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Edwin **CONSIDERATIONS** *W. Baxter*

ON THE

JUSTICE AND WISDOM

OF

CONCILIATORY MEASURES

TOWARDS

IRELAND.

ADDRESSED TO THE ELECTORS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD.

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1. **WHETHER** the stability of the Protestant Religion in these Realms does not depend upon the adherence and attachment to it of the majority of our people ; and whether that preponderating majority is not, under God, its true, natural, and impregnable security.

2. Whether therefore the apprehensions professed for the safety of our National Religion in its public establishment, in the event of the Roman Catholic subjects of the empire being admitted within the pale of the Constitution, can be shewn to consist with any just view of the relative strength, position, or means of influence, possessed by the members of the two Religions.

3. Whether in point of fact the preservation of our Religion is not always in our own power; and whether it be credible, so long as we are true to it, that any opposite system of faith could publicly supplant it in this empire.

4. Whether the Scriptural doctrines, Apostolical authority, purity of worship, and great reasonableness, of the Church of England, do not form the true bond of the attachment of her members, and the foundation of her public reverence and esteem; and whether we ought not, as Protestants, and as Christians, to look to those innate characters of truth and authority, for the welfare and honour of our Church, far more than to the privilege of law, or the patronage of the State.

5. Whether any man's religion can be taken from him, so long as his personal faith, and his immortality, remain.

6. Whether it be not a principle of the British Constitution, that the free subjects of the empire shall be eligible to bear a share in the making of those laws by which they are to be governed.

7. Whether to give men an interest in the Constitution be the certain way of making them its enemies.

8. Whether the exclusion from the Legislature, and from offices of civil power, trust, or emolument, of five millions of subjects, be not an obvious anomaly in the state; and whether therefore *prudent and well-combined* measures ought not to be taken to reform that anomaly.

9. Whether the eulogies pronounced upon our Constitution and Government, so long as the Roman Catholics of Ireland know it only by its disfavour to them, must not operate as so many insults to their feelings, and incitements to their discontent.

10. Whether it be not known that partial and unequal liberty is more irritating to men than one general condition of equal subjection however severe; the object of the privilege being itself a continual solicitation to their uneasy feelings.

11. Whether Protestant ascendancy, and the constitutional freedom of the Roman Catholic subjects of the empire, may not be reconciled, and exist together.

12. Whether Protestant ascendancy may not rest securely upon the Protestant succession to the Crown, great Protestant majorities in both Houses of Parliament, and the Protestant faith of the larger and more commanding part of the United Kingdom.

13. Whether therefore it is reasonable to anticipate the loss of Protestant ascendancy from the character of the measures now in progress; or just, to continue, upon that presumption, the civil disfranchisement of a

body of subjects, who are too few, without our own crime, to overturn the State; but too many to be excluded from a share in the government of it.

14. Whether the distinction sometimes made between the right of personal freedom, and the right of political power, however just in terms and in theory, be not practically useless in the present question; inasmuch as in free states a participation in political power is itself the chief security of personal freedom:—and in those states the principal of civil ambition, whether for good or for evil, is sure to be nurtured and propagated.

15. Whether it be not one main difference between absolute, and limited or free monarchies, that in the latter the subjects confer in the government of themselves; in the representative body; and in other subordinate stations of trust and power.

16. Whether, when it is said that other

numerous classes of persons, as well as Roman Catholics, are excluded from a seat in the Legislative body ; as women, and the clergy ; this can be deemed a fair comparison ; inasmuch as those other excluded classes are virtually represented by the members whose feelings are in unison with theirs ; whilst it must be confessed that the total exclusion of Roman Catholics leaves to that body no share in the representation, so far as representation depends upon community of personal interest and feeling.

17. Whether the divided allegiance of Roman Catholics, resulting from their connexion with the See of Rome, is more likely to be cured of its evil by measures of an adverse unfriendly policy, or by measures of a conciliatory kind ; which, whether they produce conciliation or no, will improve our cause, and give us a better right to expect it.

