

had been unvaryingly active and helpful in the parish during his absence. "The poor people spoke warmly and gratefully of her attention: she had read to the sick and aged, given clothes to those in want, sent their children to school—in short, there was scarce a cottage in the village but had some marks to show of her kindness and charity. Perhaps this was the first moment that I felt anything like love for her. Before this I might have admired her person; I might have felt a degree of kindness towards her; I might have drawn a distinction between her and the other members of her family; it might before this have occurred to me that she might make me a good wife; but it was not till now that I thought at all seriously on the subject. From the moment of my return home, my feelings of regard towards her became gradually strengthened. Towards the end of February, when I had scarce been home a month, an offer came from Mr. Norris of the living of Hughenden, and I was thrown into the greatest perplexity. There was nothing in the nature of either parish which made it an absolute duty either to go or stay. I therefore felt I might consider my own personal feeling, and here I became a prey to the most distressing state of indecision. I had a regard for Sophy, yet I could not help thinking that I did not know enough of her to commit my whole happiness to her keeping. I thought upon marriage, and took perhaps an exaggerated view of the effect it would have upon my happiness in this world, and it might be in the next. Then, on the other hand, Hughenden had great charms for me. . . . At last I resolved to go, and thought I had firmly decided, without having ever made up my mind. I was the more reconciled to this because the living was not yet vacant, and it did not oblige me to take any immediate step. I should have at least a month or six weeks longer, during which I might become better acquainted with Sophy. . . . From the moment I came to this decision, I began to doubt whether I had decided rightly. Sophy appeared more amiable in my eyes, and I could not bear the thought of leaving her for ever. This feeling became daily stronger. Thinking it arose from being much in her presence, I determined to keep away for

several days, and I did so. But my feelings, instead of growing calmer, became more excited. Throughout the whole of this business, I prayed much for God's guidance and direction, and wished to place myself altogether in His Hands. Now, however, my prayer became every day more earnest. I will hope and believe that it was under the influence of God's Holy Spirit that I resolved to ask Sophy to become my wife. Accordingly, on Thursday, March 16, I went over to Old Park with this intention. I could, however, find no convenient opportunity during that day or the succeeding. I was not asked to stay another day, and therefore returned to Durham. On the Saturday morning came a letter from Mr. Norris to say he was ready to present me. I felt I must do something. I thought the matter once more over, and prayed again for guidance. In the course of an hour I was on my road to Old Park. I took an opportunity of telling Sophy what had happened, and asked her to decide for me. . . . On the following morning she accepted me.

"I am now writing on the Wednesday following. I look calmly upon all that has passed, and I heartily thank my God that He has brought it to this conclusion. I feel convinced that it is with His approbation and under His direction that I have taken this important step. May His Blessing be with us! May He cause His Face to shine upon us! May we lead each other on the paths of peace and holiness, till we come together in the fulness of years to the glorious immortality of the Saints in Heaven!"

What prayer was ever more visibly granted? There is something very touching, now that that devoted husband and wife have both entered upon the immortal life, to notice in the young bride's pocket-book the entry on that bright 19th of March, "The first butterfly;"—Christian emblem of that joyful Resurrection which they both await in peace. A letter from his sister, announcing the intended marriage to a friend, says: "I confess it did not surprise me that the lady said Yes; for those who know Robert well must respect and love him, especially those who have witnessed his late exertions, as she has

done. The lady is one of the Miss Myddletons of Old Park, and possessing the nice old family mansion, his difficulty with respect to building a Parsonage house at Whitworth is done away with. I am delighted that he is to remain at Whitworth, though he has been much tempted to leave it."

Although naturally now much time was spent at Old Park, and Mr. Gray says he did but little in the way of reading, he certainly did not neglect his duties. His Journal records sermon-writing, two every week; he attended an interesting course of anatomical lectures by Dr. Croke with a view to the illustration of Paley; and on the 15th of May he began the Evening Service he had contemplated in the schoolroom at Byer's Green, having obtained the Bishop's consent. "I preached extempore," he says, "on the three last verses of St. Matthew's Gospel, our Blessed Lord's Commission to His Apostles. The room was crowded; many went away unable to obtain an entrance. O my Lord and God! most heartily, most earnestly, do I pray that this may be a means of awakening the souls of those who are sunk so deep in the sleep of death. May I have Thy Glory and the salvation of precious immortal souls only in view. Do Thou, O God! root out the wicked vanity of my heart which leads me to sink Thy Glory in my own, and to value the applause of men, instead of being content with the approbation of my heart-searching God. O for a single eye and a single heart! O for sincerity and truth in the inward part! I hope this service has been begun with a desire to benefit my people, and win souls to Christ. I wish more especially to arouse and attract those who have never frequented a place of public worship. I wish to supply the wants of the aged and infirm, and I wish to teach *all* the truth as it is in Jesus. Lord, be Thou my Helper, for without Thee I can do nothing. The Gospel has been brought nigh unto them, even to their doors;—may they no longer despise the Goodness and Long-suffering of God, which endureth yet daily."

A month later he says: "The service at the school prospers, and I begin to find the task of preparation less burdensome. I

begin to fear that, as I find it easier, I shall be less in fervent prayer. I must watch against this. God grant me His grace to continue stedfast." This work certainly was blessed: the congregation averaged about eighty; and that at Whitworth, where Mr. Gray began with thirty to forty, now averaged from eighty to a hundred and ten. In August Mr. Gray called a meeting of the people at Byer's Green, and established a Temperance Society among them. He declared that he "lived from hand to mouth, with no time for study or meditation, barely enough to prepare sermons, and not always that." Yet there are traces of earnest meditation in his prayers that he and his intended wife might go on growing together in the knowledge and love of God, and be a mutual blessing to each other's souls; in the close self-examination which resulted in "finding much fault with myself in many respects;" "much evil-speaking and slandering, much coldness, much neglect, much that is inconsistent with my profession. Alas! I find by daily experience that though my course of life seems far removed from the danger of sinning, Satan has always fresh resources in store, new plans and methods to ruin the soul, new temptations by which he may overcome those who are desirous of living to God. 'Resist the devil, and he will flee from you,' says the Voice of inspiration. Lord, grant me Thy Grace, that I *may* resist stedfast unto the end."

His brother Charles came to stay with him, and help him during the last month before his marriage, which was inevitably a busy time; and he complains that his thoughts and mind were much distracted. "On Tuesday, Sept. 6th, 1836, Sophy and I were married by Charles in Whitworth Church; present, Mrs. Myddleton, Henrietta, Kitty, Keiro Watson, John Wilkinson, William and Mrs. Wharton, John and Mrs. J. Wharton, Robert and Mary [Gray]. If it please God to spare our health and lives, I trust we may look forward to many years of happiness. Oh, how my God has blessed me above what I had any right to expect! Grant me, O God, a grateful heart. Grant that we may prove helpmeets to each other, not only in this life, but in our passage to another and better. Grant that she may prove a blessing to myself, a blessing to my parish, a bless-

ing to all around her ; and oh ! do Thou grant her Thy Blessing. Grant that she may grow in grace daily, and in the knowledge of the Lord, that she may become more and more a confirmed Christian, a true, humble, sincere disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. And may I, who should lead her on, never prove a stumblingblock in her way to Christ ; for this end, O my God ! grant me a greater portion of Thy Grace, a more enlarged fellowship of Thy Holy Spirit, that I may conduct myself as a Christian minister, and give no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed. O my God ! I have much to confess, much to deplore, much to entreat Thy pardon for, much to amend. Unable of myself to do anything, I throw myself on Thy Mercy, humbly, heartily, earnestly imploring mercy and pardon for the past, and the constraining influence of Thy Holy Spirit for the future."

Mr. and Mrs. Gray went on their wedding-day to Greta Bridge, and remained in the north, to which both were so much attached, all their honeymoon, visiting Richmond, Easby Abbey, remaining a week at Grinkle, then going on to Whitby, Scarborough, and Helmsley,¹ and returning to Old Park, October 7th, having ridden nearly four hundred miles during the month. They now settled at Old Park as their home, and a quietly active life began. One of the first things that strikes one is the regular reading of Holy Scripture together. Mr. Gray's Journal has continual entries, such as "Read nearly all the Epistles to Sophy ;" "Read part of the Book of Genesis, with Commentary, to Sophy." After a time, he says, "I do not intend to read more of this Commentary [Religious Tract Society]. It is rather a continued course of sermons than an exposition of Scripture. When I am looking for a plain elucidation of Scripture truth, I find in its stead a spiritual application of it. This is often very excellent, though I think also often very refined, far-fetched, and irrelevant. The mind is thus withdrawn from the consideration of the Sacred text, and the time for the most part

¹ In Mrs. Gray's pocket-book there is an entry,—"*Oct. 4th.* Rode to Castle Howard and Helmsley. *5th.* Rode to Byland,—called at Duncombe Park,—rode to Rievaulx and sketched. *6th.* Rode to Rievaulx, and over the moor by Kirkby Moorside to Grinkle."

taken up with considering the possible deductions from it. I have resolved therefore to go on with Joshua without any commentary, reading two or three chapters every day, and also to read along with it my Father's *Key*."

Mr. Gray's great love of general literature, and the lively interest with which he followed out every variety of subject—geology, natural history, legendary lore, biography, and history, etc. etc.—no doubt tended largely to promote his usefulness, and to widen and strengthen his vigorous intellect. In later years he used to recommend the Clergy to read general subjects, and keep their minds alive to the questions and sympathies of the day; but at this time he was scrupulous as to his own discursive studies, and took himself severely to task for them. "What I have most to find fault with in myself is the way I have frittered away my time. I have no fixed steady plan of theological reading, but I suffer my time to be occupied and attention distracted by books of general reading, which every one is ready enough to lend. With all that I have before me, this is perfectly inexcusable. The course of study I have marked out for myself is, first, a general view of the Reformation in Europe, specially in England. Then a rapid course of Church History, as far as may be learnt from the works of Mosheim and Milner. Afterwards a few of the best works on Natural Theology, Evidences of Christianity; and lastly, to work out a complete system of doctrine from the writings of our best Divines. Never to pass a day, however, without studying some portion of the Greek New Testament. As far as the practical part goes, continued preparation of sermons, and my daily morning readings with Sophy, may suffice. God grant that I may be able to accomplish some such scheme as this. I may then take up more largely my favourite study of Ecclesiastical History. I must throw aside all ephemeral works, and apply the little time I have for study to those things which really belong to my profession. Let me see what difference there will be this time year."

