

The Duties of Church-Wardens.

A Paper read by FREDERICK J. MAPPIN, Esq., Church-Warden of S. Anne's, Richmond, at the Meeting of the S. Francis District Lay Helpers' Association, held at Sherbrooke on Wednesday, December 8th, 1897.

Mr. Chairman, my Lord,

Ladies and Gentlemen :

The question of the work that is done by the Lay Helpers and Wardens of our Churches, is one of grave thought and of great importance. Unfortunately in a number of cases the Clergy do not get the support that they have a right to expect from the Laity. With your permission I will touch more particularly on the duties of the Wardens; and I will begin by saying that one of the most important points is that they should be on the best of terms with their Rector; to consult with him frequently about the numerous details of his Parish; to know all the members, and where they live; to have a kindly word for them when they meet them; to listen if they have any cause of complaint, and try if possible to rectify matters. The Warden will very often hear of things which the Rector might never know of; it is consequently his duty to bring such matters to his Rector, and to consult with him upon the subject. But many Wardens, it is to be feared accept this office, and yet seldom do anything in the way of fulfilling its numerous and important duties. One of the most important of their duties is to give close attention to the financial affairs of the Parish; because, if they allow their Church to get into debt, it is they who are to be blamed. After the Easter Vestry meeting, they should procure from their Rector a complete list of all his Parishioners; visit them, explain the system or basis on which the Church is supported, and shew them that only a proportion of the amount prom-

ised goes to the Rector. Very often they will not subscribe at first, because they do not care particularly for the views of the Rector on certain points. The Warden must then go to work and explain that money is needed for fire and lighting, insurance and ordinary expenses, just the same as in their own houses, and then as a rule they will subscribe something, although at first perhaps it will not be much. And in this general canvass young men in stores, farm hands, and the ordinary working classes have no right to be overlooked, their donation is as valuable as that of the wealthy; and besides they will take more interest in attending their Church, than if they are passed over, in which case they often feel slighted. If the members fall behind in their payments, they should be notified each quarter. I think a good plan is to have notices placed in the Pews, or on the Church Notice Board, stating that the quarter's subscription is due, because we are all very apt to forget these things, and by being reminded in some such way as I have suggested, we are left without excuse. In all cases in which money is paid, the Wardens should give a receipt.

It is their duty to be on hand if possible at all Services, especially on special occasions, to see that strangers are accommodated with seats; to set a good example as to the keeping of the Church rules, and to join in the Services to the best of their ability. When the Rector is absent, they should know beforehand where he is gone; so that in cases of emergency they can send word to him, and they should know what Clergymen will take the Rector's duties, when he is away for his holidays, and should meet them in the Vestry, and they should be able to give any information that may be required.

Sidesmen should also try and help the Wardens in these matters, for in this way they are being trained as to what may be expected of them later,