcely

have the hardihood, even under the goading point of our challenge," etc. I can assure Dr. Brown that I have no "knowledge of editorial usage" which sanctions his course. Among honorable journalists—my "knowledge" is chiefly confined to such—when an editor sees fit to pursue the course Dr. Brown has, in this case, he is willing to allow the person who believes injustice has been done him, however humble he may be, or to whatever class he may belong, to speak for himself in the columns where he has been misrepresented. If a different rule prevails at Richmond, among those who have been accustomed to boast of their "chivalry," I am willing to allow them the unenviable distinction which it confers.

But, after all, perhaps it was scarcely to be expected that Dr. Brown would be eager to commit *hara-kari* in his own columns, or, like Saul, upon the mountains of Gilboa, to rush upon his own sword.

R. L. STANTON.

CINCINNATI, February 10, 1876.

REV. WM. BROWN, D. D.,

Dear Sir:

I regret that your absence from home, for several weeks, has occasioned delay in the appearing of my reply, in which I now attempt to fulfill the obligations I assumed in my note of the 14th of December last, published in the *Central Presbyterian* of the 22d of that month.

In your review of my article in the New York *Evangelist*, on "Presbyterian Fraternal Relations," you dissent from several of my positions and challenge me to make them good. The task is not a difficult one, though more space may be required fully to meet your demand than you may be willing to grant in a single number of your paper. In that case you may divide this article into two, though I prefer it should appear without division.

I deem it best to pass by your studied personal disparagement, for such a style of writing can not enforce the argument on either side. But I do not object to such charges as a want of "common honesty" and a "shameful perversion of the truth," and the like, provided they can be sustained. It may not be improper to say, however, in passing, if you can appreciate the mo-

tive, that instead of its being a display of personal vanity for me to assume "the pater-nity" of a certain "accusation," I aimed simply to relieve from responsibility certain honored brethren then acting with me on the committee—Drs. Gurley, Thomas, and Krebs—but now deceased. As to my having held "views on the controverted questions of the day," during my Southern residence, which "coincided with those commonly held by Southern Presbyterians," this is an entire mistake, if I understand your meaning. If you mean the right of States to secede from the Union, it is sufficient to say that I never held that opinion; and, moreover, I left the South in 1854, seven years before the war began. If you mean views upon slavery, and by "those commonly held by Southern Presbyterians," such views as they generally held immediately before and during the war, this too is totally untrue. On the contrary, I always held in good faith the testimonies against slavery uniformly expressed by the highest judicatories of the Presbyterian Church, in five different years, from 1787 to 1818; whereas, the views of slavery "commonly held by Southern Presbyterians" at the time of the war, were as opposite to these testimonies as darkness is to light; while it

is further true, that at the time these deliverances of the Church were put forth, they expressed the views of slavery unanimously held by the Presbyterian Church, South and North, and held also by the whole American people. The change of opinion, therefore, after which you seem to be groping, is not where you place it, but belongs to Southern Presbyterians.

I. I come now to the main subject matter of your review, and shall take up your denial of several of my allegations in the order in which you present them.

You quote the following statement from my article:

The leading men of the Southern Church had filled the land with their teachings that the negro slavery of the South was a "divine institution," that it was "a school of virtue," that it was "an ordinance of God" in precisely the same sense and in the "same category with marriage and civil government."

After an argument by you of some length to show that the negro slavery of the South was "lawful," was "an ordinance of God," and of "divine appointment"—so far at least sustaining my allegations—and that those who dissent from this are "led away with the error of the wicked," and whom you put into a "school in common with infidels," you deny two things I had affirmed:

1. That "leading men" held that slavery was an ordinance of God "in precisely the same sense and in the same category with marriage and civil government."

2. That they "had filled the land" with these teachings.

1. In regard to the first point you say: "Now we plant a contradiction directly in the teeth of this allegation, and challenge Dr. Stanton to stand forth before the Christian world and make it good, or, failing to do so, admit his error and his wrong." I accept the challenge.

a. This doctrine is taught directly.

Dr. Stuart Robinson, while editor of the *True Presbyterian*, Louisville, Ky., reviewed a work of Prof. Samuel F. B. Morse, of New York, entitled, "Ethical Position of Slavery in the Social System," and highly

commended the work. The Professor, giving his notion of "the social system which God has ordained," regards it as having these four relations: the civil, or that between ruler and ruled; the connubial, or that between husband and wife; the parental, or that between parent and child; the servile, or that between master and slave; and he puts them all into the same category of divine authority. Commenting upon the work of Prof. Morse, the *True Presbyterian* says: "Thus these four great relations of human life stand side by side, *equally approved of God, and equally rightful among men.*" "The Savior himself, who corrected whatever else was wrong in man; apostles, saints, divines, martyrs, synods, councils, philosophers, statesmen, moralists; all accepted slavery as being *equally of God with civil government, marriage, or the parental relation.*"

Dr. Frederick A. Ross published a work entitled, "Slavery Ordained of God," in which he says that "slavery is of God;" and of the relation of "master and slave," that "*it is a relation belonging to the same category as those of husband and wife, parent and child.*" He says he had emancipated his own slaves, and gives as the reason for his publication: "I merely wish to show that I have no selfish motive in giving *the true Southern defense of slavery.*"

Dr. George D. Armstrong teaches this doctrine in his work, "The Christian Doctrine of Slavery," when he reviews the work of Albert Barnes, "The Church and Slavery," and condemns Mr. Barnes with special emphasis (p. 85) for dissenting from the tenet which places slavery "on the same basis as the relation of husband and wife, parent and child, guardian and ward."

b. Besides the foregoing direct affirmations of the doctrine in question, it is taught incidentally by several "leading men."

