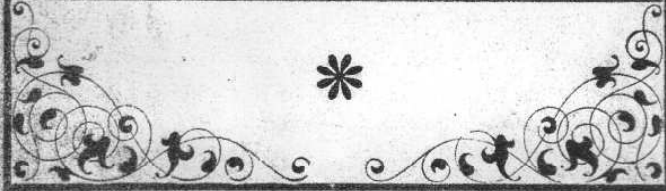
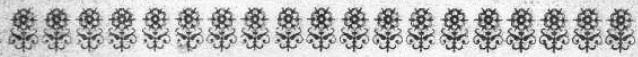


Vaughton's Hole.



YEARS + IN + IT.



PRICE ONE SHILLING.

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The Parochial Church Council of the
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Vaughton's Hole:

Twenty-five years in it.

By the Rev.
James S. Pollock, M. A.,
S. Alban's Mission, Birmingham.



"From twenty-five years old and upward they shall go in
to war the warfare."—*Numbers viii. 24, margin.*

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VAUGHTON'S HOLE.

CHAPTER I.

THE DISTRICT.

FOR nearly thirty years I have tried to promote Mission Work in Birmingham. My brother and I have conducted S. Alban's Mission for twenty-five years. It is time for us to give an account of what we have done, and of what we have failed to do.

I am anxious to give information that will throw light on the second part of my subject. I must explain our *failures*.

The circumstances of the case oblige me to speak. For more than a quarter of a century two priests have carried on the same work together. They have been assisted, from time to time, by faithful priests and devoted lay-workers. Help has come from many generous friends. How is it that so little has been done? Why have our, perhaps too ambitious, schemes

not been carried out ? Can the inadequacy of the results be explained ? I think it can, and I go on to tell my story.

Of course, the inquiry must be limited in its scope. Who can attempt to narrate all the incidents of importance that have been crowded into so many years of toil and conflict ? Who would have the patience to go through the lengthy record ? Besides, the most interesting of the facts belong to spiritual concerns, and with regard to many of them our lips are closed. A partial statement would mislead ; a full account is impossible. Matters of this kind can be dealt with only by the way, and while we discuss the progress of the work in its " external " aspects.

I therefore confine my record to two particulars. It is important to give account of the efforts made to secure the permanence of the work, and to provide Church accommodation for the people of the district. All that is said will have its connection, more or less directly, with these two subjects.

Doubtless many kind friends who know something of S. Alban's will be interested in the strange narrative that is to follow; and they will not wonder at our failures, when they see the obstacles that have hindered progress. Even some who care little for religious work may see in S. Alban's a " study " worth reading ; and may come to the conclusion that no mere human power or pertinacity could have lived through its trials.

And as concerns our own S. Alban's people, most of whom we have loved and watched from childhood—it

seems a wrong not to tell them about “ the hole of the pit ” from whence their Mission grew. Many of them know nothing of S. Alban’s struggles for life in its early days. They will prize more and more what GOD has given them, when they know what it cost.

I came to Birmingham on Holy Innocents’ Day, December 28, 1860, and on the following day accepted the Assistant-Curacy of S. Paul’s, Ludgate Hill. After the mid-day service on my first Sunday in Birmingham, January 13, 1861, I asked my Vicar, as soon as we came into the vestry, whether the congregation was as large as usual. He said it was—and I began to realize what work in Birmingham means. The Vicar of S. Paul’s, the Rev. G. B. P. Latimer, was in bad health; most of the work was left in my hands. The population was 16,000 ; the Church, which would hold 1,400, was miserably attended; there were daily services morning and evening, and almost daily funerals. Even in those days of inexperience, I saw the uselessness of a pewed Church in a parish like S. Paul’s. I remembered the large Church in a Manchester suburb where I held my first curacy, with its great congregations on Sundays—morning, afternoon, and evening ; and my own little school chapel in the country, with its very primitive arrangements and promising work. I talked with my Vicar, and asked for a small Chapel or Mission Room, free and unappropriated. He consented ; a site was chosen, and a very modest scheme proposed. But he soon put an end to my hopes by

telling me, as the result of his efforts, that "Birmingham people did not understand Mission Work."

After twelve months at S. Paul's, I broke down, and had to resign my post. A year after this, I was able to take a London curacy; but my thoughts often turned to Birmingham. Every visit to my friends at S. Paul's caused what Mr. Latimer called an "effervescence" of the Mission Chapel idea, or brought up the alternative expedient of making the Parish Church free and unappropriated. Nothing, however, was done, and our efforts were abandoned.

As soon as the schemes for Mission Work at S. Paul's came to an end, I received a communication from Dr. Oldknow's Parish of Holy Trinity, Bordesley. Some members of the "Plain Song Choir" were eager to assist in carrying out the wish of their Vicar, who, seven or eight years before, had selected a site in Leopold Street, and wanted a Mission Chapel there. The conventional district which Dr. Oldknow offered had then a population of about 4,500 poor people. There was no Church, Dissenting Chapel, Mission Room, School, endowment, grant, or any other spiritual provision for the inhabitants. I accepted the work, and came into residence on the Vigil of S. Peter, June 28, 1865. I was licensed by the Bishop of Worcester on August 2, 1865.

In my preparations for commencing the Mission, one thought filled my mind, and I lost no opportunity of expressing myself strongly regarding it. I determined

not to build a little highly-decorated Chapel for the spiritual edification of a favoured few, but to provide a large temporary building, offering a welcome to all who would come and claim their share in its privileges—trusting that the large congregation so collected would in time feel the need of erecting a permanent Church. However, Dr. Oldknow, of whose kindness and generosity I cannot speak too highly, would not permit the building of anything that was not permanent. Accordingly, two friends united with me in guaranteeing the sum required for building a small Mission Church in Leopold Street.

The discouragement caused by this disaster increased as time went on. My brother, the Rev. Thomas B. Pollock, had recently given up his curacy in London. Our Mission Chapel of S. Alban-the-Martyr was opened on September 14, 1865, and he came to be with me on that occasion, intending to spend a fortnight at S. Alban's. His "fortnight" has extended to twenty-five years, and not without a reason. Year after year he has felt it his duty to decline all offers of other work, though some had real claims upon him. For, as the following record will show, S. Alban's has always been passing from one crisis to another; and we have never had a season of quiet or peace which gave us an opportunity of separating. Whenever I have thought of going away—and the thought has forced itself upon me many times—considerations of honour or duty have always made it necessary for me to hold on till some new opposition was met, or some

new difficulty surmounted. And the same reasons have forced my brother to continue the struggle by my side. Because our work was thwarted, it was strengthened by his help.

Hence the “ disaster ” of which I speak. If I had been working alone, the little Church for 250 people might have been enough. But my brother remained with me, and a third priest soon joined us, and before many years passed we were four—the smallest number that can secure anything like efficiency. If our Church had held 600 or 800, and if we had been allowed to work in peace; our plans would have been carried out, and the district might have been adequately worked.

Let us be thankful for “ the day of small things.” Our little Church was built in seven times seven days, and the opening octave gave the work a tone, right or wrong, which it has maintained faithfully ever since. The arrangement of the services was the result of a careful forecast of what would be the authorized settlement of questions in dispute. As we carried out all our arrangements on the day of opening, and have scrupulously avoided all changes during quarter of a century ; we have been able to devote all our attention to the more serious concerns of our people.

The Mission Church soon proved too small. A statement issued in January, 1867, said :—” On every week-day since the Church was opened, we have had a good congregation of poor people belonging to the district; frequently the number of worshippers is

nearer 200 than 100. On nearly every Sunday since the Church was opened, we have been obliged to send away a number of people for whom no room could be found; frequently we have had two rows of forms in the centre passage. Many of our poor people have given up coming to Church on Sunday evening ; having been so frequently turned away from the door, they have given up the attempt in despair. During the first twelve months of Mission work the number of Communion made exceeded 3,000."

The work grew. It became more and more necessary to secure the permanence of the Mission. There were difficulties in our way from the first. The Bishop of Worcester, writing to Dr. Oldknow on December 12, 1865, gave this advice :— "The promoters of the Church might proceed under 1 and 2 W. 4, C. 38, and 14 and 15 Vict. C. 97, with the view of forming what is called a Particular District (like St. Mary's, Aston Brook) ; but this proceeding would require an endowment of £1000 at least, and a Repair Fund also." The Commissioners on February 3, 1866, in a letter to our solicitor, Mr. Newton, recommended the same plan. The Bishop again wrote to Dr. Oldknow on February 14, 1866 : " I shall be glad if the promoters of the new Church can find the means of proceeding under the Private Patronage Act, as Mr. Robins' family did in the case of St. Mary, Aston Brook." The "Act" referred to requires the building of a Church, or such part of a Church as the Bishop of the Diocese will consent to consecrate, as well as the provision

of an Endowment and Repair Fund of at least £1,150.

Our plans were clearly marked out for us on the highest authority. But here a difficulty arose. We discussed in Committee the sort of Church required for the District. We were divided in opinion as to whether we should erect a large plain Church, or a smaller and more expensive Church. The minority, consisting of the three Mission Priests present, voted for the plain Church ; the majority, consisting of all the laymen present, decided in favour of a smaller and more decorated Church. Neither Church was built ; the vote at our meeting is of no importance, except as it tends to correct a common mistake.

We went to work with energy. An appeal issued about this time, said : “ One thing checks the progress of the work, and discourages those engaged in it. The Church accommodation provided in the temporary building is painfully inadequate. Frequently 350 people have been crowded into a space hardly sufficient for 250. On Sunday evenings, especially, the little Church is inconveniently full ; and generally a great many people have to go away for want of room. Every week's experience makes the need of a larger Church more apparent and more urgent.” The appeal ends with these words: “ S. Alban's Church will be wholly free and appropriated—the first Church built with this design in the great Metropolis of the Midland Counties.”

Our architect, Mr. John Davis, an earnest promoter

of Church work, was consulted. The plans of the Church were prepared. We resolved to build a part of the Church first, the Bishop and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners having given a preliminary and conditional consent to our scheme. On December 4, 1866, the Commissioners sent us "the form in which application should be made . . . in the matter of that proposed Church and District." Dr. Oldknow's application, dated February 18, 1867, states that we proposed to build a Church "at the estimated cost of £6,000." The District was to be taken out of the "District Chapelry" of Holy Trinity and the "Hamlet" of Deritend. Those two districts contained a population of about 25,000; and their Churches provided for all those people just 1,000 free kneelings. Our new Church was to have 640 kneelings, all free. Its site, "as the crow flies," is the same distance, 800 yards, from the two Churches.

It was very hard work to raise even the sum required for building part of the Church. Our difficulties increased, when we received a communication from the Commissioners, dated April 20, 1867, informing us that "the estimated cost of the Church (£6,000) plus the amounts of the endowment and repair fund (£1,150) represents an aggregate sum of £7,150," and that the subscriptions named in our application "only reach £2,410 in all." The communication went on to say that the promoters of S. Alban's were not "in a position to carry out the proposals of their application," since "their present command

of means falls short of their intentions." A common occurrence !

The money would have come before long. I believe it would have been ready when it was wanted. But we were spared the trouble of making fresh efforts of that kind. A communication from the Trustees of the Parish of Aston put an end to our scheme.

I must explain this. According to the " Private Patronage Act," if a new Parish is proposed, the Trustees of the old Parish have the option of allowing the scheme to be carried out; or—their only alternative—taking up the scheme proposed and carrying it out themselves. The total cost of our scheme was £7,150. The five Trustees of Aston had purchased that living with its daughter Churches, including Holy Trinity, Bordesley, in the year 1857, for £7,000 ; and now, rather than permit us to build S. Alban's Church just within their boundary, they elected to spend another £7,000 in dispossessing us. They claimed a right in law to do this, and their solicitor wrote to our solicitor giving us formal notice of their determination.

The nature of their claim is explained in a letter from Dr. Oldknow to the Bishop of Worcester on December 9, 1865 : " The only difficulty in the way [of constituting the new District of S. Alban] is the objection that has been taken to my position as incumbent, for the present, of a District Chapelry, and not of a Parish. According to the opinion of the Secretary of the Ecclesiastical Commission, which I

believe Mr. Stephenson has transmitted to your lordship, this objection is not valid; and, indeed, it does appear strange and unreasonable that the consent of the patrons of the living of Aston should be necessary to the assignment of the patronage of a new Church in a district of which the incumbent has the exclusive cure of souls, when the incumbency is not in their gift ; and that this should be occasioned by the simple fact that he is not *pro tempore* legally entitled to the fees, though he [now receives them and] will have a right to them, and become the incumbent of a parish on the first avoidance of the Mother Church.”

So the legal “ point,” on which all the opposition of the Aston Trustees was founded, is “ without magnitude.” It is so microscopic that Mr. Chalk’s experienced eye did not see or believe in it. Yet it led to a lavish waste of time, money, and temper. It wrecked many souls who had to be neglected during its discussion.

Before continuing my story, let me anticipate an obvious suggestion by quoting the Bishop’s letter to Dr. Oldknow, at another stage of our conflict, on July 17, 1869 : “ I do not think that a *legal* opinion from any counsel, however eminent, will help to overcome the difficulty.”

Every one appreciates the wisdom and justice of the good Bishop of Worcester. As early in our history as December 12, 1865, he wrote to Dr. Oldknow : “ The questions which have arisen respecting

the patronage of the proposed new Church, have long occupied my best attention." In the same letter the Bishop suggested our proceeding under the " Private Patronage Act. " The action taken by the Aston Trustees made it impossible for us to carry out the suggestion of our Bishop. We were therefore obliged to fall back on the advice given to us a few days later, on December 25, 1865, in which the Bishop proposed the " New Parishes Act " as an alternative, explaining that according to that Act, " the Commissioners are bound to require an endowment of £150 a year to be secured to any District they propose to form under those Acts ; " adding, " I apprehend that this would be a fatal obstacle in the case of S. Alban's."

The Bishop's Christmas Day suggestion gave us what the Rev. Nash Stephenson, Vicar of Shirley, writing to Dr. Oldknow, on December 22, 1865, called " one chance more ;" for, as Mr. Stephenson said, in the New Parishes Acts " the consent of the patron and incumbent of the mother Church is not required for the division of the Parish; that of the Bishop is sufficient." Our course seemed plain, and we followed it without hesitation, though it involved serious loss of time and money. We called a meeting of donors, laid the case before them, and obtained their consent to the plan suggested by the Bishop of Worcester.

