

Frederick Ellis Gray

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Born in Sheffield, April 29th, 1865, Mr. F.E. Gray made his too brief life one of strenuous service for Christ and the Church. His father died when he was five years of age. His mother, a saintly woman had a struggle for existence. The sixth boy in the entrance book of Crookes Moor day school, young Gray from sheer necessity was a half-timer, but devoted all his spare time to self-improvement.

Converted when fifteen, he within two years became a local preacher. Many of his sermons were made in the mid-night hours by the light of a candle in the garret, but their delivery was accompanied by the light and fire of the Holy Spirit. At this time Hayle Street Church started a mission in a room over a coal-cellar in Martin Street, which ultimately grew into the present Hall. He became secretary and then treasurer, and so continued until his death.

He was anxious to enter the ministry, but was debarred from lack of means. He became a pupil teacher and then assistant certificated school master at Philadelphia, Sheffield, a position he held for twenty-six years. He was always considered the minister of our Martin Street Mission. Though only forty-four at his death, he had gained a District and Connexional reputation. Class leader, organist, choirmaster, young women's class teacher, Trust Secretary, and then Treasurer, he was an enthusiastic worker.

For twenty years he was Circuit Secretary, and at the time of his death, Circuit Steward of Sheffield Fourth. For eight years Secretary of the West branch of the Sunday School Union, he was President also at the time of his death. He was twice delegate to District Meeting and was a member of the London Conference. For the last three years he was Examination Secretary of our Sunday Schools, and how he managed to get through so much work is a marvel.

From the many letters of appreciation that have been received we can only give extracts from two. "He was," writes the Rev. W. Franks, "one of the most holy and useful Christians it has been my privilege to know. A man with a loving heart, he was a true friend, and brother."

Rev. S.S. Henshaw speaks of him as "one of the finest examples of a Christian that I have ever known. Upright, spiritually minded, unselfish, enthusiastic, he took a brotherly interest in men and sought with all his might to win them for his Master. All his life and power were fully consecrated to God, and his hands were full of holy toil. He was a devout Bible student, delighting in the glories of the Sacred Page, and had the warmest sympathy for the little ones."

When assailed by cancer, our dear brother faced the end with heroic courage and unshaken faith. The manner in which his loving wife and four devoted sons met their calamity, will ever be remembered. Two thousand persons attended the funeral. May our great Father sustain the bereaved and may we all meet where eternal re-union shall never be broken.

References

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