Dr. Stuart Robinson teaches it in the further review of Prof. Morse, in the *True Presbyterian*, in that the historical fact stated is pressed into the service of sustaining the doctrine; otherwise there would be no pertinency in referring to the fact—thus: "In

every country and in every age slavery has existed, *precisely as civil government and the family have existed.*" Referring to several nations: "All held slaves, and they held them without any more doubt of their right to do so, *than of their right to establish civil government, or to marry, or to rule their children.*" Naming several philosophers: "These master minds of the ancient world, reasoning upon the principles of human nature, discern this [slavery] *as one of the lawful relations of mankind.*"

In the same incidental manner and to the same effect, as bearing upon all these relations, Dr. Thomas Smyth, in the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, April, 1863, says: "God claims slavery, *like other forms of government, adapted to sinful human nature, as his own ordinance for good.*"

Dr. George D. Armstrong, in his "Christian Doctrine of Slavery," says: "With civil government, marriage, the family, and slavery, they [the apostles] dealt in the same way." But what is the object of this statement, if it be not to give sanction to the doctrine in question, elsewhere directly taught, that all these relations are, as Dr. Ross says, "in the same category," and as Dr. Robinson says, "equally of God," and thus, as Dr. Ross says, to give "*the true Southern defense of slavery?*"

Precisely of the same purport, also, is the statement of Gen. Thomas R. R. Cobb, in his "Law of Negro Slavery," saying: "They [Christ and the apostles] simply treated slavery as they did all other civil government, as of God."

Let Dr. Robinson's testimony close this point. Dr. Seabury, of New York, wrote a volume upon "American Slavery as Justified by the Law of Nature." He imagines the reader to exclaim: "Do you think there could have been bondage in Paradise? Pray why not?" "I see no reason, then, why the relation of master and servant should not have existed in a state of innocence, *as well as that of husband and wife, parent and child.*" Dr. Robinson warmly commends Dr. Seabury's book in successive numbers of the *True Presbyterian*, and says:

"He argues that in this view of it, slavery being a condition so closely allied to that in which *our wives, our sons, and our daughters are placed by the laws of God and man,* can not be the degrading and hateful relation that modern abolitionists declare it to be. There is no debasement in it. *It might have existed in Paradise, and may continue through the Millennium.*" "And if it be not degrading to our wives to obey their husbands, and to our children to obey their parents, we can not see why it should degrade a slave to obey his master."

2. In regard to your second point, that "leading men" had "filled the land" with these teachings—which you think an unwarranted statement, "simply the product of an imagination"—I did not, of course, mean that they were piled up on every square acre; but that these views were preached from Southern pulpits, and were sown broadcast in newspapers, periodicals, pamphlets, volumes, South and North, before and during the war, is one of the most notorious facts of that unhappy period.

3. And now, after these denials, to which I have replied, you challenge me with a particular case upon another point, thus: "But we are glad he has ventured within the confines of a specific case." And you quote the pastoral letter I wrote, referring to "a work which has been extensively circulated and commended, both North and South, designed to justify and shelter the system of Southern slavery, 'slave codes' and all, under the scriptural sanction of the Mosaic system of servitude."

You then state as follows: "This refers to a small production of the Rev. Dr. Stuart Robinson—a few lectures he delivered to crowded assemblies during the winter of 1863-4, which he spent in Canada." "But that he justified every thing connected with Southern slavery, '*Slave codes and all*' [your own italics], is simply another of Dr. Stanton's remarkable romances, which he will scarcely have the hardihood, even under the goading point of our challenge, to face with any thing like sober proof."

Yes, I shall "face" it and nail it with

"sober proof." Allow me to say, however, that I have never affirmed that Dr. Robinson "justified *every thing connected with Southern slavery.*" This is a phrase palmed upon me of your own invention. But that, in the "work" referred to, he "designed to justify and shelter the system of Southern slavery, 'slave codes' and all, under the scriptural sanction of the Mosaic system of servitude," I shall make as clear as the light; and I am profoundly surprised that you venture to call it in question.

But to the book and to the testimony now lying before me. This is a work of ninety pages. Section 3 is entitled: "A system of perpetual slavery was recognized and regulated by the Mosaic civil code, substantially the same with the system in the American Southern States." Turning to the Section we read as follows: "Altogether, aside from the law of temporary servitude to the Hebrew, there was in the civil code of Moses the recognition of a system of perpetual servitude, just as clearly and distinctly, though in less detail, as in the laws of Virginia, or Kentucky, or South Carolina." Again: "It will be found, furthermore, in studying the principles of this slave code, that almost all its fundamental points *are precisely the same with the slave codes of the American Southern States*, however the latter may, in the detailed application of these principles, be found differing from the former; and however much ignorance and falsehood have caricatured them. And, indeed, in some material points, the slave code of the American Southern States is even more restrictive of the principles of slavery and the power of the master than either the Mosaic code or the Roman code of Justinian." The Section closes with these words: "Those who have any acquaintance with the slave laws of the American Southern States, from practical observation rather than from the singular caricatures of them in the credulous or willful falsehoods of contemporary fanaticism, will at once recognize in these provisions of the Mosaic law *the same fundamental provisions which characterize the slave codes of the Southern States.*"

Is not this enough? The allegation I made, which is so confidently denied, and which it is asserted I should "scarcely have the hardihood" to reaffirm with "sober proof," was that Dr. Robinson's work was "designed to justify and shelter the system of Southern slavery, 'slave codes' and all, under the scriptural sanction of the Mosaic system of servitude." Is not the "sober proof" complete?