The change of plan was a great disaster. With the sanction of our Bishop and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners we had begun building. The Bishop wrote,

on February 1, 1867 : “In the event of a Church of sufficient size being built and consecrated near the site of the present Chapel, I should have no objection to urge against the assignment to it by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners of such a District as you describe.” Before we attempted to build the Church, the overcrowding of the first Mission Chapel obliged us to enlarge it westward ; this was done in June, 1867, at a cost of about £250. In October, 1867, we commenced the “ permanent ” Church ; the contract included only a part of the nave, with its aisles, at a cost of £2,222. We did not receive notice of the action taken by the Aston Trustees, till the foundations of our new Church had been laid, and its walls had been built four or five feet above the floor level, at a cost of about £600. The money was simply thrown away. I shall explain this further on.

Surely no fresh obstacle can arise with regard to the “ New Parishes Act.” All is plain sailing now. So it seemed. The great struggle was to get the £3,000. After wasting £600, and spending £250, it seemed impossible to raise so large a sum. Yet it was done.

At this point I pause, and take the opportunity of explaining our position with regard to the old congregation of Holy Trinity, Bordesley. S. Alban’s Mission was nothing more than the natural and legitimate development of Dr. Oldknow’s work for many years at our mother Church of Holy Trinity. Dr. Oldknow had preached faithfully and fully the doctrines of the

Church from the time of his coming to Birmingham. In a small pamphlet—I believe it was the first of a long and useful series—signed, “ J. O., Chapel of the Holy Trinity, Bordesley, October 6th, 1841,” he said : “The following selection from the Formularies and other Authoritative Documents of the Church of England has been made simply in self-defence. It has come to the knowledge of the compiler, that both his religious teaching and his mode of conducting Divine Service have been spoken of in no measured terms of reprobation, as betraying ignorance of the Gospel, and a manifest inclination to the superstitions of Romanism ; and that attempts have been made, both publicly and privately, to instil this opinion into the minds of his congregation. Against such representations he fearlessly appeals to the following extracts, being firmly persuaded that every candid reader of them, who has been latterly in the habit of attending the services at the Holy Trinity Chapel, will perceive that in his manner of celebrating Divine Service, he is only following the guidance and direction of the Church of which he is a minister.” * Bishop Pepys, writing from “ The Palace, Worcester, January 19, 1842,” said to Dr. Oldknow: “ Reverend Sir,—My attention has been called to certain letters in the *Birmingham Advertiser*,† wherein it is alleged that in

* Extracts from the Formularies, &c, of the Church of England, on certain points of doctrine and Ritual observance. Birmingham : Printed by William Hodgetts, Spiceal Street, 1841.

† One of the letters appeared in the *Advertiser* of Dec. 23, 1841. It is signed by “ A Lover of Unity,” who, referring to a letter on

one of the Churches of Birmingham a gilt cross has been introduced upon the Communion Table-cloth, and that the officiating clergyman is in the habit of kneeling down before this cross on his way to the reading-desk, and of bowing to it, on returning to it, after the prayers and the sermon. Not knowing to whom these letters referred, I wrote to Mr. Garbett, the Rural Dean, and requested that he would make the necessary inquiries. I now learn from him that you are the individual who has given such cause of offence. . . . I feel sure that this admonition will be sufficient to ensure the discontinuance of the novelties complained of." The Rural Dean, by direction of the Bishop, informed the clergy of Birmingham by circular that "our Diocesan is decidedly opposed to the introduction of novelties" at Holy Trinity, which occasioned "considerable excitement and controversy," and that "not only in our local, but also in the Metropolitan journals."

Dr. Oldknow was alone in 1841. Just 25 years afterwards, the Rural Deanery met again to condemn him ; and on that occasion I had the happiness of standing by him. As it happened, *we* were alone then.

the other side which appeared a week before, said : "Perhaps you will allow me to ask the author, if it were the custom of those excellent and pious men who composed our Liturgy, when in the performance of their ministerial duties, to stop at the rails opposite the Communion Table, and make a low bow, then to kneel down and 'say their prayers' before they proceeded to the place from which they addressed their audience ? Surely this practice has a strong resemblance to Popery."

The "offence" to which I have referred brings to mind one of Dr. Oldknow's best stories of the early days of the Catholic Revival in Birmingham. A parcel came to Dr. Oldknow's house; it was large, and the charge for delivery was not small; so he declined to receive it. A letter came from Bishop Pepys, censuring Dr. Oldknow for acting in a manner which excited people's feelings against him. The Bishop explained that a man had written to complain that he had sent Dr. Oldknow a halter, requesting him to hang himself with it, and that Dr. Oldknow had refused the parcel! The reprimand administered to the writer of the epistle is not on record.

I have said all this—I might say much more—to show that S. Alban's Mission has no claim to be more than the expression of thoughts which had filled the heart of at least one faithful priest for a long time. Fifty years have passed away since "Mr. Oldeknow," as people used to call him, became "Incumbent of Trinity Chapel, Bordesley, near Birmingham." Dr. Oldknow taught his people for nearly 25 years before he introduced what, of late years, has been called "Ritual." He began to wear Eucharistic "vestments" at Holy Trinity on the Easter Day *before* the opening of S. Alban's Mission in his parish; their regular use was commenced at S. Paul's, Ludgate Hill, my old parish, when I celebrated there on S. James' Day, 1865—also *before* the opening of S. Alban's Mission. There was no disagreement, ritual or otherwise, between the mother and the daughter.

Dr. Oldknow, before S. Alban's Altar on a Festival, said in my hearing to an objector, that not in "principle" but only in "detail" was there any difference between the two Churches. But the congregation of Holy Trinity took little or no interest in what they called "the Shed." One collection for our funds at the Harvest Festival in 1865 yielded the sum of £10; and hardly anyone at Holy Trinity cared whether the Mission lived or died. As Mr. Latimer had explained to me before, Birmingham people "did not understand Mission work."

It is fair to S. Alban's that its thorough isolation should be known. It had no helps to begin with, and it had few friends.

But the friends it had were true. The noblest and the best of them in the congregation of Holy Trinity was Hector Richard Cooksey, J.P., Churchwarden of Holy Trinity, who may be considered the founder of the two new Districts of S. Alban and All Saints', Small Heath. And beside him, as far as S. Alban's is concerned, must be placed his friend, John S. Newton, who gave us the benefit of his legal advice, and conducted an interminable correspondence with the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

At this crisis Mr. Cooksey saved S. Alban's. A sum of £3,000 had to be raised. Miss Wills, who had from the beginning taken an active part in our Mission work, as an indefatigable visitor and friend of the poor, gave £1,000, and Mr. Cooksey gave £500. We met in Committee, and considered the possibility, or, as it

seemed to most of us, the impossibility of raising the remaining £1,500. When everyone else was in despair, Mr. Cooksey kept us to the point—Could it be done, and how? At last it was proposed that fifteen friends should promise to give or collect £100 each. All present gave their names. Then we suggested the names of others to complete our number, with the happy result that everyone we asked consented at once, and the whole sum was guaranteed. Mr. Cooksey finished well the work he had begun. He said that the Bank would not care to have so many guarantors; if the fifteen would guarantee their sums of £100 to him, he would guarantee the whole £1,500 to the Bank—thus providing without delay the sum required for the separation of the District, and removing the one “fatal obstacle” which the Bishop feared.

This arrangement gave new heart to our people. They worked with strange energy, and the whole sum was raised.

The delay caused by the change of plan was very vexatious. A letter from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners' Secretary, dated Aug. 17, 1867, enclosed a copy of the “Rules under which the Commissioners' general augmentation and endowment grants are made;” and informed us that “the application cannot be considered in competition until the spring of 1868.” Our application bears date November 16, 1867. Among the “statements or observations” suggested in Question 10, I read the following; “The promoters have already expended one thousand, seven hundred

pounds, in the purchase of the land and the erection of the temporary Church and Schools." In spite of our great losses and disappointments, I find that, according to the new scheme, we proposed to build a Church, not for 640 as before, but for 800. The population was increasing fast, though our efforts to provide for it were thwarted.

The Commissioners' acceptance of our scheme is dated March 24, 1868 : " I am directed to inform you that they are prepared to charge upon such Fund [" The Common Fund "] a perpetual annuity of £50 in aid of the above proposed District, to meet the benefaction of £3,000, which has been offered in favour of the same, upon condition that such benefaction be paid to the Commissioners' account at the Bank of England on or before the 1st day of June next, and that the constitution of the district be duly effected, the patronage to be vested in Trustees in accordance with the wishes of the promoters." Another letter, dated April 11, 1868, explains that the Commissioners " make an annual payment of £100 in respect of the £3,000 benefaction," and add "the grant of a Perpetual Annuity of £50, thus securing to the Incumbent a clear income of £150 per annum," that sum being reduced by Income Tax only. A third letter, dated May 23, 1868, gives further information : " The assignment of the Patronage of S. Alban's to Trustees will be made by the same Order of Her Majesty in Council which constitutes the District, and therefore as to that no date is or can be named. The Trustees must first

be nominated, for approval by this Board, by the persons who provide the £3,000. I shall be glad to receive the act of nomination in due course, and I send you herewith in draft the form in which the nomination should be made."

All these details were very re-assuring. And we needed them all. We had spent three years in the discussion of minute points of law. Now at last, at the suggestion of our Bishop, we found ourselves able to adopt a course which left us in his hands alone. It was a comfort to believe that success was certain, if we only waited for it.

By great exertions the money part of the matter was arranged in time. A certificate before me announces that " Bordesley St. Alban, 33,960, has this day [May 30, 1868] paid into the Bank of England the sum of Three Thousand Pounds ; " and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners' receipt is dated June 3, 1868.

Maps and plans were forwarded to the Commissioners. A discussion of the boundaries of the proposed new District commenced on July 28, and was terminated on September 12. On the 10th of November the Commissioners required information as to the names of the " present Patrons of the Parish of Aston-juxta-Birmingham," with " a view to the service of the requisite Statutory Notices of the scheme, which the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for England have prepared for effecting the constitution of the above proposed District." On the 14th of December we were

informed that the “ Statutory Notices” had “ been given to the parties entitled to the notice.”

After long waiting we had some misgivings, though we could not see any grounds for them. I called at the Ecclesiastical Commissioners’ offices in London. The Secretary said that, in consideration of the great pile of correspondence about S. Alban’s which he had before him, he thought he might inform me that there was an obstacle to the carrying out of our scheme. The Commissioners accepted our scheme in a letter dated March 24, 1868. After nearly a year of careful negotiations respecting details, they wrote on March 9, 1869, to say that they had “ recently received a communication from the Bishop of Worcester, from which it appears that his lordship is not at present prepared to concur in the arrangements contemplated.”

The action of the Bishop is explained by a circular reprinted in the *Birmingham Daily Post* of March 30, 1869. The circular is dated March 10, 1869, and is signed by “ Arthur Kinnaird, Edmund Holland, Edward Auriol, George Lea, Sampson S. Lloyd, Trustees of Aston Vicarage.” The Trustees of Aston had asked the Bishop’s consent to repeat their former policy, and raise £3,000 for the endowment of the District, that being “ the only way to avert so serious an evil ” as the constitution of S. Alban’s District. Their circular set forth this intention, and expressed a “ hope that our appeal at this crisis to aid us liberally in the struggle for the truth of the Gospel against error and superstition, will not be in vain.” They headed

the subscription list: “ The Hon. Arthur Kinnaird, M.P., £20; the Rev. E. Holland, £500; Rev. E. Auriol, £50; Rev. G. Lea, £100; S. S. Lloyd, Esq., £100.”

We took the course which, under the circumstances, seemed most in accordance with common sense, and with our principles as promoters of Church work. I wrote to the Bishop of Worcester on June 24, 1869, on behalf of the promoters of S. Alban's, representing that we had no desire to interfere unduly with the rights of the patrons; that a rapidly-increasing population of 9,000 souls might provide an ample field of labour for both parties ; that the promoters, if allowed to go on with their work, were ready to grant all reasonable facilities to the patrons in theirs ; and that the obvious solution of the difficulty was to “ divide the land,”—the Aston Trustees endowing a new District with their £3,000, and the promoters of S. Alban's endowing a second new District with their £3,000. We asked the Bishop of Worcester to mediate ; and, if possible, to make an arrangement of the kind proposed. The Bishop's reply is dated July 14, 1869 ; he made the effort, but adds, “ I am sorry to say that my proposal has not been accepted by the Trustees.” In a long letter written to Mr. Howard Ratcliff on July 17, the Bishop sets forth very clearly his view of the case :—

“ The patrons of Aston say that they are able and willing to do what the promoters of St. Alban's have proposed, and I have thought it right that they should be allowed time for making good their undertaking. But I have further told Dr. Oldknow and others interested in St. Alban's that when the scheme of the

patrons comes before the Bishop officially, it will be incumbent on him to consider any objections which may be urged by the Vicar of Aston or by the incumbent of Holy Trinity against it. I have also thought it right to forewarn the patrons that I have received already from Mr. Peake and from Dr. Oldknow intimation of objections, which they will urge at the proper time, and that I apprehend the objections urged by those gentlemen may be such as morally to oblige the Bishop to refuse his consent to any scheme which would make the site of St. Alban's Chapel and the district in Holy Trinity now conventionally assigned to it a part of the new parish proposed to be formed by the patrons. The result in the end may be that the Bishop should appear to be stopping two benevolent proposals for the permanent good of the people ; but, under present circumstances, I do not see how this result is to be avoided, if the Bishop is to deal out even justice to all parties. The proposal [to divide the District] which I made to the patrons of Aston, would have prevented this result ; and I can only repeat my regret that it has not been accepted by them."

The consternation of S. Alban's people, when they first heard the bad news, may be imagined. A meeting of 109 Communicants, called together at a day's notice, unanimously passed a resolution, expressing their "astonishment and dismay;" and sent it to Dr. Oldknow, asking him to forward it to the Bishop.

The Ecclesiastical Commissioners, for their part, considered our case finally disposed of, and were prepared to return the £3,000. In answer to our enquiries we were informed that "if and when the £3,000 now held by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in that case shall have been withdrawn, any further proposal" must come before them "as an entirely new case." On the other hand, the Secretary was "unable to say whether any position of superior advantage can be

secured for future efforts of the promoters, by leaving the £3,000 in the Commissioners' hands."

