

# **THE CRISIS EXAMINED**

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The crisis examined by Disraeli The Younger

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**DISRAELI THE YOUNGER**

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CRISIS EXAMINED.

BY  
DISRAELI THE YOUNGER.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE following pages form a genuine report of an Address to the Electors of High Wycombe, delivered in their Town Hall, Dec. 16th. As its subject is one of general importance, and as it was then considered that a question of great public interest was placed in a proper position and a just light, it has been published.

## S P E E C H,

*&c. &c.*

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GENTLEMEN,

A CONSIDERABLE period has elapsed since I last had the honour of addressing you within these walls; and in that interval great revolutions have occurred—revolutions of government and revolutions of opinion: I can however assure you that I remain unchanged. I appear before you this day influenced by the same sentiments that I have ever professed, and actuated by the same principles I have ever advocated. There are some among my supporters who have deprecated this meeting; who have believed that I stood in so favourable a position as regarded the final result of this contest, that to move might perhaps en-

danger it; who, observing that I was supported by individuals of different opinions and hitherto of different parties, were fearful that in hazarding explanation, I might hazard discomfiture. But, Gentlemen, unless I enter Parliament with a clear explanation of my views, there is little chance of my acting with profit to you or with credit to myself. I cannot condescend to obtain even that distinguished honour by jesuitical intrigue or casuistical cajolery; I cannot condescend, at the same time, to be supported by the Tories, because they deem me a Tory, and by the Liberals because they hold me a Liberal; I cannot stoop to deception, or submit to delusion.

It is the fashion to style the present moment an extraordinary Crisis. I will not quarrel with the phrase. The times are, indeed, remarkable: we have a new Administration just formed; a new Parliament immediately threatened. It is therefore incumbent on the constituent body throughout the empire to prepare, and to resolve upon the course expedient to pursue. Hoping, even believing, that I shall be your representative, I will venture to offer to your consideration the course



of policy which, under existing circumstances, I think it the duty of an Administration to pursue. And in the first place, I think that Administration should be based upon a determination to reduce the burthens, to redress the grievances, and to maintain the rights of the people. I will not, however, and certainly I do not wish them, to shield themselves under a declaration so vague. Let us, therefore, be definite. I think the necessary measures may be classed under four heads : Financial Relief, Ecclesiastical Reform, Sectarian Reform, and Corporate Reform. I will consider the Irish question as collateral to the general one of Ecclesiastical Reform.

As to Financial Relief, I am of opinion that the agricultural interest, at the present moment, is more entitled than any other class to whatever boon the minister may spare. All who hear me know, and most who hear me feel, that that interest is fearfully depressed. We may hope, therefore, that the Exchequer may grant them, at least the partial relief of the malt tax, although I recommend them to petition for the whole. I would not, at the same time, make a request and inti-

mate a compromise. As for any further relief that may be conceded us, I am always an advocate, in spite of political economists, for the abolition of direct taxes. I hope, therefore, the window tax will soon disappear; it is a tax the most onerous and the most unjust. Further relief we cannot certainly now anticipate.

I approach now the solemn subject of Ecclesiastical Reform. Church Reform, Gentlemen, is the popular cry of the country; and when I recall the desperate professions that have been made, and the abortive measures that have been prepared upon this subject, I confess I recoil from a cant phrase, which only reminds me of the intrigues of ignorant faction, or the wily projects of the protectors of vested interests. I hope the time approaches when we may hear less of church reform, and more of church improvement. I deem it absolutely necessary that pluralities should be abolished, and that the great and consequent evil of non-residence should be terminated for ever. It is, perhaps, unnecessary for me to observe that I cannot conceive that this all-important object can be obtained without increasing the value of the

lesser livings, and the incomes in general of the inferior clergy. Ecclesiastical Reform naturally and necessarily draws our attention to IRELAND, a name fatal to so many governments.

I deem it absolutely necessary, even for the existence of the Protestant Establishment itself, that the question of the Irish Church should be forthwith grappled with; that it should be the object of a measure in its nature as final, in its operation as conclusive, as human wit can devise. It is now impossible to avoid, and too late to postpone it; it must be met immediately—the question is, how it may be met efficiently. Twelve months, therefore, must not pass over without the very name of tithes in that country being abolished for ever; nor do I deem it less urgent that the Protestant Establishment in that country should be at once proportioned to the population which it serves. But, Gentlemen, I for one will never consent that the surplus revenues of that branch of our Establishment shall ever be appropriated to any other object save the interests of the Church of England, because experience has taught me that an establishment is never despoiled except to benefit