But not only in this book, but in the *True Presbyterian*, of which he was the editor, did Dr. Robinson teach the same doctrine. I give a single example. In an elaborate article on "Slavery recognized as a proper Social Order in the Church of God during every Era of Inspiration," he says: "Yet the civil code of Moses permitted and regulated slavery, *in the main recognizing the same principles of the modern slave codes of the Southern States.*"

This certainly will suffice. Indeed, no point in the whole controversy upon slavery has been urged with more pertinacity by "leading men of the Southern Church," in recent times, than this: that the Mosaic code completely justified and sheltered the system of Southern slavery as maintained by law, and that these "codes" did, "in the main, recognize the same principles." This is simply notorious; and the squeamishness with which it is now viewed by Southern men is hopefully significant, while its open and public denial is a marvel.

II. The points embraced in your first article are now covered. Your second is devoted entirely to what you term "the gravest charge to which Dr. Stanton refers," meaning "blasphemy."

I can not but regret that you have allowed yourself, just here, to perpetrate a singular injustice. You ask and answer: "What is the ground upon which this charge rests? It is found in the Narrative of the Southern Assembly for 1864, and we give it here as quoted by Dr. Stanton." You then give in full the familiar quotation about "the peculiar mission of the Southern Church to conserve the institution of slavery," and you base your whole argument of two col-

umns, under eight heads, upon that quotation and upon *that alone*, saying further on: "Now, mark it, a single expression found in the Narrative" "is seized upon," etc.

Now, what is the fact? Did I base the charge of blasphemy upon that quotation alone? By no means. Yet you would have your readers so understand, by not embracing in your argument any other "ground upon which this charge rests." But in addition to this deliverance of your General Assembly, I gave as the "ground" of this charge sundry utterances of "leading men of the Southern Church." My words were:

The significance and bearing of the charge are plain. The leading men of the Southern Church had filled the land with their teachings that the negro slavery of the South was a "divine institution," that it was "a school of virtue," that it was "an ordinance of God" in precisely the same sense and in the "same category with marriage and civil government." These views were published "even as late as the year 1865," as stated in the above mentioned Pastoral Letter. Moreover, in 1864, the Southern General Assembly adopted a Pastoral Letter in which this declaration occurs: "We hesitate not to affirm that it is the peculiar mission of the Southern Church," etc., giving the quotation which you give by itself and alone; and then I add:

It was in reference to *these teachings* that the Northern (Old School) Assembly, of 1866, pronounced the charge of "blasphemy."

Now I submit it to your Christian candor whether you do not commit a marked injustice by isolating that one Assembly utterance from the other four specific things I named, from "leading men," as the basis of the charge of blasphemy, and making that one utterance the *sole* "ground upon which this charge rests?" I mention "these teachings"—five specified things—as its basis; whereas, you select the one "ground" and argue wholly from that. Is this fair dealing? I might retort, in your own words: "This is the part the gentleman is now acting before the Christian public of America;" and, as my article, which you review, did not appear in your paper, your readers would not discover your "acting" without its being pointed out to them.

But passing all this, let us come to the charge. What is "blasphemy?" And here you make the most marvelous display of any exhibited in your whole performance. You say: "Three things are essential to this crime. 1. God must be the object. 2. The words spoken or written, independently of consequences which others may derive from them, must be injurious in their nature. 3. He who commits the crime must do it knowingly." You then quote some authority, without giving the name, to sustain your points, and add, as covering definitions and all: "Dr. Stanton can not find a respectable authority differing from this."

This is really remarkable. So far from its being true that God alone "must be the object," in order to the commission of this offense, "blasphemy" may be committed against persons and things of almost every description, not even excepting the Pope and the Devil. For all this, my "authority" is Holy Scripture and standard authors, and these will be deemed both "respectable" and sufficient.

1. Take a few out of a multitude of Scripture examples, to which I refer without quoting: (1.) God's Word and doctrine may be blasphemed and often are, 1 Tim. vi. 1: Titus ii. 5. (2.) Paul's preaching was blasphemed, Acts xiii. 45. (3.) The Christian name was blasphemed, James ii. 7: 1 Peter ix. 16: Acts xi. 26: Acts xxvi. 28. (4.) Christians were blasphemed, 1 Cor. iv. 13: 1 Peter iv. 4. (5.) Kings may be blasphemed, 1 Kings xxi. 10. (6.) Magistrates may be blasphemed, Jude 8: 2 Peter ii. 10. (7.) Moses was blasphemed, Acts vi. 11. (8.) Judaism may be blasphemed, 2 Sam. xii. 14. (9.) The tabernacle was blasphemed, Rev. xiii. 6. (10.) Professing Christians can and do blaspheme, Acts xxvi. 11: Eph. iv. 31, 32. (11.) The goddess Diana was blasphemed, Acts xix. 37. (12.) The Devil may be blasphemed, though Michael the archangel "durst not" do it, Jude 9. (13.) And, finally, Dr. Brown has blasphemed me, as he may see by consulting the Greek of Romans iii. 8.

