

or not, and certainly not upon any innate worth in Voluntaryism *per se*. When the Free Church came out from the Establishment "naked," she drew along with her a large proportion of the numbers, the wealth, and the intelligence of the Church of Scotland. She was bound to succeed as no secession that had ever taken place in Scotland before had succeeded, because she had all the elements of success in her bosom. The Baptists in the United States are a numerous, influential, and most respectable body of Christians, although they have no State endowments; and so are the Presbyterians and many other religious bodies on the other side the Atlantic. Even the Mormons, representing as they do in doctrine and in morals a bastard form of Mahomedanism, have achieved within as short a period a success quite as wonderful as the Free Church of Scotland. No religious sect is more energetic in proselytising, and perhaps none is more liberal in its contributions towards what it considers religious purposes. But did not Christianity itself spread over the whole Roman world before it was endowed by the State, and achieved its greatest triumphs in the years of its greatest poverty? On the other hand, we can point to numerous religious denominations and to some establishments which have been most miserable failures. The Episcopal Church in Scotland has not succeeded, because it is not in harmony with the genius of the people. The Reformed Presbyterian Church—the old Cameronians—have gradually dwindled down to a few congregations, because they erected a barrier which prevented a member of their Church from performing some of the most important duties of a citizen. The Anglican Church in Ireland is no less a failure, despite its enormous wealth and privileges. It has not held its ground against the Presbyterians; while both combined have not been able to make any inroad upon Roman Catholicism. It is neither Voluntaryism, therefore, nor endowments, which contribute to the prosperity of a Church, but the adaptability of its faith to the religious wants of the people among whom it is placed.

The Free Church argument, as it has been called, is entirely irrelevant to the Irish Church question. We are not going to disendow and disestablish that Church on the plea that it will be more prosperous when left to its own resources. If that held good in the case of Ireland, it ought to hold good for England and Scotland as well, and we do not know that even the more temperate members of the liberation Society would go so far as that. The Irish Church is to lose its supremacy and State endowments because it is incapable of satisfying the religious wants of the great body of the Irish people. It ought never to have been established and endowed. It has been eating the bread of the nation, and enjoying all the

influence and power which the British Government could place into its hands on false pretences so far as the Irish people were concerned. Political justice—now that the country has awakened to a sense of that high principle—demands that the favours bestowed upon it be extinguished, and that the Irish people be governed upon the principle of religious equality. If upon these grounds the act of disestablishment and disendowment is not justifiable, it is justifiable upon no other. It is ridiculous to say to the Irish Church, "Look at the advantages which you will secure to yourself by being disconnected with the State; look at the enthusiasm which will be awakened in your members; and look at the example of the Free Church of Scotland, and be convinced that disestablishment and disendowment is the best thing that can happen to you." Why, if all these blessings more than counterbalance State support, would it not be better to begin at home? There cannot be the least doubt, we think, that the influence and power and capability even of doing good will be circumscribed by the withdrawal of State support from the Irish Anglican Church. She will probably be unable to maintain her position in parishes and counties where the Roman Catholic Church greatly predominates, and the status of her clergymen will everywhere suffer deterioration. The contributing power of her members will be taxed to the utmost, and this tells in the long run upon zeal and enthusiasm. The Free Church has had a hard struggle to spread her influence in remote and thinly peopled districts, as Mr. M'Naught's pamphlet incontrovertibly establishes; and her numerous schools are a burden upon her of which she would willingly be relieved. Notwithstanding the great success of the Sustentation Fund, it must be admitted that it is maintained at a cost of drumming-up which may yet prove dangerous. We are willing to acknowledge all that the Free Church has accomplished without any depreciation; but in those respects in which it fails *cæteris paribus* the Establishment principle succeeds. However successful the Anglican Church in Ireland may be, when it begins to live upon the Voluntary principle, we are certain that it will be less successful than it is at present wherever it comes in direct opposition with its rivals. It is of no use trying to hide the evil that is about to overtake this Church, or to foolishly attempt to convince her, by the example of the Free, that it is for her good she is to suffer by the despoiling of her benefices. We admit that it is an evil when we propose to deal towards her in a generous manner. If Voluntaryism were an unmingled blessing, we ought to take from her every remnant of her endowments, and send her forth, like the Free Church, "naked" to the world.