His day was mapped out, and cannot be called idle, especially if compared with the ordinary standard of parish work

forty years ago. He was dressed by 7.30, spending the time before 9 o'clock breakfast in study or preparing his extempore sermons; then came reading the Bible with his wife, followed by sermon-writing or study till 1 o'clock, when he went out into his parish, not *less* than three days in the week, till 5 o'clock dinner. After that came letter-writing and lighter reading, and from 8 to 10 P.M. reading aloud. From 10 to 11 was devoted to studying the Greek Testament, but that hour was apt to be absorbed by working up something for which time had not been found earlier. Constant examinations in the schools are alluded to, and a variety of other parochial work. At the close of this, to him, eventful year 1836, Mr. Gray, as usual, reviews what has passed. "I see much cause for self-abasement, much for gratitude, and some, I would hope, for encouragement. As far as external worldly circumstances are concerned, there is much reason for thankfulness. I have been blessed with a more than common share of health; I have met with much kindness from friends; I have enough, and more than enough, for the supply of every want and comfort; and I have been blessed with a fond and affectionate wife, whose tastes and occupations agree with my own, and who is willing and anxious, as far as in her lies, to become my helpmeet in the duties of my profession. . . . As far as my *external* parochial duties are concerned, I have not much to reproach myself with. I have been active and busy, up and stirring, and have perhaps devoted as much time as I ought to have done to the mere physical labour of going from house to house. But this is all that can be said for me. When amongst my people my time has not been turned to the best account; I have been deficient in persuading, instructing, warning, and reproving them. I fear at times I have not been bold enough; I have not sufficiently sought after those perishing souls who deliberately live in neglect of God, or spoken to them with faithfulness and affection. With regard to sermons, too, I have not made sufficient preparation for them by study, meditation, and prayer, especially in my afternoon extempore sermon; thus I have often fed my people with husks."

The year 1837 was chiefly spent in quiet work, and much reading. The wide grasp of Mr. Gray's mind, and his power of exhausting books and making their substance his own, is very striking in these month-to-month records. There is always a mind of his own at work—he never drops into mere conventionalities; and if sometimes he expresses crude opinions of books or principles, such as later on he saw ground to change, they are at least always expressed with humility as well as independence of thought. Thus he writes:—"Bridges' *Christian Ministry*, the general scope of which I think excellent. I hope I have received much good from him, and shall, I hope, receive still more, as I purpose reading it over again soon. There are, of course, peculiar opinions of which I cannot see the force or admit the truth, but this may be more my fault than his."

So too, in public matters, he could not keep from forming and acting upon a deliberate opinion. Soon after a short visit to the south, he writes: "Much interested about the Elections. Believing, as I most solemnly do, that at the beginning of a new reign, with a young girl upon the throne, men's minds wild for every scheme of so-called liberal tendency, much will depend upon the Parliament which shall be returned; believing too, that the Liberal party are more than half prepared to sacrifice the Established Church, in the safety of which I consider the welfare and happiness and religious character of this country is involved; I think I should be wanting in my duty to my people and my God, if I did not warn them of the danger which will arise from returning "Liberal" members, and I have therefore spoken individually to all the Electors who are in my parish, and advised them how to vote. Others may condemn me for mixing in what they call political matters, but before God my conscience acquits me. I believe it to be a religious duty. In the preservation of the Church is involved, (humanly speaking) the preservation of Christianity; defending that, we are defending the cause of God."

One of those fits of discouragement which must from time to time lower over the best and steadiest workers in the Church's vineyard, swept across Mr. Gray about this time, and

he says: "Much disheartened at the general apathy of my people, especially their neglect of Sunday. Have been much in prayer for them, and for a blessing on my ministry. Resolved to be more diligent in teaching every man and warning every man;—sought earnestly for God's grace, that I might be enabled to preach the Word with all boldness and clearness,—feelingly and convincingly, and that souls might be awakened and brought to the knowledge of the truth. I think I have prayed nearly every day for my people since I took charge of this parish, but I do not think that at any time I have prayed with more earnestness than during the last month."

He was, no doubt, suffering at this time under rather too heavy a strain of work. In a letter to his sister he says: "I shall be glad to get a little relaxation; I feel that I want to get away for a week or two. . . . I have very troublesome and discouraging work with my people, and I have the still more discouraging task of reforming myself;—all together are more than I can well manage, and I shall not be sorry to escape for a few weeks from the former. . . . I have lately had a bad accident in my parish. The navigators work at the railroad night and day. Last Thursday one was completely smashed by a fall of earth in a deep cut:—dead in an instant. They all subscribed to his funeral, and came in a body (upwards of one hundred) to his burial. This was good feeling, which I was glad to see, as they are a sad profligate set of fellows. As they almost to a man spend their Sunday in the public-house instead of the church, I thought such an opportunity was not to be lost, and as I had fairly got them inside my church, whence they could not decently escape, rather uncanonically and irregularly I gave them an extempore sermon, to which they patiently submitted. They were the most uncouth congregation I ever addressed."

On the 21st September, 1837, their first child was born:—There is much indicated in the brief record that the husband "read and prayed daily" with his wife during her time of weakness and seclusion; and on the 3rd October, his twenty-eighth birthday, Mrs. Gray re-appeared downstairs, a fact gratefully

recorded. "From the hour when she gave birth to her little girl to the present hour, neither she nor the child have suffered a moment's pain or uneasiness. Each day brings with it fresh causes for gratitude. O that the unnumbered mercies and blessings of God had their due effect upon me! This too is my birthday. I do hope that during the past year my religious principles and feelings have not diminished. O that I could perceive more undoubted proofs of steady progress in the things of God!

"Let me note my present practice and feelings, in order that, should God be pleased to spare my life for another year, I may have a sort of landmark by which I may trace my course, and test my religious state. To begin with Prayer—I fear that both my family and private prayers are most frequently cold and languid;—sometimes, indeed, I feel, much fervour and earnestness, especially in intercessory prayer on behalf of my people, when I have been previously thinking of their apathy and hardness of heart. I think I have more freedom in prayer during the day, either when walking, or preparing my sermon, or when any train of thought has led me to pray. I think I may say that I never prepare a sermon without entreating my God to direct me to a suitable subject, and to enable me to treat it faithfully, fully, and clearly; nor ever preach one without begging a special blessing from God in the convincing, awakening, and edifying my people. And these prayers, I would hope, are always earnest. But my prayers during the day, as they are not conducted upon any plan or system, frequently fall short, and sometimes whole days are spent without any at all. I am idle in my self-examinations; and though I profess every night to review the day that is past, it is almost always done, I fear, in a very superficial and cursory manner. With regard to my study of the Word of God, there is much fault to be found. I am very ignorant of my Bible, and do not read it near enough.¹ I hope by God's Grace to

¹ Compare with this self-imputed ignorance and insufficient study of God's Word, the continual steady reading of the same which we find through all his Journal.

amend this. With regard to general studies, I have not been idle, though they have been far too diffuse and secular. With regard to parochial duties, I am always from three to four days every week (from one o'clock to five or six) visiting from house to house, or examining the school. The time is perhaps as much as I need give, or could consistently with other duties. But there is much fault to be found with the tone of my conversation with the people. It is not sufficiently to the point: it is not always warning, teaching, exhorting, rebuking; but I too readily give way to worldly conversation, and I am not sufficiently faithful. With regard to my family, I am not sufficiently strict and unflinching in requiring double attendance at Church; and with regard to dear Sophy, I blame myself exceedingly for not conversing with her upon our own religious views and practice. I see that it might be of infinite importance to us both. I am sure she would readily concur with my views, and yet I hold my tongue, from an invincible repugnance to speak of my own religious experience. I hope, if my neglect be sinful, God will forgive me; or rather that He will make an opening: With regard to my own practice, I have most to condemn my pettishness and impetuosity of temper. I have sinned grievously of late in thought. My feelings too are decidedly worldly. I consider it one of the marks of God's kind Providence, that I am placed here very much out of the way of general society, and that I have married a wife who would never *wish* to dine out; because I am fully aware that the love of such society as is within my reach is my peculiar snare."

Evidently both Mr. Gray's reading and preaching were taking a more definite and doctrinal mould at this time. He preached a course of ten sermons on the Lord's Prayer, and another on Baptism, which latter led to a good deal of careful and close study of the whole subject of Baptismal Regeneration. Perhaps in later years he would have drawn up a somewhat different list of the authorities he studied; but, as it was, he carefully read and examined Hammond, Barrow, Mant (Sermons on Regeneration and Conversion), Simeon, Robinson, Dodsworth, Wall, Leighton, Secker, Frith, Milner, etc.; and above all he carefully studied

all Holy Scripture bearing upon the subject, comparing it with the doctrines of the Church; and the result of his studies was thus summed up:—

“I. That Baptism is generally necessary to salvation.

“II. That wherever it is rightly administered and properly received, it is always accompanied by certain spiritual blessings.

“These blessings are—1st, *Forgiveness of sins that are past.* Acts ii. 38; xxii. 16.

“2nd, *The influence and assistance of the Holy Spirit.* S. John iii. 5; Tit. iii. 4-7; 1 Cor. vi. 11; Col. ii. 12; Rom. vi. 4-5; Eph. v. 25-7; 1 Cor. xii. 13; 1 S. Peter iii. 21.

“3rd. A title to all privileges of the Gospel; become Members of Christ, Children of God, Heirs of Kingdom of Heaven.

“These blessings, I believe, are conferred *in, by, through* Baptism; that is, that Baptism is God’s appointed means or channel through which He is pleased to convey these spiritual blessings to the soul.

“By ‘*rightly administered*’ I understand that it should be in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, with water, and by God’s ordained minister.

“By ‘*properly received*’ I understand with Repentance and Faith, where the subject is capable of these graces. And that, in the case of infants, it is sufficient that the Sacrament be rightly administered.”

The year of 1838 began by Mr. Gray’s going to the south, half sad at leaving his wife and babe at home, “without any one to comfort her or bear her company during my absence,” for his brother Charles’s wedding, which took place at Hughenden on January 11th, the bride being Miss Agnes Norris. Journeys from the north were rather more of an undertaking then than now: he had to take a coach to Leeds, then a mail at midnight to Manchester, where he arrived just in time to miss the first train. In due course of time another took him to Birmingham, where again he got a coach to Henley through Oxford. Mr. Gray had only just returned to Whitworth, when his cousin and esteemed friend, Mr. Robert Gray of Sunderland

("Cousin Robert"), died of typhus fever, caught while visiting his sick parishioners. "To him to live was Christ, and to die, gain. His loss to Sunderland is, humanly speaking, irreparable. All seem to feel deeply as if they had lost a father or a brother. His funeral was public,—the whole population present. I hear from all quarters the highest testimonies to his character; Churchmen and Dissenters all agree alike in proclaiming his praise."