It is, then, clear beyond question that all

these passages of Scripture are against your restricted meaning and application of the term "blasphemy."

2. Consulting standard lexicons as to the etymology and meaning of "blasphemy" the result is the same. Of the Greek, *Blasphemia*, Liddell and Scott, Pickering, Donaldson, Donnegan and Robinson and Schleusner, all give the fundamental meaning of *blasphemia* to be, to speak injuriously, both of and against, not only God, but *human persons, and inanimate things*. Of the standard Latin lexicons, White and Riddle, Andrews and Stoddard, Leverett, Ainsworth, and others, agree with the Greek.

3. Standard writers are also against you. Even the *Evangelist*, commenting upon my article, when published in its columns, says that my quotations about "blasphemy," from Webster and Worcester, "do not give its theological definition." Then take the foregoing passages from the Bible. But if the Scriptures, which ought to be "theological," are not "respectable authority," then take the following among a hundred standard writers:

John Calvin (Inst. III. v. 3), speaking of Romanism at large, and of Romish indulgences in particular, says: "Their *whole doctrine* is a compound of horrible sacrileges and blasphemies; yet this blasphemy is more monstrous than the rest." Again (*Ibid.* 6): "The *doctrine of purgatory* has been erected with a multitude of blasphemies, and is daily propped with new ones." "It is nothing but a horrible blasphemy." That is, they blasphemed *the truth*.

Augustus Toplady, speaking of Wesley's caricatures of Calvinism (too numerous to quote), calls them simply "blasphemies" and "blaspheming assertions." (Historic Proofs, 18.) Speaking of Randall, he says: "He would not venture to blaspheme *those doctrines* under his own hand." (*Vide* his Historic Proofs, 115, 152, *et passim*.) Wesley's use of the word "blasphemy," in this controversy, is to the same effect.

Now, it should be observed, that this is the very illustration which you select to break the force of my application of

"blasphemy" to the *doctrines* in question of the Southern Church—that is, if I am correct, the Calvinist and the Arminian might charge each other with being "blasphemers," just as Toplady and Wesley do (the truth of the charge, of course, turning upon the truth of either doctrine)—and you call this "constructive" blasphemy. On the contrary, it is direct blasphemy, as proved by Scripture, the lexicons, and the usage of all the "respectable" standard writers.

John Owen (Works, Vol. VIII. p. 166), after speaking of blasphemy against God, as punishable with death, says: "If any shall say that blasphemy is of a larger extent and of more general acceptance in the Scripture, I shall not deny it;" and adds that it is taken for a man's "reviling and speaking evil of *the truth* which he receiveth not."

Patrick Fairbairn (Pastoral Epistles, p. 289) says of blasphemy: "It is to act the part of a reviler or slanderer." "Titus was to charge the Christians of Crete to give no exhibition *toward any one* of such a spirit."

Dr. George Campbell (Prelim. Diss. p. 395) says: "The word blasphemy and its conjugates are often applied to reproaches *not aimed against God*," and refers to many Scripture texts in proof.

Dr. Isaac Barrow (Works, Vol. I. p. 175) says that the word "blaspheme" imports the use of "words *concerning any person*, which do signify in us ill opinion, or contempt, anger, hatred, enmity conceived in our mind *toward him*."

William Chillingworth (Works, p. 141) says of the Church of Rome: "Why does not your Church set forth infallible commentaries or expositions upon all the Bible? Is it because it would not be profitable for Christians? It is *blasphemous* to say so." Again, p. 187: "*All error* is damnable sin, for it is a blaspheming *the truth*."

Wm. Bates (contemporary with and the friend of Archbishop Tillotson and John Howe) says: "The carnal conceit that God will graciously receive sinners when the world has left them, the conceit that they

shall find mercy, is as blasphemous an atheism as the denial of a God." That is, such views, in his judgment, blasphemed *the truth*.

I add to the foregoing foreign writers several well-known American writers who are classed as "respectable."

Dr. Wm. S. Plumer, a "leading man" in the Southern Church, and hitherto at least deemed a "respectable authority," says in his commentary on Romans iii. 8: "*We be slanderously reported,*" etc. ("blasphemed," Greek). Of the Apostles, he says: "*They were slanderously reported as favoring the loosest Antinomian doctrines,*" and adds shortly after: "*We must bear bold and solemn witness against detestable and blasphemous opinions.*"

This is precisely what the Old School General Assembly did in 1866 in testifying against the modern Southern "opinions" upon slavery, and in charging the Southern Church with departing from and blaspheming the doctrines of the fathers upon slavery, pronouncing them "infidel heresies."

Dr. George D. Armstrong (Christian Doctrine of Slavery, p. 85), another "respectable authority" in the Southern Church, in his review of Albert Barnes' work on slavery, quotes Mr. Barnes assaying that "if a book professing to be a revelation from God, by any fair interpretation defended slavery, or placed it on the same basis as the relation of husband and wife, parent and child, guardian and ward, such a book neither ought to be, nor could be, received by mankind as a divine revelation." Dr. Armstrong then says: "Dr. Barnes may be able to show that this language of his does not amount to positive blasphemy; but we ask—using one of his own favorite expressions—what would 'a proper development of it' be?"