18. Whether, when men are not allowed to look to the State as their friend, this be not a motive to them to look elsewhere.

19. Whether a divided allegiance is not better than the loss of it altogether.

20. Whether it is true, as is asserted, that the spirit of the Roman Catholic Religion and its adherents is unalterably the same in all ages and countries.

21. Whether the action of the Roman Catholic Creed, in its most obnoxious articles, upon men's minds, never varies under different circumstances of government, civilization, diffusion of enquiry, scriptural knowledge, or habits of communication with the members of a more enlightened Church.

22. Whether the history of the successful struggles of the Roman Catholic State of Venice with the Papal authority, and the establishment of the liberties of the Gallican Church, and other movements in Roman

Catholic States, are not so many instances to shew that the members of that Religion are not always and exclusively governed by principles of subserviency to the See of Rome.

23. Whether many of the Roman Catholic Nobility and Gentry of England did not give proof of their loyalty, honour, and love of their country, even in the inauspicious reign of Elizabeth, and when the Spanish and Papal Armada was at sea, and that Sovereign had been deposed and excommunicated by a Papal bull.

24. Whether in Ireland the doctrines of the Reformation have ever had a fair trial.

25. Whether the civil separation created there between Protestant and Catholic, has not placed a bar to the extension of the Protestant faith, by excluding confidence and friendly regards, and turning men's minds

from the care and thought of Religion to the object of political contest.

26. Whether social justice is not a branch of the essential morals of our Religion, and whether we can say with a good conscience that we have acquitted our obligations in that respect towards Ireland.

27. Whether, when the limitation of the succession to the Crown is compared with the exclusion of Roman Catholics from Parliament, and the two cases are attempted to be identified, there is not a mistake in the statement.

28. Whether the Sovereign, if a Catholic were not excluded from the throne, might not at once, and by his sole will, change the Protestant character of the throne, and throw the whole weight of Royal power on the other side: whereas the admission of a limited number of Roman Catholics into either House of Parliament can work no such

change in those branches of the Legislature.

29. Whether those branches might not remain mixed bodies with a permanent ascendancy of Protestant strength; and whether so long as the nation is Protestant, and under the terms of the union with Ireland, they could, in fact, be any other.

30. When therefore it is said that Roman Catholics ought not to legislate for Protestants, whether there is not an assault made upon our judgment by putting a minority for the whole.

31. Whether the best lights of history, and not least those classical histories with which we have been conversant as subjects of our academical study, do not conspire in illustrating the extraordinary power, resources, and perseverance, of the spirit of liberty, when contending on its own ground: and whether we can in prudence undervalue

the hostility or the friendship of a people, beginning to be animated by that spirit.

32. Whether the erection of the United States of Holland, and of America, may not teach us something.

33. Whether the views of Government which have been heretofore applied to Ireland, do not remind us of the mistakes of our policy towards America.

34. Whether a frank avowal and acknowledgment has not been made by the distinguished Person, our late Representative, who stood most strongly pledged to his country, for the support of certain measures; in avowal and acknowledgment that he can no longer, in prudence to his country, or in duty to his Sovereign, give those measures his support; and whether this be not a striking proof of his conviction of the evils and embarrassments to be expected from a perseverance in them.

35. Whether that individual, if he could have persuaded himself, that those measures were capable of being defended by him any longer under his responsibility as a Statesman, was not the person of all others in regard to his engagements of public character to defend them to the last.

36. Whether another Statesman, of all men the least accessible to the imputation of acting under the impression of vulgar or imaginary difficulties, has not come forward as the adviser and conductor of another course of policy, which appears to have received no public countenance from him before, not disguising that this new course is in his view become necessary.

37. Whether the inviolability of the United Church of England and Ireland is not a fundamental article of the Act of Union.

38. Whether the Church of Ireland has not been placed in odium and danger by the system of civil disabilities.