Mr. Robert Brett, one of the first Trustees of S. Alban's, interposed on our behalf. Writing to me he said : " I cannot but think that a firm and decided attitude will bring things to a better pass. This is the line I have always taken, and with uniform success. . . . Don't let the matter sleep, or be damaged by too gentle a spirit." In answer to his letter to the Commissioners, he was informed that " so far as this office is concerned, proceedings for the formation of the proposed district of St. Alban-the-Martyr, Bordesley, have been suspended since March last." By Mr. Brett's advice, I prepared a memorial which Dr. Oldknow sent, on behalf of the promoters, to the Commissioners, on November 22, 1869. The reply of the Commissioners is dated December 9, 1869. Their Secretary is " directed to say that the Commissioners regret that they do not see any step " which can be taken in the matter ; and he is further directed to " suggest for the consideration of the promoters whether, under the circumstances in which the promoters are placed, it is desirable to leave longer in the Commissioners' hands the benefaction of £3,000 which has been paid over in this case."

My brother, the Rev. Thomas B. Pollock, who came to spend " a fortnight " with me in September, 1865, had worked at S. Alban's for more than four years. All that time he officiated by permission of the Bishop, without a formal license. Everything was uncertain.

Any day the promoters of the Mission might despair, or feel themselves obliged to put an end to it. My brother wrote to the Bishop, asking his lordship's direction with regard to being licensed. On December 16, 1869, the Bishop wrote : " I am content that you should still continue to serve there [“ S. Alban's Chapel ”] without a license." The Bishop added : " I need hardly say to you, in answer to your remarks about the present state of the proposal for a permanent district in connection with S. Alban's, that the subject is one of much anxious and almost painful interest to me. I have tried in vain to reconcile conflicting views, that so an end might be put to uncertainty. I can only counsel patience."

The Rev. George Peake, Vicar of Aston-juxta-Birmingham, wrote to the Bishop, saying: "A communication just received from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to Dr. Oldknow, has completely startled me." Mr. Peake had given us all the assistance in his power from the beginning. In a letter to Dr. Oldknow, bearing date March 30, 1870, the Bishop of Worcester says : —

" I wrote to the Vicar of Aston two days ago to explain the present position of the proposals for a new Ecclesiastical District, and requested him to show the letter to you and to any other persons who may take interest in the matter. I understood from you and from the Vicar last year that you were prepared to object formally to the scheme proposed by the patrons of Aston on the double ground that provision is already made for that part of Holy Trinity which the patrons proposed to take, and that the object of the patrons is to overthrow what is now being done. If you and Mr. Peake are of the same mind now, and will state

to me your objections, in anticipation of the scheme which the letter of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to you leads you to expect, I will at once state to the Commissioners that my consent will not be given to any scheme which includes the part of Holy Trinity in question. This notification, at the present stage of proceedings, would save the Commissioners the trouble of framing the scheme, and sending out the notices which the Act directs."

The trouble caused to our good Bishop by the action of the Aston Trustees is greatly to be regretted. On December 12, 1865, the Bishop wrote to Dr. Oldknow : " The questions which have arisen respecting the patronage of the proposed new Church have long occupied my best attention ; " and recommended him to " wait for a change of circumstances." After a controversy prolonged during four years and three months *more*, the Bishop is able to refuse his consent to the patrons' scheme ; advising us, as at first, to " wait for a change of circumstances "—" I can only counsel patience." While scrupulously guarding what he considered the rights of the patrons of Aston, the Bishop consistently advised the promoters of S. Alban's to wait patiently for the realization of their hopes.

But patience is a hard lesson, when the hope is long deferred. No wonder that our most earnest friends " lost patience," and sighed for an end of the controversy. Our Committee met one evening in the Class-room of our Infants' School in Dymoke Street ; and by an almost unanimous vote passed a resolution determining to make no further efforts to obtain a district for S. Alban's. This meant that the Mission would cease with the lives of the Vicar of Aston and

the Incumbent of Holy Trinity ; and that, while it lingered, all heart and hope would be taken out of it. The resolution, adopted with the greatest reluctance, meant the dismissal of the clergy and the end of the work.

I am anxious to emphasize the position which I have described. S. Alban's people will not wonder at S. Alban's *defects* and shortcomings, when they know how long it had to struggle to maintain its *life* ; and how, in a crisis of great danger, nearly all its friends "despaired even of life." Other circumstances, which I must add soon, will show at what great hazard we have maintained such helps to reverence, and such ways of honouring GOD as we now enjoy. And no sane person will wonder that those who guide the work at S. Alban's feel the duty of preserving a consistent and unaltered course. May the Mission never suffer loss or be wrecked by any change in this respect!

Need I say that I voted against the resolution of despair ? My brother, who was absent, wrote to protest against it, questioning the power of the Committee to act without the consent of the subscribers. Miss Wills wrote in the same strain.

It was an evening meeting. Next morning I paid an early visit to Aston Vicarage. The Rev. George Peake received me with his usual open-hearted kindness. He heard my story, and did not content himself with an empty expression of sympathy. He gave me, unasked, private information which I had no right to ask. He assured me that before long all difficulties

would be got over, if only I could persuade the Committee to wait, and ask no questions.

This was a task of no ordinary difficulty, as the following letter from Dr. Oldknow proves :—

“ HOLY TRINITY PARSONAGE,

“ *Friday night.*

“ Dear Mr. Pollock,—On further consideration I think the members of the Committee, at least those who were present at the meeting on Thursday evening, have a right to know the *nature*—I do not say the exact details—of the circumstance which has prevented their virtual resolution from being carried into effect ; and it does not strike me that there is any difficulty in its being entrusted to their *discretion*. . . . To tell the truth, I do not like my present position of being the ostensible hinderer of that being accomplished which they had agreed upon, whilst they are kept in ignorance of the reason. I feel, in fact, that I am acting *beyond what I have authority to do*. Mr. ——— has written to me, expressing his disappointment at the delay which I have authorized in forwarding the letter to the Bishop. I could only reply that the information I had received seemed to me to render it expedient, and I thought would appear in the same light to him when he was possessed of it ; but, under the circumstances, I think both he and the rest may justly complain of not being well used in having it altogether withholden. I am fully convinced that it would have been much better had it been imparted at the meeting.* However, I feel my position a very disagreeable one, and must rely on your discretion to relieve me of it.—Believe me, very truly yours, J. OLDKNOW.

“P.S—I do not see any force in the objection that the Committee have not power to close the Mission. They are the representatives of the subscribers *for all purposes*, may receive the £3,000, return it to the contributors, and, in fact, wind up the whole concern. I have seen ——— to-night, who concurs *generally* in my views.”

* I could not explain, even to Dr. Oldknow, when or how I got the information.

Dr. Oldknow's vexation in feeling himself obliged to send such a letter as this may be imagined, when we find that he wrote to the Bishop on December 9, 1865 : —

“ If, therefore, their [the Aston Trustees'] consent be necessary, and the impediments to making the District Chapelry of Holy Trinity a separate parish be insurmountable, the building of the Church will have to be given up. Such a result will be most painful to all who are engaged in the work, and especially to myself, as it was in the hope of carrying out this project, on which I had fixed my mind for many years, that I was induced to accept a legal district; nor did I then anticipate any of the objections which have since been raised. But, if they cannot be removed, there is no alternative.”

From this date the promoters of S. Alban's district were few in number; they were only Mr. and Mrs. Peake, consulting with my brother and myself. All other friends of the work were powerless, for lack of information ; some of the most earnest among them had resolved to “ close the Mission,” and “ wind up the whole concern.” Yet, after their first remonstrances, all acted with rare generosity in consenting to “ wait for a change of circumstances,” though I was not permitted to give any information whatever.

The Secretary of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners wrote to Dr. Oldknow, on February 3, 1870, with reference to our “ wish that the benefaction of £3,000, which has been paid over in this case, should for the present be retained by this Board ” ; and informed him that “ under the circumstances of the case, the Board are prepared to accede to the wish thus expressed, and

to retain the money for the present." Mr. Chalk wrote another letter to Dr. Oldknow, on March 25, 1870 : " I am directed to acquaint you that the Commissioners, after conferring with the Bishop of Worcester upon the subject, have come to the conclusion that it is expedient for them, under the circumstances, to accept the proposals of the Patrons of Aston, and to cancel the conditional grant which, in the year 1868, was voted in the case of this district to meet a benefaction offered by yourself and others." Our money had been paid on May 30, 1868 ; and twenty months after, we got so far in our scheme as to obtain permission to leave that money still in the Ecclesiastical Commissioners' hands, although the Commissioners had formally " cancelled " our grant and accepted the proposal of the Aston Trustees ! We did this in the hope that " something would turn up."

It did turn up in the " course of time " ; but it worked a long time under ground before it came into view. Stealthy visits to Aston Vicarage gained the needful information. By the kindness of the Vicar of Aston and Mrs. Peake, I was able to learn the right time for maturing our arrangements, and setting us free from the interference of the Aston Trustees. The secret was kept so well that even the warmest friends of S. Alban's knew nothing of our plans and hopes, till the permanence of the work was secured and the result of the controversy was published in the newspapers.

The " New District " of S. Alban the Martyr was constituted by an Order in Council, bearing date

August 19, 1871, I was licensed to the incumbency by the Bishop of Worcester, on November 18, 1871.

During the six previous years all was uncertain, and the life of the Mission depended on the lives of the Vicars of Aston and Holy Trinity. Till the year 1871, all the clergy of S. Alban's were Assistant-Curates of Holy Trinity, and we lived in constant fear of the "winding up" of the work.

For the last nineteen years, S. Alban's has been in a position of perfect security as a "New District." The "New Parish" will not be constituted till the Church is consecrated. The five Trustees of the living are : The Dean of Lincoln, the Earl Beauchamp, J. G. Talbot, M.P., H. T. Ratcliff, and W. H. Sproston.

Before the District was formed, we felt that it was our duty to provide more Church accommodation. We were waiting the final result of our application to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Everything was uncertain. Some unlooked-for crisis might destroy the little hope that was left to us. Hence we formed this double resolution : First, to provide a better Mission Church at once ; Secondly, not to spend more money on it than was necessary, in case we might find our whole Mission work destroyed in a few months' time. In fact, we built a Church which, in case of emergency, might be sold, with the rest of our effects, and converted into a manufactory.

Though we could not venture to erect anything but a cheap building, our architect, Mr. John Davis,

provided a very Church-like and convenient home for us. It contained apsidal Chancel, Nave, and three small Vestries ; and had free and unappropriated kneelings for 480 worshippers.

I have already explained that the Church commenced on the same piece of ground had to be abandoned on account of the action taken by the Trustees of Aston some years before. We could not attempt to continue the building of that Church. Its plans were too costly ; the uncertainty of our position obliged us to be economical. On the other hand, it seemed absurd to wait : we had waited for many years, and did not know how much longer our waiting time might continue,—or whether it would ever come to a successful end. The materials of the “ruin” were, therefore, given to the builder of the new Church, among the terms of his contract. He dug up some of the bricks which we had laid, and adapted the stonework.

A six years' conflict had failed to establish the work. All hope of better things rested on assurances given by the two priests, who were not able to support their statements by a word of definite information. Yet, in the face of all this, S. Alban's people cordially accepted our proposal for the building of the Church. And the two members of the Building Committee, who arranged with me all the details, were Mr. Howard T. Ratcliff and Mr. W. H. Sproston—the same devoted workers who, for many years in succession, held the office of churchwardens of S. Alban's, who kept the office so long because the pecuniary and other responsibilities of

their office were so heavy, and who did not resign their office till last Easter when our debts were greatly reduced and our prospects were getting brighter.

The new Church was opened with great thankfulness and rejoicing on March 7, 1871, under license of the Bishop of Worcester, who, in reply to an objector, stated that he had "ascertained" that it was "in every respect free from objection, and fit for the service of the Church of England." Its cost, including all fittings, did not exceed £1,500. But long time and anxious labour were spent in providing that small sum. Our resources were exhausted by recent losses, and by the great effort made to raise the money required for the Endowment Fund.

Two years after this, another important step was taken in the opening of S. Patrick's Mission. S. Alban's Mission Buildings were placed in the most thickly inhabited part of the district; the "Hilly Fields," now covered with houses, separated it from Moseley Road. The population rapidly increased. The Brick-pits were filled up, and streets were built. "Vaughton's Hole," which gave its name to the surrounding district, was a thing of the past; "Harrison's Hole," and other such places, soon came to the same end. The population is now about three times as large as it was twenty-five years ago. Our record, so far, is enough to show what might have been done if the work had not been hindered. With a large temporary Church, and the appliances which such a Church must have gathered

round it, we would have *anticipated the growth of the district*, and provided for it in time. As it is, our work, like other Church work in general, is too late. And when the record of opposition of other kinds, which I am obliged to add, is considered, the reason of our failures will not be far to seek.

In the early days of the Mission, I conducted negotiations with a view to the erection of a School-Chapel in Conybere Street, or Highgate Street. They bore the name of "streets," though few of their houses were built : they now contain about 3,500 inhabitants. The idea of providing for all these people *before they came* had to be given up, because the separation of the district was opposed by the Aston Trustees. The same reason put an end to negotiations about Mission work and buildings in Moseley Street.

It is necessary to give these explanations. For it may seem to those who do not understand the needs of a population like ours, that we acted rashly in enlarging our first Mission Church, and, a few months later, building our second Mission Church in Leopold Street ; while the question of the district was undecided, and when we had no money—only our own credit and securities—to pay for it. What I have just said illustrates, by way of examples, the way in which many schemes of important development were crushed by the five earnest men who deemed it an imperative Christian duty to thwart us in every way. If in some things we were rash, it was because we were so often repressed, and had to vent our feelings by an occasional rebound.

The general result, however, is not that we did too much ; but that we left undone many things that we ought to have done for the spiritual interests of GOD'S poor.

In mentioning the building of S. Patrick's, I must state the position which S. Alban's Mission has found it needful to take with regard to Elementary Education. Before we had any schools of our own we rented factory buildings on both sides of Leopold Street, and had large Sunday and night schools. Mr. Knight's buildings were used for both purposes. One day I heard a boy spelling aloud the name, " K-n-i-g-h-t," adding, " It's the noight school." We got two little rooms built on the site in Leopold Street, used them as Girls' and Infants' Schools, and paid, £33 a year rent for them till we were able to purchase them for £200. S. Agnes Home, in Highgate Street, provided another Infants' School : Sister Emma placed the largest room in her house at our disposal. The opening of the second Church in Leopold Street, like all our building operations, enlarged our school accommodation—giving Mission Church, and three Schools for Boys, Girls, and Infants on the same piece of ground. All this, remember, while we did not know what a day might bring forth, or how soon the Mission might be closed.