Dr. A. A. Hodge, of Allegheny Seminary (Work on the Atonement, p. 175), says: It is "blasphemy" to hold "that Christ was made personally a sinner when he bore our sins on the tree." "It is nonsense on the one hand and an infamous blasphemy upon the other." That is, it is blaspheming *the truth*.

Albert Barnes (Com. on Rom. iii. 8), "slanderously reported—i. e., blasphemed." "This is the legitimate and proper use of the word blaspheme, *to speak of one* in a reproachful and calumnious manner." "It was doubtless some perversion of the *doctrines* that the Apostles preached."

Edwards (Cyclopedia of Rel. Knowl. p. 248) says: "The import of the word *blasphemia* is evil-speaking in the largest acceptation." "When blasphemy is uttered against God there is properly no change made in the signification of the word. The change is only made in the *application*; that is, in reference to a *different object*."

William Shakespeare, though not a standard theologian, is a "respectable authority." In his King John (III. 1) we have these words of the king:

"Where we do reign, we will alone uphold,
Without assistance of a mortal hand.
So tell the Pope—all reverence set apart
To him and his usurped authority."

To this King Philip, of France, replies:

"Brother of England! You blaspheme in this."

Measure for Measure (I. 5):

"You do blaspheme the good."

In Macbeth (IV. 3):

"He does blaspheme his breed."

So it appears both the Pope and the Devil may be blasphemed; the Pope on the authority of Shakespeare, and the Devil on the authority of Scripture.

William Cowper is generally classed as a "respectable authority," whether in poetry or prose. In his "Charity" (Complete Works, p. 115), speaking of the very question in hand, the vexed question of slavery, he says:

Canst thou, and honored with a Christian name,
Buy what is woman born and feel no shame;
Trade in the blood of innocence, and plead
Expedience as a warrant for the deed?

Impudent blasphemy! So Folly pleads,
And Avarice being judge, with ease succeeds.

After what I have now given, showing the meaning and application of the term

"blasphemy," I am not much disturbed by your charge that I have "suppressed the truth by quoting only a part" of what Webster and Worcester say; and especially so, when, to make up for my deficiency, all your additional quotations, from these lexicographers, directly apply the term to God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit. I have shown that even these additions fall far short of the full meaning of "blasphemy," as given in the Scriptures and in standard theological writers. With what force, then, might I retort in your own language: "The reader can draw his own conclusion as to the unfortunate talent he displays for misleading such as may trust him"—to give the full meaning of "blasphemy;" that is, provided you were really aware of what the Scriptures reveal and standard writers have recorded. It is fair to presume that you were not wholly unaware of this, for you say of this word: "We have had the curiosity to examine with some care its precise meaning." On turning to the authority where your "curiosity" was but too easily satisfied (McClintock and Strong's Dictionary, word "Blasphemy"), I find, in close proximity to the quotation you make, to show that God alone "must be the object," this further statement upon the meaning and application of this word: "It may mean *any* species of calumny and abuse." Quoting Dr. George Campbell, they say: "It is in Scripture applied to reproaches *not aimed at God, but man also*. Rom. iii. 8; Do. xiv. 16; 1 Pet. iv. 4, Greek."

May I not now fairly turn your own words upon yourself? With a very unseemly air of triumph you say: "One would expect a man who is so deeply concerned for the honor of his Maker, to have paid some respect to common honesty. But the rub was here—the quotation of such words would have hoisted him with his own petard!"

III. Having thus shown you seriously at fault in restricting the application of "blasphemy" to God alone, it may now be pertinent to show the justness of its application as used in the Pastoral Letter of the General Assembly of 1866, to the Southern doc-

trines upon slavery which that Assembly condemned, and out of which this present controversy has arisen.

1. When the "leading men of the Southern Church"—yourself among them, in the year of grace 1875, in your review of my article—declare the late system of negro slavery of the Southern States "an ordinance of God," they *blaspheme the truth* which the General Assembly of 1818 unanimously set forth, and in which the whole Southern and Northern Church united, pronouncing that system a "blot on our holy religion;" in the words of Cowper:

A blot that will be still a blot, in spite
Of all that grave apologists may write.

2. When these "leading men"—yourself among them, in the year of grace 1875—declare the late system of negro slavery a "divine institution," they again *blaspheme the truth* as unanimously uttered by the Assembly of 1818, that "slavery creates a paradox in the moral system."

3. When the "General Assembly of the Confederate States," in December, 1861, unanimously declares of the late system of negro slavery, that "God sanctions it in the first table of the Decalogue," that whole Assembly *blasphemes the truth* as unanimously uttered by the Assembly of 1818, in pronouncing that system "utterly inconsistent with the law of God."

4. When that Confederate Assembly of 1861 put the negro slavery of the South under the sanction of the New Testament, it again *blasphemed the truth* as unanimously uttered by the Assembly of 1818, pronouncing that system "totally irreconcilable with the spirit and principles of the gospel of Christ."

5. When the Confederate General Assembly, in 1864, declares that "it is the peculiar mission of the Southern Church" to make "the institution of slavery a blessing both to master and slave," that Assembly *blasphemes the truth*, as unanimously uttered by the Assembly of 1818, which pronounces "the inconsistency of slavery, both with the dictates of humanity and religion."