Some of the notices of books in this year's journal bear evident token of an advance in the tone of the writer's mind. He was reading Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity* with close attention. "The edition which I inadvertently picked up," he says, "is by a rabid dissenter, who omits no opportunity in his copious notes of firing popguns at Hooker, which, however, for the most part, fall very harmless. On the whole, it is just as well to have this edition, for we here have all they *can* say against his book. With all his excellences" (it will comfort some students to hear Mr. Gray add), "I cannot but think Hooker unnecessarily prolix! His style is involved, and his sentences and sections occasionally terribly long-winded!" And a little later: "Hooker proceeds calmly, and as a perfect master of his subject, to expose the weakness of the Puritans' objections to the forms and ceremonies of the Church." Nor was Hooker his only piece of solid, hard reading that year. Newton on *Prophecies*, Collier's *Ecclesiastical History*, Hallam's *Introduction to European Literature*, are noted down, as well as a large quantity of other books. He was greatly delighted with the *Life of William Wilberforce*; and bearing in mind his later intimacy with and affection for one of the sons of that eminent man, and one of the authors of that life, Bishop Wilberforce, the notice Mr. Gray makes of the book is very interesting:—"I think it is not only a very entertaining, but a very valuable publication; politically, historically, and morally valuable. We have here the evidence of a man attached to no party, living on terms of intimacy with the great men of his day, and speaking the truth in the fear of God, respecting the character of those with whom he mixed. His observations, too, never

intended for the public eye, but his own reflections in his daily Journal. For my own part, I confess that nothing henceforth will ever shake my convictions of the high integrity and noble patriotism of Pitt. Wilberforce's remarks upon Pitt's character year after year, both in his private letters and journals, when most opposed to him, are very striking. The book furnishes very excellent material for this period of our history, and it is chiefly valuable in this point because Wilberforce was behind the curtain—perfectly unprejudiced—writing only for his own satisfaction, or (in his letters) to his confidential friends; but above all because every one must feel that he never said a word or wrote a line which he did not believe to be true. But its chief value is, I think, in a religious point of view. There can be but little doubt, I think, but that this book will be read by many who would not read a religious book, and yet perhaps no religious work would be more likely to awaken religious feelings. It shows how a Christian may be in the world and yet not of the world; it affords a beautiful specimen of the Christian's growth in holiness; it is a lasting evidence of the influence of Christian principle uprooting pride, ambition, selfishness, indolence, and compelling men to live to the Glory of God. It is a striking instance of the fulfilment of the promise—'Him that honoureth Me, I will honour.' It shows the means which must be used by all who would walk as he walked—in continual watchfulness, self-accusation, study of the Word, meditation, self-denial, prayer, public ordinances and sacraments of the Church. It contains too, in almost every page, some statements of Christian truth, so that it cannot be read without at least presenting us with a body of practical, doctrinal, and experimental religion. I would humbly hope the reading of it has not been without its use to me, and that I may by it be stirred up to greater diligence in the concerns of my own soul."

The newly-widowed Mrs. Robert Gray and her children were guests at Old Park that summer, and the elder Mrs. Gray (the Bishop's widow) also came to stay with her son, as well as other members of the family, consuming time and

thoughts. An object, too, which lay near his heart was to get a seemly chapel built at Byer's Green, instead of the school-room, where, since Mr. Gray first began them, services had been held regularly. There are some rough copies of letters to the Bishop of Durham on this subject, which show how earnestly he had the interests of this his adopted flock at heart.

"Should the coal-field adjoining Byer's Green not be worked, the population will in all probability not materially increase, and there would in that case be no very urgent necessity for building a chapel. If, on the other hand, however, your Lordship's coal should be worked, and the pit population be located in Byer's Green, I must most decidedly differ from Mr. ——— in thinking that your Lordship's bounty could be better bestowed than in endowing and building a chapel for the very people who are working that coal. It would seem to me that they had the strongest, and I may add the only claim upon your liberality. . . . [Here follow certain local particulars.] The population in all these districts has been created or considerably increased by the working of the coal of different proprietors; and upon them alone, I think, rests the responsibility of providing religious instruction for the people they have drawn together."

And again later, though both copies are undated:—"I thank your Lordship for your very liberal offer, an offer which will, I hope, secure to the coal district around Byer's Green a place of worship and a resident minister. I agree with your Lordship in thinking that 1840 will be the earliest period for building, and I shall be glad to employ the intermediate time in making application to the different parties interested, Church Building Societies, and in arranging any preliminary matters.

"In a former letter to your Lordship, I mentioned what I thought would be the only effectual provision for the religious instruction of the pit population in this neighbourhood. It is unnecessary for me to enter into this question now further than to observe that it included a chapel for Byer's Green, and another for Tudhoe, the whole of my parish, with its very small

church, lying between these districts. Your Lordship will, I believe, be personally interested only in the Byer's Green district. The Tudhoe population consisting only of Mr. Shafto's and Mr. Bryan Salvin's pits, I take it for granted that your Lordship would wish the whole of your donation to be applied to the Byer's Green Chapel, and the more so, because there will not be the same necessity for *endowing* a chapel at Tudhoe, as it may easily be built within the limits of my parish.

"One thing I should take the liberty of mentioning, and that is that it will be very important, when your Lordship's coal is worked, that the pit-houses should be built as near the present village of Byer's Green as possible. We should then have the whole population thrown very much together, and consequently nearer the church."

The warm interest Mr. Gray took on behalf of this Byer's Green and its population was still more emphatically proved by an offer which he received on the 15th September, 1838, of the living of Crossgate, Durham. The thoughtful way in which he balanced the *pros* and *cons*, and the absence of self and self-seeking in the matter, is very striking:—"Received a letter from the Bishop of Chester, urging me to accept the living of Crossgate, which he assures me would be offered me. Letter flattering and kind. I am much distressed at this offer—very sorry that it has been made. Fear, too, there is no time to consult pious friends. I hope, with all due allowance for the deceitfulness of my own heart, that I am prepared to go wherever I may most promote the Glory of God and the spiritual welfare of my fellow-sinners. Yet my *inclination* is decidedly to decline the offer. I have prayed for guidance, that I may form a right decision. I will put on paper, as I did with regard to Hughenden, the *pros* and *cons* of the case.

"*Arguments for remaining at Whitworth.*—Sought it—like it—content to live and die here;—acceptable to people. . . Hope I am in some degree useful:—I have taken other duty (Byer's Green), which in all probability would be neglected by my successor. The population of my parish nearly certain to increase.

“Uncertain with respect to Byer’s Green—cannot, however, be less than one thousand, may be more. Probably Chapel not be built, at least for years, unless I remain here. The increase at Whitworth will probably be 1,500 souls. Chapel must be built near Tudhoe. But what probability of this if I leave?

“Old Park in some measure my own. Intend to purchase it. Sophy fond of it; gives me, I think, some increase of influence and usefulness.

“*Against remaining at Whitworth.*—Winter very trying to health in wet country; small population; might increase my usefulness by leaving. It is *possible* the population may not increase. I am too much of a squire, perhaps, for my own good.

“*Arguments for accepting Crossgate.*—Immediate increase of usefulness. Probability of very important living going to inefficient man. Having private fortune, could do more than others. I might keep a curate, which another man might not be able to do. Might with Blessing of God be able to give good direction to minds of divinity students. There seem to be no clergymen in Durham inclined to give them the opportunity of learning the work of a parish. Might be of use in this respect, and so very extensively to the Church. I am in some respects better suited to a town than the country. Durham with its dry walks might contribute to my health. Emolument somewhat greater.

“*Arguments against accepting Crossgate.*—The Chapter may give it to an inefficient man, and the Bishop of Chester seems to hint as much; but am I responsible for the acts of the Chapter? If they wish for an efficient man there are plenty to be found, much more so than myself. I am not altogether suited to the wants of that parish. It requires a man of commanding mind to take the lead, influence others, direct the minds of principal laity (almost all of whom now frequent that church). My ability not sufficient; temper too yielding and pliant. Work possibly beyond my strength; much temptation in society of old friends; should fear yielding too much to that. I am rather too young; deficient in knowledge; mind not

made up upon several very important points upon which I might be called to act. I might possibly be led to changes of opinion, and from that cause lose influence and respect."

The result of this earnestly conscientious consideration was—"Resolved to decline the offer of Crossgate. Called on the Archdeacon at his request: he very civil, obliging, and pressing that I should accept. Stated my reasons for declining. He seemed to think them sufficient and satisfactory. Suggested to him the names of one or two valuable men. Wrote to the Bishop of Chester; stated my case plainly to him. He perfectly approves of my decision—kind letter."

The allusions Mr. Gray makes to the probable benefit of a drier locality in winter were not without cause. He was suffering then, and continued for some time to do so, from severe inflammation of the eyes and ulcerated sore throat, which seriously interfered with his work and gave some cause for anxiety to his friends. He went to Redcar for a time, and returned home better, but the malady returned, and all November he was quite ill and unable to do any work. At the end of December he writes: "Worse and worse all this month. At length, upon the strong recommendation of Green, and the pressing advice of all here, I have resolved to go to the south, if necessary, for three months, both for change of climate and for further advice. May God enable me to profit by all His Mercies, whether they assume the shape of a smile or a frown. I cannot but think that this light affliction is meant to be a warning voice. It must be looked upon as a special call to 'lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset me, and to run with patience the race that is set before me, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of my Faith.' O that I might have grace to lay this warning to heart, and listen to its still small voice, and take more heed to my ways."

On January 3rd, 1839, Mr. Gray and all his family, including his mother, went up to London, to Dr. Williamson, in Dean's Yard, remaining there (excepting occasional visits to other members of his family) till the end of April. He consulted Mr. (afterwards Sir B.) Brodie, who found his throat in a

bad state, and his general health much deranged. During these four months of rest from parochial work, Mr. Gray was by no means idle. He wrote a great many sermons, and his reading, as usual, was extensive and careful. He was beginning, now, for the first time, to take a keen interest in the writings issuing forth from Oxford concerning the revival of Church principles; and it is most interesting to watch his sober, deliberate study of the *Tracts for the Times*, finally accepting, as he did, their teaching in most things, not from impulse or personal leanings, but from a deep conviction of its truth.

The first mention of the *Tracts for the Times* occurs in January, 1839, when Mr. Gray says: "My object is to read the Tracts through, that I may judge for myself whether the charges of their opponents are true—*i.e.* that their doctrines are unscriptural and contrary to the doctrines of the Church of England. As far as I have gone, I see little or nothing to object to in their principles, though I would by no means subscribe to all their *opinions*. I cannot but hope that the discussion of these vital questions will be productive of good. I fear the most zealous and spiritual-minded of our clergy entertain low opinions of the Blessed Sacraments, and of the nature and authority of the Church. May we not hope eventually to see these matters clearly defined and settled? I am very glad that the attention of the clergy is being drawn to them, and trust they may in God's good time end in the union of His dismembered Church, and the conviction that schism is a sinful thing."