More Church and School accommodation being urgently needed, S. Patrick's was opened on November 18, 1873. It provided a skilfully-arranged school-chapel. The Bishop licensed it for Divine Service.

All our schools were, as soon as possible, placed under Government Inspection. Alterations and enlargements have been made whenever they were practicable and advisable. The building of the new Church in Conybere Street has set free the second Mission Church for use as the largest Boys' School in Birmingham.

But I must not anticipate. I stop for a moment to recall the happiness and prosperity that for a short time—not quite a year—followed the opening of S. Patrick's Mission. By the generosity of one of our friends the stipend of a fourth priest was provided. The earnest labours of the Rev. E. J. Scarlett and the Rev. John H. C. Cowan will be long remembered at S. Alban's and S. Patrick's. The two Missions, conducted by my brother and myself, worked side by side. A complete system of Sunday Services was established at both Churches ; the week-day Services were chiefly at S. Alban's. Our schools on Sundays and week-days were prospering. Their average attendance before the opening of S. Patrick's was :—Sunday Schools, 488 ; Day Schools, 423 ; Night Schools, 305. And the new schools added 369 places.

Everything gave promise of blessing and progress. And all might have been well, if our staff of clergy could have been maintained, and if the work had been developed on the two convenient sites which had been secured.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHURCH.

I PASS on with reluctance from those happy days. It is time to speak of the new hindrances from which S. Alban's has suffered since that time, and which have now been happily removed.

S. Patrick's had not been open a year before my brother's health gave way. He had been strong, and had conducted the whole work during my long absence from ill-health after "the Bother"—a separate subject on which I cannot now enter. He in his turn, was obliged to go away; he spent two winters in France and Italy. Our staff was further weakened by the withdrawal of the stipend of the fourth priest; the donor added it to his large contribution to the new Church.

It may seem unnecessary to explain the circumstances under which S. Alban's Church was built. We have got it, and its heavy debt has been paid. It is my duty, and I must not shrink from it, to state why and how the work was taken in hand.

When my brother went to the Continent for the first time, three out of the four clergy were disabled. I was one of them; and I packed up all my goods, feeling

quite uncertain as to whether I could return or not. Before I went away, I took a step which perhaps was mistaken, and which certainly led to enormous difficulties. I asked a few of the most earnest and influential friends of S. Alban's to hear a statement on the subject of Mission work. I set before them the growing needs of the district, and our scanty Church accommodation — only 750, including S. Patrick's, which was then only a school-chapel. I urged what I had advocated at the beginning of the Mission, the erection of a large plain iron Church, or a brick Church like that in Leopold Street, deprecating strongly the idea of attempting any costly enterprise. With the noblest and best intentions, my plan was set aside, and the immediate result of my appeal was a proposal to commence the erection of a good permanent Church in the following spring, 1875. The Church was commenced in September, 1879, and was opened on May 3, 1881. So I did not attain the object of my earnest desire ; but, on the contrary, brought upon myself and my people the burden of debt which it was my fixed determination to avoid.

If we had adhered to our carefully-arranged scheme for the building of that Church, all might have prospered. Mr. Butterfield was our first architect. When he gave us a design for a Church which would have cost about three times the sum we named to him ; we resolved to build only the Chancel, with the addition of an iron Nave. When Mr. Butterfield declined to carry out our arrangements, Mr. Pearson, R.A.,

designed the present Church. Our first proposal was to spend about £7,000, and build only part of it at first. It would be tedious to tell the story of the changes of plan which more than doubled our original estimate. Besides, I can allege the common excuse that we are “no worse than others” in this respect.

Throughout all our difficulties the architect acted in the spirit of his words written to me : “I venture to offer these suggestions for the consideration of the Committee. At the same time I wish it to be understood that I am quite ready to carry out the Church, divided in any way they may think best.” We retained our Altar, though Mr. Pearson said it was too large, and would “cover up much of the architecture” of the East-end of the Church. The cost was divided into two portions. The eastern portion, with an iron Nave, would have cost about £7,000 ; the western portion about £8,000 more. We decided to build the eastern portion with large iron Nave. Two members of our Committee took in charge the provision of an iron Nave, and obtained an estimate for it. We thought we were justified in taking so much of the work in hand. In addition to other offerings, we were promised two munificent donations of £2,000 each. My brother by this time had returned to work with renewed strength, and S. Alban’s was prospering.

Our prosperity was short-lived. The disaster came in this way. The two donors of the £4,000 offered to pay that sum at once, instead of in yearly instalments, on condition that the Building Committee undertook

the building of the whole Church. The madness of accepting this generous proposal is inconceivable now. I, as Chairman, did not vote. My brother did not vote. Mr. Howard T. Ratcliff, the devoted friend of S. Alban's, who has done more than anyone else to retrieve the disaster of that day by his zealous and untiring efforts, absented himself from the meeting, and gave the reason of his absence. The votes of the two donors and two other votes secured for us the immediate payment of £4,000, and fixed our debt at a sum of about £14,000.

Hence the erection of our magnificent Church has never been to me, or to the worshippers at S. Alban's, the joy and pride that it might have been under other circumstances. In addition to its beauty, it gave us only 250 more kneelings than the Mission Chapels had provided—those Mission Chapels, by agreement with the Committee, being closed when it was opened. It took from us our fourth priest, and gave us almost hopeless debt.

The builder and all others who worked for us, were paid, of course. The debt was arranged thus :—Our three large sites, with all the Churches and Schools built upon them, were encumbered by two mortgages ; and an overdraft at the Bank supplied the rest.

I do not attempt to excuse myself for my part in this transaction. Perhaps I ought to have been more wilful. Perhaps it was my duty to resign in 1865, when Dr. Oldknow stopped the building of my proposed large iron Church. Perhaps I ought to have done so

when, in 1874, my project for putting up another large plain building was superseded by a more costly alternative ; or when the simplest rules of arithmetic were ignored in 1879. But it is not easy to be strong or wilful in opposition to friends who are generous and hopeful.

The debt was reduced by slow degrees at first ; in 1886 it amounted to £12,000. S. Alban's congregation did not feel the pressure of that debt on their consciences. They never were in a position to ask for so costly a Church, or guarantee the money to build it. Their object and mine was not to free the Church from debt—this was only the means of preparing for work—but to be free to develop our Mission agencies.

At a meeting of communicants I formally set before S. Alban's people the condition of affairs. Our debts were three in number, and I expressed my opinion that if two of them were cancelled, and our debt was reduced to £4,000, we might be in a position to consider some modest scheme for enlarging our work without adding appreciably to our financial burdens.

To the surprise of everybody the object sought was attained very soon. The Bishop of the Diocese wrote to me :—" It is very desirable that the debt on St. Alban's Church which so seriously interferes with your work in your poor and populous parish should be discharged as soon as possible. I hope that the efforts which your Committee are now making for the purpose may be blessed with full success." A generous friend gave large anonymous offerings. Many smaller sums

were contributed. Our people acted nobly, and made vigorous efforts, with the happy result that the first mortgage of £4,500, which encumbered our two school sites with their buildings, was cancelled.

The second debt, the overdraft at the Bank, was paid at the same time. I have mentioned that the immediate cause of our heavy debt was the large offertory of £4,000, which some, who do not know our poverty, consider a sign of our wealth. One of the two donors of the sums of £2,000 nobly came forward to relieve us from the pressure of debt that seemed to be hopeless. When we decided to attack the three items of our debt, Mr. Thomas Middlemore promised that, if we could collect from all sources the £4,500 required to pay off the school mortgage, he would be responsible for the whole of the Bank overdraft, amounting to £2,850. Resolutions of the Building Committee had authorised him to open and continue that account. Mr. Middlemore accepted our common debt as his own personal concern, and paid the money.

The debt that remained amounted to £4,000. I again addressed the S. Alban's people. I reminded them of my words spoken when the debt was £12,000, and of my promise not to say anything to them about further building till the debt was reduced to £4,000. I went on to say that, grievous as was the decision, I did not feel myself justified in recommending any fresh effort. I said I must make a further concession, and wait till the debt was reduced from £4,000 to £2,000.

I do not believe in a direct blessing from GOD on rash and unwarrantable extravagance. But I do believe that errors committed in good faith and with generous design are dealt with mercifully. In this way I interpret the success of our efforts to pay for S. Alban's Church. Strange to say, the debt was soon reduced by an anonymous benefaction to £2,000.

The clergy of S. Alban's were still in a difficulty. Even now, with a debt reduced from, £12,000 to £2,000 in so short a time, they did not feel themselves justified in proposing any further outlay. The effort, though successful, had been great and exhausting. One parishioner, Mrs. Harris, an inmate of the Alms-houses near the Church, had collected no less than £36 5s. od., chiefly in pennies, from her poor neighbours. Many others had worked in like manner. It seemed cruel to drive them to work again. Moreover, we seemed to feel the pressure of the smaller debt more than the larger one. Years before, when the debt was at its height, no one cared to attempt the hopeless task of paying it. When it became smaller, and we had exhausted our resources by successful efforts, it seemed more difficult than ever to do anything.

My brother and I had frequent and anxious consultations. We devised our plans privately, and after many months of waiting formed our resolve. The position was this. Something must be done, and that soon. We had come to Birmingham as soon as a few

years of varied experience in other work had qualified us for the task. We had given all our years of full vigour to the Mission, and we were commencing the twenty-fifth year of our work in Birmingham. We felt that the best and only way was not to ask our people to do anything, but to do what was needful ourselves, as a thank offering for 25 years' opportunities of work in S. Alban's Mission, and the blessings received by us and our people. Accordingly, we consulted with a London builder of iron churches, and erected S. Patrick's, Highgate Street, and S. Katharine's, Stanhope Street — devoting the contributions of some friends, none of whom live in Birmingham, to the provision of fittings for the new Chapels.

S. Patrick's supersedes the School-chapel on the same piece of ground, and holds 343 worshippers. S. Katharine's, which is built on a part of the Church site, is a Children's Chapel for 230 ; its services are conducted by four faithful laymen. S. Alban's and S. Patrick's are licensed by the Bishop ; S. Columba's and S. Katharine's are opened by the Bishop's permission, though not formally licensed. Our Church accommodation is now 1,020 at S. Alban's, and 1,053 at the three Mission Chapels ; total, 2,073. All kneelings, of course, are free and unappropriated.

Let anyone who understands Church work contrast our position before and after the building of our two new Mission Churches. Then we had only one Church, S. Alban's, Conybere Street, with two School Chapels ; the inconvenience of using the same

building for day school and for Church service is apparent, and needs no description. Now we have our Church as before ; S. Patrick's with its complete set of Sunday services ; S. Columba's, a large School-chapel, formerly the Church of the district ; and S. Katharine's Children's Chapel. The Church does not provide many more good seats—good for seeing and hearing — than S. Patrick's ; and S. Katharine's attracts a Church-full of children, leaving more room for adults at the other Churches.

Another great object has been attained ; we have got a fourth priest. We lost him when the new Church was proposed. The Additional Curates' Society has increased its second grant offered to us some years ago ; and we, at last, have felt ourselves able to accept the grant. In other respects, our financial position shows signs of improvement. The organization is more elaborate than ever, and our anxieties increase in proportion. But, with an earnest and united congregation, there is no cause for despondency.

I said that S. Alban's for the last nineteen years has been a " living." A six years' struggle with the Aston Trustees attained that necessary step for securing the permanence of the work. Under ordinary circumstances, the district would have been formed into a parish with consecrated Church shortly after the commencement of the Mission—perhaps 23 years ago. According to the arrangements made in those days by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, the stipend of the Vicar would have been raised to £300, with the

addition of certain fees. The struggle for the district and the building of the new Church have made it impossible to claim the grant. When we thought ourselves in a position to consider the possibility of offering the Church for consecration about two years ago, we found that that year the Ecclesiastical Commissioners had been obliged to cease to augment livings, on their old plan. We, therefore, have not only lost the augmentation—from, £150 to £300—for the last 23 years or so, but apparently we have *for ever* lost the chance of augmentation on anything like the old terms. Without making calculations as to the future and its losses, it is sufficient to state our position so far. During the last 23 years or so, my own personal loss of money—from this one cause, apart from others more or less connected with it—has not been less than £4,000. Add to this the other large sums of money lost by delays, changes of plan, and many disasters for which our wealthy opponents are responsible. We would willingly take our places as good citizens, and contribute liberally to the charitable institutions of the City. What I have just said will explain some of the shortcomings of the clergy and people of S. Alban's. Our Home Mission has survived, and no weapon formed against it has prospered. But, in our struggle for life, we have, to our sorrow, been obliged to neglect some loud claims in Birmingham and Missionary Work abroad. Our enforced isolation has not destroyed us, but it has taken from us, in great measure, the power of helping others.

CHAPTER III.

THE BOTHER.

IT may be imagined that the opposition to S. Alban's has done the Mission more good than harm. I am unable to assent to this. There is a great deal to say on the other side of the question.

True, the continual struggle was useful in stirring up the zeal of our people. And such feelings, mixed with what was higher and more religious, have been the means of exciting in them a whole-hearted, and perhaps bigoted devotion to their Church, which could not have been attained by other means. Besides, each assault was an advertisement, which forced some, who knew nothing about us, to ask the meaning of the work, and of the opposition to it. Good friends and valuable workers have been won in this way. But who can tell the measure of success which we might have had, if we had been severely left alone ? Two, three, or four priests have given themselves to the Mission for a quarter of a century, and have done nothing else. Friends of mine came with me from my curacy in London, and gave many years of devoted labour to S. Alban's. A friend from another parish in London in which I had worked was ordained for this Mission

and his household gave three workers, to whom S. Alban's owes far more than I can tell. I speak of the Rev. F. Pidsley, M.D. His medical skill was a great strength to us. I remember, on one occasion, a married woman was talking to me about her Confirmation ; and, after our talk was over, said, " I am not very well, I think I will go now and speak to Dr. Pidsley." Part of my brother's influence has been gained in the same way ; one of our people long ago described the changes made with regard to the visitation of her street thus : " Mr. Pollock himself doesn't come now ; young Tom Pollock, him as is half a doctor, used to come; and now a lad comes round." The lad was the only married man on the staff! In addition to those I have mentioned, many workers have come to Birmingham, and have stayed in the city for years because S. Alban's was there and for no other reason. Besides, many Church people, trained in country parishes, found at S. Alban's no novelty and no scare, but the ordinary Church privileges to which they were accustomed. I mention these things to show that, if the work had not been hindered, it would have *grown* fast in a more healthy and satisfactory manner. Besides, we must take into account the multitudes of quiet people who naturally, and perhaps wisely, hold aloof from a cause that is connected, by its own fault or that of others, with strife and controversy.

