ANNO VICESIMO PRIMO

GEORGII III. REGIS.

****

Cap. xlix.

An Act for preventing certain Abuses and Profanations on the Lord's Day, called *Sunday*.

Preamble.

WHEREAS certain Houses, Rooms, or Places, within the Cities of *London* or *Westminster*, or in the Neighbourhood thereof, have of late frequently been opened for publick Entertainment or Amusement upon the Evening of the Lord's Day, commonly called *Sunday*; and at other Houses, Rooms, or Places, within the said Cities, or in the Neighbourhood thereof, under Pretence of enquiring into religious Doctrines, and explaining Texts of holy Scripture, Debates have frequently been held on the Evening of the Lord's Day, concerning divers Texts of holy Scripture, by Persons unlearned and incompetent to explain the same, to the Corruption of good Morals, and to the great Encouragement of Irreligion and Profaneness; be it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the Authority of the same, That, from and after the passing of this present Act, any House, Room, or other Place, which shall be opened or used for publick Entertainment or Amusement, or for publickly debating on any Subject whatsoever, upon any Part of the Lord's Day called *Sunday*, and to which Persons shall be admitted by the Payment of Money, or by Tickets sold for Money, shall be deemed a disorderly House or Place; and the Keeper of such House, Room, or Place, shall forfeit the Sum of Two hundred Pounds for every Day that such House, Room, or Place, shall be opened or used as aforesaid on the Lord's Day, to such Person as will sue for the

From the passing of this Act, any House, &c. opened for publick Amusement or Debate, on a *Sunday*, to which Persons shall be admitted by Payment of Money, &c. shall be deemed a disorderly House; and the Keeper thereof shall forfeit 200*l*. for every *Sunday* the same shall be used as aforesaid.

the same, and be otherwise punishable as the Law directs in Cases of disorderly Houses; and the Person managing or conducting such Entertainment or Amusement on the Lord's Day, or acting as Master of the Ceremonies there, or as Moderator, President, or Chairman, of any such Meeting for publick Debate on the Lord's Day, shall likewise, for every such Offence, forfeit the Sum of One hundred Pounds to such Person as will sue for the same; and every Doorkeeper, Servant, or other Person, who shall collect or receive Money or Tickets from Persons assembling at such House, Room, or Place, on the Lord's Day, or who shall deliver out Tickets for admitting Persons to such House, Room, or Place, on the Lord's Day, shall also forfeit the Sum of Fifty Pounds to such Person as will sue for the same.

Penalty on the President, &c.

Door-keepers, and Servants.

II. And whereas, by reason of the many subtle and crafty Contrivances of Persons keeping such Houses, Rooms, or Places as aforesaid, it may often be difficult to prove who is the real Owner or Keeper thereof; be it enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That any Person who shall at any Time hereafter appear, act, or behave him or herself as Master or Mistress, or as the Person having the Care, Government, or Management of any such House, Room, or Place as aforesaid, shall be deemed and taken to be the Keeper thereof, and shall be liable to be sued or prosecuted, and punished as such, notwithstanding he or she be not in fact the real Owner or Keeper thereof: And wherever any such House, Room, or Place, shall belong to or be kept by divers Persons in Partnership, as Joint-owners or Joint-keepers thereof, each and every such Joint-owner or Joint-keeper of such House, Room, or Place, shall be deemed the Keeper thereof, and shall be liable to be sued or prosecuted, and punished as such: And any House, Room, or Place, at which Persons shall be supplied with Tea, Coffee, or any other Refreshments of Eating or Drinking on the Lord's Day, at any greater Prices than the common and usual Prices at which the like Refreshments are commonly sold upon other Days at such House, Room, or Place, or at Coffee Houses, or other Houses where the same are usually sold, shall be deemed a House, Room, or Place, to which Persons are admitted by the Payment of Money, although Money be not there taken in the Name of or for Admittance, or at the Time when Persons enter into or depart from such House, Room, or Place; and any House, Room, or Place, which shall be opened or used for any Publick Entertainment or Amusement, or for publick Debate, on the Lord's Day, at the Expense of any Number of Subscribers or Contributors to the carrying on any such Entertainment or Amusement, or Debate, on the Lord's Day, and to which Persons shall be admitted by Tickets, to which the Subscribers or Contributors shall be intitled, shall be deemed a House, Room, or Place, to which Persons are admitted by the Payment of Money, within the Meaning of this Act.

The Person who acts as Master or Mistress in any such House shall be deemed the Owner thereof.

Where there are Joint-owners, each of them shall be liable to Prosecution.

All Houses where Refresh-ments are sold at greater Prices on *Sundays* than on other Days;

and such as shall be open-ed for publick Debate, on *Sundays*, by Subscription, &c. shall be liable to the Penalties in-flicted by this Act.

III. And, for the better preventing Persons assembling on the Lord's Day for such irreligious Purposes as aforesaid, be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That any Person advertising, or causing to be advertised, any publick Entertainment or Amusement, or any publick Meeting for debating on any Subject whatsoever, on the Lord's Day, to which Persons are to be admitted by the Payment of Money, or by Tickets sold for Money, and any Person printing or publishing

Penalty on advertising any such publick Amusement for *Sunday*, and on printing such

publishing any such Advertisement, shall respectively forfeit the Sum of Fifty Pounds for every such Offence, to any Person who will sue for the same. Advertisement.

IV. And be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That any Person intitled to either of the aforesaid Forfeitures, may sue for the same by Action of Debt in any of His Majesty's Courts of Record at *Westminster*, in which it shall be sufficient to declare that the Defendant is indebted to the Plaintiff in the Sum of [being the Sum demanded by the said Action] being forfeited by an Act made in the twenty-first Year of the Reign of His Majesty King *George* the Third, intituled, *An Act for preventing certain Abuses and Profanations on the Lord's Day, called* Sunday; and the Plaintiff, if he recover in any such Action, shall have his full Costs. Penalties how to be recovered.

V. Provided, That no Action shall be brought for either of the said Penalties by this Act imposed, unless the same be brought within Six Calendar Months next after the Offence committed. Actions to be brought within 6 Months.

VI. Provided also, That if any Action or Suit shall be brought against any Person for any Thing done in pursuance and in Execution of this Act, the Defendant may plead the General Issue; and if a Verdict pass for the Defendant, or the Plaintiff discontinue his or her Action, or be nonsuited, or Judgement be given against the Plaintiff, then such Defendant shall have Treble Costs. Persons sued in Execution of this Act, may plead the General Issue, and recover Treble Costs.

VII. Provided also, That the ecclesiastical Jurisdiction within this Realm shall not by this Act be altered or abridged; but that the ecclesiastical Courts may punish the said Offences, as if this Act had not been made. This Act not to affect the ecclesiastical Jurisdiction;

VIII. Provided also, That nothing in this Act contained shall be construed to extend to take away, alter, or abridge, any of the Liberties or Immunities to which the Protestant Subjects of this Kingdom are intitled, by an 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.* nor the Toleration Act of 1 *Gul. & Mar.*

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