



The ABOLITION of COMPULSORY CHURCH-RATES

The following letter has been sent to the Clergy and Church-wardens of the Archdeaconry of Sarum:-

Baverstock, March 18, 1869

Dear Sirs

In the Charge which I delivered at my Visitation last year, I told the churchwardens that if the Bill for the abolition of compulsory Church-rates, then before Parliament, should become law, I should be prepared to offer them my advice as to the best mode of raising money for the repair of the church, and for the maintenance of Divine worship. Since that time the Act has passed, and I feel called on to fulfill the promise I then made.

In order to put you in possession of the existing state of the law, I enclose a copy of the Act itself; and also of certain resolutions agreed on by a large number of Archdeacons.

With regard to the Act, you will observe that it is not an Act for the abolition of Church-rates; but to abolish the compulsory payment of them. It freely allows the undisturbed maintenance of the old accustomed mode of procedure, when that mode gives satisfaction to the parishioners. The object of the Act is to leave the parochial machinery exactly as it stood before it became law, with the exception (a very important one, no doubt) that the rate can be no longer recovered by law.

Those parishes, therefore, in which rates for church purposes have heretofore been levied, had better in my opinion go on as before, and make their rate and collect it as they have hitherto done. If any who are occupiers, but not owners, refuse the payment, I recommend in that case that the owner should be asked to supply the proportion of the rate as directed by section 8 of the Act.

Should the plan I have recommended be found impracticable in any parish, then I hope you will take care at your Easter vestry to adopt some other, so that our churches may still be kept in good repair, and everything provided for the decent celebration of Divine Service.

And I have no doubt that in your parish this will be done in a liberal spirit, and that the trifling expenditure required for the promotion of God's glory and the good souls will be cheerfully provided.

Let me request that you will be particular in calling your Easter Vestry, and in choosing the churchwardens. The new Act makes no change whatever in the duties of their office. Believe me, very faithfully yours,

WM. ED. HONY, Archdeacon of Sarum.

Salisbury and Winchester Journal, Saturday, 20 March 1869