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*Full transcript*

## **CHURCH RATE**

3<sup>RD</sup> Reply

The RATE proved to be a "TAX" only.

We beg to assure our fellow townsmen that, it is because of the audacity of the charges brought against us, we are compelled to trouble them with so many Papers on this subject. We were driven, either to reply or silently submit to be placed on a level with dishonest people, rogues and thieves. For you were told that "on every principle of common honesty" we were bound to pay. The "Rate". And that we were not "Just" except we came forward, and paid a sum, equal to what we had been benefitted. Now as in conscience we cannot do either, so of course, in the estimation of our accuser, we still remain "unjust and dishonest". That the Public will judge us to be so, we do not for a moment believe. They have read the discussion – they have seen our accuser declare that the "Rate" is not a "TAX"; - that no "ALLOWANCE" whatever has been received by any one to pay it; that formerly the Tithes were applied to repair the Church, and keep the Poor, and that both the Poor Rate and Church Rate, were then unknown; that as it is a mere "Tax" it is unjust, and unchristian to tax all religious sects, to support the Hierarchy.

And if anything further were necessary, to prove the Rate to be a "TAX" only, and at the same time show the absurdity of demanding a sum by way of redemption, it is this: the Churchwardens are (says Blackstone, Vol I, p394) the "representatives of the body of the Parish". Viz. (according to the 19<sup>th</sup> Article of the Church of England), this body of people is the CHURCH itself. Now, when they meet in vestry with their Churchwardens, they can make what Rate "they" please, or in other words – tax themselves to what amount they think proper. Well, suppose that the Parishoners (or as the Article says) the Church, should at the next Vestry held for the purpose vote for a "farthing in the pound Rate" (and they legally may) What! (we ask it seriously) what would be the consequence if they were then to go to our accuser and say, Sir, we wish to redeem the Rate as you requested, taking the "Farthing Rate" as the rule of purchase and redemption!!! We ask what would be the consequence if this absurd demand was carried into practice. Why, taking it at 25 years purchase, a few farthings only would be received to repair the Church for ever; and the people be exonerated from all future Rates!!

This case alone is quite sufficient to show the extreme absurdity of demanding a sum to redeem the Rate, since, the Rate must ever vary as the people choose. It also proves it to be a mere "Tax", and not levied at the will of the Clergy.

Our accuser also says we speak falsely, in saying that the "Ministry" of the Church is "bought" or sold, because "ordination" is not bought, only the property being bought! This is a mere evasion to avoid simony. We refer to the numerous advertisements of "SALES" to prove our assertion. Nor can we, or our accuser separate the ministry, from what he calls the property, it being originally designed to support the ministry and at present they are inseparable. For "ordination" be it remembered, always follows, after the golden Key of Mammon has unlocked the portals of the Hierarchy. One word as to the exclusive system of ordination asserted to be "the only system known for 1500 years after Christ" let our accuser read the last 12 verses of the 1<sup>st</sup> Chap. of Acts, here he will find that the PEOPLE were called on by Peter, to elect even an Apostle, and they did choose Matthias. And further, it was the constant practice of the People in the primitive Church

to choose their own Ministers, and Bishops. They were not “then” thrust upon people as at present, whether they like them or not, for the sale of Worldly Pelf!

But we are told “it is all known ‘Truth’ that is advanced by our accuser! This assertion does not make it so, as we shall now see. We are told (for a certain purpose) “that the Augustine introduced Christianity to England!! Is this known to be truth? O! No; for the following reasons, - he and his 40 Monks did not come to England ‘till A.D. 596, whereas Tertullian who died 380, years before that time mentions “Britain” as having received the Gospel. So also says Origen, his contemporary, and several others. Our own countryman and historian Gildas (who by the bye is an older author than Bede) informs us that it was introduced in the time of Tiberias. Gildas was himself a Christian Preacher, and lived and died before Augustine came. Besides, there were three Fathers of the ancient English Church who assisted at the Council of Arles in France as early as A.D. 314. How can all this be reconciled with “known truth”? Can much credit be now given to any assertion of our opponent?

But in order to clear the Church from the responsibility of the four fold division of the Tithes, we are told such division never was the Law of the Land. But we assert and can prove that it was the established usage of the Catholic Church, who set herself in these matters above the Civil Law. We are also told that Augustine and his Clergy were specially exempted by the Pope from such a division. Now, Augustine asked Gregory merely of “Such oblations as the faithful offer (mark this they were then offered) upon the altar, what portions or dividends ought to be made thereof? The Pope, in answer expressly mentions the Romish usage to be the “Four-fold division” But he says “You must observe this institution concerning your conversation which was in the first Fathers (the Apostles) in the beginning of the primitive Church; among whom there was NOT ONE which counted anything to be HIS IOWN proper of ALL he did possess, but all was common among them”! See Acts Chap. 4 v 32, 33, 34 for his example.

How different this Apostolic method to what it is now! For now, all is asserted to be PRIVATE PROPERTY! But neither the Scriptures, nor St. Austin, Jerome or any of the primitive Church countenance the demand. But the Apostolic system was laid aside at the establishment of parochial clergy, and the four-fold division substituted, as Blackstone and others prove. What then does our opponent get by quoting Augustine? Will he do as he did? Or will he adopt the Four-fold Division?

We now beg to ask our opponent how he reconciles it with Protestant Principles to unite together the two Churches of Rome, and England, as he does; he styles the Romish system. “The Church”.. He speaks with indignation of the “Robbery” of this very Church, buy taking away the Abbey-lands &c. This is very strange, for if it was a “Robbery”, the Protestants alone committed it! And they are still in possession of the spoils; for the tithes must still belong to the Catholic Church, except it be granted that the Law GAVE them for the support of the protestant ministry. Yet our opponent stoutly denies that they hold them as a “GIFT of the LAW”!! By what authority then do they hold them, if not by such “Gift” for most assuredly as “Protestants”, not one of them is a “duly qualified Minister according to the donors’ intention”. They therefore are qualified and provided for, by the Law only, which of course can (as it has done) in its power and wisdom dispose of the Tithes &c as may best suit the interests of the Community at large.

As to letting seats in Church, we answer (being requested) we have no seats – we let none. In return, we ask – “Is it because seats have been taken away by Churchwardens &c.! That people ask an acknowledgement to secure their rights?