

The House of Lords has done its best to spoil the Scotch Educational Bill by preserving the denominational schools from becoming national.

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The Lords have been wise enough to accept the Church of Ireland Bill so far as to pass it to its second reading, but are endeavouring to mutilate it in Committee. The danger that they might reject has caused a freer discussion of the utility of the Upper House than England has entered upon before. The Bishops distinguished themselves in the debate, especially those of Canterbury, St. David's, and Peterborough; the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Trench, was a disappointment on the occasion.

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The Congregational Union of England and Wales met in Finsbury Chapel, London, on the 13th and 16th of May. As usual, the chief feature of interest was the Chairman's address. It did not disappoint the high expectations which Mr. Dale's name excited. His theme was "Christ and the Controversies of Christendom," and with great power did he set forth how the personal Saviour solved the various questions of the age, whether those of Rationalism on the one hand, or Romanism on the other, whether connected with the relations of the Church and the State, or with the social condition of the people.

Our brethren are feeling their way to a Sustentation Fund, somewhat after the manner of the Free Church of Scotland, whereby the strong may help the weak. The principle was adopted by the Union, and a Committee appointed to carry out the details. We are not very sanguine of their success, for Independency, genuine or ultra, stands in the way. The power to create a pigmy "interest," whenever half-a-dozen members take a tiff, is too precious a privilege to be sacrificed for such minor objects as the consolidation of churches, and the proper maintenance of an efficient ministry.

The question of that amount of recognition of denominational good standing, which is afforded by publication of a minister's name in the *Year Book* list, again troubles our brethren. The Union itself being a voluntary organisation, it would not at all serve to make membership in it essential to recognition; and on the other hand, admission into the Union is so easy, that dubious men may creep in through a side-door. The *English Independent* (June 3, page 546) well points out how any minister, who is a member of a church in connection with the Union, may become a personal member of that body on payment of five shillings a year, and so be entered on the official list, although not recognised, and even, rejected, by a County Union or Association. The attempt has often been made in the Canadian Union, to make the holding of the pastorate of an associated church entitle a minister to membership; but it has been felt, on the other hand, that unwary churches may so often be imposed upon, that the Union ought to retain the power of receiving ministerial members in its own hands. The Association system, at the same time, is so incompletely adopted as not to furnish a sufficient test; so that we are compelled to spend some portion of the time of each annual meeting over these "membership cases,—perhaps not an unwholesome discipline, after all, albeit somewhat tedious and debate-provoking.