6. When these "leading men," represented

by Dr. Thomas Smyth, declare that "God claims slavery as his own ordinance for good," they again *blaspheme the truth* as unanimously uttered by the Assembly of 1818, which pronounces the system "a gross violation of the most precious and sacred rights of human nature."

7. When these "leading men" cordially sustain the leader of the whole Southern Church, Dr. Thornwell, in declaring Southern slavery "a school of virtue," they again *blaspheme the truth* as unanimously uttered by the Assembly of 1818, when representing the victims of that system "as dependent on the will of others whether they shall preserve their chastity and purity," and that this and other "evils" named "connect themselves with the very existence" of that system, and that these evils "often take place in fact and in their very worst degree and form," and that "a great and the most virtuous part of the community abhor slavery."

8. When these "leading men" declare that this system is an "ordinance of God" in the "same category with marriage and civil government"—to which the sentiment of Cowper is pertinent:

The supposition is replete with sin,
And bears the brand of blasphemy burnt in—

they *blaspheme the truth* of Holy Scripture in degrading those ordinances which the Scriptures make perpetual and essential to the existence of society to a level with that system which God in his providence has destroyed; and in this they again *blaspheme the truth* as unanimously uttered by the Assembly of 1818, in all the particulars already recited.

9. When these "leading men" cordially sustain and honor the leader (since the death of Dr. Thornwell) of the whole Southern Church, Dr. Palmer, in teaching, in November, 1860, the doctrine of a "divine trust," committed to the Southern Church, "to perpetuate and transmit" the system of Southern slavery to posterity, and when the Confederate General Assembly, in 1864, following the teachings of Dr. Palmer, declares that "it is the peculiar mission of

the Southern Church to conserve the institutions of slavery," they all again *blaspheme the truth*, as unanimously uttered by the Assembly of 1818, which pronounces it to be the duty of Christians to use their influence "to obtain the complete abolition of slavery throughout Christendom, and, if possible, throughout the world"—a doctrine which that Assembly of 1818, representing the whole Southern and Northern Presbyterian Church, unanimously pronounced in the exercise of its highest and most sacred functions, and in the discharge of its most solemn duty, under the Form of Government (Chap. XII. Sec. 5), where it is declared: "To the General Assembly also belongs the power of deciding in all controversies respecting doctrine and discipline; of reproving, warning, or bearing testimony against error in doctrine or immorality in practice, in any Church, Presbytery, or Synod;" and, moreover, a doctrine which had never been repudiated or disapproved by any subsequent General Assembly previous to the meeting of the General Assembly of the Confederate States in 1861.

10. When these "leading men" declare the principles set forth by the Assembly of 1818, "infidel heresies," and class those who maintain them as belonging to a "school in common with infidels," and as "led away with the error of the wicked"—yourself being a leader in this, even as late as your review of my article—they do again *blaspheme the truth*, and *blaspheme the whole General Assembly* of 1818, including the leading men of that day of the Southern Church who were members of that Assembly, and they also, in these libels, blaspheme the whole Christian world, and the wisest statesmen and civilians of every class who rule the nations of the earth.

11. When the General Assembly of the Southern Presbyterian Church, in December, 1865—after slavery had been destroyed, and after an amendment to the Constitution of the United States had been adopted, prohibiting slavery within the United States forever—declares of the negro slavery of the South, that "the lawfulness of the relation as a question of social morality and of

scriptural truth has lost nothing of its importance;" and when Dr. Palmer, now confessedly the leader of the Southern Presbyterian Church, declared on behalf of that Church, in his recent correspondence with Dr. Nelson, "that just what we were from 1860 to 1865, we have also been from 1865 to 1875, and shall continue to be until we go to the judgment," it is clear that all the foregoing blasphemies, in the several specifications recited, are repeated and persisted in, although the institution which occasioned them has now passed away forever and ever; these eleven specifications thus showing a complete departure from the doctrines of the fathers of the Presbyterian Church upon the character of negro slavery, and thus exhibiting, in the whole body of Southern Presbyterians, a change which future ages will regard as one of the most remarkable revolutions in human opinion, in a large mass of intelligent Christian people, which the world has ever known.

12. I now insist, and challenge any one to show the contrary, that I have made good the charge of "blasphemy" which the Old School General Assembly of 1866 brought against these "leading men of the Southern Church," in their individual capacity, and against several of the General Assemblies of the Southern Presbyterian Church.

IV. One point remains. In closing my article (on the late Nelson-Palmer correspondence), which you have reviewed, I very briefly stated, without having space to go into the argument at length, that I was ready for fraternal relations with the Southern Church, or for organic union, so far as questions growing out of slavery and the war were concerned, as both these issues were dead and buried forever, and as I had confidence in the Christian character of the ministers and members of that Church. To this your reply is both expressive and impressive, and consists of a single word: "Bah!" But let us look at the question seriously, and with brevity, by merely noting a few points.

1. It may appear to some, without due reflection, a palpable inconsistency to charge

men with "blasphemy," and yet be willing to fraternize with them. But I have shown from the Scriptures, and from standard writers, that Christians may and do blaspheme. Whether, therefore, it is proper to fraternize with them, must depend on other considerations than the fact that they have committed this sin. But, waiving this, for the moment, a far more difficult problem is before the minds of honest men who are striving for fraternal relations with the Southern Church, and who seek to satisfy themselves by ignoring the offenses which the unanimous judgment of the Northern Church has charged upon the Southern. To deny these offenses, or to concede that the charges founded upon them should be "disapproved"—that is, should be pronounced *untrue*, which is the Southern demand—is to trample God's truth in the dust. To try to put them out of sight, for the sake of fraternal relations or for any other purpose, by covering the head, ostrich-like, in the sand, is to stultify one's self, and to bring the General Assembly to do this is to stultify the Church. Truth before all things is that which honest and Christian men should seek.