Whatever opinion we may hold on this point, there can be no doubt as to the disastrous consequences of what is still known in S. Alban's district as " The

Bother." If this name is unfamiliar to non-residents, perhaps they will understand it when they recall the numerous leaders and paragraphs in one of the Birmingham papers, which piled up the agony day by day, and announced on its placards—" Excommunication Case," " Riots at St. Alban's," " Renewal of the Riots," &c., &c.

" The Bother " was a succession of riotous proceedings, which commenced in September, 1867, continued for about three months, and did not quite leave us for six months or more.

I am anxious to explain at once that Ritual had nothing to do with the S. Alban's Riots. As might have been expected, it was imported into the controversy ; but it had no connection with its origin. I need not attempt a detailed history. As in dealing with other parts of S. Alban's experiences, I must content myself with a few salient points.

Many people, who knew nothing about the circumstances, were greatly exercised by the " Excommunication Case." A long word fitly introduces a long controversy. Moderately instructed Christians are familiar with the practice of ministers of all denominations with regard to participation in the ordinances of their different religions. Some church-people have read the long " Rubric " at the beginning of the Holy Communion Service in our Book of Common Prayer ; and have seen the painful responsibilities resting on the clergy in certain cases.

Whether the action I took is altogether warrantable

or not, I do not mean to argue about it now. At a meeting of the communicants of S. Alban's, held at the beginning of the trouble, I gave a full and faithful account of my action in the matter. Reporters were present, and my statement appeared in full in the Birmingham papers. My address of explanation was given in reply to an address of sympathy, as follows :—

“We, the undersigned communicants of the congregation and district of St. Alban's, desire to express our sympathy with you under much misunderstanding and misrepresentation, and to assure you of the confidence of your own people. We desire now, especially, to thank you for the jealousy with which you have defended GOD's Altar from desecration, and relieved us of a grievous scandal. We trust and pray that you may always have given you the same zeal for GOD's house and boldness in rebuking sin.”

Mr. Sproston, one of the churchwardens, in presenting this address, mentioned that it had been signed by 137 communicants, and that the Church only held 450 people. The signatures were all written in a very few days. Some of those who signed it were present in Church when the “ Sentence of Excommunication ” was said to have been delivered. No one was present, when in the open Church, after Divine Service, I spoke quietly and, I believe, kindly to the person censured, urging that scandal caused made communion at S. Alban's improper, and advising communion at some other Church, and advice from some other clergyman : this was the only “ excommunication.”

I have said that a general account of “ The Bother ” is all that I need attempt. It might be enough to say

that on every week-day for three weeks, my brother and I were conducted to our house, after evening service, by the police ; and that on every Sunday evening for about three months, we had a similar escort. We did not, as far as I remember, ask " police protection." It was given because it was considered needful.

The people of the district, as a body, took no part in the disturbances, except to protect themselves and the S. Alban's clergy from the attacks of strangers. One friend of mine, when the mob came past his house, sent all his family upstairs, and put the poker in the fire : he was then ready to give a warm reception to intruders if they came ! The mob consisted mainly of roughs, who gladly obeyed the call of agitators—not knowing or caring what it was all about. In addition to the Birmingham contingent, strangers appeared in the neighbourhood on those Sunday mornings, asking for the Church where the riots were : they came from the country " to see the battle," not to take a side in it. Only one person, as far I know, got benefit from " The Bother." A publican near the Church had two barrels of sour beer : the noxious stuff was not wasted, for the rioters drank it all!

The riots proper—if I may be allowed the phrase—began on Sunday, Oct. 13, 1867. I was celebrating Holy Communion at 11 o'clock. The little Church had been in great part occupied by a crowd of roughs. As soon as I announced the services on S. Luke's Day, and the Harvest Festival on the following

Sunday, "the conclusion of this statement," the newspaper report says, "was greeted with shouts of laughter." The same report says: "The Rev. T. B. Pollock next took his place in the pulpit to preach a sermon. . . . The preacher kept his temper admirably, and, waiting calmly until each successive burst of coughing had exhausted itself, proceeded with his discourse, until it was brought to an abrupt termination in this wise:—

"For some minutes the clamouring outside for admission had been increasing in loudness, and at length a sudden rush was made at the door, which gave way, and in a moment what had before been an exceedingly disorderly business became a wild tumultuous row. Women screamed, men imprecated, shouted 'hurrah,' catcalled, groaned, and emitted the most discordant yells which, with some little experience of contested Parliamentary elections, the present writer has not heard excelled. . . . There seemed every probability of an attack upon the 'Altar,' to resist which the choristers left their places, and ranged themselves in a body in front of it."

I need not further describe the scene and its termination. The chief promoters went away in triumph, though they had not succeeded in their efforts to force the clergy to communicate the person censured.

Our manner of life on Sundays after this was to remain in Church or schools from the time of the mid-day Service till the police deemed it prudent to take us home—generally at a late hour at night. Those pic-nics in the little school-rooms have memories connected with them that are not altogether unpleasant. The clergy, with some members of the choir and some Sunday School teachers, occupied one school-room ;

the police had the other room beside it. Our food was sent us from home ; we had a convivial tea-party before Evening Service. The crowd lingered about all day : they boo-ed vigorously whenever the Church bell—now the bell of S. Katharine's, Stanhope Street—began to ring for Service. One Sunday night they were specially demonstrative ; and the inspector of police would not allow us to leave the Church till nearly ten o'clock. Then the police cleared a passage in Leopold Street, and the crowd, deceived by this ruse, congregated there. In the meantime another body of police got us out by the Dymoke Street gate. To avoid the crowd, we walked by a round-about way to my house, with an escort of about thirty policemen, and as many more men of the congregation.

One week-day evening we were all vested and ready to go into Church for the usual daily Service. The verger came in and informed us that a mob was on its way from town, with implements to pull down the Church. At the end of the Psalms for the day, the verger came to me, and said, on the authority of the police inspector, that the mob was coming near the Church. We all knelt down, and I said " The Grace," etc., at the end of the Service. Then we returned to the vestry. Our people must have known the danger ; but, after we passed, they did not omit to kneel down, according to their custom, for a concluding private prayer ! Then all got away in time ; and the police with their sabres, which not then only they had to exhibit, drove back the mob.

I wanted to go to London ; but renewed attacks were expected daily, and I had to wait for a time of peace. Things looked quieter, and I went away. I was talking with a man in a shop, and he casually remarked, " What a sad thing about your Church ! " I asked him what he meant, and he told me that the Evening Star of that day announced its " destruction." He got the paper for me ; the account was exaggerated, but on my return I found that not only were the windows broken, but the iron sashes were displaced by the stones. One of the rioters got astride on the roof of the Chapel, and tried to tear away the iron cross at its East-end. The police disturbed his work, and the cross still keeps its place on S. Alban's Girls' School, Leopold Street.

All this time our congregations were undiminished. The people came as diligently as ever to their Church, though they had to make their way through the mob, and were admitted one by one by the policemen who guarded the doors. A few wet Sundays damped the zeal of our opponents, and early in 1868 they deserted S. Alban's. Then I was unwell, and absent for some months. The indignation of some good people was greatly excited by my recovery and return to Birmingham. They memorialized the Bishop, and reorganized the riots. One Sunday morning we had the usual rough congregation in the Church, and the same howling multitude greeted us when we came out. My brother at once formed a wise determination. We had moved to a new house, and he thought it well

not to take the mob there. He proposed to me that we should go to New Street, and let loose the malcontents. We walked together down the street with a mixed multitude of worshippers and rioters attending us. When we got near the Queen Street entrance to New Street Station, we quickened our pace to get near the front of the procession. The porters at the gate admitted my brother and me, and then promptly shut the gates in the face of everyone else. We walked over the bridge, took a cab in Stephenson Place, and while friends and foes were looking for us went quietly home.

My brother then wrote to the Stipendiary Magistrate, Mr. Kynnersley, and stated our case in the following words :—

“ HIGHGATE, BIRMINGHAM,

“ May 24, [1868.]

“SIR,—As a vigorous effort is being made to renew the riots at my brother’s Church, will you allow me, in as few words as possible, to state our case ?

“ For four months last year we were outlaws. Our Services were interrupted continually, and we were followed home night after night, and even at mid-day, by a crowd of roughs. Every kind of filth and blasphemy was shouted after us in the hearing of the police. Not one man was interfered with. We did not want the police for protection : we could easily have done that ourselves. They were useless in preventing us from being grossly insulted.

“ For four months my brother has been an invalid, unable to do any duty, and for some time in a state to give real ground for alarm ; through the over-excitement which he had to undergo, besides his trying work. He has just returned, still delicate ; and I, almost worn out myself, have been ordered to take a long rest. Now we are threatened with the same thing over again. . . [“At our Church to-day”] some eighty of the worst roughs mixed themselves with our congregation; and, when my brother and I

started for home, the old hooting began. We would not go home, but went to the New Street Station, crossed it, and took a cab. The police would do nothing to stop the hooting or the following till I asked them to go away and let us do it. Then one man was arrested. . . The thing *can* be stopped at once. If it is not by the police our people are resolved to do it, and we cannot urge them to longer forbearance. . . . As I said before, we do not want the police for protection ; we can do that very well. We want to be able to worship free from interference, and to go home without insult. I think we have a claim for this. We get no pay for working in a large and neglected district. Our Church was built by private subscriptions, and is maintained by those who like it. I do not think we can be blamed if we feel strongly the injustice of our being looked upon, as we plainly are, in the light of outlaws.

“ I may say again that our people are so incensed by the wantonness of the conspiracy now, that I apprehend the most serious consequences if the movement is not crushed at once. That it is a conspiracy there is not the smallest doubt. I heard of one man offering £25 to keep the riots up before. And it is well known that many were regularly paid.

“ Apologising for troubling you, and for writing at such length, “

“ I am, faithfully yours,

“ THOMAS B. POLLOCK.”

The offender referred to in this letter was fined forty shillings and costs, with a promise of imprisonment without option of fine in the next case. This put an end to the “ Bother.”

The Stipendiary Magistrate's prompt action was a strange contrast to the inaction of a civic dignitary, who, during his season of “ brief authority,” had to visit S. Alban's one Sunday evening when a surging mob threatened destruction to us all. He walked with me up and down outside the Church before service, and spent his time and mine in commenting on my duties as a priest with a “ faithfulness ” that no Bishop has ever shewn towards me. It was in vain that I

ventured to remind him that the question of the moment was not what I had done but what he could do. Having decided the religious question to his satisfaction, he showed his skill in matters belonging to his own office by walking after Service a few yards with my brother and me, drawing the police across the road, and sending us to walk home alone. I am quite sure he did all in good faith, and that he did not consider that there might be other streets beside Leopold Street by which the mob might reach us. As it happened, the mob were strangers, and did not know our new streets and "hilly fields" in the dark; so we got home just before they arrived in force. The papers said we "ran;" this is not true. We heard the scuffle outside. We did not hear till afterwards that a friendly neighbour, a Nonconformist minister, went up to one of the leading religious zealots, and asked him, "Don't you remember when I saved you from being hanged, when you were drunk and were going to murder your wife and children?" That night a man went to his house near S. Alban's District, and said that he had lost his hat, but he didn't mind, for he had "done for Pollock's brother!" He made a mistake; the poor fellow they "jumped upon" opposite my house was a friend of mine, one of the best of men, son of an eminent Nonconformist minister. He sent for me, and I found him in bed.

I suppose no one will tell me that "The Bother" helped the work of S. Alban's. It got us new friends, who came simply because we were persecuted. It

deepened our characters, and gave us the strange power that nothing else can give. But it confirmed and stereotyped the position of isolation which, against our will and strong desire, had been forced upon us. The fact that such things were continued from month to month ; and that nearly all our clerical brethren, having in vain appealed to the Bishop to put us down, left the mob to do it in another way without their interference—these things helped S. Alban's to stand, but unhappily they made it stand *alone*.



CHAPTER IV.

THE MEMORIAL.

ALL the quiet undermining work of the Aston Trustees at the office of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners during the six years, 1865-1871, did not "close the Mission." The violent efforts of the Rioters during the nine months, September, 1867—May, 1868, did not "wind up the whole concern." Their combined force about the middle of the longer period, full of great crises, must have effected their purpose, if S. Alban's had not been very strong. What the Trustees and the rioters together failed to do must have been done by a third ally, the monster Memorial, if the Bishop of Worcester had not been very brave.

The Memorial must not be brought upon the scene without due and respectful introduction. Other movements of like nature must make their appearance first. Two Memorials against Ritual were sent to the Bishop about the same time. A Memorial, signed by forty-seven clergymen of the Rural Deanery of Birmingham, is dated April 23, 1866. One of their number was the local clerical member of the Aston Trust ; and the Memorial was forwarded by the non-resident Rural

Dean. A second Memorial was signed by sixty laymen of Birmingham, who dated their Memorial April 25, 1866. It was forwarded by Mr. Sampson S. Lloyd, the local lay member of the Trustees of Aston, who were at the same time opposing the separation of the New District from the parish whose patronage they had purchased. The two Memorials, then, are linked together, not merely by the circumstance of time. They meant the same thing. No one now is likely to tell us the secret history of the movement. But Dr. Oldknow promptly replied to the clerical Memorial in a pamphlet dated May 4, 1868, and entitled "Anti-Ritual Proceedings." In it he said : " I have also heard—I know not how truly, but the report has reached me from various quarters—that one of your number, not content with what has been done by the clergy, is endeavouring to stir up the laity to unite with them, going about from house to house to urge them to put their names to an address, calling upon his lordship to withdraw the licenses of certain curates [of S. Alban's], whose doings are not in accordance with Protestant orthodoxy." In the same pamphlet he says : " You decided [at a meeting on April 23] with the dissent of only one [J. S. P.] beside myself, that it was proper to address his lordship." Speaking of " the influence of Church ritual," Dr. Oldknow remarks : " A Wesleyan Methodist, who lately witnessed the procession of priests and choristers proceeding from the vestry to the Chapel of the [S. Alban's] Mission in this parish, singing a hymn as

they went, told one of the clergy that he could not help bursting into tears. " I shall not leave my own place," he added, " but for all that, I shall come and see you sometimes." Dr. Oldknow continued : " Whilst men of your sentiments, Reverend Sirs, find it so difficult to obtain curates, though you have usually at least equal pecuniary advantages to offer with any of ourselves, and far greater in the way of social enjoyment and prospect of patronage, I, who can hold out little or no worldly inducement have now four curates [soon after they were five] working in my parish, who came to me without any seeking for on my part." A useful " Letter to the Churchmen [laity] of Birmingham " was published by Dr. Oldknow in the following year.

