

**A REVIEW OF THE CASE OF THE
PROTESTANT DISSENTERS;
WITH REFERENCE TO THE
CORPORATION AND TEST ACTS;
PP. 1-60**

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A review of the case of the Protestant dissenters; with reference to the corporation and test acts;
pp. 1-60 by Samuel Horsley

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SAMUEL HORSLEY

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A
REVIEW OF THE CASE
OF THE
PROTESTANT DISSENTERS;

WITH REFERENCE TO THE

CORPORATION AND TEST ACTS,

In which the Reasons alleged by the Non-conformists for the
Repeal of those Laws, are examined under the three General
Heads, to which they are reducible, of

GROUND OF CLAIM, RELIGIOUS MOTIVES,

A N D

POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS,

AND SHewn TO FAIL IN EACH BRANCH.

*Λιμνω ὑπερ ἱερων και ὑπερ ὁσίου και μαρτυ και μελη πολλων, και ἱερα
τα πατρια τιμησω.*

L O N D O N :

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M, DCC, XC.



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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following pamphlet was written in the year 1787, upon the first circulation of the Case of the Protestant Dissenters; but not being carried through the press, in time to be given to the Public before the debate took place in the House of Commons upon Mr. Beaufoy's motion, it was at that time suppressed; the author having no ambition to be the Falstaff who should kill the breathless Percy, and little thinking, that the Dissenters were in earnest in the declaration, which they made upon that first defeat, of their intention to renew their rejected petition from year to year. The firmness with which they now seem determined to abide by that resolution, is thought to render the publication still seasonable. As the real case of the Dissenters is not altered (however the words of it may have been varied yearly) the tract is published as it was originally written, without the least alteration, and with particular reference to the printed Case of the year 1787, which for the benefit of readers who may not have preserved the original paper, is prefixed.

The author conceives, that his argument is considerably strengthened by the new marks, which the Dissenters give, of their love of peace and quiet, by appearing for the third time, before the same parliament, with a petition twice debated, and twice disapproved: They trust, as is evident, for success, not to the merits of their cause—but to the near approach of a general election; to the efficacy, at that particular season, of the loud threats of the exertions, which they, “the most quiet and peaceable subjects in the realm—orderly themselves, and promoters of good order wherever they reside”—will make for the service of their own party; and they trust, perhaps, still more to the ill-founded apprehension, which they think possesses the minds of those who are likely to be candidates for popular favour, of a *criminal* supineness and inactivity in the clergy, and other members of the established church, in the support of their own friends, in opposition to the vigorous and united efforts of their adversaries.

P R E F A C E.

*A*MIDST the perpetual struggles of the Church of England with her numerous enemies, those various sects, which, with little good liking to each other, have been always however firmly confederated for her destruction; the defence of the Corporation Act and the Test Act hath from time to time found employment for the pens of her ablest advocates; among whom she may justly reckon SHERLOCK, GIBSON, ELLIS, SWIFT, WARBURTON. Of these, the first and the last may be considered as the elementary writers upon the subject. Bishop Warburton in his Alliance between Church and State, hath shewn the general good policy of an Establishment, and the necessity of A TEST for its security, upon principles which republicans themselves cannot easily deny. Bishop Sherlock in his Vindication of the Corporation and Test Act, at this time very seasonably republished, hath shewn the particular necessity of a Test to this country, and the particular propriety of the Sacramental Test. Bishop Warburton's work is one of the finest specimens, that are to be found perhaps in any language, of scientific reasoning applied to a political subject; and Bishop Sherlock's pamphlet, for force and perspicuity of argument, and for precision and elegance of style, may rank among the first of controversial writings. The following Treatise is of another kind. It pretends to no merit, but that of applying

applying immediately to the present occasion. It is simply, what the title announces, "A Review of the Case of the Protestant Dissenters." The general argument is but slightly touched; so far only, as seemed necessary for the confutation of their plea, and the correction of their mistakes. Their political merits are canvassed with the greatest freedom. To set them forth in their real colours, neither heightened nor extenuated, it hath been found necessary to refer to particular passages in the latest writings of their most distinguished teachers; and to draw inferences concerning the spirit of the party, which its friends may perhaps dislike, but at which they cannot justly take offence. If it is maintained, that Dissenters are, as such, disqualified for certain situations; it is not that they are esteemed dangerous, as bad men, but, as very good men, for such many of them unquestionably are, ledde away by unhappy prejudices. If they are taxed with principles, which in certain situations and in certain times, would render them not the best subjects of the British Government; it is not, that they would be worse than honest men must be, with those principles. But after all, offence will be taken, nor will it easily be removed. For unfortunately such principles are proved upon the party, and the tendency of the principles is self-evident: it would need no proof, even if none were extant in the British annals. It will still be the author's consolation, under whatever resentment he may have drawn upon himself, that he hath acted in pure obedience to that maxim of antient wisdom which his title page holds

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holds forth, meaning to serve the interests of religion, and to satisfy one of the first duties of a Citizen. He thinks it only necessary to declare, that under the general name of Dissenters, he includes not the Members of the Church of Scotland, or of any foreign establishment, who, residing here, may choose to adhere to their own forms. For our indigenous Dissenters, to whom alone the appellation properly belongs, he heartily prays; that the issue of the present contention may be, to open their eyes to the discernment of this truth: That Toleration on the part of Government, and a cheerful submission, on the part of the Tolerated, to some necessary restraints, are the only terms, upon which Churchmen and Dissenters can ever walk together as friends.