After three months' painstaking study he writes more confidently: "I have been much pleased with these Tracts, notwithstanding the great outcry raised against them. Sure I am that their principles are in the main those of the Church of England. There are some passages and opinions to which I cannot assent, and some which require consideration and reflection. They are written for the most part in a pious, humble spirit, and are, I cannot but think, calculated to do much good, by leading Churchmen to a study of their own principles." Tract XC. and the controversy arising out of it interested him intensely: he "read and read over again" all the

pamphlets, letters, etc., which appeared on this subject, and found Dr. Pusey's most interesting. Mr. Gray read all that came forth on the subject of the Church revival with the same lively interest. He mentions a sermon of Dr. Hook's in December, 1839 (the subject is not noted), as "with copious notes. This *is* a book! It is one of the clearest and most striking exhibitions of High Church views that I have read, and contains much valuable matter in the notes."

"Wilberforce's *Parochial System*. A very admirable little work. True and sound views.

"Tracts of the Anglican Fathers. Sermons and tracts written by the Fathers of the English Church, re-published to prove that our reformers held High Church views, especially on the Sacraments and Apostolical succession. The language is very strong, and sometimes in the sermons on the Eucharist, the expressions border on Consubstantiation.

"Gresley's *Portrait of a Churchman*. An admirable book, placing the principles of the Church before the reader in a light and popular manner.

"Palmer's *Treatise on the Church*. Very able and interesting. I would not undertake to subscribe to *all* his opinions, but I am very thankful to have fallen in with his book, and hope to get much good from it.

"Benson's *Four Sermons against Tracts for the Times*. Written calmly and reasonably, but his views are low. He insists that each man must interpret Scripture for himself, values the Apostolical Commission, yet defends the claims of anti-Episcopal bodies to be considered as branches of the true Church!"

Mr. Gladstone's *State in its Relation to the Church* struck him immensely, though he thought the style involved, "but the tone is noble and elevated. It is a most interesting and able defence of High Church principles, and evidencing much religious feeling. Though not prepared to subscribe to every opinion advanced in his book, I should be heartily glad to see such a man as Gladstone occupying a high position in the councils of the nation." He goes on to make one extract, which must often have been brought before his mind in after years.

“The duty of the Sovereign towards the Church in virtue of the Ecclesiastical Supremacy, seems to consist mainly of the *Executive* duty of defending it under the existing laws; the *Judicial* duty of determining all questions which arise in mixed subject-matter out of the relations between the Church and the State; and the *Negative* duty of permitting the Church to enter from time to time upon the consideration of matters of her own internal government, to be subsequently proposed to the Great Council of the nation, that its members may have the opportunity of judging how they affect the compact, and that the Church may know by their assent that it continues unimpaired. And if, in reference to the anomalies of modern legislation, this shall appear to be a theory, let a fair consideration of our whole history declare whether it does not express the ancient practice and the general spirit of the constitution better than the precedents drawn from periods of indifference or oppression, or both.” Mr. Gladstone's *Church Principles*, somewhat later on, also greatly pleased Mr. Gray. “An admirable and most interesting book,” he calls it.

Mr. Gray at this time also studied various Patristic writers—S. Clement, S. Ignatius, S. Cyprian, etc.—in the original text, the better to establish himself in what he believed to be true and sound Catholic principles. Thus, ending the Epistles of S. Ignatius, he says: “My views confirmed with regard to the sin of schism, the necessity of Unity, the doctrine of the Sacraments, and the three Orders.” S. Cyprian specially delighted him, and was copiously marked for the extract-book. But his reading was not at all exclusive, or confined to Church writers or ecclesiastical subjects, though, as must always be the case, the Churchman's mind was brought to bear on all that presented itself. He always read history with eagerness, and a military man could scarcely be more fascinated with Colonel Gurwood's edition of the *Duke of Wellington's Despatches*, the numerous volumes of which were devoured with intense interest.¹ Lord Brougham's *Contemporary Characters* interested him, though, he

¹ “They are unique, and it is impossible to describe them, or say how much one admires them. They are wonderful compositions.”

says, "a Churchman of principle is always a bigot with him;" Hallam, Scott—travels, memoirs, Church histories, antiquities, *Quarterly* and other reviews—all came into his net, and all were calmly and temperately weighed.

Towards the end of April, 1839, Mr. Gray and his family returned home by water, sailing on a Saturday and landing at Middlesbro' on the Monday. He said the Church offices on deck for the passengers on the Sunday. Mr. Gray's health was now much improved, and he devoted himself again with all his old energy to the parish work which had so largely been increased by his voluntary efforts for the neglected neighbourhood. A new line of railway was being made at this time through that country, and he found an addition to his parishioners of some three hundred navvies and their families. "Population daily increasing," he says. "Can, for the most part, make no impression upon the navvies. Some few attend Church and school service. Congregations very good—school especially, some frequently unable to find seats." He was very much occupied with parochial visiting, sick people, preparation for Confirmation, etc.; and yet with all this he contrived to get an "average of about eight hours a day for reading and writing of all sorts." It certainly was not the Priest's fault if his parish did not advance as he desired, or had at first thought it did. Probably his own increasing perceptions as to what was to be looked for had something to do with his dissatisfaction. Compare Mr. Gray's ordinary life with that implied as common among the Clergy at a period not so very far distant, in an Ordination sermon of Dr. Paley's, preached in the Diocese of Carlisle, and quoted early in 1839 by him: "Strictly *advice*; a moral lecture. It serves to show, however, how very corrupt the Church must have been in that day. He warns those who are just ordained against open fornication, drunkenness, tippling in public-houses, being 'seen at drunken feasts, boisterous sports, late hours, barbarous diversions.' That such an exhortation should have been deemed applicable by so sober and grave a person as Paley is a melancholy proof of the dissolute character of the Clergy at that time. There is not

one word of doctrine in the whole sermon, nor does it seem that he thought they could be affected by his taking high ground, for he only insists upon external decency and decorum. We may thank God that such an Ordination sermon would in these days be deemed an insult to the Clergy by their enemies equally with their friends." Such a state of things had not unnaturally prepared much disappointment and discouragement for a better race of men; and in this autumn of 1839, amid his active anxious work, the young Incumbent of Whitworth (he was then just thirty) says, "Much disheartened at the little fruits I see among my people. After two years' labour I thought I perceived a gradual improvement. For these last two years, owing to the horrible depravity of the men engaged in the public works, I think I have perceived a gradual falling off. I pray for them, however, night and day, and continue to warn, reprove, rebuke, and exhort, and I will trust that in due season I shall reap if I faint not. I have been tried, too, by the various endeavours to create dissent in the place. Now some Ranters come every Sunday and Tuesday. I have, therefore, lately preached upon the Ministerial office and commission. May God preserve all in the Unity of the Faith, and keep and deliver us from heresy and schism. I have been circulating some of the earlier numbers of the *Tracts for the Times*."

But, however disheartened, he never ceased to plan and toil to remedy the evil; and, at this very time, a letter to his sister Mrs. Williamson shows how energetic he was in his efforts to provide more spiritual help to the people around him:—" . . . We are not likely immediately to want R.'s kind contribution to my church. We are at present merely watching where the population which is hovering over our heads will settle down, in order that we may know what will be the most eligible sites for churches. You will say our notions go on enlarging with the prospects of enlarged populations, when I tell you that five churches or chapels (if not six) are contemplated in this neighbourhood. Such is, however, the case, and I hope with every prospect of ultimate success. Indeed we are remarkably favoured, for all parties concerned (or nearly all) profess a

disposition to fulfil the obligations which rest upon them of providing religious instruction for the people they bring together. The Company are very anxious, and have been with me, and *talk* exceedingly liberally. And John Shafto, I am told, means to give up £200 per annum for the endowment of two churches. The country here is in a most deplorable state; we cannot go out without wading through a sea of mud, and the roads are getting worse and worse every day. . . . I should be glad if R., when he next has an opportunity, would send me Pusey on *Baptism*, and the third volume of *Tracts for the Times*."

He was ready enough to believe himself to be at fault in the failure among his people. At the close of the year he says: "I have not so much fault to find with myself for want of active exertion, because I am for the most part several hours of each day in my parish; but I fear I am too often active about nothing. I have to complain of extraordinary coldness and dulness in my pastoral visits. I do not improve these opportunities sufficiently to press upon every person the danger of neglecting their souls. I often leave a house without having spoken plainly and faithfully where I ought to have done so, and where I wished also to have done so, and this owing to my stupidity, and, I fear I must add, through not sufficiently feeling the worth and the value of immortal souls. Lord, make me more diligent, more faithful, more bold to speak the Word in love to sinners! If I look to my people, the prospect is not cheering. I fear instead of progressing they have gone back. There are several who used to be regular attendants at the House of God who are now seldom to be seen; and though my population has increased, my congregation has, if anything, decreased. This I attribute, first, to my own inefficiency, and failing to make myself clearly understood, and arresting attention by interesting the mind. But I do not think this is the chief cause. Every house is full of lodgers. This has necessarily kept the women much at home on the Lord's Day; and the bad example which these strangers set, scarcely any of them appearing in the House of God, has, I fear, not been without its effect on my own people. Though there are some

few encouraging things, the general aspect of religion amongst my people is anything but encouraging. This may be, and probably is, in part to humble me. Success might have filled me with self-conceit, and prevented my giving all the glory to God. Now I am taught my own nothingness, my inability to do anything for God. I have at times been greatly discouraged, and even dejected; but I think that when most disheartened God has graciously been pleased to give me some little encouragement. I trust, however, that I feel that duties belong to me, but results to God; and I hope I am well persuaded in my mind to labour diligently and unweariedly in my Lord's vineyard. At times I have been very earnest in prayer with God for a blessing on my ministry. I hope I have felt in some degree what it is to wrestle in prayer; but my prayers, I grieve to feel, are in a general way dull, listless, wandering, formal. May God give me more and more the spirit of prayer. The increase of my flock, owing to the pits and railroads, calls for more diligence and zeal. How disheartening it is to find that about one-half of the new-comers are Dissenters—many of them very bigoted and spiritually proud. I do warn them in a spirit of meekness against the sinfulness of schism, and I have not as yet, that I am aware of, offended any by so doing. I hope God approves. I have prayed for guidance in this respect, and hope I am right."