A Counter-Memorial of 250 " Ritualists," men and women, was sent to the Bishop in May, 1866. So the good Bishop's valuable time was wasted, and he had to write three replies, dated May, 14, 17, and 31.

In the Bishop's reply to the lay Memorial, he does not call those who troubled him " busybodies in other men's matters." He gently expressed his thoughts by the quiet remark : "No complaint has reached me from the inhabitants of any parish in Birmingham respecting the mode of conducting Divine Service in their own Parish Church."

This " soft answer " ought to have turned away the " wrath " of the memorialists, or shewn them the folly of it. But no ; Birmingham is a manufacturing city, and the resolution was taken—If people do not complain, they must be taught to complain ; if they are not

“aggrieved,” the manufacture of grievances must be commenced. And commenced it was without delay.

First of all a “Churchman” wrote to the *Birmingham Daily Gazette* and asked “the residents in the district intended to be appropriated to the Church of St. Alban, who do not approve of the mode of conducting the services, or the teaching inculcated there, to be so good as to communicate with me, by addressing a line at the *Daily Gazette* office.” In due time the “Chairman of the Canvassing Committee,” the “Vice-Chairman,” and the canvassers who, on the authority of their leaders, are described as “persons for the most part known to the clergy of this town,” completed their labours, and presented to the Bishop a “Memorial, signed by 1,174 persons,” who at the time were “residing in the district which it is understood is proposed to be assigned to the Church of St. Alban, such persons being of eighteen years of age and upwards.” The memorialists complained that the “teaching” at St. Alban’s is not in accordance with the “teaching of the Church of England,” and that “grievous harm is done to the consciences of those who reside in the said district :” they prayed the Bishop to “cause a change to be made,” or to “revoke the license of the said Rev. J. S. Pollock.”

The Bishop’s reply is dated October 28, 1867. His decision is this :—”I can only counsel moderation and forbearance on all sides.”

Dr. Oldknow thanked the Bishop for his answer, and at the same time protested against “the interference of

individuals with the religious concerns of the district of Holy Trinity, who do not reside therein, and are in no way connected with either of its congregations.”

The memorialists were not satisfied. Their leaders wrote to the Bishop an immediate answer, dated Oct. 29, 1867, reminding him again of the “ facility ” with which Bishops can deal with the “ cases of licensed curates.” The Bishop had taken no notice of their request to “ revoke the license of the said Rev. J. S. Pollock,” and he ignored their second appeal on the same subject.

The people to whom the most “ grievous harm ” was done could not be expected to remain silent. The *Birmingham Daily Gazette* contains the following account of their view of the matter :—

“ A large meeting of the communicants of St. Alban’s Church was held in the Schoolroom, Dymoke Street. Among other questions, the Memorial lately presented to the Bishop was discussed. Strong feeling was expressed with regard to the conduct of the promoters of the Memorial, who, though belonging to other districts, had endeavoured to interfere with the work of the clergy of St. Alban’s, and to stir up strife among the people.

“ Several papers were handed in, signed by persons who stated that they had been led to sign the Memorial by false statements made to them by the canvassers.

“ The following resolution was carried unanimously :—

“ ‘ We indignantly protest against this unwarrantable intrusion of strangers; we protest the more indignantly on account of the unscrupulous manner in which many of the signatures to the Memorial have been obtained.’ It was further agreed that a copy of the resolution should be forwarded to the Bishop of Worcester.”

In explanation of the latter part of this resolution I ought to say that I wrote a formal and detailed indict-

ment against the canvassers, which appeared in the Birmingham newspapers. I quote a few words from the end of my statement :—

“ The Mission has to work among about 7,000 people, nearly all of whom belong to the working classes and the very poor. The work has been maintained for two years with no external help, except a grant of £80 a year from the Additional Curates' Society. During nearly the whole of these two years three clergymen have worked at S. Alban's. . . Your lordship will remember that some months ago, 1786 communicants, members of the congregation, and inhabitants of the district, presented a petition to your lordship, asking for a share of the money given for Church Extension by Miss Ryland.”

The papers “ handed in ” at the meeting were afterwards pasted in a book, which I forwarded for inspection to the Bishop, and which is now in my possession as an interesting record of those times. I add a few of them :—

“ I was deceived in signing the Memorial against St. Alban's, as I like the Church and its services.” — “ This is to certify that the name of H—— M—— was obtained under false colours, stating they had come from Holy Trinity Church on behalf of Mr. Pollock.” — “ They asked me whether I was willing for the disturbances to be done away with, and I said ‘ yes,’ of course, thinking it was for Mr. Pollock, that he should not be served as he had been.” — “ The men said they came from Holy Trinity ; they asked a young man to sign the paper who was sitting in my house; he said, ‘ I don't live here.’ ‘ No matter,’ said they. ‘ I live at Hockley,’ [two miles distant], said he. ‘ That does not signify,’ said they. The young man would not sign. They asked where my son was. My daughter said down at the Chapel [S. Alban's]. Then they were sure he would not sign.” — “ I signed the petition, being told it was *for* Mr. Pollock, to stop the bother.” — “ I signed a paper to the Bishop of Worcester, believing it to be for the putting down of the riots at S. Alban's.” — “ I, H—— F—— told the gentlemen who called with the paper that I would not sign

anything against Mr. Pollock. . . . They said they were not against Mr. Pollock. . . . I signed my name." — "J—— C——, of D—— Street, stated in the shop that he had signed his name in Cox's public house, and that his nephew had signed for him at home, that it would only be the more." — "I distinctly said I would not do it, as Mr. Pollock was to much respected in the district to have him removed. They then said, 'Will you sign for him? we have one here which will be forwarded to the Bishop with the one against him.' " — "A Mrs. Jones said they wanted seven years' transportation, for they told her daughter it was not against Mr. Pollock, but to do away with the noise." — "Mrs. R—— being told that she might sign either for or against Mr. Pollock gave it for him, making her mark on a large sheet of paper." — "I replied, 'With pleasure will I sign in favour of Mr. Pollock, as I know how he is respected in the district, and I hope it will be the means of stopping the persecution to which he has been subject.' To this they made no reply. All they said was, 'Place your name here.' " — "I certify on the testimony of both the father and mother of W—— G—— that he, being only 13 years of age, signed the Memorial against S. Alban's." — "The men came, and asked me if I would sign that paper; it was to put down the disturbances on a Sunday, and that's all they says to me. I says, 'It's very unpleasant for Mr. Pollock, and very wicked on a Sunday,' and they made no reply. They seem to have said the same thing to all them as I have spoke to." — "Mr. and Mrs. L——, of the —— Tavern . . . beyond S. Alban's district authorize me to say that their names were put to the Memorial by a neighbour without their permission. The paper was taken into the tap-room, where four or five more names were added. Mr. and Mrs. L—— say they would not have signed any paper but one in favour of Mr. Pollock." — "The men came to me living at ——, not in S. Alban's district. I would not give them my name, but said I'd burn the paper if they'd give it me."

The case numbered 14 in my book is, perhaps, not the only one of its kind. A few months ago I was visiting a sick man near S. Alban's Church. Another man was sitting by the fire. He said he knew me, but perhaps I had forgotten him. He told me his name,

not a common one ; and I at once told him I remembered him very well, and that more than twenty years before that time he lived in Angelina Terrace, in S. Alban's district. I went on to say that I could tell him something more—that he had signed a paper asking the Bishop to send me away from S. Alban's. The man expressed his surprise, and repudiated the idea warmly. I told him not to trouble about it, for I had at my house his certificate to prove that he signed the paper when he was drunk ! I have now before me the certificate in question, signed by the man and his son, declaring that “ we were drunk.”

Have I, with sufficient ceremony and solemnity, introduced the Monster Memorial ? It followed that sent from S. Alban's district. The same “ Chairman ” and “ Vice-Chairman ” guided the proceedings. In a letter which they sent to the *Daily Gazette*, they said that “ the late Memorial from the district surrounding S. Alban's Church was forwarded to the Bishop in the hope that some action would have [been ?] taken relative to it, but the result has disappointed that hope, and impressed us with the conviction that the time has come when the laity of the town should be asked to express their opinion as to the course which the authorities of the Church should take.”

The former Memorial had asked the Bishop to withdraw my license ; when the Bishop declined to do so, the promoters of the Memorial expressed their dissatisfaction at his refusal, and their determination to teach him what he “ should ” do.

“Diogenes” versified the “New Memorial against Ritual.” I quote a few lines from the “Third Edition Revised :” —

Memorialists from Birmingham, we ask your Lordship’s ear,
We come before you troubled much, and with good ground for
fear;

The strength and growth of Ritual we feel are now so great,
That danger threatens everything we prize in Church and State :
The times are evil, and the crisis imminent indeed
For all who hate to bind themselves to any settled creed.

We, Protestants of Birmingham, a movement have begun,
And tell your Lordship in plain words that something must be
done.

There is no time to lose, and your Memorialists are sure,
That, if you will be led by us, we can suggest a cure.
We know your Lordship has refused a remedy before,
But your refusal only makes us press you all the more.
We do not come in humble guise for counsel what to do,
Rather, with solemn dignity we give advice to you :
In fact, we want to prove your Lordship wholly in the wrong,
’Tis simply this that is the burden of our modest song ;
And we would have you lend to us your Lordship’s name of might,
That we may do what you would do if you believed it right.

Your Lordship will, no doubt, expect that we should firstly give
Some short account of who we are, and whereabouts we live.
Herewith we send a list of streets, and a long roll of names,
That you may see our numbers and may estimate our claims.
We live in Birmingham, within a radius of two miles ;
At least for eighteen years we’ve been exposed to priestly wiles.
We don’t know what to say we are; the work is not confined
To men or women, boys or girls, of any special kind.
Some of us roll in wealth, and others pine in wretched need,
Some of us proudly write “ M.A.,” some never learned to read ;
Some are hard-headed clever men, some have not brains enough
To judge of what is told them, or to know when it is stuff.
Religious we are very, as your Lordship may detect,
Among our members there are men of almost every sect ;

We've tried to crush the work in every way we could devise,
 But after each assault it seems more vigorous to rise.
 Scandal has plied its busy trade, but we have found it hurt
 Not him who was assailed, but only him who handled dirt.
 The mob has tried what it could do, and miserably failed;
 For, Soldier's sons, the Clergy went straight on and never quailed.
 We tried Memorials, but (as you have heard in many a letter),
 About the way the names were got, the less that's said the better.
 We're fairly baffled, puzzled, and, not knowing what to do
 We come, as our last effort, to appeal again to you.

We press the need of action, sternly, promptly to put down
 As Anti-Christian novelties, what does not please our town.
 With deep humility, we ask your Lordship to remove
 The men and things of which we in our wisdom disapprove.
 As free-born Protestants, we liberty of conscience claim,
 But only those who think as we do should enjoy the same.

The new Memorial sets forth that “ (1) The Mission Church of St. Alban's is only a place licensed by you for public worship, and depends, therefore, for its existence upon your lordship. (2) The Rev. J. S. Pollock, who is the principal officiating minister, and against whom complaint is chiefly made, being only a curate licensed by your lordship, we understand you have power to revoke such license without legal process.” They go on to say that “ such action as we indicate would not only tend to check such illegal practices, but would inspire the sincere and attached members of the Church of England in this diocese with confidence in your lordship.”

To write to the papers expressing a conviction that the laity of Birmingham must teach their Bishop “ the course ” which he “ should take,” but has refused to take : to repeat their two demands as to the withdrawal

of the licenses of S. Alban's Church and S. Alban's clergy ; to threaten the alienation of the " confidence " of " sincere and attached " members of the Church in case the Bishop still refuses to yield to their demands—all these are moderate insults. But when they go on to quote Dr. Lushington's " Interlocutory decree in the Consistory of London," and a " Constitution of Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury," it is impossible for anyone to be vexed with the memorialists. At the same time it was hardly respectful to invite the laity of Birmingham to joke with their Bishop, by quoting legal documents for the admonition of one of the greatest Ecclesiastical lawyers in England ! The Bishop, in reply, assures his instructors that he is " well aware of the power" he has, and gives his reasons for the position he maintains : " I cannot adopt the opinions of the memorialists, or take the course of action which they advise."

The great work of canvassing commenced on Monday, November 18, 1867. " The Memorial is signed only by persons of eighteen years of age and upwards, residing or occupying property within a radius of two miles from Stephenson Place [in the middle of], Birmingham, exclusive of the district surrounding St. Alban's, which has been already canvassed." The Memorial was forwarded to the Bishop on Saturday, December 7. Three weeks only were spent in the canvass. During that time 23,000 inhabitants of Birmingham signed the petition. The number of canvassers employed is said to have been 500 ; this

estimate seems too small, especially if, as is the case of the other Memorial, two went together. Add the two items—Birmingham, exclusive of S. Alban's district, 23,000; S. Alban's district, 1,174; grand total, 24,174.

“ Nothing succeeds like success ; ” but success must be prudent and possible, or its assertions lead to failure of the most dismal sort. Examine the figures. The population of Birmingham in 1867 was about 350,000. One-third of the population is under the age of 18 years, according to usual calculations. Then only about 240,000 were eligible to sign. But 24,174 did sign; so one-tenth of the adult population of Birmingham, having studied the long letter to the Bishop, “ expressed their opinion ” as to *his duty* to withdraw the license of S. Alban's clergy and S. Alban's Church.

You ask what I mean by dwelling with such satisfaction on the large number of signatures. I will tell you. Some years ago, when S. Alban's school-rooms were used as polling booths at an election, my brother, the Rev. Thomas B. Pollock, went to the schools in the course of the afternoon, and said to a man he met there, that he hoped all was going on quietly. “ Yes, pretty well,” said the man, “ but there was a big fellow here making a noise about my giving the voters beer. Now you know, sir, as well as I do, that the most of them didn't ought to have votes, for they know nothing about it. And when you go to explain things to them, if you don't give them beer they won't listen to you.”

