

MR. DISRAELI ON THE CHURCH CRISIS.

On the 8th ult., Mr. Disraeli received a deputation representing the Ulster Protestant Defence Association and Central Protestant Defence Association in Dublin, together with their various branches throughout Ireland, who laid before him resolutions passed by those bodies in reference to the proposed disestablishment and disendowment of the Irish Church.

Mr. Disraeli, who, on rising, was received with loud cheers, said—

“I need not assure you that I am deeply gratified, and I am sure my colleagues will be, when I inform them of the important deputation which I have the honor of receiving this day, and which represents the whole of the Protestant population of Ireland—(cheers)—which is not limited to one church or to any particular sect, but which, I think, from the various associations which have been delegated to appear here to-day, may be plainly looked upon as representing the general sentiments of the Protestant population of Ireland. (Hear, hear.) And, gentlemen, I can assure you that so far as the Protestant churches and the Protestant institutions of Ireland are concerned, you need have no fear that Her Majesty’s present Government will not stand by them—(cheers)—and to the utmost of their efforts support and maintain them. (Loud cheers.) We are well aware of the critical position of affairs in Ireland from the policy which has suddenly been introduced by the Opposition in the present Parliament. But I think we should be taking a very limited

view of the situation if we looked upon it as only affecting the interests of Ireland. In the opinion of Her Majesty’s Government, the interests of the whole United Kingdom are concerned; and the blow that is to be dealt to the institutions of Ireland must in due time, as a necessary consequence, be levelled against the institutions of Great Britain. Under these circumstances of great difficulty, and no doubt of great danger, Her Majesty’s Government have taken that course which they believed was their duty, namely, to take care that no precipitate decision was arrived at by Parliament upon a question of paramount importance suddenly introduced to its consideration. And although from the position in which we were placed—having accepted office originally in a minority—we have not been able to accomplish that which we could have desired, we have at least secured this for the people of this country, that their constitution shall not be subverted without an appeal to them, so that if there is to be a great and lamentable change in the institutions of the United Kingdom, it will be by the people of the United Kingdom, and not by the machinations of a party of politicians who have seized a favourable opportunity of carrying their revolutionary designs into effect. The question, therefore, is simply this—Do the people of the United Kingdom wish for a revolution? Do they wish for a subversion of those institutions to which they owe, in my opinion, their happiness and their greatness? (Loud