Work has always a tendency to increase upon those who are willing to do it, and the year 1840 opened out a new sphere of activity to Mr. Gray, which probably was, under God's Providence, the first step that led to his being called to his great Missionary work for the Church in Africa. In January 1840 he says: "Much engaged this month in writing letters to the principal laity of the county, inviting them to support the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, of which I have undertaken the Secretaryship; also in calling upon the Clergy, chiefly in the great towns, to induce them to form Parochial Associations. There is a very general inclination upon the part of nearly all of them to do so, and some, I hope, are already actually formed. The annual sub-

scription list is at present £83. I shall not be content with ten times this sum." From this time his work for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel was untiring and arduous. "Much engaged with S. P. G.;" "Much occupied writing letters to both Clergy and Laity for S. P. G., endeavouring to arrange a course of sermons and meetings throughout the country;" "Incessant letters for S. P. G. occupied nearly all my time;" and records of sermons preached in various places, and meetings attending, are constantly recurring entries. It may be worthy of notice that, while throwing all his weight and influence into the cause of this Society, which he considered the true organ of the Church, Mr. Gray did not ignore the work of the Church Missionary Society, but in July 1840 we find sermons preached both at Whitworth and Byer's Green, and collections made in its behalf. He was also bestirring himself actively with the Company and with Mr. Shafto about building a school at Whitworth and a church at Hillington, and his parochial work was becoming more and more earnest and devoted in spite of discouragement. There were seasons of hope and encouragement too. Thus he writes: "*June 14, 1840.*—In many respects this day has been one of comfort. In the morning service I prayed, I hope, with the Spirit and with the understanding also; indeed I never pray so fervently as in the public congregation, and I think every Lord's Day I love the Church services more and more; I feel their beauty and suitableness. In the evening I preached with more freedom and accuracy than usual. Extempore preaching still makes me feel uncomfortable, and when done, I feel as if I had delivered a task. Morning congregation 114—full; Evening about 60—not quite an average."

But while adding to his work on all sides, he was alive to the danger of becoming too much immersed in external duties, and slurring over more private and personal matters. He was continually on the watch lest his self-examination should be slurred over and become formal, or his study of Holy Scripture lacking in devout meditation and prayer. "I am always *doing* something," he says, "and have a sort of feeling that when not

reading I am idle. This is very absurd." And such passages as the following indicate his watchfulness:—"I fear that when I find people neglecting public worship, I feel as much mortified at my want of success as at God's dishonour. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit in me." Various practical matters, too, grew upon him as his Church principles became more and more fixed; and it was part of his character to apply to his own daily life whatever he grasped and accepted as a principle. So we find him saying: "Though I am convinced fasting is a duty, I quite neglect the Fridays through the year; and it has never even occurred to me to fast during the Ember Days which have just passed. I must make a change. I have not fasted since Lent. The principle, I am sure, is Scriptural and sound; the Church, too, commands it, the only difficulty is to settle the degree." Henceforward he notes this subject, and alludes to the Friday fast as a point of self-examination. He became more anxious, too, about family prayer, and having used a Commentary on the Bible daily at this office, came to the conclusion that a few simple extempore words would be more useful, and more likely to fix the attention of his household, and consequently resolved to adopt this plan. Eventually he took to reading the second Lesson for the day at family prayers. His sermons increased in dogmatic teaching—Courses on the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Apostolic Commission, and like matters, were carefully prepared and preached; and his belief in the need for teaching sound Church doctrine became more and more confirmed, and took shape in various ways, as did his ever-increasing yearning after Unity—a yearning which did indeed grow stronger and stronger to the very end of his life. This belief is constantly expressed in his Journal, as, *e.g.*, "Read Beaven on *Intercourse with Eastern Churches*: an excellent, sound principled, and reasonable publication; it is very consoling in the present day, amongst many circumstances of a discouraging nature, to see Church principles spreading far and wide." And on the birth of his son (August 24th, 1840), he expresses his conviction in very clear language:—"May God grant that he may grow up

in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. If his life be spared, may he one day be a faithful minister of the Gospel of Christ Jesus, a witness for his Lord to a sinful generation. God grant that I myself may be more faithful, watchful, zealous, and that I may live in the spirit of prayer. O that in these dangerous days I may be guided to the truth as it is in Jesus. I am more and more convinced that what are called CHURCH PRINCIPLES are the true Gospel principles. Lord, open mine eyes if I be in error, and give me grace if right to speak the truth boldly as I ought to speak. My danger lies, I believe, now in the fear of man. I dread giving offence, and perhaps losing the good opinion of those I esteem by decidedly avowing my principles. The same holds good with regard to my people. I do not like to offend them (put a stumblingblock in their way). My idea of my duty, if I would be faithful to my God, is to speak the truth in love, with tenderness and consideration for weak consciences. Perhaps, however, I am justified in not laying too great stress on Church principles, on the ground that they are not able to bear it. O for a single eye,—a mind free from prejudice,—loving truth, desiring above all things the promotion of God's Glory. We do not know, oftentimes, what spirit we are of; but if I do know my heart, I believe its desire is to glorify God. I really from my soul believe that if I could look upon dissenters as God's ministers, and doing according to His Will in preaching the Gospel, I would, notwithstanding their rancour and hostility to my own branch of the Church of Christ, receive them as such, give them the post of honour, and be content to be a doorkeeper in the House of my God."

Again, early in 1841, after reading Fremantle's *Letter on Eastern Churches*, he says: "I trust we shall soon make an effort worthy of our Church, and in accordance with her principles to commence a friendly intercourse with the Greek and other branches of the Catholic Church. There seems to be a great opening and cheering prospects."

And again:—"Read several numbers of the *Missionary Register*, which afford me quite as much pain as pleasure. If

England and America are converting the heathen in Africa, the West Indies, and elsewhere, they are at the same time carrying with them the schisms which are the disgrace of our age, and the cankerworm of our religion."

Of the American Church he says: "The prospects of the Church are most encouraging there. The divisions and subdivisions of sectarians pave the way. The American Prayer-book and Church discipline and practice is a strange jumble of primitive and modern views. I am not condemning their alterations, several of which may be good; but in some a low church latitudinarian tendency may be observed, such as the omission of the Athanasian Creed, the optional expression for '*descended into Hell*' ('went to the place of departed spirits,')—the churches built north and south,—the change of the expression in the Eucharistic Service¹ '*verily and indeed taken,*' into '*spiritually,*'—the Cross omitted in Baptism when requested, as likewise Absolution in Visitation of the sick, etc. etc. While in others, High Church sentiment seems decidedly to have prevailed; witness their restoration of the Weekly Offertory, bolder assertion of the Apostolical Succession, etc. etc."

Dr. Pusey's writings always seem to have met a warm reception, their warmth and spirituality being essentially congenial to Mr. Gray's own mind. He remarks upon the "deep personal piety which made itself felt in all his writings;" and after reading Dr. Pusey's well-known *Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury on the present Crisis in the Church* (1842), comments upon the "beautiful spirit" in which it is written, while owning that it "fills him with very melancholy thoughts respecting the Church's prospects." Mr. Gray's summing up of Mason Goode's *Answer* to Dr. Pusey is brief and telling. "Able and striking; alarming and uncharitable, sneering and sarcastic!"

In November, 1843, Mr. Gray comments thus on Garbett's *Review of Pusey*: "An elaborate, interesting, but not to my mind convincing critique. He does not throughout upwards of a hundred pages, fix upon a single passage and denounce it as heretical, but he finds fault with the language used,—draws his

¹ Mr. Gray evidently means the Catechism.

own inferences from it, imputes motives abundantly, and will have it that Dr. Pusey holds transubstantiation and means to teach it, though he positively denies it. There is, however, much matter for thought, and he writes well. Sometimes his views appear to me quite sound and Catholic, and at others he seems to fritter away the truth, substituting faith for the Real Presence."

As might be expected, Dr. Newman's sermons were fully appreciated, and Mr. Gray also read Manning's *Unity of the Church*, Williams on the Passion, the *Catena Patrum*, the writings of S. Thomas Aquinas, Wordsworth's *Theophilus Anglicanus*, Archdeacon Wilberforce on Church Courts and Church Discipline, with keen interest and much admiration. But time for reading must have been growing less and less each month, as his work for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel increased upon his hands, and parish work at the same time grew more thick. On Sundays Mr. Gray undertook four full services, and walked nine miles in order to carry them all out; often, he said, feeling less tired than at the end of an ordinary week day. In July, 1841, however, he resigned the charge of Byer's Green.

In May, 1841, Mr. Gray was called suddenly to London by the death of his mother, but except this, he seems to have worked on unflinchingly till the end of 1842, when, after some weeks spent in the south, he returned with new vigour to the main objects of his life, "my ministerial duties, theological study, and sermon-writing."¹ There was much distress in his parish that spring, owing to the coal-pits being laid in, and his time for reading or journal-writing became less and less. The chief events of this year (1843) were the birth of a daughter

¹ At the end of 1843, Mr. Gray says in his Journal: "I find I have *written* just thirty sermons this year. As I have taken a good deal of pains with them, perhaps this is as much as I need have done, after having been ten years in the parish." In July, 1844, he was "much engaged in writing sermons, chiefly with a view to the Barberite heresy recently introduced into my parish." On one occasion he says that he finds his catechising is much appreciated by the elder part of his congregation, who "learn a great deal without having their pride offended, or appearing to be taught."

in June, and Mr. Gray's being called upon to preach the Visitation Sermon at Durham in July:—which is briefly recorded—"Asked to print it—declined." His thirty-fourth birthday came round, and in his wonted self-review at each such season, while lamenting his "want of strictness, of deep religious feeling, of fixedness of purpose, and of continued application to Divine things"—(a want which scarcely seems indicated by his devoted life)—he also expresses a sense of "more deadness to the world, and weariness of it, and more realisation of the importance of eternal things."

1844 also went by without any marked events. Mr. Gray's time and hands were full, and he went more about as Deputation for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel:—going, for instance, into Lincolnshire for three weeks in this capacity, in October, 1844;—and in April, 1845, he made a prolonged tour through the manufacturing districts of Yorkshire; Leeds, Bradford, Halifax, Dewsbury, Wakefield, etc. His pit population increased greatly, and consequently his parochial and school work; and he had the satisfaction of seeing churches at Byer's Green and Hunsworth consecrated. But the sphere of his activity and self-devotion was about to change, and a new scene in his life to begin.

CHAPTER III.

