

The times in which we live are perilous in the highest degré to the soul and to spiritual interests. The fascinations and seductions of worldly society, the insidious encroachments of a worldly spirit and worldly principles, the haste and eagerness to be rich, and the consequent speculations and modes of trade and merchandise, and the ever restless hopes and anxieties induced. Add to these the rationalistic, infidel and Jesuitical principles and dogmas, now everywhere propounded—all are fraught with danger, with, indeed, extreme peril to the souls of men. As your watchmen, beloved, upon the walls of Zion, we love you too well to slumber or be silent. We lift up our voice. We warn you of these dangers. We charge you to be vigilant. Your enemies, numerous, invisible, most subtle and formidable, are near; they surround you. Watch. Be ever on the alert. Quit you like men. "This is the victory that overcometh the world," that whereby we are able to conquer, "even our faith," the faith of the saints, the faith that is divine, that is of God. To possess this and to be daily and continuously influenced and actuated thereby, be especially and particularly attentive to private devotions, prayer and meditation, and the reading of the word. It is thus that men have faith and rise out of the vanities of time into the riches of eternity. It is in this way that the soul doth plume her wings of faith and hope, and, like the eagle as it soars towards the sun, scatters the dust of earth from her feet and ascends to contemplate and exult in the glories celestial. It is thus that men do live; that the feeble are made strong, even as David, and the Davids in Israel become as the angels of God.

You will not, we trust, deem it unbecoming or out of place if we address to you a few words relative to what we regard as most important obligations due to the ministry. You will, we are sure, feel with us how important and how imperative it is that the members of the Church should pray for and assist, and liberally support and esteem very highly the ministry of God among you. On no occasion speak disrespectfully or disparagingly of such ministry. Remember, beloved, that though human, and therefore characterized by infirmities and defects, it is, nevertheless, divine—the ministry of Christ. Do not think of ministers as some appear to regard them, as mere orators, sent of God to delight, by eloquent orations on religious subjects the imaginations and feelings of the people, as any eloquent orator on a stage or in a theatre might do. The true minister of Christ is an ambassador of God, sent by Him not to please men's fancies and to pander to men's tastes, but to save men's souls, and to treat with men in things pertaining to God and Christ, and eternity. It is to convert; to reconcile man to God; to instruct the Church; to comfort, and, if need be, to rebuke; that all may be saved, and thus the entire Church may be without spot and blameless. Bear this in mind, beloved, and listen to the ministers of God who are sent to you, not so much to be pleased and delighted, as profited; to be taught, disposed and influenced to keep God's commandments. "He it is" says Christ, "that loveth Me, and such shall be loved of My Father."

In conclusion, allow us to remind you of the importance of family religion. Do not neglect family prayer, nor attend to it hastily or after a slovenly, formal manner. But let it be as the morning and evening sacrifice, a season of delight and means of grace. And let every one in