

source such exceptionable language had proceeded, it was not from the Divinity Hall. In 1842, Dr. Balmer had published, by request, an introductory essay to a reprint of a work on the extent of the Atonement; and he had done this, he said, not that he approved every sentiment in that work, but that it would give him an opportunity of presenting to the public his own views. This essay did not give satisfaction to those who speak of redemption as purchased only for the elect. They were alarmed by some passages which seem to vindicate the propriety of speaking of Christ's death, as a universal atonement, which, however, are accompanied with a caution in the use of an expression which was liable to be misunderstood. At the meeting of the Synod in May, 1843, the brethren who were dissatisfied with the Doctor's views sought a conference with him, that they might hear what explanations he might be pleased to give. To this, on his return home, he refers as follows, in a letter to a friend:—"I have neither time nor space for Synod news. Things are not altogether in a satisfactory state. While in one quarter there is not a little extravagance and imprudence, in another there is a sad want of forbearance, and of a right understanding of the points in dispute. The conference to which you refer took place, but was not a very formidable affair. The conversation turned chiefly on the propriety of the expression 'Universal Atonement,' and the issue was, that the dissatisfied brethren were not quite satisfied with the explanations given them; but that, in the meantime, they relinquished their intention of bringing the subject under the notice of the Synod."

But the matter did not rest here. For, at the meeting of the Synod in 1843, an overture was transmitted from the Presbytery of Paisley and Greenock, proposing that the Synod should take an early opportunity of entering into a free and confidential conversation respecting the differences of sentiment among the ministers of the Church, and that the two senior Professors should be requested to deliver their views on the subject.

The impression produced by the Conference appeared to be satisfactory. Many who supposed the Professors had taught error were convinced that it was otherwise. The following was the finding of the Synod, on this occasion:—"That on explanation, supposed differences of sentiment, in a great measure, disappeared, and that scriptural harmony prevailed among the brethren. That, in particular, on the two aspects of the Atonement, there was entire harmony, namely: that, in making the Atonement the Saviour had especial covenant relations to the elect, had a special love to them, and infallibly secured their everlasting salvation; and that his obedience unto the death afforded such a satisfaction to the justice of God, as that on the ground of it, in consistency with his character and law, the door of mercy is opened unto all men, and a free and full salvation is presented for their acceptance."

The statements made by Drs. Brown and Balmer were afterwards published; and although they were satisfactory to many, yet there were others who complained of them, not so much that they contained any doctrine which could be considered erroneous, as that some modes of expression were new, and in the opinion of some were calculated to lead less discriminating persons to adopt views of the Atonement which are not warranted by the word of God. Such expressions as "the Atonement having a general as well as a special reference,"—"opening the door of mercy to all,"—and