

the early stage of its existence, at Bethlehem. Miss Walker-Arnott's school at Jaffa has for twenty-five years been doing excellent educational and evangelistic work amongst Jews, Christians, and Moslems. In the same town and the villages around the admirable medical and mission work of the Mildmay deaconesses is doing great good. The important part which Christian women have taken in these various labours is very remarkable. Amongst the evangelical Germans also, who have laboured side by side with the English, the work done by devoted women has been very conspicuous. The hospital of the Kaiserswerth deaconesses at Jerusalem was commenced soon after that of the London Jews' Society, and has become a large and important institution. Their free boarding-school, which is now located in a handsome building erected for the purpose outside the wall of Jerusalem, is one of the best in the country. At Beyrout they have the care of the hospital of the German Order of St. John of Jerusalem, which is equal in every respect to the best hospitals of the same size in Europe. At Nazareth and Tiberias medical missions are supported by the Scotch; and at Safed the Jews' Society has recently strengthened its mission by the appointment of a medical man in connection with it.

These various efforts are not without visible results. The country is no longer sunk in ignorance and apathy. The Greeks, the Jews, and even the Moslems, have been provoked to jealousy and have established schools of their own. Civilization, education, Scriptural truth, are permeating the population in every direction. The long dark night is already past, and a new day has begun to dawn on the Holy Land.

THOMAS CHAPLIN, M.D.



#### ART. V.—CHURCHWARDENS.

*Addresses to Churchwardens.* By Chancellor ESPIN, D.D. Liverpool: Adam Holden, 1887.

THOMAS FULLER describes the good Parishioner<sup>1</sup> as one who "hides not himself from any parish-office which seeks for him, but if chosen Churchwarden is not busily idle rather to trouble than reform." Certainly the office, if honourable, is onerous too. Until recently it was the exception rather than the rule to find men of good position and education

<sup>1</sup> "The Holy State," p. 86, anno 1652.

willing to serve as churchwardens, at any rate in town parishes. But a great change has taken place of late years. Local government has excited more interest, and the Church has been more successful in attracting laymen to her service. The result is apparent in and around London in the greatly-improved position of churchwardens. They are, as a class, of better social standing, more intelligent, more accessible to reason, and far more in earnest about their duties than their predecessors of a generation ago, who, although not without their modern counterparts, survive principally in the imagination of novelists. This advance in the character of the men is the more remarkable, because it has been accompanied by a decided diminution in the amount and importance of their work. The general subdivision of Metropolitan parishes has greatly restricted the area over which any particular churchwarden has sway, and the abolition of church rates has deprived churchwardens of the means of levying taxes and of administering public funds. How vast the difference is which this latter fact has made will be realized by anyone who will turn to the legal text-books of even forty years ago. Three-fourths of the cases which concern churchwardens relate to church-rates and their attendant squabbles. That is all swept away now, and churchwardens remain, more exclusively what they were originally, lay officers of the church. As such their duties are very important, and it must be owned often very difficult and harassing. For they are legally responsible for the maintenance of the church fabric and furniture, but are without any legal resources for the work. That is the absurd anomaly which the abolition of church-rates created. The Church is still the National Church, and the State professes to superintend its business affairs. The law requires churches to be kept in repair, and as the responsibility must rest somewhere, settles it on the churchwardens. They are, as it were, trustees for the parish, and so long as the law went further and enabled the churchwardens to levy church-rates, the duty and the means of fulfilling it went together, and there was nothing to complain about. But now they are dissevered the duty remains, but the ways and means are gone. It is not surprising that the Courts should refuse, as they have done, to make churchwardens personally liable for not spending money which they have no means of obtaining, and which, if they advance it out of their own pockets, they have no means of recovering. The result is that nobody is now really and truly responsible for the non-repair. If, the other day, St. Mary's in the Strand had actually fallen down in the middle of the road, as the local authorities professed to expect, there would have been ample time for grass to grow amongst the ruins before any-

one could have been compelled to rebuild the church or even to clear away the debris. That grave scandals have not more frequently occurred is due to the zeal of church people who will not allow the Houses of God to go to ruin, and especially is it due to the labours and good management of churchwardens, who, in concert with the clergy, have made voluntary collections and offertories supply, as far as it can be supplied, the place of legal church-rates.

Thus, how to provide for the repair of the church and the maintenance of its fittings is one of the chief anxieties of churchwardens. Certainly they need counsel and advice. Chancellor Espin, who for fulness of knowledge and experience and for untiring devotion to the duties of his office has few rivals, has done good service by publishing his visitation addresses, delivered last spring to the churchwardens of Liverpool on their admission to office. His directions and advice are general, for the local references are few and far between. He gives an interesting sketch of the history of the office, which he connects with the *guardiani ecclesie* of Lyndwode, and traces back to the beginning of the fourteenth century. Sidesmen, or the assistants of the churchwardens, he thinks, derive their name from standing at the side of the churchwardens; so that the popular notion that sidesmen are so-called because they collect the alms and manage the seats in the side aisles is not so very far wrong, after all. Dr. Espin rejects the more usually received derivation from *synodsmen* (*testes synodales*), and believes that *sidemen* is the original form.

