

see, that the petition of Mr. Fraser prayed for an alteration in the profession of the Burgher body on the points referred to; and that the overture of forbearance proposed a compliance with the prayer of the petition. Unwilling, however, to run the risk of alienating their people, as Drs. Peddie, Dick, Hall, &c., chose to express it in their reasons of dissent from the deliverance that was ultimately given, "overawed by clamour and threatenings, and by the fear of consequences," the Synod, after considering various proposals to meet the difficulty, dismissed the overture of forbearance, seemed determined to maintain their principles in all their integrity, and adopted the following preamble, or explanation of the questions of the Formula:

"Whereas, some parts of the standard books of this Synod have been interpreted as favouring compulsory measures in religion, the Synod hereby declare, That they do not require an approbation of any such principle, from any candidate for license or ordination: And, whereas, a controversy has arisen among us respecting the nature and kind of the obligation of our solemn covenants on posterity, whether it be entirely of the same kind upon us as upon our ancestors who swore them; the Synod hereby declare, That while they hold the obligation of our covenants upon posterity, they do not interfere with that controversy which has arisen respecting the nature and kind of it, and recommend it to all their members to suppress that controversy, as tending to generate strife rather than godly edifyings."

A motion which was supported by a minority, of the Synod, who were still bent upon carrying the overture of forbearance, also proposed the adoption of this preamble, but only as an interim measure, reserving the intended alterations in the Formula for future consideration. According to the motion which was carried, the Synod adopted the preamble as the final settlement of the question.

The members of the Synod who were desirous to maintain the entire profession which had been hitherto made by the Secession, as testifying for the principles of the Church of Scotland, were induced to vote for this preamble by the solemn assurances which were given to them by its promoters, that it was a mere harmless explanation to relieve the consciences of certain brethren who thought that the Confession of Faith favoured persecuting principles. When the preamble was at

length adopted, some had less scruple in indicating that it had effected a change of principle. Messrs. Greig and Lothian, who had supported the overture of forbearance, in recording their reasons of dissent, say, "The subscribing Dissenters are glad to find, that all the forbearance proposed in the overture of the committee is granted in the declaration now prefixed to the Formula. But they feel for the honour of the Court, in granting that forbearance in so clumsy and undignified a manner." It was now held that anti-establishment principles were no longer inconsistent with the obligations of a Formula connected with such an explanation, that preachers might be licensed, and ministers might be inducted into charges connected with the body, whatever their views might be regarding the power of the civil magistrate. This opinion that a change had been effected by the adoption of the preamble, rested upon a particular interpretation that was put upon the phrase "compulsory measures in religion."

The proper import of the phrase is, *persecution for conscience' sake*, or, the exercise of that compulsory power which belongs to the civil magistrate in reference to men's persons or property in order to constrain them to make a particular religious profession. In this sense, those who adhere to the Confession of Faith in all its integrity decidedly condemn compulsory measures in religion. Against such compulsory measures in religion the Secession Church, while still honestly adhering to the whole doctrine of the Confession of Faith, had already clearly expressed its mind; and had this been honestly adhered to as the meaning of the phrase in the preamble, the Synod might, notwithstanding its having agreed to such an explanation, have proceeded to deal in the way of discipline with those who, in embracing the New Light, had, as was frankly admitted in Mr. Fraser's petition, renounced some of those principles for which the Church of Scotland, and the Secession as adhering to her standards, had hitherto testified. Drs. Peddie and Dick, who, with others, had endeavoured to get the overture of forbearance, if not immediately passed, yet reserved for further consideration, unquestionably entertained this view, as may be seen from the following reasons of Dissent which they gave in against the decision of the Synod.

"3d. Because the court, by the present decision, have voted against any forbearance with those of its members who