2. But our Savior says: "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men." (Matt. xii. 31.) I am not aware that any one has ever charged the Southern Church, or any of its "leading men," with "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost," which is deemed "the unpardonable sin." All their other blasphemies I freely forgive, and judge the Northern Church does the same.

3. I need not dwell at length on the question which casuists and theologians have discussed through the ages, whether repentance is an essential prerequisite to forgiveness. In regard to private offenses, the case, at first view, seems to be clear: "If he repent, forgive him." (Luke xvii. 3.) And yet it is by no means certain that this is intended to restrict forgiveness in matters between individuals, to the penitent alone. Indeed, many contend that one may freely forgive another without

any manifestation of penitence; and, as a matter of fact, this is often done. Who shall say that this is improper? But be this as it may, the case between the Northern and Southern Churches presents a totally different issue. Look at some of the principles here involved. (a) The offenses in question are in no sense of a private nature. It is not a difference between individuals, but between public bodies concerning public questions involving public interests. The offenses charged upon the Southern Church, growing out of slavery and the war, were committed against God, the nation and the Church. Suppose, then, it be true that these offenses have not been repented of, what has that to do with the case? We are well aware that Southern men constantly asseverate that they have done no wrong, and therefore have nothing to repent of. But we need not wait either for their conviction or their penitence, provided we have a forgiving spirit. Absence of repentance, therefore, on their part, can justly form no barrier to our exercise of forgiveness. If there is any bar to this it is with us and not with them. (b) In negotiations between public bodies, on public questions, principles enter into the case, and courses of dealing are universally recognized, which do not apply to the cases of individuals. This, as an established principle, is as well known as any principle or proceeding in law or morals. The differences between the Churches, North and South, come under this rule. (c) The vital element in question here may be partially illustrated by recent history in our national affairs. By the National Constitution, the people of the South committed "treason against the United States," which consists in "levying war against them," etc., and by a law of Congress the penalty for treason is "death;" but the General Government, in passing by this offense committed by large bodies of people and by organized States, has never for a moment intended to be understood as holding that treason had not been committed, but has rather shown, in all its measures of reconstruction, that it has been. (d) The offenses of the Southern Church, as an independ-

ent ecclesiastical body, were met by the Northern Church in remonstrances and testimonies. This was Christian duty and this was the whole of it. All those provisions for examining ministers and members who should apply to be received into the Northern from the Southern Church, or from the Declaration and Testimony party—and all other acts of a similar character—have been declared "null and void," so that intercourse is as free between the Presbyteries and Churches of these bodies as between those belonging to any one of them. But although these restrictions have been removed, the testimonies of the Churches on both sides, North and South, upon the character and issues of the contest itself, must forever remain intact, for they are simple judgments of these bodies, and as such must stand as they were uttered. As such judgments they can not be reached by any power on earth; for, any act of repeal, if such were possible, could not alter their character, or unmake them as a part of the indelible record of history. But notwithstanding all this, these Churches may come together as one—leaving the past to speak for itself, without disturbance or change—provided they have confidence in each other's doctrinal soundness and Christian character.

4. Take an illustration from our common ecclesiastical history. The disruption of 1837-38 brought forth charges and recriminations, upon one side and the other, of a most damaging character. They not only involved unsoundness in doctrine, but moral obliquity of a dark hue. Blasphemies were plentifully hurled on either side, whether the term was used or not. The Digest of the Old School Church contains one hundred and thirty-eight pages, with a running title on "The New School Schism." A Pastoral Letter of the Synod of Philadelphia, at the opening of that contentious history, is zealous in "contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, and of resisting the introduction of Arian, Socinian, Arminian and Hopkinsian heresies." The Assembly "condemns this letter," and this calls forth protests respecting

the "errors, delusions and heresy of the Hopkinsian system," and the "violation of ordination vows," etc. In the long controversy which resulted in the lawsuit and separation, the charges of "breach of faith," "guilty of usurpation," and the most violent aspersions and imputations upon character are indulged in on one side and the other. So bitter was the feeling that nearly ten years afterward the two Assemblies could not meet together in the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

But the New and Old School bodies have become one. The South led the way in this reunion and the North followed. But in neither case was any retraction demanded or concession made respecting the utterances on either side, previous to or during or succeeding the disruption. The record of those times on both sides has passed into history and can not be effaced. In the Southern reunion of the Old and New School Churches certain articles of a purely ecclesiastical character, touching doctrine and policy, were agreed upon, but the charges and recriminations referred to, a generation earlier, remain, as before, a part of the history of those troublous times. The union of the Old and New School Churches at the North was made upon the simple basis of the Standards, with a few "concurrent resolutions" upon incidental matters. But the violent charges referred to remain untouched. Can not a similar reunion be now made between the Northern and Southern Churches, simply upon the basis of our common Standards, without any demands or concessions touching the old issues upon slavery and the war, and without damaging the character of the parties to the union on either side? Rest assured, Dr. Brown, that this union will yet be accomplished, though you and I may not live to see it, and it will be accomplished just in this way.

