

§ H A P.
CXI.

were produced in court; and if any future change or alteration shall be made in the original plan, by authority of the congregation as aforesaid, such change or alteration shall in the same manner be made known and recorded; and the said clerk shall be entitled to such fees for his services as are allowed by law for services of the like nature in matters belonging to his office.

Every corpora-
tion to hold and
use a seal, &c.

VI. AND BE IT ENACTED, That every corporation or body politic aforesaid respectively, and their successors, or the majority of them, by their name of incorporation aforesaid, shall have full power and authority to hold and use one common seal, to appoint the times and places of their meetings, and the number necessary to constitute a quorum, and shall moreover provide and keep a good and sufficient record book, and cause to be therein registered a fair account of all their proceedings, subject at all times to the inspection of the several members of the church, society or congregation, in whose behalf the same are respectively entered, and the same shall be laid before a public meeting, when thereunto required by any five or more of the same; and the said trustees, or a majority of them, shall have full power and authority to frame such rules and ordinances for conducting their concerns as may be necessary and convenient for accomplishing the end of their institution; provided always, that nothing therein contained shall be repugnant to, but perfectly consistent with, the constitution and laws of this state.

Vested with an
estate in lands,
&c.

VII. AND BE IT ENACTED, That all and every of the said corporations or trustees, and their successors, by their respective names or titles, shall be vested with an estate in fee-simple in any land or parcel of ground not exceeding two acres, and also in every chapel, meeting-house, or other house of worship belonging to, or in the use of, the particular church, society or congregation, for which they are respectively chosen as a body politic or corporate, and shall also, by their respective names or titles, have absolute property in all books, plate or other ornaments, and all goods and chattels, belonging to the said church, society or congregation, whether the same have been given, granted or devised, directly to the said church, society or congregation, or to any person in trust for them; provided, that the person or persons holding lands, or goods and chattels, in trust for any particular church or society as aforesaid, shall voluntarily make over, by indenture proper for that purpose, to the trustees or body corporate of such particular church or society, such lands or chattels, for the use and benefit of such church, society or congregation.

They may pur-
chase, &c.

VIII. AND BE IT ENACTED, That all and every the said corporation or trustees, established or to be established in virtue of this act, and their successors, shall be capable in law to purchase and hold, in fee-simple, a quantity of land, not exceeding two acres for the use of any one church, society or congregation, by gift or grant of any person or persons, or bodies politic, capable in law to make the same, provided such gift or grant be made by indenture, duly executed and recorded agreeably to law, and in no other manner whatever; and also that every the said body corporate, and their successors, or a majority of them, severally, by their respective name, may take and receive any sum or sums of money, any kind, manner or portion, of goods and chattels, that shall be sold or given to them as aforesaid by any person or persons, bodies politic or corporate, capable in law to make a gift or sale thereof, and employ the same for the benefit and use of the particular church, society or congregation, whereunto they respectively belong, as a body politic or corporate; provided, that all and every gift, grant, bargain, sale, or deed of transfer, made by any person or persons, and not intended to take effect and vest in any religious body or corporation during the life of the giver, grantor or seller, but to become their right and property after his, her or their decease, shall be utterly null, void, and of no effect; and provided also, that the clear yearly value of the estates, rents, annuities, or other hereditaments, of any church, society or congregation, thus incorporated, shall not amount to more than the clear yearly value of two thousand dollars, and all gifts, grants, sales and transfers, to any the said corporations, or their successors, after the clear yearly value of their estate shall amount to two thousand dollars, and all bargains and purchases to be made by any of them, which may increase the yearly value of the said estates above and beyond the standard here fixed, shall be utterly null, void, and of no effect.

Limitations
not to affect the
estate, &c.

IX. AND BE IT ENACTED, That the limitations in point of annual value aforesaid shall not be understood to affect the estate, property, interest or inheritance, or the income arising therefrom, which any christian church, congregation or society, may be in possession of at the time of passing this act.

X. AND, whereas it is necessary for the greater effect of the preaching of the Gospel, that men should be permitted to employ and sit under the teaching of those whom they find or esteem most capable of instructing them, and enforcing the precepts of religious truth, in whose character and
faithfulness