

by death, the charge was tabled against the other in the form of a Libel. We say nothing with regard to the truth of the charge; but we cannot shut our eyes to the fact, that the United Secession Synod declared that the charge was groundless, without ever coming to a finding upon the relevancy of the Libel—a step which was necessary in order to do justice to the case, and without which the public could have no opportunity of knowing the principles of those by whom the case was tried—of knowing what they would hold as sound or unsound in reference to the doctrine of the Atonement."

The following is the Reply of the Presbyterian Synod to this part of the Letter: "Our brethren appear to be greatly offended at the proceedings of the United Secession Synod in the case of the libel preferred against Dr Brown by Dr. Marshall. They do not charge the former with heresy, but allege that justice was not done by the Synod. We do not feel ourselves called on to vindicate every step that may have been taken by that Synod, but simple justice to a body of Christians to whose exertions for more than a century, in defence of a scriptural government of the church, the Free Church owes its existence, and who have done infinitely more for the cause of religion in this country than they have done, compels us to give an explicit contradiction to the statement." To this summary disposal of the matter, they subjoin the following statement, in Appendix, No. iii. "The precise point to which our brethren object, is that the Synod tried the case, 'without ever coming to a finding upon the relevancy of the libel, a step which,' they say, 'was necessary to do justice to the case, and without which the public had no opportunity of knowing the principles of those by whom the case was tried.' It is true that the Synod did not consider the relevancy of the libel *by itself*; but it is not true that they came to no finding upon this point. Their resolution was to consider the relevancy and the probation together. We give the words of the resolution: "That the Synod having heard the libel and defences or answers thereto, considering the inconveniences which would attend a separate and preliminary discussion on the relevancy apart from the probation,—Resolves—to hear the parties on each of the charges or counts against Dr. Brown in their order, and then proceed directly to the consideration

of these seriatim with the view of determining whether or not the passages quoted imply the doctrines averred, and *whether or not these doctrines are opposed to the Holy Scriptures and the subordinate standards of the church.*" It was then merely a question of order whether it were better that they should consider the relevancy by itself, or the relevancy and probation together. Upon this point there will be differences of opinion, but whatever be our view of the mode of procedure, the assertion that the Synod pronounced the charge groundless without ever coming to a finding on the relevancy of the libel is simply untrue.—And so far is their statement that 'the public mind had no opportunity of knowing what they held as sound or unsound upon the doctrine of the atonement,' from being true, the Synod had not only on several previous occasions expressed their opinions upon this important subject; but had our brethren but glanced at the decisions on this trial, they would have seen that they on that occasion gave a new and explicit statement of their sentiments. On the third Count of the Libel their decision is as follows, 'The Synod find that Dr. Brown expressly rejects the Arminian doctrine of universal redemption, and holds the doctrines of the reformers, of our standards, and of the decisions of synod upon this subject, that the death of Christ in connexion with covenant engagements secures the salvation of the elect only, but that a foundation has been laid in his death, for a full, sincere, and consistent offer of the gospel to all mankind.'"

There are, no doubt, cases in which mistatements may be made so recklessly, and in a manner so much calculated to give offence, that it may be quite allowable to contradict them in the style which the brethren have been pleased to adopt in the passages quoted above. Those, however, who venture upon such a mode of contradiction, should, at least for their own credit, be very careful to ascertain both that they have truth on their side, and that the spirit which prompted to the mistatement is so manifest as to present a ready apology for their disregard of the ordinary rules of courtesy in the mode of correcting the misrepresentation. In the present instance, the reader can have no difficulty in perceiving, that the statement of the Free Synod was not made in a spirit that should have drawn forth such a reply. It was a statement made by them in all frankness, in order to show