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THE IRISH CHURCH.

The question of the disestablishment of the Irish Church, now engrossing the attention of the British public, is one of world-wide interest. The principles involved in it are of such magnitude and importance to the interests of spiritual religion and of the human race, that it may well claim of us more than a passing notice. Briefly summed up, they may be stated in the following terms: Shall the Christian religion be left to be supported, as it undeniably was in Apostolic days, by the willingness of those who profess it, or shall the State endow and maintain it? Or, if the latter course be adopted, on what principle shall its patronage be bestowed,—the selection and establishment of a single sect, or the endowment of all alike?

With the corruption of Christianity, and the introduction of a less spiritual worship, the rights and duties of the churches were gradually lost sight of, until in an evil day, the well-intentioned but ill-advised Constantine proclaimed the Christian religion the religion of the Roman Empire. Soon the Church came to demand as her right the support which was first proffered as an act of Imperial generosity, and in due course, the Church of Rome, fully developing her impious pretensions, laid violent hands upon the reins of civil government, and compelled the State to give her whatever her lust of power and self-coveted after, under the threat of excommunication. The Pope was supreme; Kings and Emperors were but his vassals, to hold his horse's stirrup, or wait barefoot at the gate of the Vatican until he should condescend to open it. The Church was without a rival, and never was over-scrupulous as to the nature or extent of her exactions.

The Reformation made but little change in regard to the principle of such endowments. At first the only difference apparent in England was