1845 TO DECEMBER, 1847.

OFFER OF LIVING OF STOCKTON-ON-TEES — ACCEPTATION — LETTERS TO HIS SISTER—CONSECRATION OF S. SAVIOUR'S, LEEDS—DEPARTURE FROM WHITWORTH—SETTLING AT STOCKTON—WORK AT STOCKTON—SCHOOLS—DISTRICT VISITORS — PAROCHIAL DIFFICULTIES — APPOINTMENT TO AN HONORARY CANONRY AT DURHAM—OFFER OF THE LIVING OF WHICKHAM DECLINED—LETTERS FROM BISHOP OF DURHAM—FIRST SUGGESTIONS OF A COLONIAL BISHOPRIC FROM MR. ERNEST HAWKINS—CONSULTATIONS WITH FRIENDS : WITH THE BISHOP OF DURHAM—CORRESPONDENCE WITH MR. HAWKINS—ACCEPTANCE, IF CALLED ON BY THE CHURCH — CORRESPONDENCE WITH ARCHBISHOP HOWLEY—BISHOPRIC OF CAPE TOWN FINALLY ACCEPTED—QUESTION OF MEANS—OF MR. GRAY'S SUCCESSOR AT STOCKTON—HAMPERED CONDITION OF COLONIAL BISHOPS—PASTORAL LETTERS ON BEHALF OF THE NEW SMES—MASTER OF UNIVERSITY—DOCTOR'S DEGREE—DEPARTURE FROM STOCKTON—CONSECRATION IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY—CORRESPONDENCE—LAY BAPTISM—DIARY—JOURNEYS ABOUT ENGLAND ON BEHALF OF THE CAPE —LEEDS—WAKEFIELD—INTERVIEW WITH SIR HARRY SMITH—SALISBURY—CHELTENHAM — GLOUCESTER — BIRMINGHAM — MALVERN — LIVERPOOL—CHESTER — WORCESTER — INTERVIEW WITH LORD GREY — LETTER FROM BISHOP BLOMFIELD—MR. FOX MAULE AND MILITARY CHAPLAINS—MR. MERRIMAN—WELLS—CLEWER—ADDINGTON—CAMBRIDGE—ALVERSTOKE—CHICHESTER — BATH—ETON — EXETER—TORQUAY—BISHOP OF EXETER—OXFORD—LAST COMMUNION BEFORE SAILING—PORTSMOUTH—EMBARKATION FOR THE CAPE.

EARLY in August, 1845, Mr. Gray received the following letter from the Bishop of Durham (Dr. Maltby) :—

“ Auckland Castle, August 2nd, 1845.

“ My dear Sir—I do not at all know whether the proposal I am about to make will fall in with your views of duty and comfort, and those of Mrs. Gray. But while I indulge my own feelings in paying you a tribute of respect and confidence, I must beg that you will not for one moment scruple to decline it. It has always appeared to me very unreasonable to make

an offer by way of kindness, and yet not leave the persons to whom it is made entire liberty to reject it.

“The vicarage of Stockton being about to become vacant by the removal of Mr. Eden to this place about Michaelmas, I am anxious at least to make you the offer of it, as a testimony to your zeal and professional exertions, not only in your own Parish, but in the adjacent district of Byer’s Green, and especially to mark my approbation of the admirable sermon which you preached at the consecration of the church in that place.

“You need not be in any haste to answer this. I must set out for Raby on Tuesday, in my way to a wild part of the country, where a chapel is to be consecrated, and shall return for two or three days before I set out on the larger portion of my Visitation.—Yours, my dear sir, very sincerely,

“E. DUNELM.

“The Rev. Robert Gray, Old Park, Bishop-Auckland.”

As before, when Crossgate had been pressed upon him, Mr. Gray’s one desire was to find out, as far as possible, what seemed to him God’s Will in the matter, and then simply to carry that out, whatever it might be. His heart was poured out in writing (according to his usual habit on special occasions) as follows :—

“O Lord God Almighty, I come to Thee at this time in humble but earnest prayer, feeling deeply my need of Thy Guidance and Assistance. Thou hast permitted me, my God, unworthy though I be, to become Thy Ambassador to sinful man, and to preach the Gospel of my Lord and Saviour, and hast cast my lot in a small but neglected land, where through the assistance of Thy Ever Blessed Spirit some fruit is beginning to appear. And now (I cannot but think that it is at least by Thy permission) a sphere of still more extended usefulness, a heavier and a greater charge has been pressed upon me. My God, I know not whether it is Thy Will that I should go whither I am called, or remain with my present little flock. O do Thou guide me, do Thou direct me! Most earnestly do I implore of Thee that Thou wilt send down Thy Holy Spirit

upon me, and lead my steps in the paths Thou wouldst have me tread. Show me where I shall be most useful in turning sinners from their sins, and in leading them to Christ. Of myself I feel I can do nothing; I confess my utter worthlessness, and the unknown depths of my guilt, aggravated because I have too often sinned against light and knowledge. Yet well do I know, my Father, that oftentimes Thou hast chosen the vilest sinners as monuments of Thy Mercy, and the weakest vessels for the greatest purposes, that Thy Hand may be clearly traced and acknowledged in Thy works, and all the glory may be Thine. O then, again and again do I beseech Thee to influence my decision in such a way as shall best promote the salvation of my own soul, and of those committed to my trust. May no merely temporal matter interfere with my duty to Thee, or the obligations of my sacred office; but may I so act as shall best advance the glory of God and the eternal interests of men. Hear and answer, O Lord, these my imperfect petitions, in the Name and for the Sake of Jesus Christ, my Blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen."

The result was that Mr. Gray accepted the Vicarage of Stockton, being induced to do so, he says himself, "partly from a conviction of my unprofitableness with my new pit population; partly from a desire that both Sophy and myself may be saved our long Sunday walk of five miles in all weathers, and our entire absence from the children on that day from morning till night; and partly from the hope of being of use in Stockton, and altering my too secular and expensive mode of living. My present population consists of about 1000, 900 of whom have come almost within the year. They are, for the most part, of the worst character, and are continually changing. May God give me patience, perseverance, faithfulness, zeal, wisdom, and success, in my new and most important charge." That these reasons for wishing to move were not suddenly brought into existence, may be seen from a letter written to Dr. Williamson in the beginning of that year, when he was seeking a Curate.

"Could I have afforded to exchange a living for a curacy I should have been half induced to offer myself to come

and work under you, for I am heartily sick of pit people, and I am more and more convinced that the Sunday work is too much for Sophy. . . . Do you know any one who would go out to the Cape as Missionary, or minister to the emigrants?"

Mr. Gray writes to announce his intended move as follows:—

"Old Park, August 8th, 1845.

"My dearest Annie . . . I write now to give you a piece of information which may perhaps surprise you. I am going to leave this Parish, and have accepted the Vicarage of Stockton, which the Bishop has offered me in a very kind and flattering manner. I have of late been so disheartened at the state of my parish, having a sad reprobate population; and not at the present moment, I believe, one hundred souls who were here this time last year, that I have been quite prepared to leave it. And in addition to this, our Sunday winter walk of five miles, and absence from the children all Sunday, have been an increasing trial to us. I shall of course regret much to leave this old place, to which I am much attached; and also the Shafto family, whose kindness to us has been very great. There are very few (though there are some) in my now changed parish whom I shall care to leave. You know I have only just lost my old congregation, who have gone to their new church. I believe my work here is done, and perhaps others may be more useful. But I think I am worked out. I thank God that amidst very many errors and infirmities I have been of any use in this district. I shall have 6,000 souls under my charge at Stockton, and shall keep a curate. There are several things which are likely to make the parish a comfortable one, though the responsibilities are great. In a pecuniary point of view the gain will not be great; but I do not think I should have done right to refuse, considering all the circumstances. I have been very generally marked out both by clergy and others for Stockton and for Bishop-Auckland." . . .

"August 14th, 1845.—My dearest Annie, You are anxious to hear a little more about Stockton. The town has about 10,000 souls:—6,000 under the Vicar, who keeps a curate,

and about 4,000 with a new church which Collinson lately had. The value of the living after paying the curate is about £350. There is a very tolerable house. The people are, I believe, a very excellent body with a hearty church spirit, and a great desire to pull well with their Vicar. There is, of course, a great deal of dissent. The Methodists are a very influential body. The Roman Catholics have just got a new church by Pugin, and an Independent chapel is now building. There is a famous Blue Coat School with large endowments, and I have both master and mistress to appoint. I am thinking of applying to St. Mark's College for the master. . . . I mean to take my present mistress with me; she has been very unwell of late, and I am thinking it would do her health good, and be a great improvement to her to send her for six months to the institution at Whitelands, Chelsea; and I have already written to make inquiries. . . . I wish her, before taking her important charge, to have advantage of education, and also of seeing the best London Schools. . . . There is a Lectureship attached to the parish church which is now occupied, but which I *ought* to have and *could* have to help to pay the curate. The church is hideous,—brick,—round-headed windows, pulpit and desk before altar, large galleries, pews bought and sold! But there are many things to make the sphere a useful and not an unpleasant one, and I see a great work before me. I do not expect to gain anything; there are many things to be done, in all of which I must take the lead. My moving, too, will in various ways be expensive; it cannot cost me less than £150. I am satisfied, however, that I have done right, and these pitmen only prey upon my spirits and weigh me down, without my doing them any apparent good. I have had a very kind and affectionate letter from C., but full of earnest cautions not to upset everything I find *at first*, and begin my work by a battle for the surplice and the rubrics! How little men understand each other! And what an utter nincompoop (if you understand the word) he must think me! I am going to order a black gown immediately, and I shall again submit with the best grace I can to the usual twang of the clerk, and the loss of the offer-

tory and church militant. . . . I expect to begin moving on October 1st, to be in residence by the last day of that month. Am, of course, anxious about my successor here, and am scheming for a good man.—Ever, dearest Annie, your affectionate brother,
R. GRAY.”

Mr. Gray was accordingly collated to Stockton Vicarage, September 30th, 1845, and read in on November 9th following. A letter to his sister gives an account of his parting from Whitworth, the offering of a testimonial, and the entry upon his new work, as well as a very interesting record of his few days spent at S. Saviour's, Leeds, during part of the Octave kept after the consecration of that Church on SS. Simon and Jude, 1845.

“ Old Park, November 3rd, 1845.

“ My dearest Annie—I would gladly write oftener to you all, but literally I cannot. From morning to night we are in a bustle. You will say that this is inconsistent with my going to the consecration of S. Saviour's, but it was an old promise, and I could not resist ; and I am glad I went. We met, 250 clergy, and I shall not easily forget the glorious services of that day. The procession up the hill was beautiful. The church perfect. But the earnest burst of prayer from that whole congregation was such as I never heard before, and perhaps never shall again on this side the grave. There were 500 communicants out of a congregation of 700. Collection in the morning £1,000. The Bishop preached a sound but not able anti-Roman sermon. Dr. Pusey, in the evening, a most touching discourse upon *Mary Magdalene* a model of penitence and love.¹ We were ten hours at these services that day. Next day I was donkey enough to go to York for an S. P. G. Meeting, to hear the Bishops of Calcutta and Jamaica, but returned for evening service, thereby missing two of Dr. Pusey's. But I heard him twice on Thursday, and was four times at church, and again on Friday. On that evening I went to Churton's, at Craike.

¹ “ Loving Penitence,” No. 1 in the volume of *Sermons on Solemn Subjects*, preached in S. Saviour's, Leeds, 1845.

