

will be seen from the Report, have taken prompt measures to bring this uncomfortable fact under the notice of the parties immediately concerned. A circular has been transmitted to every congregation whose contributions have come short as compared with the corresponding months of last year, and a communication has at the same time been transmitted to every Presbytery within which such cases have occurred. I regret to say that the number of these cases is very considerable. The contributions of no fewer than 231 congregations exhibit on the four months that have elapsed of the current financial year, a falling off, the aggregate amount of which is no less than £1248. What makes this deficiency still more unsatisfactory is, that in the corresponding months of last year the present movement for increasing the Fund had not commenced. In point of fact, the income of the Fund was falling off during these months of last year; and their present deficiency is therefore a falling off upon a falling off. So, that in regard to these 231 congregations the case stands thus:—Instead of doing anything in the course of these four months to further the movement, they are actually doing less for the Fund this year than they were doing before the movement began. (Hear, hear.) I have a further fact to state about some of these congregations, and one which is still more discouraging. There are 57 of them which, taken altogether, gave £661 17s. 4d. less to the Sustentation Fund in the year ending at May 1855, than they had done in the year ending at May 1854. In other words, while every one of these congregations received for its minister at May last £13 more of stipend than they did the year before, they, instead of contributing to this result, took away, by their shortcomings, nearly a pound from the stipend of every minister of the church. This year apparently they are going to make matters worse. They fell off last year, and they are falling off still more this year. (Hear, hear.) It is quite true that in the case of some of the congregations whose contributions to the Fund seem to be getting into this state of chronic decline, the evil may have arisen from causes for which they are not to blame. This apology, however, cannot well avail for more than a mere fraction of their number. Only seven of them are vacant congregations. As for the great majority of them, it is difficult to find any explanation of the fact which might not just as well be made by half the congregations of the Church. My regrets, however, are not by any means exhausted, when I have spoken of the congregations whose contributions exhibit a positive decrease. It is hardly less disappointing to find how very trifling is the amount of progress which has been made by a number of congregations fully as great. It sounds, no doubt, very much better to be in the increasing rather than in the decreasing list; and yet the reality may be very little better after all. There are 79 congregations which have no doubt made an increase during these four months, but in not one of these cases does it amount to more than £1, sterling; in not a few of them it amounts to only a few shillings, or even pence! At this rate of progress it is easy to see what must become of the movement for adding a fourth to the income of the Funds. Besides these 79 congregations, there are 228 others, whose, increase on the four months is less than £5 each; the average being probably not more than from £2 to £3. Let us look at these facts. In the first place, we have 231 congregations positively falling off, as compared with the corresponding months of last year; and in

the next place, we have 307 congregations whose increase in no case exceeds £5—the average not being more than half that sum. What does this prove? It proves that not more than one-third of the congregations of the Church are doing anything fitted to tell on the all-important result at which we are aiming—of securing a minimum stipend of £150 for the ministry of our Church. We have 231 congregations which, instead of helping the movement, have taken, by their deficiencies, £1248 from it; and we have 307 congregations whose entire aggregate increase is probably not more than seven or eight hundred pounds. Practically, therefore, in so far as these 538 congregations are concerned, we not only have no movement at all, but a positive falling off to the extent of about £500. It is in the face of that deficiency that the remaining 250 congregations are left, as matters now stand, to provide the expected fourth to the gross income of the Fund. The thing is out of the question. On such a footing it cannot and will not be done; and the sooner people open their eyes to the fact the better. It is quite plain that half the Church is still asleep upon this subject,—dreaming, no doubt, that the work will somehow or other be accomplished, but at the same time leaving others to do it. It seems to be a universal infirmity of the human mind to pass from one extreme to another. Last year about this period there was something amounting almost to a panic abroad in the Church in reference to this Fund. One might have supposed from the way in which it was then very common to speak of it that it was on the point of going to pieces. Of course, that was a great extravagance. But that groundless alarm has been succeeded by an almost as unreasonable confidence. A vague notion seems somehow to have gotten into men's minds that it is all right now, and that there is no need to give themselves any more trouble or anxiety upon the subject. I fear that under the mischievous influence of this indolent and good-for-nothing idea, there has been a great and altogether premature relaxation of the efforts necessary to ensure success; nay, that in cases only too numerous, these efforts have never been begun at all. The statistics to which I have referred make it manifest that this is the fact. I earnestly hope that there will be an end of this. If the ministers, elders, and deacons of the numerous congregations that were doing little or nothing, many of them less than nothing for this great movement, will not bestir themselves, it must fail, and it will deserve to fail.

