

professed to have conscientious scruples respecting the articles in dispute, inasmuch as the overture for forbearance has been rejected, without qualification or hope of enactment, and the Formula in common use retained with *all its faults*."

"4th. Because the court, by the present decision, have finally declared their judgment that the civil magistrate has power in matters of religion, though they seem to deny him a compulsory power, and that the covenants have an obligation on posterity, though the kind of it is undefined; whereas by delaying a final judgment, these would have been left open to discussion."

Although, in the sense of the phrase already explained, the condemnation of "compulsory measures in religion" was nothing new to the Secession body, the preamble itself was objectionable on various grounds. It left, for instance, the standards of the Church of Scotland undefended from the groundless charge of favouring persecution for conscience's sake; and that on the part of men who were solemnly pledged to maintain the doctrines of these standards as founded on the Word of God. Still further, while the uncorrupted Seceders of 1743 had, as Mr. Trotter knows well, fearlessly denounced the dangerous extreme of espousing principles in favour of propagating religion by offensive arms; the tame position assumed by these self-styled defenders of religious liberty, is, "That they do not require an approbation of any such principle, from any candidate for license or ordination." It is true, in a declaration such as this, they do not open a door wide enough to admit voluntaries; but neither do they keep that door shut which their predecessors had closed against the advocates of persecuting principles. They do not require their elders or preachers, or ministers, to approve of persecuting principles; but they do not say that the holding of such principles would expose the parties to any church censure. Such was the position of the Synod under the preamble, if the word compulsory were interpreted, as they themselves often interpreted it, as being synonymous with persecuting and intolerant.

But while this is the only proper import of the expression, it came to be employed by the leaders in this movement as meaning generally the power of the civil magistrate about religion. The expression "compulsory measures in religion" was held to be synonymous with the national establishment of religion. Com-

pulsory principles and establishment principles were regarded as exactly the same thing. But while this mode of understanding the language employed in the preamble opened a door wide enough to admit of Voluntaries, it did so by representing the preamble as having effected an alteration in the profession which the Synod had hitherto maintained, and it did so moreover by an unwarrantable interpretation of the words which were actually employed. In reference to the power of the magistrate, Dr. McCrie, in his Statement of the Difference, (page 111.) says, "We readily grant that the magistrate's power is compulsory, and that a compulsory power is employed about religion. But the question is, *How* is this power employed, and upon *whom* does the penalty fall? Is it employed in compelling men to believe, profess, worship, &c., and in punishing those who may think, profess, or act in any way different from the national establishment? This is what we deny, and what ought to be proved as a necessary consequent. It is so, indeed, with those laws which are intended to gain the end, directly and immediately, by their own influence. But it is quite otherwise with those laws which are intended to accomplish the ends by the intervention of institutions, and means adapted unto them. In this case, the law is directly employed in sanctioning, securing, providing for the public support and maintenance of these institutions, and the penalty falls upon those who shall attempt, in a factious, disorderly, or turbulent manner, to prevent their being carried into execution, or to interrupt, hinder, disturb, or overturn them. This is the case with many of those laws which are calculated to promote religion, morality, education arts and sciences, with other things connected with the public good of a nation. Those must be strangers to the operation of government, who do not know how many laws are enacted, and carried into execution from time to time, for promoting public improvements and institutions, where neither the private nor public conduct of men are controuled, with respect to any thing necessarily connected with true liberty. When laws are enacted for promoting certain arts and sciences, a compulsory power is employed about them. But are men forced to become artizans and philosophers? or are these things promoted by fines and imprisonments? When laws are enacted for promoting education, and for erecting schools and colleges, as seminaries of na-