

tisfaction or atonement for all. It accomplishes on behalf of all the grand and essential objects of an atonement." Dr. Brown in making his statement expressed his concurrence in what had been advanced by his colleague. The Synod expressed their satisfaction with the explanations. Another overture from the Presbytery of Paisley and Greenock was then considered, viz, "That the Synod examine an Essay by Polhill, on the extent of the death of Christ, lately republished, with a recommendatory preface by Dr. Balmer, and declare whether the sentiments contained in the said Essay and Preface are in accordance with the doctrine of the word of God, as exhibited in the standards of this Church." The vote being taken it was carried "That considering that the main subject of this overture has, at previous seditments, been very fully discussed, and the mind of the Synod expressed in regard to it; considering that Dr. Balmer explicitly states in his Preface, that the Essay of Polhill is not free from faults and imperfections—that some of its expressions and statements are certainly unguarded, and some of its reasonings inconclusive; and considering farther, the explanations already given by Dr. Balmer, in regard to the Preface, the Synod agree to declare, that it was not necessary to entertain the overture." When the Synod met next year, Mr. Alexander Balfour, minister at Lethendy, whose infirmities from advanced years had prevented him from being present when this overture was discussed, requested that the decision should be reviewed. The Synod did not agree to this, but allowed Mr. Balfour to enter his dissent from that previous decision: and, inasmuch as there was ground to fear "that the meaning of the decision had been misapprehended, the Synod thought proper to declare, that it was not intended as an alteration of the Standards of our Church, but rather as a declaration of the existence of harmony in regard to the system of divine truth, which these Standards contain." Dr. Balmer has been quoted as writing, in 1812,—"A prudent use of the words, 'universal atonement' may the more reasonably be required from those who prefer it, when it is considered that, in all probability, the time is not distant when the employment of them will give no offence whatever. Twelve years ago, the supreme court of the United Secession Church passed an act condemning the doctrine of a universal atonement, and forbidding

the use of the phrase. *But how great the change effected within the last two years.* The doctrine of a universal atonement has been *officially* recognised; and though the expression is not yet stamped with the seal of judicial approbation, the chief lets to the use of it are taken out of the way; and already it is *sanctioned by such authority* as will speedily ensure its all but universal adoption." The prediction of the Professor was fully accomplished, and the seal of judicial approbation was given to the use of the phrase universal atonement, or satisfaction, by the deliverance of the Synod in 1843, further ratified by the refusal of the Synod, in 1844, to re-open the discussion. Dr. Balmer died a few weeks after the rising of the Synod.

But although the deliverances of the Synod declared that they had come to an agreement in their views on the doctrinal subjects which had been under their consideration, the Church at large was so far from feeling this to be the case, that no fewer than forty seven memorials and petitions from Presbyteries and Sessions were laid before the Synod in May 1845, calling for a review of their late doctrinal decisions; while there were upwards of thirty against re-opening the question. The Synod, by 243 votes in support of a motion of Dr. Heugh's, against 118 in support of a motion by Dr. Hay, declared that it was not expedient to enter further into these doctrinal discussions. There was a large list of dissentients from this finding; and, in consequence of it, Mr. Scott, minister at Leslie, withdrew from the United Secession Church.

It was in circumstances such as these, that the case was taken up by Dr. Marshall against Dr. Brown; and, whatever may have been the personal relations betwixt these two individuals, it is clear that the character of the Synod itself for soundness in the faith was now involved, and that she was called upon to give utterance to no uncertain sound. Without dwelling upon the preliminary matters, it may be enough to state that a Libel, at the instance of Drs. Marshall and Hay, against Dr. Brown, was laid before the Synod in July 1845.

For the information of some, it may be useful to mention that the document which in judicial proceedings is called a Libel, consists of three propositions—the major, the minor, and the conclusion. In a Libel for alleged heresy, the major proposition contains a statement of what, in