

In May, 1850, this subject came again before the Synod, and the following resolutions were passed:—

“1. That while the Synod regard religious instruction as the matter of paramount importance in education, and shall use their utmost endeavors to secure it for the young placed under their care, and co-operate with other religious bodies in imparting such instruction to the neglected portion of the community, they hold that it lies not within the province of civil government, but belongs exclusively to the parent and the Church to provide for it, and that any interference with it by the State ought to be resisted.

“2. That the Synod renew their condemnation of the Government Scheme of Education, not only on account of the unconstitutional powers exercised by the Committee of Privy Council in its administration, but especially because of its indiscriminate support of truth and error, and its tendency to perpetuate sectarian animosity and strife, while it is not even adequate to meet the educational wants of the more necessitous districts of the country.

“3. That in so far as any measure which has been, or which may be, introduced into Parliament shall be found to contain provisions in accordance with the preceding resolutions, and in particular the reform of the Parochial Schools by the abolition of Tests, and the transference of their control to Local Boards elected by a popular constituency, cordial support be given to it; and remit to the Committee on Public Questions, and recommend to the members of the Church to watch over any such measure, and to take all constitutional means to prevent the enactment of any scheme at variance with said resolutions.”

In 1851 the Synod expressed its continued adherence to these resolutions, its approval of the Bill then before Parliament, so far as it accords with them; and thanking the Committee for their diligence in this matter, re-appointed them, with instructions to pay the closest attention to the business committed to them, and to exert themselves to procure the insertion of such clauses into the Bill as shall render it practicable to carry it out in accordance with the principles of this Church; and, in particular, that it be enacted that parents, or lawful guardians of children, may require that they shall be exempted from attendance on the religious instruction that may be given, while availing themselves of the other branches of education imparted in the National Schools.

This subject was not resumed till the meeting of Synod in May, 1854, when the committee reported that their attention had been occupied during last year with questions relating to the abolition of the Tests in the Universities of Scotland, the reforming of the Parochial Schools; the extension of the means of Common School education, and specially to the Bill introduced by the Lord Advocate into the House of Commons on the subject of National Education in Scotland.

The Synod agreed to consider the subject with reference to the Lord Advocate's Bill in so far as it affects religious principles and interests, and after reasoning on the subject it was carried unanimously, that the attention of the Synod having been called to the Bill lately introduced to the House of Commons, on the subject of Education for Scotland, the Synod, while it regards several of the provisions of said Bill, as an improvement on the existing state of matters, resolves:—