My argument is this. The people of Birmingham, rich as well as poor, are not learned in Ecclesiastical matters—in the “interlocutory decrees” of Dr. Lushington, or the “Constitutions” of “Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury.” They could be taught a good deal, if time were allowed for the purpose ; but all the signatures were obtained in three weeks. A large portion of the population needed lengthy “ explanations.” Would they, or did they, “ listen to ” the canvassers without inducement ? Beer was not given—at least, not ordinarily. It is part of my argument to assume that the Church workers “ known to the clergy of the town ” used no such arguments. But if beer was not given, we are forced to fall back on such information as was given in a letter to the *Daily Post*, dated Dec. 11, 1867, and written by a man of irreproachable character, who signed his name to the letter, in which he said : “ It is utterly idle and useless to deny the fact that money has been offered to get names for the filling up of the late Memorial to the Bishop of Worcester. . . . I am now in possession of [the names of] others who were present on the occasion referred to. One of them is a young man of respectability, now living in a situation in the town, who was not only present, but solicited to take some of the papers to get filled up, at the paying price of one shilling per hundred, to whom I am at liberty to refer Mr. ———, or any other party.”

The promoters of the Memorial, by the very fact of promoting it, shewed that they knew nothing of

the people whose signatures they requested, and of their slender acquaintance with Ecclesiastical controversies. About the date of the Memorial, a worker in the brickfields near S. Alban's Church was overheard saying to his companion : " They had a young man at the Chapel, and they powered water on his yed, and called him Joseph ; wait till old Pollock comes up here, and we'll heave a brick at his yed." My brother was preparing a married man for Confirmation. The man did not know whether he had been baptized or not. His parents were appealed to; they reported that he was not baptized, for " when he was born there was no such thing about."

But I return to the point. If one-tenth of the adult population of Birmingham signed a petition for the destruction of S. Alban's Mission from a careful consideration of its work, and for no other reason : imagine the " pride " and " haughty spirit " which we S. Alban's people must indulge, and which would be our " destruction" and our " fall." In the " one shilling a hundred " arrangement is our safety. It rebukes our arrogance, and teaches us our insignificance. It tells us with what poor weapons our humble efforts were opposed.

I should be sorry to believe that the business arrangement referred to was used by many of the canvassers. But where arguments of this kind were not resorted- to, the " explanations" given to make people sign their names against S. Alban's must have been very emphatic. We soon experienced their force in the treatment we received, not in S. Alban's district,

but in districts near, and sometimes in distant parts of Birmingham.

For example, one day two Black Country curates had been visiting us ; my brother and I were walking with them part of the way to New Street Station. The usual cries greeted us before we parted. Our two friends, soon after leaving us, were passing the door of a public-house where some men were standing. One of the men took his short pipe out of his mouth, and said in a confidential tone : “ And them as associates is just as bad ! ”

Though “ association ” with brother priests was difficult at the time, we were able in a quiet way to do a little good outside S. Alban’s district. At an “ English Church Union ” Committee Meeting, I proposed that we should try to get up Lent and Advent Mid-day Services for business men at S. Philip’s Church, like those in some London Churches. A sub-committee was appointed, with instructions to draw up a request to the Rector of S. Philip’s, and make arrangements for getting signatures of business men in the neighbourhood. The sub-committee consisted of the local Secretary of the English Church Union, my brother, and myself. We three remained at the “ Catholic Dépôt ” after the other members of committee had left. Each of us drew up a petition. My brother’s form of petition was selected by the two other members of the sub-committee, and with some revision was adopted for signature. Of course our hands did not appear. We got our document passed

from one hand to another, till it came to people who could openly do the work. The idea was taken up well. The newspaper which had recently denounced S. Alban's commended the Hon. and Rev. G. M. Yorke, Rector of S. Philip's. The Bishop of Worcester preached one of the first special sermons. The services are continued still, and doubtless have been helpful to many who know nothing about their origin.



CHAPTER V.

DERITEND.

THE two ancient parishes of Birmingham and Aston are close together. Aston used to be called Aston-juxta-Birmingham, to distinguish it from other places of the same name. The *Clerical Guide* for 1817 gives Birmingham a population of 70,207; Deritend is improperly included in this estimate. The same authority gives Aston a population of 11,698. No daughter Churches of Aston are named in this place. The Churches of Birmingham were S. Bartholomew's, Christ Church, Deritend, S. Martin's, S. Mary's, S. Paul's, and S. Philip's. Aston runs round about one-half of Birmingham on its East and South sides. The two "hamlets" of Deritend and Bordesley are in Aston. Deritend is separated from Birmingham by the little river Rea, and Bordesley is on the other side of Deritend.

The Rea, in former times, when passing beside West Deritend, had a bend, but now it takes a straight course. The streets between the "loop line" and the present bed of the river are, of course, still a part of Birmingham, and belong to the new parish of S. David. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners proposed

to add West Deritend and this small portion of S. David's parish to S. Alban's new district. They have a common-sense partiality for streets and rivers as boundaries, and they told us so. S. Alban's people were not responsible for a part of the boundaries proposed for us—" an imaginary line " behind the houses in Moseley Road !

But why add any part of Deritend to S. Alban's district ? We Bordesley people surely have nothing to do with the other hamlet. To explain this, I must say a little about the spiritual condition of Deritend, avoiding all the archaeological details that are supplied in guide-books, not even deciding whether Deritend means " Dirty end " or " Der-yat-end."

S. John the Baptist, Deritend, is an ancient chapelry ; from far-off days there has been a Chapel on the present site. The distance of the hamlet from the Parish Church of Aston made the Chapel useful. The people could not go to Aston at all times, being prevented by the floods in the Rea. Provision was made¹ that the chaplain of S. John's should baptize children that could not be taken in good time to the Parish Church. He was also authorized to hear the confessions of the inhabitants of the hamlet or hamlets ; but with this proviso, that they resorted for this purpose once a year before Easter Communion to the Vicar of Aston. No ecclesiastical district was assigned to the chaplains ; and on this plea it has been held that they had no right to visit or minister to the people except within the walls of Deritend Chapel. A

more absurd mistake could not be made. The yearly value “ in the King’s Book ” of S. Martin’s, Birmingham, is given in the Clerical Guide for 1817 as £19 3s. 6½d. ; the value of Aston is £21 4s. 9½d. ; and the value of Deritend Chapel is £38. Prefixed to the £38 are the pleasant letters *C.V.*, meaning “ clear value ”—the other livings, then as now, suffering many deductions. My argument is this : If old-world arrangements as to the responsibilities of the chaplain are to be adhered to, then reason and right demand that the pecuniary emoluments also remain unchanged. But as the “ *C.V.*, £38 ” has risen to about *C.V.*, £500, common justice, apart from religion, demands that the duties and responsibilities of the office should grow in proportion.

All this, however, by the way. I enter into these matters to point out plainly the spiritual difficulties of the hamlet people before I go on to show how these difficulties have been met for the past quarter of a century.

We began to work among the people of Bordesley alone. Dr. Oldknow assigned to us a conventional district taken out of his district of Holy Trinity. We had plenty of work to do, for up to this time Dr. Oldknow had worked his whole district without a curate. He had an efficient lay assistant. But “ Vaughton’s Hole ” was far from “ Holy Trinity Chapel,” and little could be done for it.

It was well for me and for Deritend that my brother

was able to extend his “ fortnight’s ” visit, and that other priests soon joined us. The geographical details already given will sufficiently explain the impossibility of our confining our efforts within the limits of Bordesley. The district which Dr. Oldknow gave us contained about 4,500 people. The part of Deritend west of Moseley Street lies beside our district in a wedge shape—its point coming within a few yards of, but not touching, the Parish of Edgbaston; It contains about 3,000 people. Our Mission Chapel was built on a site chosen many years before by Dr. Oldknow. It was near the lower extremity of the district, and was easily accessible from Deritend. It was well placed in the middle of the streets of the district, the upper portion nearer Moseley Road being mere brickworks and “ hilly fields.”

And here let me say a word for the Deritend people. Seeing a little Church built near them, and having no spiritual agencies to attract them elsewhere, they came to us in large numbers. They did not understand the mysteries of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners’ office, and thought that a Church built close to their doors must be for their benefit. They heard that it was always open for private prayer ; that there were services every day with Choral Evensong at 8 o’clock, after their work was done ; and that no seats being reserved, rich and poor were equally welcome. Surely, then, they are not to be blamed, but commended, for ignoring the boundary line separating the hamlets, and claiming their share in S. Alban’s Mission, Within the

last few days my assertion that Deritend is not my district has been met by an incredulous stare.

I give one illustration of what I have asserted with regard to the earnestness of the people of Deritend. It is, perhaps, still supposed by some people who know nothing of S. Alban's that it is a school for Ritual, and that our people are well posted up in what some one called the "postures and impostures." A closer view would let them see that all such questions were well considered and done with at S. Alban's twenty-five years ago. And if they questioned the clergy, they would be surprised to find how many details of that subject have been forgotten in the pressure of more important matters. While many good people, clergy and laity, have been learning and advancing ; we have been forgetting, and—remaining as we were at first.

If anyone desires to know what we *have* taught our people, I point to what has been done with regard to the great subject of Holy Baptism. If we have failed—as we have—in many things, we have great cause for thankfulness here. We have not promoted new fads, nor have we introduced, as some tell us, "a religion of our own." We have pressed the old-fashioned Church doctrine, the Church of England doctrine of Baptism, as taught in the Bible and the Church Catechism.

Let me be understood. People may divide themselves into parties as they will : there is one division into two parties which the Church makes, and she

keeps wide asunder those who belong to the two religions. The great vital question for each soul is not where or in what direction, or in what garments the priest stands—all proper questions in their own subordinate place—but where *he* stands before GOD. The Church tells him plainly : nay, that there may be no mistake about a question of life and death, she bids him say it for himself. She makes him affirm in his early childhood that he was at a certain definite time made a “ child of GOD.” She tells him to make that fact the starting-point of his religion ; and by implication she denies and repudiates all other methods of making the start. If some people, in and out of the Church, refuse to believe the “ blasphemous figment of Baptismal Regeneration,” she asserts it in defiant definite terms. She does not by any “ judgment of charity ” or cruelty declare that to be true in the case of every baptized child which she doubts in the case of any one.

It was the vindication of this cardinal doctrine of the faith by Dr. Pusey which gained for orthodox Churchmen long ago the dignity of being called Puseyites. That holy and venerable man, who through evil report remained to the day of his death firm and unshaken in his allegiance to his Mother who taught him, vindicated her “ Scriptural views of Holy Baptism ” in one of the famous “ Tracts.”

We follow not Dr. Pusey only, but the Bible and the Church in asserting the same truth. We rejoice to see that the Church bids all her baptized children claim

their place in her and in the family of GOD. That gift, bestowed by free grace alone, without any “ works, merits, or deservings ” on their part—nay, in the time of their “ unconscious infancy ”—she declares to be *the* beginning of the application of GOD’s salvation to the soul. It is life, though like natural life at *its* beginning, it is weak, and in danger of death. What may come before it is something different from, something less than “ being born of water and of the SPIRIT : ” what comes after it is not a monstrous third or fourth birth, but a re-quickening of that which, perhaps, was ready to die. That gift, as the Church teaches, her children got ; this they must keep ; this they must return to if they fall. This first new birth they must not let go till they enjoy its consummation in the other day of birth when they will be “ children of the Resurrection.”

I am anxious to emphasize all this, because it is important for all men to understand that the Church’s controversy against doubters, far or near, *concerns the way and method of salvation*. This one article of the faith being accepted, all the rest comes as a matter of course. If the washing of water be not a mere putting away of the filth of the flesh, but a being buried and risen with CHRIST in—not apart from, or signified by, but in—Baptism : then the Bread and Wine are not a weak revival of Jewish symbols, but are what the LORD “ verily, verily ” says they are. And, if such holy mysteries are dispensed, it stands to reason that their dispensers must be carefully set apart and authorized ;

and that the community within which they are dispensed must be an organized body, to which all should flee, and from which none should depart.

Returning from this digression, I admit that S. Alban's has been a conspicuous and ignominious failure in many ways ; but in the way of propagating the cardinal doctrine of old-fashioned " Church of Englandism " which I have set forth, S. Alban's has been strangely blessed. We have taught our people in Deritend and Bordesley the doctrine of Baptism ; they know it, and prove their knowledge by their practice. In the little Font set up in our first Chapel, carried to the second Chapel, then to the new Church, and now placed in its fourth home—S. Patrick's, Highgate Street—we baptized more than 10,800 in twenty years.

I do not know where the people of West Deritend were baptized before S. Alban's was opened ; a large proportion of the children in both hamlets were unbaptized. On one occasion I baptized 42 adults publicly at S. Alban's ; another day the number was 25. In ten of the twenty years I have mentioned above, we baptized more than 550 from Deritend. In this estimate I include only the small wedge of West Deritend which we claimed as part of the new district, with a population of 3,000—the whole population of Deritend, according to an estimate made some years ago, being about 11,500. In one of those years the baptisms at S. Alban's from " our " part of Deritend, and from the small portion of S. David's connected

with Deritend by being on our side of the Rea, was 93 ; the next year it was 91. The first page of our Baptismal Register has a baptism from “ our part ” of Deritend. On the last Sunday of our twenty-fifth year at S. Alban’s the last two baptisms I registered were from “ our part ” of Deritend ; and the first baptism I registered after our twenty-sixth year began happened to come from the same district.

Under circumstances of this kind, and for pressing reasons of a spiritual nature, it was thought advisable to apply for the addition of a part of Deritend to the new district. We renewed our application from time to time. But our bitter experience of the manifold obstacles put in our way made us remove from our last and successful application all possible cause of objection. To my great regret Deritend was not named in the constitution of S. Alban’s District. From the beginning of S. Alban’s Mission, since the Deritend people began to flock to S. Alban’s, I have considered West Deritend part of my personal charge, and have visited it, or nearly all of it, from house to house. When the Rev. R. W. Enraght became Vicar of Holy Trinity, he asked me what he was to do with the sick people and the private baptisms from Deritend which claimed the attention of the clergy of Holy Trinity. I replied that I could not do more than I had always done, that is, minister to the part of Deritend which is west of Moseley Street. His immediate reply was that, if I could still do this, he would be responsible for all work that came to him from the rest of

Deritend. Some time later, I divided " my part " of Deritend with one of my brother priests at S. Alban's, the Rev. John H. C. Cowan. He took charge of certain streets ; and I sent applicants from Deritend to him, just as I sent him the people of his own district at S. Alban's. All through the severe and long-continued small-pox epidemic, we ministered to the Deritend people exactly in the same way as to our own. Deritend has received its full share of all the gifts, in money or in kind, which we were able to provide for the poor.