The subject which more frequently than any other causes friction between churchwardens and parishioners is the seating of the people in church. Every now and then, as at Beverley a few months ago, a commotion is caused by disputes about appropriation of sittings to particular persons or families. And of late years several societies have existed for the express purpose of stopping all appropriations, and of making all churches "free and open," as it is called. In addition to this, cases from time to time arise—they form the greater part of the contested business of the Consistory Courts—in which private rights to particular sittings or pews are asserted by individuals and denied by churchwardens on behalf of the parish.

The law upon this subject is not really very complicated, and it is not at all obscure, for there is an abundance of precedents. Whatever confusion exists in the public mind has been caused by the well-meant but ill-instructed endeavour of a few individuals to find support for their own notions where no such support exists. The "free-and-open" cause, so

far as it aims at making our churches more readily accessible to both rich and poor alike, is a good cause; but unfortunately it has become identified with foolish and ignorant attempts to misread and misstate the law, which are utterly indefensible. Chancellor Espin very gently and considerately brushes aside all the vain talk and misconception, and lays down very clearly the rules which should guide churchwardens. It is their duty to seat the people in church, as the officers of the Bishop, whose authority, when it is directly used, of course overrides theirs. If the people can or will seat themselves without disputes, well and good; if not, the churchwardens are bound to act to the best of their discretion. "Free and open" in the sense of their being under no control, church sittings cannot be made, and it is questionable whether Chancellor Espin is right in assuming as he does (page 62), that the Bishop's Court can "declare them so." Every parishioner has a right to have a seat allotted to him, so far as the accommodation of the church will permit. The churchwardens, if applied to, are bound to make such an allotment, and it is difficult to see how anything short of an Act of Parliament can take away the right or remove the obligation. Chancellor Espin says that he "does not wish well" to the Parish Churches Bill. I have in a previous number of this Magazine<sup>1</sup> stated my objections to it; but if I had not done so already I should not now discuss it, for it would be labour in vain. It was not even formally revived last session. The Select Committee upon it collected some interesting statistics, and then separated, not to reassemble; and so the Parish Churches Bill seems to have died. But it is to be hoped that the subject will not die, for it wants handling not in the ridiculous, harum-scarum, revolutionary spirit of the late attempt, but wisely and intelligently.

Chancellor Espin must have felt something like pride when he wrote (as he has done in the pamphlet before us), that he forebore to say anything as to the necessity of applying for a faculty before making permanent alterations in churches, because in the dioceses of Liverpool and Chester it was unnecessary. I venture to say that there is no other diocese in England of which the same could be said truthfully. Things are improving. Churchwardens are growing more amenable, and officials and their fees less prodigious; but the feeling of "May I not do what I will with my own?" is deeply seated with regard to our parish churches, and both clergy and churchwardens not unnaturally are apt to consider that if only they can collect the money they ought to be allowed to

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<sup>1</sup> CHURCHMAN, June, 1886.

perpetrate anything in the way either of destruction or obstruction which it pleases them to describe as "restoration."

While I am writing about Chancellor Espin's admirable and interesting pamphlet, I should like to mention another by the Bishop of Carlisle, "An Address to Churchwardens," S.P.C.K. It contains a clear and lucid account of churchwardens' duties, and its study will, I think, materially assist anyone called to perform them.

LEWIS T. DIBDIN.

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### An Autumn Hymn.

"We all do fade as a leaf."—ISA. lxiv. 6.



SEE the early leaves unfold,  
I see them fading, falling, gone :  
Man's generations I behold  
In like succession hastening on.

The leaves unfold, the leaves decay,  
No care for them, no second thought ;  
Not such for man, his passing day,  
His life with endless issues fraught.

Swiftly the days of childhood fleet,  
A seedtime for the years to come ;  
And soon those after years complete  
Their record for the day of doom.

Nay ! rather say, their witness clear  
Of life eternal now begun,  
The life in Jesus springing here,  
Outlasting flesh and earth and sun.

Come, risen Lord, that life impart,  
Bright with Thy likeness and Thy love ;  
Come, quickening Spirit, fill my heart,  
And this sad blight of sin remove.

Then earthly life may fade to death,  
Through vernal youth and sere decay,  
Till some keen gust of wintry breath  
Shall sweep its pale remains away.

From failing flesh and fleeting time,  
Then life eternal rising free  
Shall flourish in that happier clime  
Where sunshine streams, O Lord, from Thee.

T. D. BERNARD.