5. Take for another illustration a recent individual case, but also a representative case, and of all the more significance from its having occurred in a Southern State. Dr. Samuel R. Wilson wrote the paper known as the Declaration and Testimony. No more terrible indictment was ever brought against

an ecclesiastical body in modern times than is brought by that paper against several Old School General Assemblies, growing out of these very issues upon slavery and the war. The charges which your Baltimore Committee, by your own pen, collate against both the Old and New School Assemblies, are cast far into the shade in the presence of those made by the Declaration and Testimony. But Dr. Wilson is now again a member of the Northern Church. In his recent reception into the Louisville Presbytery, by unanimous vote, no demands or concessions were made on either side. I have the best reason to know, moreover, that he entertains the same views of the errors of the Church and of the truthfulness and necessity of the Declaration he wrote against them as formerly; and on the other hand the Church stands just where it did when that paper was condemned by the Assembly of 1866. Had either Dr. Wilson or the Presbytery of Louisville made conditions he never would have entered it. The Assembly of 1867, by an almost unanimous vote, prescribed the concessions and form of admission to be complied with by the Declaration and Testimony party on application for readmission. But though this is one of the things covered by the "null and void" action of the Assembly of 1873, and though every signer of the Declaration and Testimony, and the several Presbyteries that adopted it, would now be received, without question, condition, or concession, that paper and the action upon it will stand forever as the judgment of the respective parties, enacted in good faith. Here, again, I ask, why can not union between the Churches, North and South, be effected in the same way? And here, again, I answer, it will be in God's own time.

I now respectfully submit, whether the position I have taken be not a sound one, even though you ask "if a Jesuit could exceed this"—namely, to maintain intact all the testimonies of the Church concerning slavery and the war, leaving you to retain yours, and at the same time maintain the propriety of reunion—notwithstanding this proposition has been made the subject of a little cheap wit, though it has not been met

with a particle of sound logic. If any persons think this as an ethical proposition unsound, absurd, or jesuitical, let them try their powers upon it in a manly and sensible way, and no longer trifle both with themselves and the subject. If fraternal relations or reunion can not be reached upon such a basis, then let them forever remain in abeyance, for truth is of more value than either.

It may not be easy to convince you, or others in the Southern Church, that it has given me no pleasure to write this paper or the one which called forth your review. I have scarcely lifted a pen upon any branch of the subject since the meeting of the General Assembly of 1867, the last Assembly of which I have been a member. Nor should I have written my former paper, had it not been that a distinguished minister of the Northern Church—than whom, personally, I esteem no one more highly—seemed to be willing to humiliate the Northern Church before the Southern, without cause, and to barter the truth for a shadow. Nothing concerning the welfare of the Church would rejoice me more than to have all controversy between the Churches, North and South,

forever cease, and to have them again become one and go forth in the common work of their common Lord. But this can not be properly done by the sacrifice of truth. In attempting to defend it I am not responsible for reopening these old issues. When the two Assemblies, last May, acted upon the Baltimore official correspondence, there the case might well have rested, though I of course admit any person's right to discuss this or any other question to his heart's content.

And now, if any persons in the Northern Church, or if any coming General Assemblies, in the near or remote future, choose to get down on their knees, or lie flat on their faces in the dust, and accede to the demands of the Southern Church—which are, in a word, that the South has been all right and the North all wrong—God forbid that I should deny them that gratification, but I can not be of their company.

With this candid and honest utterance, I sincerely subscribe myself,

Fraternally yours,

R. L. STANTON.

CINCINNATI, Jan. 8, 1876.

SYNOD OF KENTUCKY ON SLAVERY.

As the Southern General Assembly of 1865 refers to the sentiments upon slavery, set forth in the Address of the Southern Assembly of 1861, as "the old doctrine of the Church"—and as the foregoing pages quote the utterances of the General Assembly of 1818, to show that what is claimed to be "the old doctrine of the Church" is not "the old" but an entirely new doctrine—it may be well to fortify this point by further testimony taken from the action of the Synod of Kentucky.

In 1834, the Synod of Kentucky appointed a Committee of ten persons, one half ministers and the other half elders, "to digest and prepare a plan for the moral and religious instruction of our slaves, and for their future emancipation, and to report such plan to the several Presbyteries within our bounds for their approval." The Committee were "Messrs. John Brown, John Green, Thomas L. Smith, J. R. Alexander, and Charles Cunningham, laymen; and Revs. Wm. L. Breckinridge, James K. Burch, Robert Stuart, Nathan H. Hall, and John C. Young, ministers."

This Address was issued, and is entitled "An Address to the Presbyterians of Kentucky, proposing a Plan for the Instruction and Emancipation of their Slaves, by a Committee of the Synod of Kentucky." It is not known to the present writer that any of this Committee are now living, except Dr. Wm. L. Breckinridge. The Address was written by that accomplished scholar and pulpit orator, Dr. John C. Young, for many years, and until his death, the President of Centre College, Danville, Ky., and Moderator of the Old School General Assembly of 1853.

The object of the following extracts from this long Address is to show how slavery was viewed by these eminent gentlemen who lived in the midst of the system, who saw its actual working, day by day, and who were as competent as any persons who ever lived, to testify to its character. A few of the more salient passages are selected, which are as follows:

"We all admit that the system of slavery which exists among us is not right. Why then do we assist in perpetuating it? Why do we make no serious