My last effort to make permanent provision for Deritend was in 1884. I had then an opportunity of explaining to the Bishop our position with regard to the Deritend people : and expressing our desire to be allowed to do under authority what we had so long done without authority. I proposed the addition to S. Alban's District of a smaller portion than that which we formerly claimed,—my object being not in any way to interfere with the work of the Rogers Memorial School which had been built, I do not know why, opposite the foot of my most populous street. The Bishop did not say one word to discourage me. But he wrote on September 9, 1884: " The scheme which you propose, for adding to St. Alban's District land in Deritend must, therefore, be submitted to the Vicar of Aston and his patrons. I do not anticipate any objection from the Vicar ; but I think that his patrons would certainly object to the transfer on the ground that they hope to deal with the spiritual condition of Deritend hereafter."

Understand the position. For many years the attention of the Trustees of Aston had been specially invited to this remote part of their parish. They had from the first given most earnest attention to S. Alban's District on the borders of Deritend. They knew that we proposed to "deal with the spiritual condition of Deritend" as early as 1866, and that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners had sanctioned our efforts. Their circular dated March 10, 1869, stated that the Advowson of Aston had been purchased "for the purpose of sub-dividing" it, and of "placing faithful and able ministers therein." The same circular stated that S. Alban's District was to be "formed out of Holy Trinity, Bordesley, and of the Hamlet of Deritend." They went on to say that the effect of our scheme would be to "defeat the object of the Trust." Three months later they declined to accept our proposal to "divide the land," of which I have given an account on page 22. For about a quarter of a century they continued to "object" to our Deritend work. For six years after the Bishop's last letter to me on the subject, they continued to "hope" to do something for Deritend; yet during all that time they made no provision for the district which they claimed as their own.

This book is not intended to be a melancholy recital. But perhaps the story of Deritend will appear to be the saddest scene of all. Looked at in another point of view, Deritend is a happy thought for all S. Alban's people, and especially for its priests. If we baptized 550 in 10 years, in the whole 25 years we cannot have

baptized less than 1,000—just one-third of the population of “ our part ” of Deritend at any one time. If what I have explained as the Church doctrine of baptism is true, how happy the thought ! Though Deritend may have “ ten thousand instructors,” it has “ not many fathers.” It will, I hope, derive great benefit from its Vicars and visitors, but to S. Alban’s it owes the starting point of its spiritual life. There are chains stronger and closer than any forged at the Ecclesiastical Commissioners’ Office. And not till a whole generation passes away will the holy bond that unites S. Alban’s and Deritend be severed.

It is easy to see how this chapter is connected with those that go before it. In the early days of S. Alban’s Mission we had only one centre of operations, and it was close to West Deritend. The claims of Deritend nearly doubled our work. For several years we were thwarted and disturbed by the struggle for the District, the “ Bother,” and the “ Memorials.” During those years, especially, we were not permitted to concentrate our attention on our own proper work ; but had to minister to another district, which, at that time, was nearly as large as our own. And the strange feature of the case is, that while the Aston Trustees opposed our work in Dr. Oldknow’s district, they left us in charge of a district for which, as appears from the Bishop’s letter quoted above, they considered themselves responsible. At the end of our twenty-five years’ work in Deritend, a change was made by an Act of Parliament, which gave S. John’s, Deritend, the rights of a parish.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MISSION.

LET it be distinctly understood that I have not attempted to write a " History " of S. Alban's Mission. I have treated the subject from one point of view only. My humble effort has been to supply a record of our failures, and the causes of them.

We have not suffered from the common draw-backs that hinder work. For six years we struggled against obstacles which prevented S. Alban's from coming into existence as a permanent Mission, or entering upon the duties of Mission life. The fight for the " District," the " Bother," and the " Memorial" did their work, and stopped ours. And during all that time we gladly returned good for evil, by taking the spiritual care of 3,000 Deritend people to whom we had no legal right to minister, while the Patrons of Aston, who stopped our work, were content to " hope to deal with the spiritual condition of Deritend hereafter "—a strange story, too like one of Æsop's Fables to be readily believed ! Our " Church " trouble did not commence till the Church was built. But the ten years' interval between the constitution of the district in 1871 and the opening of the Church in 1881 was in

great part disturbed by the position which, whether we liked it or not, we were obliged to take in the troubles of our Mother Church of Holy Trinity, ending with the imprisonment and deprivation of its Vicar.

The last and sorest trouble of all was the building of S. Alban's Church. That expensive luxury has wasted fifteen years—five years of delay in the arrangements for building it, and ten years of agony in paying for it. I am bound to confess that, as far as I can see, nothing but the strong hand and kind heart of our Bishop could have got us out of the depth of despair into which we sank. Bishop Philpott's three letters supporting our appeals—the first of them corrected by his own hand—obtained for us generous donations, which, I have reason to believe, would not have come without them. He sent £100 to the fund which extinguished our debt in September last, and in a *fourth* letter said : “ I am very anxious that the end of the twenty-fifth year of service of Mr. Pollock in the Ecclesiastical District of St. Alban's should be marked by a strong and successful effort to free the Church from the debt, of which Mr. Pollock and his brother have voluntarily undertaken the responsibility.”

Before saying a concluding word on the present state of S. Alban's Mission, I must mention three things which in different ways illustrate my argument, and help to account for S. Alban's failures.

1. The struggle for the district deprived the whole

diocese of an institution which might, by this time, have grown to a position of great value and importance. One of our earliest friends was anxious to give his house and grounds near Birmingham into the hands of the Bishop and other representative Trustees for the purpose of founding a Nursing Sisterhood for the Diocese of Worcester. It was part of his plan that the clergy of S. Alban's should, under the Bishop's direction, take spiritual charge of the institution. He, therefore, felt that he could take no step till S. Alban's District was secured. During the long delay he became hopelessly ill ; and, though he lingered many years, was never in a state of health which made it possible for him to carry out his generous intentions. The valuable property which he wished to give to GOD has been sold. How many good things of this sort have been lost to S. Alban's, and to other interests, will never be known. I might say more on this subject, but it is enough to mention one case.

2. The small-pox epidemic troubled every parish in Birmingham. I name it in this place, because throughout S. Alban's District the visitation was very severe. As soon as the small-pox came to Birmingham it attacked S. Alban's District ; and, when it had left nearly every other part, it lingered with us. A list of streets was published in the papers, giving the number of cases in each ; two of our streets were very near the top of the list. For many months our poor people suffered severely.

3. In November 1872, I received this communication :—

“ The Ecclesiastical Commissioners for England having had under consideration the question as to the appropriation of the balance remaining in their hands of a certain fund, known as Sir Robert Peel's Benefaction, which fund was placed to the Commissioners' credit by the late Sir Robert Peel in the year 1843, to be applied by them towards providing Church accommodation in several specified counties. . . . The Bishop of Worcester having recommended to this Board the case of St. Alban's, Bordesley, as a case eligible and fit to receive that portion of the Residuary Fund which is set apart for the County of Warwick, I have now the honour to acquaint you that the Board will be prepared to grant the sum of £183 consols in aid of the provision of a permanent Church for the District of Saint Alban's, Bordesley, provided that subscriptions to an equivalent amount at least shall be forthcoming to meet this grant.”

Of course we were most anxious to secure the grant, not chiefly on account of its amount, but because our Bishop had obtained it for us. But the offer came too soon after the opening of our second Mission Church, and the constitution of the district the year before. I have described the circumstances under which that Church was built. It was costly enough to exhaust our resources. It was not good enough to be made the permanent Church of the new district. And all this resulted from the delay caused by the action of the Aston Trustees.

In this difficulty we obtained the advice of the Commissioners' Architect, Mr. Ewan Christian, who reported to the Board, and could have remedied the " defects " of our Church. If this work had been done we might have had a Parish and a Parish Church in 1874, and would have obtained the grant of £183 towards our expenses, as well as the doubling of our endowment, and the addition of fees. We hesitated, for we had no money to improve our Church or build a better one. Besides, we were willing to sacrifice all the advantages which would have been gained by making S. Alban's a Parish, for we did not know what new ways of interfering with our spiritual work might be opened out by any step we took in that direction.

I have before me several letters from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, allowing us to defer our decision, and still offering us the grant which, before we finally abandoned it, had accumulated, and was about £243. The Bishop of Worcester wrote to me on June 16, 1881—eight years and a half after the grant was first offered—asking if there was " any prospect " of our claiming the money ; adding, " It seems a pity that the district should lose the endowment, if the loss can be avoided." The money was lost. Circumstances already detailed had obliged us to build S. Alban's Church ; its great cost made it hopeless to attempt to meet the conditions of the grant by paying our debts and offering the Church for consecration. Our new Church was opened on May 3, 1881 ; on July 19,

1881, the Secretary of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners wrote : “ After conferring with the Bishop of Worcester, the Commissioners have now cancelled the conditional grant.”

Enough has been said about the trials of S. Alban's in the past. How do we stand now ? And what is our future to be ?

It was a bold venture—perhaps a rash one—to open S. Alban's Mission in Leopold Street without any visible means of carrying it on. It was, perhaps, not prudent, but it was right to add S. Patrick's Mission, eight years afterwards, in the opposite extremity of the district ; and to mortgage its site and buildings till a good friend sent my brother £1,500 to release them. Perhaps it was neither prudent nor right to add a third large piece of land, with its costly buildings, in the centre of the district, half-way between the two Missions. The wisdom or folly of the last measure remains to be seen ; it is the test of our strength and energy.

Yet with regard to this question I do not think I shall have again to write the -word failure. Our “ plant ” is excellent and well-placed ; and the generous self-sacrificing zeal of our loving people has made it, for the present, free from debt and danger. They proposed to raise £1,700 to pay off the balance of the Church Building Debt, as a thank-offering at the end of our first twenty-five years' work, and in four months they raised £2,200. In our four Churches, some slight

alterations now being made give us room for more than 2,200 worshippers, every kneeling free and unappropriated. We have the largest of the Day Schools in Birmingham which are not under a " Board ; " two or three of the Board Schools exceed our accommodation.* And S. Alban's Schools are in a high state of efficiency.†

Yes, you tell me, S. Alban's has a very wealthy congregation, with ample means to pay for all that is wanted. In reply I offer no opinion of my own, but quote from the column of our Baptismal Register marking " Quality, Trade, or Profession " of father, and give all the entries for the last 100 Baptisms of our twenty-five years, and the first 100 Baptisms of the twenty-sixth year :—

Baker, barman, basket maker, bedstead polisher, blacksmith, bone turner, boot finisher, boot maker, brass caster, brass dresser, brass founder, bricklayer, bricklayer's labourer, brickmaker, brush maker, burnisher, butcher, cabinet maker, cab proprietor, carpenter, carriage lamp maker, carriage lamp spinner, carter, carver, chandelier maker, chandelier worker, clerk, coach axle tree turner, coach painter, collier, commercial traveller, compositor, cook, cooper, coppersmith, currier, electro plater, electro plate finisher, engineer, engine driver, engine fitter, factory worker, fender maker,

* The Daily Post of June 22, 1887, gives " a list of the number of children entertained at the various schools " on the occasion of the Queen's visit to Birmingham. The highest numbers are : Hope Street Board School, 1,593 ; S. Alban's, 1,569 ; Little Green Lane Board School, 1,527. These figures give the numbers on the books.

† In a return of schools issued some years ago by Her Majesty's Inspectors for this district, a S. Alban's Boys' School gained the highest proportion of passes, and was placed *first* of the sixty-four Elementary Boys' Schools in Birmingham.

file cutter, filer, fireman, fitter, french polisher, fruiter, gardener, gas fitter, general dealer, glass blower, grate fitter, gun action filer, gun maker, hair dresser, horse dealer, horse keeper, house painter, iron plate worker, jeweller, labourer, lamp maker, leather bag maker, machinist, mail cart driver, maltster, metal roller, millwright, moulder, nailcaster, packer, packing-case maker, painter, paper cutter, paper hanger, pin pointer, plane maker, plasterer, plumber, police officer, purse maker, railway guard, railway porter, refreshment house keeper, rule maker, saddle tree maker, safe painter, sawyer, screw filer, shoemaker, slater, stableman, stamper, steeple jack, stick dresser, stoker, stove maker, surgeon, sweep, tailor, thimble maker, tinner, tin-plate worker, tube drawer, upholsterer, venetian blind maker, vice maker, ware-houseman, wire drawer, wire weaver, wood pavior.

These are our people—not merely the inhabitants of the district in which we work, but our people in a higher sense—those who accept our ministrations and seek the ordinances of GOD at our hands. The 50,986 copper coins, which they contributed to the offertory last year, give another proof of their attachment to S. Alban's. And, let me add, these good people have an attractive power that seems peculiar to themselves. The history of our town parishes is a history of change, retirement, and promotion. No other district in Birmingham has retained the same priest for the last twenty-five years : two priests at S. Alban's are in the twenty-sixth year of their work there.

The three parts of the work must be maintained.*

* More than once we seriously entertained the idea of selling S. Patrick's. The building of the new Church which, in its unfinished state, cost about £18,000, seemed at one time to make this course necessary. I hold a petition, signed by 157 worshippers at S. Patrick's, who strongly deprecated the closing of their Mission Church when the new Church was opened.

But, whatever we do, we must not neglect the definite Mission work for which S. Alban's was founded. A " show Church " would be an absurdity, as well as a profanity, in S. Alban's District. Our people have proved their love of Mission work, and they must be encouraged in it.

If any word I have used seems to express a thought of unkindness to those who have opposed us most, let me say in all sincerity that I do not mean, or feel, any such thing. I believe in my heart that the highest and most religious motives prompted many that have appeared to us to be hinderers of GOD's work. We deserve no credit for dismissing unpleasant thoughts about the past. For all things, by the mercy of GOD, and spite of our many errors, have worked for good and made us to prosper.



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