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*An Act for Preserving the Protestant Religion, by better Securing the Church of England, as by Law Established; and for Confirming the Toleration Granted to Protestant Dissenters by an Act Intituled, An Act for Exempting Their Majesties Protestant Subjects, Dissenting from the Church of England, from the Penalties of certain Laws, and for Supplying the Defects thereof; and for the further Securing the Protestant Succession, by Requiring the Practicers of the Law in North Britain to take the Oaths, and Subscribe the Declaration therein mentioned.*

**W**HEREAS an Act was made in the Thirteenth Year of the Reign of the late King Charles the Second, Intituled, *An Act for the well Governing and Regulating of Corporations*; and another Act was made in the Five and twentieth Year of the Reign of the said late King Charles the Second, Intituled, *An Act for the Preventing Dangers which may happen from Popish Recusants*; both which Acts were made for the Security of the Church of England, as by Law Established: Now, for the better Securing the said Church, and Quietting the Minds of Her Majesties Protestant Subjects Dissenting from the Church of England, and rendering them Secure in the Exercise of their Religious Worship, as also for the further Strengthening the Provision already made for the Security of the Succession to the Crown in the House of Hannover; Be it Enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in Parliament Assembled, and by the Authority of the same, That if any Person or Persons, after the Five and twentieth Day of *March*, which shall be in the Year of our Lord One thousand seven hundred and twelve, either Peers or Commoners, who have or shall have any Office or Offices, Civil or Military, or Receive any Pay, Salary, Fee or Wages, by Reason of any Patent or Grant from or under Her Majesty, or any of Her Majesties Predecessors, or of Her Heirs or Successors, or shall have any Command or Place of Trust from or under Her Majesty, Her Heirs or Successors, or from any of Her Majesties Predecessors, or by Her or Their Authority, or by Authority derived from Her or Them, within that Part of *Great Britain* called *England*, the Dominion of *Wales*, or Town of *Berwick upon Tweed*, or in the Navy, or in the several Islands of *Jersey* or *Guernsey*, or shall be admitted into any Service or Employment in the Household or Family of Her Majesty, Her Heirs or Successors, or if any Mayor, Alderman, Recorder, Bayliff, Town-Clerk, Common-Council-Man, or other Person bearing any Office of Magistracy, or Place of Trust, or other Employment relating to or concerning the Government of any the respective Cities, Corporations, Boroughs, Cinque-Ports, and their Members, or other Port-Towns within that Part of *Great Britain* called *England*, the Dominion of *Wales*, Town of *Berwick* or either of the Isles aforesaid, who by the said re-

cited Acts, or either of them, were or are obliged to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, according to the Rights and Usage of the Church of *England* as aforesaid, shall at any time after their Admission into their respective Offices or Employments, or after having such Patent or Grant, Command or Place of Trust as aforesaid, during his or their Continuance in such Office or Offices, Employment or Employments, or having such Patent or Grant, Command or Place of Trust, or any Profit or Advantage from the same, knowingly or willingly resort to, or be present at any Conventicle, Assembly or Meeting, within *England*, *Wales*, *Berwick upon Tweed*, or the Isles aforesaid, for the Exercise of Religion, in other manner than according to the Liturgy and Practice of the Church of *England*, in any Place within that Part of *Great Britain* called *England*, the Dominion of *Wales*, and Town of *Berwick upon Tweed*, or the Isles aforesaid, at which Conventicle Assembly or Meeting, there shall be Ten Persons or more assembled together, over and besides those of the same Household, if it be in any House where there is a Family inhabiting, or if it be in an House or Place where there is no Family inhabiting, then where any such Ten Persons are so assembled, as aforesaid, or shall knowingly or willingly be present at any such Meeting in such House or Place, as aforesaid, altho' the Liturgy be there used, where Her Majesty (whom God long preserve) and the Princess *Sophia*, or such others as shall from time to time be lawfully appointed to be Prayed for, shall not there be prayed for in express Words according to the Liturgy of the Church of *England*, except where such particular Offices of the Liturgy are used, wherein there are no express Directions to Pray for Her Majesty and the Royal Family, shall forfeit Forty Pounds, to be recovered by him or them that shall sue for the same, by any Action of Debt, Bill, Plaint or Information in any of Her Majesties Courts at *Westminster*, wherein no Essoign, Protection, or Wager of Law shall be allowed, or any more than one Imparlance.

And be it further Enacted, That every Person convicted in any Action to be brought, as aforesaid, or upon any Information, Presentment or Indictment in any of Her Majesties Courts at *Westminster*, or at the Assizes, shall be disabled from thenceforth to hold such Office or Offices, Employment or Employments, or to receive any Profit or Advantage by reason of them, or of any Grant as aforesaid, and shall be adjudged incapable to bear any Office or Employment whatsoever within that Part of *Great Britain* called *England*, the Dominion of *Wales*, or the Town of *Berwick upon Tweed*, or the Isles of *Jersey* or *Guernsey*.

Provided always, and be it further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That if any Person or Persons, who shall have been convicted as aforesaid, and thereby made incapable to hold any Office or Employment, or to receive any Profit or Advantage by reason of them, or of any Grant as aforesaid, shall, after such Conviction, conform to the Church of *England*, for the Space of one Year, without having been present at any Conventicle, Assembly or Meeting as aforesaid, and receive the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, accord.

According to the Rites and Usage of the Church of England, at least three times in the Year, every such Person or Persons shall be capable of the Grant of any the Offices or Employments aforesaid.

