

C H A P.
XXIV.

or of those persons who last possessed the powers of vestrymen, by writing set up at the door of the church ten days before the day of meeting.

Churchwardens may be chosen, &c.

XIV. AND BE IT ENACTED, If churchwardens should not from any cause be chosen by the vestry on the day of the election of vestrymen, it shall and may be lawful to choose them at any subsequent meeting of the vestry, and such elections shall be held valid and obligatory.

Vestry may choose ministers, &c.

XV. AND BE IT ENACTED, That the vestry of every parish shall have full power and authority, from time to time, to choose one or more ministers or readers of the protestant episcopal church, (heretofore called the church of England,) to officiate in any church or chapel belonging to the parish, and to perform the other duties of a minister therein, for such time as the said vestry may think proper, and they may agree and contract with such minister or ministers, reader or readers, for his or their salary, and respecting the use and occupation of the parsonage-house, or any glebe or other lands, or other property, if any, belonging to the parish, and on such terms and conditions as they may think reasonable and proper, and their choice and contract shall be entered among their proceedings; and upon the expiration of such contract, the said vestry may, in their discretion, renew their choice, or make a new contract, but if they do not incline so to do, their former choice and contract shall remain until they declare their desire to make a new choice or contract.

If only one, to be called rector, &c.

XVI. AND BE IT ENACTED, That if only one minister shall be chosen for any parish, he shall be called the rector thereof, but where two or more ministers shall be chosen of the same order in the ministry, they shall be called associated rectors of such parish, and shall preside in the vestry by rotation; and in any parish in which there shall at any time be more than one minister regularly settled, and either of them of superior order in the ministry, such superior minister shall have the sole right of presiding in the vestry, and be called the rector thereof, and the other or others shall be called associated ministers of such parish.

Vestry may take in subscriptions, &c.

XVII. AND BE IT ENACTED, If the vestry of any parish should think it necessary to take in subscriptions for the maintenance of their minister or ministers, reader or readers, or for paying the salaries of such other officers as the occasions of the parish may require to be appointed, or for any other parish purposes, it shall and may be lawful for them so to do.

And provide a register, &c.

XVIII. AND BE IT ENACTED, That the vestry of every parish shall be and they are hereby obliged to provide a fit person as register of their parish, whose duty it shall be to keep true and fair entries of the proceedings of such vestry in the execution of their trust, which register also shall, before he acts as such, take and subscribe the oath of fidelity herein before mentioned, (unless he shall have before taken such oath,) and make and subscribe a declaration of his belief in the christian religion, as also take an oath for the due and faithful execution of the duties of his office, to be administered as herein before directed.

His duty.

XIX. AND BE IT ENACTED, That it shall be the duty of the said register to enter in a book, provided for the purpose, all baptisms, marriages and funerals, of free persons in the parish by any minister of the protestant episcopal church, and which may be made known to him by any of the said ministers or vestrymen of the parish; and it shall also be the duty of the said register, in the entry of baptisms, to insert the christian names of the persons baptised, the christian and surnames of the parents, with the dates of the baptisms and births of the persons baptised, and in the entry of marriages and burials to insert the times of the celebration, and the christian and surnames of the persons married, and the persons buried; and it shall be the duty of the minister or ministers of every parish, to take care that the said register be made acquainted with all the baptisms, marriages and burials, celebrated by him or them in the parish.

Baptisms, &c. to be communicated, &c.

XX. AND BE IT ENACTED, That if any minister of the protestant episcopal church shall celebrate any baptism, marriage or burial, in any parish in which he may not be a settled minister, he is hereby required to communicate it to the rector, or some one of the vestry, of the parish, who shall communicate it to the register of said parish.

Penalty on the minister, &c.

XXI. AND BE IT ENACTED, That if any minister or vestyman shall fail in the duties herein respectively assigned them, or if any register shall refuse or neglect to enter any baptism, marriage or burial, so made known to him, the person offending shall forfeit eight dollars for every such offence.

XXII. AND