

attention to prayer meetings. It happens that months pass without a single meeting for congregational prayer in some congregations. In other congregations there are prayer meetings, so called, but prayer is not offered by any one except the minister, and the meetings are very thinly attended, very cold and dead. A revival would surely revive our prayer meetings.

We have had a week of prayer in common with all the evangelical churches. Let us plead with God not to let the fire of devotion die among us. Let us plead that he would give us grace to honour him in all things by obeying his commands, and doing what we can for the promotion of his cause.

THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.

"It is a poor business," from a worldly point of view. Nobody has ever amassed a fortune by preaching the gospel. A politician may secure an office worth six or ten hundred pounds a year. A lawyer may make his thousand, or more. A successful merchant may count his monthly gains by thousands. A rumseller may accumulate riches. Even so. But the chief end of man is not to gather worldly gear. If it were so, piracy, theft, and robbery would be justifiable. If it were so, ministers would be of all men the most short-sighted if not the most miserable.

It is *not* a poor "business"! Emphatically it is the noblest and the best in which a man can engage if he has a call to it.—Even in a literary and intellectual point of view it is a noble business. Your mind comes into almost constant contact with the greatest and purest minds of the past and the present. All that is most sublime in poetry, most fascinating in history, most glorious in science, you lay under heavy tribute. Your model, your *ideal* of perfection is the God-Man who spake and acted as never man did.

In a philanthropic point of view the gospel ministry occupies the very highest rank. You "minister to the mind diseased."—Your place is the bedside of the sick and the dying and the sorrowful. You cheer the desolate and forsaken. You instruct

the ignorant, and you lead the erring and the vicious into the ways of truth and virtue. Disease in its causes and effects, moral and physical pollution, all that retards men's progress, it is your mission to combat.

But there is a far higher view of the gospel ministry. You are an ambassador of Christ. God speaks through you to rebellious sinners. Christ holds you as a "star" in His hand to give light to a dark world. You are instrumental in rescuing souls from eternal perdition and in leading them to God and Heaven and everlasting joy.—What number of hundreds of pounds would you take in exchange for a position such as this? Would you take anything earthly? It is good and honourable to serve God in the humblest calling; but it is better to serve Him in the ministry of the gospel.—What if you must be poor all your days; what if your coat must be threadbare, your hat seedy, and your table very plain?—From the beginning it has been so with prophets and apostles and martyrs. Nay, it was so with the blessed Jesus himself.—If God honour you with a call to preach the gospel—to be His ambassador—will you not say, Come, want and penury! Come, peril and death! I will fulfil my Master's commission. Trampling under foot mammon, and pride, and earthly ambition, I go forth bearing if need be the reproach of the cross!

But what is a call to the ministry of the Gospel. This is not difficult to tell. There is now no miraculous call such as marked apostolic times. It is in vain that we look for such a call. But God speaks to our hearts in His gracious and providential dealings with us. We ask His guidance in deciding what is our duty, and He will not refuse our prayer. The internal call to preach presupposes piety towards God and honesty towards men. It implies an earnest desire to engage in the work of the ministry, and delight in it. It implies the talents, the means, the opportunities and providential circumstances that could qualify us for serving God in this calling. Conscience speaks; its voice is to the pious, enlightened, docile christian, the voice of the Master. "I delight to do thy will, O