I spent a pleasant day with them, and on Saturday I returned to Stockton, where I preached yesterday an opening sermon (very moderate), but I hear of some half offended about the Sacraments. I came home to-day to receive a piece of plate, but it is put off till to-morrow. I have never seen anything so striking as the devotion at Leeds. Laity of my own age and station sobbing aloud, and engaged for hours in prayer,—most of the congregation spending the time before the service (a full hour at times) in reading the Psalms, or kneeling in private prayer, and Pusey's sermons most awakening. Poor man! he had hardly been in bed at all during the four nights I was there, and never tasted food before two o'clock. We lived with the Clergy of the church,—four of them with £50 a year between them. I think a strong *Church* (not Roman) feeling pervaded most minds; and I hope that season was blessed to the confirming and strengthening many minds in the faith wherein we stand. I can answer for one devoted young layman whom I persuaded to go with me, and upon whose mind I trust that holy season had a beneficial effect. I am sure you will be glad to read the sermons when they are published.

“I had a painful parting with my people yesterday week. The church was crammed, the people filling up the aisles. But I got through the services better than I expected, after the first few moments. They were all very kind; the poor Shaftos were much affected, then and when we went to luncheon. In the afternoon I had, for the first time, to open out both schools; but the service was different. I could not speak comfortably to them as to my people in the morning. It was a last warning. We go to the Bishop's to-morrow, and from thence probably to Strong's at Sedgefield to meet the Bishop of Jamaica, and then to work at Stockton. Having preached my first trying sermon, in which I thought it right to lay my views of duty and of doctrine before them, I shall henceforth preach plain practical sermons for a time. If I can get a hold of the people, I may then give them strong meat as they are able to bear it. There is much, very much, to be done, and I doubt not I shall be often cast down; but if I could be refreshed occasionally by such

holy seasons as that of last week, I feel I should be greatly strengthened and encouraged. I have been surveying the parish to-day, and hearing much of good and evil, though I hope the good preponderates. I am sure, dearest Annie, I shall have your prayers for God's Grace and Blessing to be with me. I much need them. I feel much obliged to you for your kindness to Mary.¹ She is well worthy of anything that can be done for her, and grateful for it. I am going to ask you to let her stay a day or two with you after she has left the Institution, if not inconvenient. I want her, now that she is in London, to see the British Museum, National Gallery, Adelaide Gallery, and anything well worth seeing. Such sights enlarge the views of young country girls, and she will probably never have such another opportunity."

Mr. Gray plunged heartily into the parish work of Stockton, of which, as he says, there was indeed plenty to be done, and to him there needed no additional stimulus to be up and stirring in his Master's service. Unfortunately there is a blank in his Journal at this time (probably from excess of work), and we can only find hints of the various efforts he was making, in letters. Among his first objects was the education of the children of his flock. He writes—

To Dr. WILLIAMSON.

"Stockton, November 20, 1845.— . . . I like my prospects here. There is much to do, and the Church is not leavening the lump, but it is respected. Education is at a very low ebb. . . . I am sorry to hear what you say about men's minds being shaken upon the point of our being in schism. This would look as if the movement were proceeding a step farther, for hitherto Romanisers have, I think, pretty generally shirked the historical, abstract case, and flown off on the ground of personal feeling, as Oakley. Indeed, it is one comfort to find how very weak have been the reasons assigned. I have not seen all Oakley's letters, but, though amiable in feeling,

¹ The young schoolmistress of whom he had written before.

what I have seen appears to me purely imaginative. If he leaves us because our Bishops are not S. Ambrose or S. Charles, what will he feel when he comes in contact with the M'Hale school? But really matters are very sad on every ground, and not least that holy men should leave us because they think God has."

"Stockton, December 1st, 1845.— . . . I have just come from a long discussion this evening at an Infant School—a joint affair between Church and dissent. We were three Churchmen, two Quakers, one Methodist, and one half-and-half. I still cling to it, hoping to get it into my hands, but it has at present a Baptist master and mistress. And a proposal was made to start another school in the very district where I am endeavouring to get schools. I have staved off the matter for three months, and hope before then to get my plans matured. But I have no time to lose. I wish, if you can, you would get me some statistics about Infant Schools. I want to know, from as many places as I can,

- " 1. The age of admission and dismissal.
- " 2. Salary of teacher.
- " 3. Whether master or mistress, or both.
- " 4. How many one teacher can manage.
- " 5. The expense of keeping up an Infant School from year to year.

"I preached yesterday for our High Schools, and got a large collection for this town, near £22. I wrote my sermon in a great hurry, for I had expected Townsend or Chevallier to preach. . . . We are fully employed here, and the *callers* add to our difficulties. I mean to rise (and have begun) every morning before six o'clock."

To Miss MOWBRAY.

"Stockton, December 18th, 1845.—My dearest Lizzy, Mary has given me this evening £25 from you. Am I right in supposing it is a subscription for my schools? If so, I am much obliged to you, dear, for it. It is the first I have received, and it is an encouragement to me, and, I hope, a good omen of

success. I am not apt to despond when I have a work of this kind before me. I look upon it as a thing *to be done*, but I foresee some difficulties in the present case. My actual obstacle is a site. Ten shillings a square yard is an awful price, and that is what I am threatened with. But I do not yet know : we have really some very good church people here, not intelligent, but hearty. I am, of course, cautious in not speaking too strongly, but I suppose I shall be thought somewhat high. We are just starting a clothing-club, which I hope will be of use to the poor and our schools. It is to embrace the whole of the town. We do not yet know what support we shall meet with, but we are putting it upon an extensive plan. If it takes as well as it did at Byer's Green, we shall have near 300 depositors. We have hitherto only talked about it, and people highly approve. It remains to be seen how they are disposed to give. We are just issuing the papers, and Sophy is writing letters to the leading people. She comes out more and more, and is a first-rate deaconess, and will, I hope, be of much use with the ladies. There are several people in the parish who remember the daily prayers, when they used to go full-dressed, and from church to tea and a rubber. Please God, I hope I shall be able to give them an opportunity of worshipping God again every day in His Holy House. I mean to have prayers on all the Saints' Days (it has been customary to have them on some), and daily during Lent. I feel the daily prayers a privilege, and long to re-establish them, but I must move slowly. . . . Ever your affectionate Uncle,

R. GRAY."

To Mrs. WILLIAMSON.

"Stockton, January 3rd, 1846. . . . — is very anxious that I should hold a meeting for the Church Missionary Society, which I decline, and would have me support the Bible Society, which I also decline. I hope your S. P. G. meeting has passed off well. I shall of course make an effort for it here, as soon as I have leisure, and have got a little influence. . . . Can you furnish me with any information about the formation of District Visiting Associations? There is, I know, one large Asso-

ciation recently established in London, besides smaller parochial associations. I want particularly to know the nature and extent of duties of the visitors—what they do, and what they are instructed *not* to do. I hope to be able to make use of ladies in that way here. I have already one besides Sophy, who is a most accomplished visitor, and goes very courageously alone all over the town. Our schools re-open to-morrow. I am much obliged to you for your information about Infant Schools. I expect I shall want a mistress in three or four months.”

Mr. Gray exerted himself vigorously to get new schools built, a letter from the Bishop of Durham proving that he backed his efforts.

“4, Upper Portland Place, May 15th, 1846.

“My dear Sir—I attended the National Society yesterday, having desired Mr. Kennedy to give me notice when the question of the Stockton grant was to come on. I am happy to inform you that a vote passed of £200, and there was a strong opinion in the Committee that the Privy Council would not give less than £300. . . . Yours very truly,

“E. DUNELM.”

The Bishop was also promoting Mr. Gray's intentions of improving the Vicarage “by lands which I am desirous of making over to it.”

A letter to Mrs. Williamson (undated, but apparently written about this time) alludes to all this: “We have our house, our school-buildings, and our singing, at this time, all in a critical condition. Any one of these may upset all our plans. Will you let me know when is the soonest you can receive us, and when Henry will be at home. I feel I ought not to go away at all, there is so much to do, and my Curate only a Deacon of some four months' standing. Souls, too, perishing all around for lack of care. We have no system at work here to reclaim the lost or arouse the indifferent. I *must* have another Curate. And I talk of going away to amuse myself for the best part of a month! . . . The Bishop was kind enough to write to me about my grant—it is more than

I expected. Our second case is now before them; that will be for 200 children—the first was for 300 children. I am going to invite, by circular, the congregation to come and practise chants and psalms in the large schoolroom. I am quite uncertain how it will take. We are now practising a class of twenty adults and forty children there and in the church. It seems ludicrous in me to have anything to do with such a thing, and this is not a musical place, but our singing is wretched, and it is well worth an effort.”

“Stockton, June 22nd, 1846.—My dearest Annie . . . I am again in hot water from the slanders of Socinians, Quakers, Baptists, and Independents, with reference to Schools and Education. We almost despair of getting our house altered this summer, there are so many difficulties in the way. I shall be very glad indeed to have a sight of you all again. I am not without hopes that my parishioners will keep me a second Curate. Unfortunately the chief of them are absent from home, and will be so all summer. I am thinking, on my return, of opening a room for Divine Service in the midst of the worst part of my population. The more the Church takes her true position here, the more rancorous will be the opposition she will meet with.

“I applied to Mr. Coleridge for a S. Mark’s man for the Blue Coat School, but he has not one to spare, which is a disappointment to me. I had hoped to have grafted on to it a middle school, which is rather a hobby of mine. We lose all the middle class for want of a good Church education, and these S. Mark’s men appear to me the very persons for the middle classes. I mean, however, to keep this in mind. There is much to be done in the way of Sunday Schools, Church Union, and Library, in imitation of Leeds. For all of these Eden has in some measure paved the way, and I hope in course of time all will be carried into effect. Ultimately there must be another church.”

During that autumn Mr. Gray received another mark of the

respect and value entertained for him by his Bishop, expressed as follows :—

“Auckland Castle, Sept. 24th, 1846.

“My dear Sir—The exemplary manner in which you have performed your professional duties since I have had opportunity of observing it, points you out as one of those Clergymen who should be appointed to an Honorary Canonry in our Cathedral. If it be agreeable to you to accept a situation purely honorary, I have much gratification in thus marking my personal regard and approbation of your public services. . . .

“Believe me, dear Sir, yours very faithfully,

“E. DUNELM.”

Mr. Gray replied to this :—

“Vicarage, Stockton, Sept. 24th, 1846.

“My Lord—I have to thank your Lordship very sincerely for this new and unexpected proof of your kindness and consideration towards me. It would, under any circumstances, be a satisfaction to me to be connected with the Cathedral Church of my Diocese, but that of Durham has peculiar attractions for me, associated as it is with all my early recollections, and connected with it as my Father was for so many years. I accept therefore, with much gratitude, your Lordship’s offer of an honorary Canonry, and I trust that this mark of my Diocesan’s regard and approbation may serve to make me more diligent and earnest in the discharge of the important duties of my calling.”

