

Dominion Churchman.

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THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH.

What is the object of the Church's existence? For whose benefit was it called into being? It is an organized community of no human origin. It was established by our Saviour Christ Himself. He gave His life for it. So closely indeed is it connected with Him, that it is called "The Church of the Lord, which He purchased with His own blood." He built it upon a rock; that rock consisting of "the Twelve," Apostles and Prophets, with Himself as the chief corner stone; and He took such care in its first institution, and such precautions for its future preservation as to determine that though the wildest billows should dash their fury around its base, and the fiercest lightnings should flash about its summit, while discord might sometimes rage within, yet ultimately the gates of hell should never prevail against it. With all the power of the mightiest nations of the earth arrayed against it, with the loftiest eloquence of Greece poured forth in its dispraise, with the contempt of the courtier, and the profoundest subtlety of the most acute philosophers that ever lived, engaged in undermining its foundations, it wins its widening way; it has outlived imperial Rome and has witnessed the death of every ancient system that opposed its progress. He that sitteth in the Heavens has decreed that the Fountain of its authority shall reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. In the progress of time a succession of men has been raised up, one age after another, to transmit onwards, to the latest generations, the commission given among the hills of Judea, before the Redeemer ascended up to the glory of His Father, while His word and Spirit ever remain to guide and comfort those who are gathered into His fold; and are humble enough, as well as earnest enough to submit their stubborn wills to the teachings, the ministrations, the ordinances, and the governments He Himself has appointed.

Now for what purpose has this altogether unexampled array of agencies, means, and instrumentalities been brought to bear upon the formation, the growth, and the prosperity of the Church of Christ? We repeat the question:—For whose benefit does the Church exist? Is it to further the interests of the clergy, as a privileged order of men, whose advancement, temporal and spiritual, is of more consequence than other people's? If indeed it were so, a more abortive institution never existed; a more monstrous perversion of the highest means was never exhibited to produce so dire a failure. In this country, and in most other parts of the world too, whatever may be said to the contrary, in the majority of instances, and where there are no

adventitious aids to be pressed into the service, there is no pursuit less remunerative in a pecuniary point of view, no profession where more obstructions are thrown in the way of advancement and of successful enterprise; and certainly none where real merit is less rewarded. We say then, that the Church does not exist for the benefit of the clergy in any respect whatever. But, next after setting forth the glory of Messiah, and affording a theatre for the exhibition of the Divine perfections, where the angels may look and learn, the object for which the Church exists and pushes forward its triumphs is for the spiritual advancement, the real benefit of the great mass of Christians that are gathered within its fold. It is not, however, to flatter their infirmities, to gain their praises, or to pamper any evil tendencies they may have, but to promote their holiness, to secure their growth in grace, and to cultivate in them the fruits of the Spirit, so that at His second coming to judge the world, Christ may present to Himself a glorious Church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. He loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.

Now this object, the highest that can be conceived possible in earth or heaven, can never be accomplished, when every man does that which is right in his own eyes, when the so-called rights of individuals are pushed to such an extent that a general demoralization is the result. The Church is a voluntary institution; but to insure its success, or even its permanent existence, order, rule, subordination, sinking the individual for the sake of achieving the objects for which the Church has been called into being, are just as necessary as in bodies social or political; and unless there be some attention paid to this principle in its practical working, the Church may just as well not pretend to exist at all.

THE BERMUDA BURIAL CASE.

It will probably be in the recollection of our readers that an extraordinary outrage was committed in the parish church-yard in Bermuda, somewhere about a year ago, we believe, which has caused considerable excitement in that usually very quiet spot. It appears that the Rev. Mr. James is Rector of the parish, and as the laws there on that subject appear to be pretty much the same as in England, he would be not only privileged, but compelled by law to bury all his deceased parishioners. In the burial of a woman there, whose name we forget just now, Mr. James was proceeding according to his usual custom, to read the burial service, when a Mr. Cassidy, a dissenting minister, stepped up and actually read the service aloud after the rector, claiming that he had a right to officiate there, if he chose. What kind

of religion it might be called which would inculcate so disorderly and so wanton an outrage, we are at a loss to imagine. If there is any dispute about the right to officiate, one would have thought that the time of performing a religious service, and the burial ground likewise, were both of them unsuitable for the purpose. It does not, however, appear that there can exist any doubt that the church and burial-ground both belong to the Church of England in Bermuda. But as spoliation is the order of the day, and Bermuda is a remote island with only one mail a month, that place appears to have been selected in order to assert a claim which John Wesley would have disposed of in a very few seconds, by turning out of his connection the man who had dared commit so impious an outrage, and exhibit so extraordinary an amount of presumption. Two or three law suits appear to have been instituted in connection with the case. In one of them the jury disagreed, although the Judge charged strongly against the intruder, who had to plead his own case, as a Nova Scotia lawyer employed by him could not plead in Bermuda. The case again came up on the 11th ult., when the Methodist preacher was fined a nominal sum, the verdict being understood to carry costs. The Judge decided that the graveyard, like most others in connection with the Church of England, is a freehold vested in the Rector of the parish. It is suggested that an appeal will be made to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, (the usual resort of obstructionists and malcontents), at the expense of the General Conference in Canada. We do not much wonder at any appeal being taken to such a tribunal, when the object is to damage the Church. Its decisions have been so strange as well as contradictory, that we cannot possibly predict what it is likely to decide in any particular case that may come before it. In England, however, it has always been supposed that the law is clear on the point, and that an act of Parliament would be required in order to give permission to dissenting teachers to officiate in the church burial grounds—which act of Parliament has not yet been obtained. The question does not appear to be one in which high or low Churchmanship is involved; for the Rector of Weston, Ontario, who is suspected of having some little leaning towards high Churchmanship, always allows non-conformist ministers to take funerals in his church-yard, when they desire it, giving the parish clerk directions to inform them that he cannot give them permission to officiate in his Church, but that in winter he is to get a fire for them, and make them comfortable.

CORRUPTION IN THE UNITED STATES.

It was not so very long ago—we can recollect it ourselves very well—that cor-