Provided also, and be it further Enacted, That every such Person so Convicted, and afterwards Conforming in manner as aforesaid, shall at the next Term after his Admission into any such Office or Employment, make Oath in Writing in some one of Her Majesties Courts at Westminster, in Publick and Open Court, at the next Quarter-Sessions for that County or Place where he shall Reside, between the Hours of Nine and Twelve in the Forenoon, That he hath Conformed to the Church of England for the space of one Year before such his Admission, without having been present at any Conventicle, Assembly or Meeting, as aforesaid, and that he hath Received the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, at least three Times in the Year; which Oath shall be there Enrolled and Kept upon Record.

Provided, That no Person shall suffer any Punishment for any Offence committed against this Act, unless Oath be made of such Offence, before some Judge or Justice of the Peace (who is hereby Impowered and Required to take the said Oath) within ten Days after the said Offence committed, and unless the said Offender be Prosecuted for the same within Three Months after the said Offence committed; nor shall any Person be Convicted for any such Offence, unless upon the Oaths of two Credible Witnesses at the least.

Provided always, That this Act, or any thing therein contain'd, or any Offence against the same shall not extend or be judged to take away or make void any Office of Inheritance; nevertheless, so as such Person having or enjoying any such Office of Inheritance, do or shall Substitute and Appoint his sufficient Deputy (which such Officer is hereby Impowered from time to time, to make or change; any former Law or Usage to the contrary notwithstanding) to Exercise the said Office, untill such time as the Person having such Office, shall Conform, as aforesaid.

And it is hereby further Enacted and Declared by the Authority aforesaid, That the Toleration granted to Protestant Dissenters, by the Act made in the first Year of the Reign of King William and Queen Mary, Intituled, *An Act for Exempting their Majesties Protestant Subjects, Dissenting from the Church of England, from the Penalties of certain Laws*, shall be, and is hereby ratified and confirmed, and that the same Act shall at all times be inviolably observed for the exempting of such Protestant Dissenters as are thereby intended, from the Pains and Penalties therein mentioned.

And for the rendring the said last mentioned Act more effectual, according to the true intent and meaning thereof, Be it further Enacted and Declared by the Authority aforesaid, That if any Person Dissenting from the Church of England, (not in Holy Orders, or pretended Holy Orders, or pretending to Holy Orders, nor any Preacher or Teacher of any Congregation) who should have been Entitled to the Benefit of the said last mentioned Act, if such Person had duly taken, made and subscribed the Oaths and Declaration, or otherwise qualified him or herself, as required by the said Act, and now is or shall be prosecuted upon or by Virtue of any of the Penal Statutes, from which Protestant Dissenters are exempted by the said Act, shall at any time during such Prosecution, take, make, and subscribe the said Oaths and Declaration, or being of the People called Quakers, shall make and subscribe the aforesaid Declaration, and also the Declaration of Fidelity, and subscribe the Profession of their Christian Belief according to the said Act, or before any two of Her Majesty's

Justices of the Peace (who are hereby required to take and return the same to the next Quarter-Sessions of the Peace, to be there Recorded) such Person shall be, and is hereby Entitled to the Benefit of the said Act, as fully and effectually as if such Person had duly Qualified himself, within the time prescribed by the said Act, and shall be thenceforth exempted and discharged from all the Penalties and Forfeitures incurred by Force of any the aforesaid Penal Statutes.

And whereas it is or may be doubted whether a Preacher or Teacher of any Congregation of Dissenting Protestants, duly in all Respects qualified according to the said Act, be allowed by virtue of the said Act, to Officiate in any Congregation in any County, other than that in which he so qualified himself, although in a Congregation or Place of Meeting, duly certified and registered as is required by the said Act; Be it declared and Enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That any such Preacher or Teacher, so duly qualified according to the said Act, shall be and is hereby allowed to Officiate in any Congregation, although the same be not in the County wherein he was so Qualified; provided that the said Congregation or Place of Meeting, hath been before such Officiating, duly Certified and Registered or Recorded according to the said Act: And such Preacher or Teacher, shall if required, produce a Certificate of his having so Qualified himself, under the Hand of the Clerk of the Peace for the County or Place where he so qualified himself, which Certificate such Clerk of the Peace is hereby required to make; and shall also before any Justice of the Peace of such County or Place where he shall so Officiate, make and subscribe such Declaration, and take such Oaths as are mention'd in the said Act, if thereunto required.

And be it further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That on or before the Fifteenth Day of June next, all Advocates, Writers to the Signet, Notaries Publick, and other Members of the College of Justice, within that part of Her Majesties Kingdom of Great Britain called Scotland, shall be and are hereby obliged to take and Subscribe the Oath appointed by the Act of the Sixth Year of Her Majesties Reign, intituled, *An Act for the better Security of Her Majesties Person and Government*, before the Lords of Session of the aforesaid Part of Her Majesties Kingdom, except such of the said Persons who have already taken the same: And if any of the Persons aforesaid, do or shall neglect or refuse, to take and subscribe the said Oath as aforesaid, such Person shall be *ipso facto*, adjudged incapable, and disabled in Law to have, enjoy, or exercise in any manner his said Employment or Practice.

And be it further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That in all time coming, no Person or Persons shall be admitted to the Employment of Advocate, Writer to the Signet, Notary Publick, or any Office belonging to the said College of Justice, until he or they have taken and subscribed the aforesaid Oath, in manner as is above directed.

Hague, January 22. N. S. We have Advice from the Frontiers of the Low-Countries, that the Enemy has endeavour'd to set Fire to the Brats that brought necessary Utensils to render the Scarpe navigable, and were arriv'd at Hanoh; but, that they were disappointed of their Design, and that a Redoubt has been since rais'd upon the Scarpe to cover the Workmen, and a Detachment has been made from the neighbouring Garrisons, so that they need not fear any Disturbance for the future. Here are Accounts from many Places, of the raising the Siege of Cardona, and that the Enemy were entirely defeated, so that very few of them were able to make their Escape.