To Mrs. WILLIAMSON.

“Stockton, Sept. 29, 1846. . . . I have been desirous for some days to write, but could not. Arrangements for S. P. G. meetings and sermons throughout the Diocese, entailing a never-ending correspondence, have been the chief cause. . . . You will be glad to hear that the kind old Bishop has offered me, in a very handsome manner, an Honorary Canonry in Durham Cathedral. . . . It is a pleasure to me to be connected with the Cathedral Church under any circumstances, but much more so with our dear old Durham.

“We had our first meeting here for S. P. G. last night—a most crowded and successful one, and I was well supported by the leading laity. It has cost me a sleepless night, to which you are indebted for this letter, which otherwise, perhaps, I had not had time to write.”

Mr. Gray was collated on October 3, 1846, to the Honorary Canonry in “the Cathedral Church of Christ and Blessed Mary the Virgin.”

To Mrs. WILLIAMSON.

“Grinkle, Oct. 15, 1846. . . . We came here, literally driven out of our house by dust and dirt from our repairs, and remain till Saturday. Kitty and her husband too had come down, so that the sisters are all together. . . . You ask me about the Hon. Canonry; I believe it will be my duty when at the Cathedral to sit in a stall appropriated to me, but I know nothing more. . . . My stall has no emolument attached to it—it cost me £3:15s. to be collated. I felt it was very kind in the Bishop. . . . Has R. any pain in his knee? How easily are we disabled from work! It should make me very thankful that I have so little illness. We have the typhus very bad in Stockton just now. I am thinking of building a Church Institution. Can Richard give me any hints about one? I shall want £500, and hope to get on with it next year.”

To Mrs. WILLIAMSON.

“Stockton.—I am, as usual, in a bustle and hot water. . . . I am uncertain now whether I shall not lose my Curate, which will be a sad blow to me. . . . It is not impossible that I may get Arthur Gray for a second Curate. . . . Affection for dear Robert’s memory would make me do much for his children. With a very little exertion I hope we shall be able to send up from £60 to £70, and perhaps more, for S. P. G. This is a good breaking of the ground; I do not think that more than £5 was sent last year. Dissenters are very bitter. They say it will not be long before I go to Rome. I have given *no* ground whatever for any such imputation, having been Anti-

Roman even almost beyond what is charitable. But it shows they feel the Church is moving, and that consoles me. But one of my District Visitors told me to-day people said I meant to do away with pews in the Church, and turn all into free and open stalls. I have been endeavouring, alas! with little success, to break down the system of buying and letting pews. I am very anxious next year to build the Church Institution, but it will cost £500, and I don't see my way to more than half the money, so that I tremble to take it in hand.

“. . . I have really not been able to write, what with one thing or another. . . . Our mistress has been confined to her room two months with erysipelas, and we have had to teach. The Clothing Club has been very exhausting, and Sophy has been overwhelmed with all sorts of accounts. . . . I hope matters are proceeding comfortably in your parish, and that the Cross has not been defaced by the zeal of your parishioners? . . . I have been working hard this last week to get hold of an endowment of upwards of £300 from the Kirkleatham school for a Grammar school in this place. I have sent up petitions from the clergy, town and country, Mayor and Corporation, magistrates, men of business, and tradesmen. I am sanguine enough to hope we shall get it. To-day we have had a meeting about the support of my new schools. They will cost a gross sum of £180 a year to keep up. The Trustees of the Blue Coat School promised me their savings, and the rest I am pledged to raise as best I can. I am rather anxious about them, but hope to succeed. It is, however, a great experiment and a risk. Chevallier is going to preach here to-morrow week for the Irish, and a collection will afterwards be made through the town. Subscriptions here are ruinous. . . . I have some idea of sending a cart round the town for all the old clothes! . . . Arthur Gray will, I hope, be ordained to my curacy before Lent. . . . If I had more time at my disposal, I should write to you more frequently. I am just beginning an adult school on Sundays, which I hope may

be useful. It is almost the only spare hour I have, but I wish to get hold of the young people if I can."

In the midst of all Mr. Gray's troubles and toils at Stockton, the genuineness of his self-devotion was put to the test by an offer unexpectedly made to him by the Bishop of Durham of the living of Whickham. The language in which the offer was made would have justified many men to their own consciences in leaving the post of difficulty and discomfort for one much more agreeable.

"To the Rev. Robert Gray. Private and Confidential.

"4, Upper Portland Place, May 22, 1846.

"My dear Sir—Although I am sensible of the inconvenience arising from a short incumbency, yet necessity sometimes requires it, and a change from one sphere of usefulness to another not less useful, fully justifies it. I therefore feel myself at liberty to offer you the Living of Whickham, because, in point of income and situation, it will be more desirable for yourself and family, and you will have as abundant exercise for your zeal and energy in the education of the young and spiritual instruction and comfort of both young and old, as at Stockton. I believe that a portion of the labour and responsibility of Whickham parish has been removed by the new district, and as soon as the Ecclesiastical Commissioners obtain funds, I believe also it will be very advisable to detach Swallow from it. I presume that you were acquainted with the place in the time of Mr. Douglas; and being just now, as indeed always in London, much engaged, will add on this part of the subject no more than that if, from any cause, you wish to remain at Stockton, you will not consider yourself precluded from following your own inclination. If you remove, you will naturally feel an anxiety about a proper successor; and upon this I wish to advise with you CONFIDENTIALLY. . . . I mark this communication as *private*, but of course you will take counsel with Mrs. R. Gray, though with no one else.—Yours very truly,
E. DUNELM."

Mr. Gray's answer needs no comment :—

“ My Lord—I need not, I trust, assure you that I am deeply sensible of your great kindness in making me the offer conveyed in your letter of to-day. If I felt myself at liberty to decide upon my course, simply upon personal considerations, I should not hesitate for a moment about accepting it ; for both the situation, with its house and the income, offer inducements, to the force of which I am fully alive, loving as my wife does the country, and narrowed as my income has of late years been from various causes. I cannot, however, fail to observe, from what I have seen since I have been here, that another speedy removal of their Vicar would be injurious to the cause of the Church and religion generally in this place. They felt very much the loss of Mr. Eden, and I am sure (without meaning myself) that the people generally would feel sore at another change within so short a time. Indeed, since I have been here, there have been various wide-spread rumours of my leaving, and they created unpleasant feelings in the place. Under these circumstances, therefore, I think it right, with every feeling of gratitude to your Lordship for your great kindness towards me, to remain where I am, and where I hope I am in some degree useful, and have been received very kindly. I think I should do wrong to move at present simply from interested motives, and I could plead none other for a change. The parishioners also will, I am sure, expect that, having embarked in a large scheme for the improvement and extension of the means of education, as well as other schemes by which I have involved them in much prospective expense, and to which they have yielded from placing confidence in me, I ought to remain and work out my plans to a safe conclusion.

“ The only serious drawbacks to my comfort and usefulness here are, first, the sad system of letting and selling pews, which is both illegal and most unjust to the poor, and operates very seriously against the Church, indeed, more so than I could have imagined ; and, secondly, the utter impossibility of myself and Curate adequately discharging the duties of this parish. If I

could induce the Churchmen of Stockton to support another Clergyman for the poor destitute, whom we are compelled to neglect, I should be quite compensated for the sacrifice which I now make. I have not mentioned your Lordship's offer to any one except my wife. Though delighting in the country, she quite agrees with me in thinking that I ought to remain where I am. I do not know Whickham, and have not been to see it, but I know the country round about it, and much prefer it to this. . . .—I remain, my dear Lord, very faithfully and gratefully yours,

ROBT. GRAY."

To this the Bishop of Durham replied:—

" 4, Upper Portland Place, May 26th, 1846.

" My dear Sir—Although I very much regret that you cannot benefit by the offer of Whickham, yet it is impossible for me not to appreciate highly the motives which have induced you to decline it. They are truly honourable to you, and I may be allowed to add to Mrs. Gray also. As you have acted with a view to the weal of the Church, and to secure the attachment of your parishioners to it, they ought to be made acquainted with the sacrifice you have made; and if they have any right feeling, they should show their sense of it by assisting you in your very natural wish to abate the mischief arising from the letting or sale of pews, and also to obtain additional assistance in the discharge of your duties. I therefore release you from all obligation to secrecy, and need not add that whatever aid I can give, in the discreet use of authority, for checking illegal traffic in pews, I shall always be ready to supply. In endeavouring to secure the services of an additional Curate, I am ready to become a subscriber of £20 annually to any fund you may raise. It has occurred to me sometimes that in the great dearth of labourers in the Church, and the absence of sufficient endowments to requite them, it might not be inexpedient to unite the offices of Curate and schoolmaster. Whether any arrangement of this kind be practicable at Stockton, you are the best judge. . . . Yours very sincerely,

E. DUNELM."

His predecessor, Mr. Eden, writes in the same strain :—

“ Bishop Auckland, June 4th, 1846.

“ My dear Gray—I was fully aware of what the Bishop had done . . . and he was very much pleased at your answer, and commended the motives which led you to refuse it. The offer to you, and your refusal will no doubt strengthen your hands not a little amongst your people. I should have been very sorry for Stockton if you had left it at present; but I was sure that you would make any sacrifice, rather than that any injury should have been done to the Church by your removal, which I believe would have been the case if you had acted otherwise than you have done. I have no doubt that you will feel continual satisfaction in having made this sacrifice,—for it has been a sacrifice to yourself as well as to Mrs. Gray; and I can easily understand how much you will be encouraged to go on boldly in your work. I am sorry for all your troubles. . . . We all have our troubles, and I suspect that we should not get on half so well without a rub occasionally. As to . . . I should rejoice rather than be annoyed at what has been done. It will, you may depend upon it, be the means of strengthening your hands and increasing the friends of the Church; or, at all events, of separating the true Church people from the mixed multitude. It has been too long the custom in Stockton for Churchmen and dissenters to act together in many things, and you will get on much better when alone.” . . .

Thus, for a time it appeared to be settled that Mr. Gray was to remain at Stockton; and though, from a worldly point of view, some of his relations could scarce help regretting the sacrifice his refusal to accept Whickham involved, there was a general feeling that such sacrifice was consistent with his character, and what those who knew and loved him would expect. It was but for a short time, however, that matters remained thus quiescent. Another invitation to quit Stockton shortly arose, and this time of a very different character;—the doubt as to self-seeking or consulting the temporal welfare of himself or his family certainly did not and could not enter into the question of whether or no he was to accept that Colonial Bishopric