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## A PLEA FOR THE MINISTRY, AS A LIFE WORK.

Allowing for the just attractions of all those professions, which are merely secular, I claim for the ministry of the Word a superiority over them all. It presents a wider range of thought to the intellect, and imparts a new interest to the investigation of truth. Here all that is great in thought and pure in pleasure—"the power of exerting the largest influences for the highest purposes"—the full feast to a noble mind of an ambition as holy as its rewards are immeasurable—an ambition which finds more sweetness in work for the eternal salvation of men than in building a pyramid, or creating an empire—all meet and embrace each other. Here a regenerated soul accomplishes the most for God, attains the end for which his piety, his endowments, and his being were given him; finds the choicest banquet for his spirit and the most perfect peace for his conscience.

But some one will say—Do you expect me to turn my back upon houses and lands, and deliberately to decline all the fruits and rewards of modern civilisation for an office generally associated with poverty and persecution? Yes, verily; I beseech you to reckon rightly. Put into one scale all that secular pursuits, when most successful, can give; and in the other the "hundredfold more in this present life and in the world to come—life everlasting"; and you will perceive that, compared with the donations of grace, the imperial riches and magnificence of the earth are nothing. I do not know and cannot conceive what everlasting life shall turn out to be. I know it to be something which shall place me by the side of Christ, at the head of creation, and that, as a joint-heir with Him, I can never, to all eternity, have a superior; while the constituent elements of my bliss, as my spirit stretches towards the Infinite, shall be such as God only can communicate and know. But with regard to the hundredfold in this life which my Master undertakes to give me, I can see that it means light, love, beatitude, nearness, repose, the consolation of the spirit—a mine of spiritual wealth, a throne of spiritual honour, in comparison with which all that this green earth holds or contains is poor. Oh, what a life that must be in which you have nothing to do but serve Christ, but glorify Christ, but imitate Christ! Is it worth living for anything else than that "all our strength, our breath, our life, our faculties should be consecrated, devoted, and crucified for the service of the Lord Jesus?" Is not this crucified life, filled with Christ and transformed by the Spirit, very happiness, as well as the mainspring of usefulness? Happiness, usefulness, character—these three sum up all attainable good on earth; and it is in the production of these that the profession of the ministry exists.

1. Happiness. What is it? It is the conformity of the soul to Jesus