

THE RIGHT TO PLUNDER VINDICATED.

Being Chap. XXIX of the Acts of the Apostles, lately adopted for the Upholding of Church-rates, &c.

VERSE 1. Now it came to pass, while Paul tarried at Corinth, that he made a rate of twopence in the pound upon the Jews, and upon the Gentiles, and upon the Church of God: and the rate was upon this wise,

2. When the brethren came together on the first day of the week, Stephanus, which was the first-fruits of Achaia, being churchwarden that same year, moved that a rate should be made of twopence in the pound for the mitre of Paul, and for his apron, and for the wine, and for the bell-ringers, and for the organist, and for the painted window, and for the beadle, and for the grave-digger, and for the clerk.

3. So a brother whose name was Aristarchus, seconded the motion,

4. And Paul, the Lord Bishop of Achaia, sat in his chair, in his rochet: and the very reverend Gaius, Dean of Corinth, sat at his right hand.

5. And a man, whose name was Albinus, rose up straightway in the midst, and said that he was ashamed that the saints should not pay for their own religion, but that they should lay a burden on the Jews and on the Gentiles that believed not, making the truth to become utterly an abomination unto them.

6. But the brethren lifted up their voices in the vestry with one accord, and cried mightily for about the space of half an hour. Turn him out! and they threw dust in the air, and made no small stir, stamping with their feet, and hissing, inasmuch that Albinus was put to shame, and held his peace.

7. And Paul the Apostle took the vote, and the brethren lifted up their hands, and they made a rate and a decree that the saints, and the heathen and the Jews, should offer willingly of their substance twopence in the pound, and that whosoever would not pay should be delivered unto the

keeper of the prison, and that his goods should be sold until he had paid all that was due.

8. And the churchwardens departed, and they gathered up the money of them that believed, and put it into a bag; and afterwards they went to the Gentiles, and to the Jews which believed not.

9. And they came to the house of one Silvanus, and he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and a ruler of the synagogue, and he gave alms unto the people; but he knew not the gospel, neither consorted he with the Church which was at Corinth.

10. And when the churchwardens demanded of him his rate, behold he refused to pay, for he said in his heart, Lo! are not all these Nazarenes? and I believe not their words.

11. So the brethren departed from the habitation of the chief ruler of the synagogue, and hasted unto the assembly of the saints; and they rehearsed before the apostle and the elders both the stubbornness of Silvanus and of the idolatrous Greeks.

12. Then Paul rose up, and they which were with him, and rent his garment, and cried with an exceeding loud voice, Anathema! and a young priest, whose name was Tertullianus did in like manner, and his countenance fell.

13. And Paul spake, and said unto the churchwardens and unto the beadle go quickly unto the street which is called Straight, unto the house of the ruler of the Jews, nigh unto the gate, of the city with staves in your hands, and carry away suddenly his table, and his bed, and his silver jug, and his spoon, and the spoon of his wife, and whatsoever he hath, and bring them into the market-place, and sell them unto all that pass by, until the rate shall be paid.

14. And if he will shut up the door