Three Hundredth Anniversary of the Martyrdom of Ridley and Latimer.

A sermon was preached on Tuesday afternoon, in St. Mary Magdalen Church, Oxford, adjoining the Martyr's Memorial, and adjacent to the very spot where Ridley and Latimer were burned, in commemoration of that event, by the Rev. J. C. Miller, of Lincoln College, Honorary Canon of Worcester, and rector of St. Martin's, Birmingham. The church was crowded in every part. The preacher selected for his text the 11th verse of the 12th chapter of Revelation.

The preacher commenced by reminding his hearers that on this occasion they were assembled to commemorate the death of those who were martyrs not only in will but in deed. Foremost among the many beauties of Oxford stood that sculptured memorial, which told how they cherished the martyrs' memories, and

maintained their protest against the Church which kindled those fires. Hard by was the memorable spot on which those noble spirits mounted on their chariots of fire to take their place near God's altar. Oxford had yet many a son who gloried in the Protestant Reformation. The preacher quoted the graphic description given by Fox of the manner in which the martyrs met their death. There was a solemn interest attached to this ter-centenary, for they found the Church and University engaged in the same painful strife, on the same points of controversy, between Protestant truth and Romish error, which sealed the faith of the martyrs. For the pure doctrine of the Lords's Supper were the fires on this day 300 years kindled; and the battle of the Reformation 300 years ago was still being fought in the bosom of the Reformed Church. Rome was still the same; she had withdrawn no claim, altered no dogma, nor rescinded any canon, and she still held that heresy was punishable with death, and toleration inconsistency. Of all the cant of the present day, whether in the pulpit, the senate, the platform, or the press, there was no cant so nauseous as that of liberalism on the lips of Rome. The man who told him he would burn him if he could, he would give credit for his candour; but the man who prated of toleration and liberty while attached to the Church of Rome, he could only despise, and regard him as ignorant of the first principles of his Church. In Oxford's street the martyr's candle, which was never to be put out, was lighted; but he grieved to say, that in Oxford a conspiracy was formed to extinguish the martyr's prophecy. In Oxford, men had banded together to put out the candle, and in Oxford was the Protestant Reformation vilified. Many friends and pupils, bound by the ties of companionship, had gone from them; but, notwithstanding personal recollections, they were bound to enter a stern protest against their apostasy; and, while they marvelled at the influence of Rome over some, it was still more humiliating to see others ministering at Protestant altars and eating Protestant bread, while they were doing Rome's work. The memorial of the day forbade them to speak with breath of Rome, and he asked if that man was a firebrand and a bigot that gave Rome its name, and charged her with idolatry, because if so, they would do well to throw down the memorial which they had raised to their martyrs' memory. He then alluded to heresies, and cited her latest invention, the immaculate Conception, as the crowning idolizing the Virgin Mary rather than the Church of the Living God. He stated that it was not by Romish errors that the candle attempted to be extinguished; for there was another and portentous evil in the midst of England, namely, Rationalism, and again that no less than against Romanism they should contend; for it was in danger both by over-traditions and rationalistic speculations. Whether in Smithfield or Oxford fires might be kindled; whether others would be called to be burned, it was not for them to say. To do duty was enough for them, to contend earnestly against Rome and Rationalism for the once delivered to the saints. The sermon which occupied one hour within five minutes will be shortly published. The beautiful memorial of Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, adjoining the north end of Magdalen Church, was ornamented with evergreens,—large plants in pots occupying the steps within the railing.