IS THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PROTESTANT? A HISTORICAL ESSAY

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Is the Church of England Protestant? A historical essay by Homersham Cox

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HOMERSHAM COX

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IS THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PROTESTANT?

A HISTORICAL ESSAY.

BY

HOMERSHAM COX, M.A.

A JUDGE OF COUNTY COURTS.

SECOND BDITION, REVISED AND AUGMENTED.

LONDON:
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1875.

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PREFACE

TO

THE SECOND EDITION.

The first edition of this Essay obtained an unexpected degree of success, the whole of a considerable impression having been sold in the course of a few months. As the Publishers assure me that the demand for this little work continues, I have prepared a second edition, in which some errors of the first are corrected, and the account of the transactions of Convocation in the reign of William III. re-written. A chapter on the Evangelical system is added. The principal tenet of the Evangelical school is here combated freely and earnestly, but, I trust, not unfairly or acrimoniously. A most firm and thorough conviction of the unscriptural character of that tenet is compatible with a sincere respect for the great body of the clergy by whom it is maintained.

HOMERSHAM COX.

TONBRIDGE:

June 1875.

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PREFACE

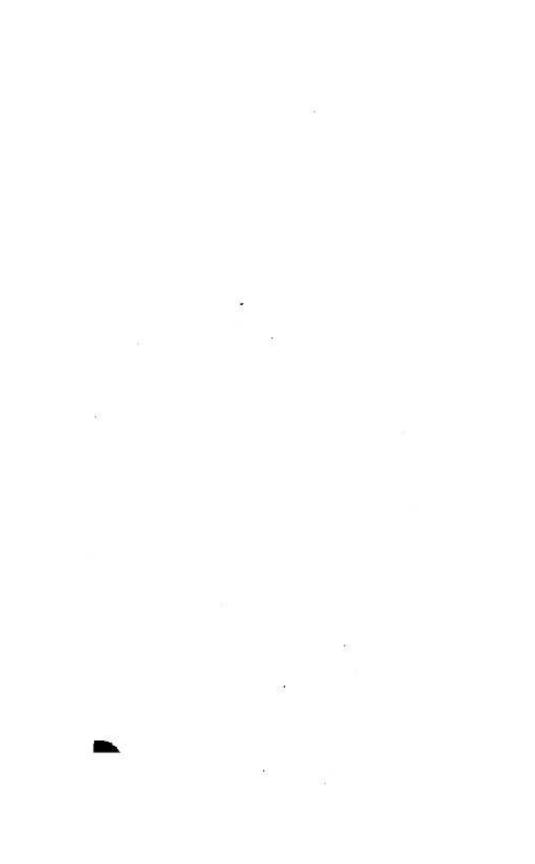
TO

THE FIRST EDITION.

Some parts of the following Essay appeared, in July last, in letters which I published under the same title, in the Daily Telegraph. These letters produced a great multitude of replies, addressed, some to the Editor, some to me personally. Many of them were acrimonious and minatory. Others were argumentative; and these I have carefully considered before writing this paper. Others strongly urged me to republish my letters in a separate form. This suggestion was made by persons of such eminence and authority, that it seemed a sufficient encouragement for putting together the following observations. They give a most imperfect and inadequate view of the subject. In the compass of a few pages it was not possible to contain a theme to which the great masters of English theology have devoted vast stores of learning and research.

HOMERSHAM COX.

INNER TEMPLE: Oct. 1874.



IS THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PROTESTANT?

INTRODUCTION.

MUCH DEPENDS at the present time on the answer to this question. If the Church of England is correctly designated Protestant, the Evangelical party has an almost unassailable position. Their argument stands simply thus: The Church is Protestant—ergo, we are justified in upholding the thing called Protestantism, and in using our utmost endeavours to repress opposition to it by vigorous legislation.

But the first step in the argument is based on an unproved assumption. Search the Prayer Book through, and you will not find the word 'Protestant' once used. Nowhere in the Articles, Liturgy, or Homilies does it occur. If there were one instance—only one solitary instance—in which the designation had been adopted by our Church; if on any single occasion, from the period of the Reformation until the present time, she had so designated herself; the Evangelicals would have some justification for their persistent endeavours to assimilate the English Church to the Kirk of Scotland and the Lutheran and Calvinistic congregations of the Continent.

Mere reiteration, however frequent or vehement, will not supply the place of proof. If the Church be Protestant, how easy must it be to point to the passage or passages in her authentic records in which the title is assumed! As I said, much depends on this preliminary proof. Show that the title