

Bishop Wilson's Meditations on His Sacred Office, No. 3.-- Tuesday

by J.H. Newman

J.H. Newman emphasizes the vital role of pastors in defending sound doctrine and promoting unity within the Church amidst challenges from erroneous teachings.

Scripture: Matthew 7:20, Matthew 13:25, Acts 28:29, 2 Timothy 4:3, Revelation 2:14

Topics: "Sound Doctrine", "Church Unity"

Description

J.H. Newman preaches about the importance of defending the truth and combating erroneous doctrines within the Church, urging pastors to be vigilant and not tolerate teachings that go against God's Word. He emphasizes the need for unity, piety, and steadfastness in faith, praying for God's mercy and guidance in preserving the Church. Newman warns against complacency and the dangers of allowing sin and false teachings to infiltrate the Church, citing biblical examples of the consequences of neglecting sound doctrine.

Transcript

Question from the Office of Ordination

Â-- ARE YOU READY, WITH ALL FAITHFUL DILIGENCE, TO BANISH AND DRIVE AWAY ALL ERRONEOUS AND STRANGE DOCTRINE, CONTRARY TO GODÂ'S WORD; AND BOTH PRIVATELY AND OPENLY TO CALL UPON AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO DO THE SAME?Â--Ans. I AM READY, THE LORD BEING MY HELPER.

Blessed be the good providence of GOD, who, in great compassion for this Church and Nation, has hitherto preserved us from heresies and schisms.

O LORD, continue to us this great mercy, and grant that we, Who are appointed to watch over Thy flock, may employ our learning and our time in promoting of true piety; that we may never grow secure and careless, but that we may endeavour to secure the power, as well as the form of godliness. Have pity upon all Christian Churches, that are distracted by contending parties, and reduce all that wander out of the way. Enable us to preserve this Church in peace and unity by all means becoming the spirit of the Gospel. Keep us stedfast in the faith, that we may never be tossed about with any wind of doctrine, or the craft of men. Let the zeal and industry of those that are in error provoke us to be zealously affected in a

righteous cause; in labouring to make men good, and in converting sinners from the error of their ways; which GOD grant for JESUS CHRIST'S sake. Amen.

"But," the Bishop, "himself also, as his important affairs will permit him, shall use his best persuasion, and all good means he can devise, to reclaim both them and all other within his Diocese so affected."--Canon 66th.

2 Tim. iv. 3. "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears."

N.B. We are now in these sad times, and it behoves all faithful Pastors to know it. It is not the doctrine of the Gospel, if it favours men's lusts. They that will not receive, or who reject, the truth, are often judicially punished with a greediness to receive errors, falsehoods, and fables.

Ver. 5. "Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, make full proof of (or fulfil) thy ministry." He that is wanting in any essential part, is wanting to his own salvation.

LORD, Thou art just in all the troubles which Thou hast brought upon this Church and Nation. Yet, O LORD, have mercy upon us, and restore to us that peace and unity which we once enjoyed.

Matt. vii. 20. "By their fruits ye shall know them." This rule, though given by CHRIST himself, is seldom observed. The best fruits are counted as nothing, are overlooked, and often condemned by those who have none good to show. Hence, all the evils the Church suffers.

Matt. xiii. 25. "But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat." O JESUS, awaken the Pastors of Thy flock, and open their eyes, that they may perceive the tares which choke the seed,--the wolves which destroy Thy sheep.

A mixture of good and bad in the Church is necessary to instruct, exercise, purify, sanctify, and keep the righteous in humility.

Matt. xiii. 29. "Nay, lest, while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them." A zeal not regulated by this prohibition, allows no time to the good to grow strong in goodness, or to the wicked to forsake their evil ways; but chooses rather to destroy the good, provided they can but destroy the bad.

Rev. ii. 14, 20. "I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication." How dreadful is the government of the Church, wherein a man must answer for those sins which he does not hinder! To tolerate by silence those who favour and promote sin, JESUS CHRIST rebukes in the persons of these Bishops.

O my SAVIOUR ! Thou who givest me this warning, enable me to profit by it. Assist me, in this day of trial, effectually to oppose and suppress that spirit of impurity, idolatry, profane ness, and irreligion, which is broken in upon us.

If for fear of offending men or from a false love of peace, we forbear to defend the truth, we betray and abandon it.

Acts xxviii. 29. "And when he had said these things, the Jews had great reasonings among themselves." A preacher of the truth is not to be blamed for the contests which it gives occasion to carnal men to raise. Even CHRIST Himself could not preach without disturbing sinners; and if He came not to bring peace on earth, but a sword of division, His Ministers ought to expect to do the same.

It is not by the heat of disputation, but by the gentleness of charity, that souls are gained over to GOD. And when controversy is necessary, as sometimes it is, let it never be managed with harshness, bitterness, or severity, lest it exasperate and harden, more than convert and edify. A prudent condescension has often prevailed upon the weak, and rendered them capable of hearkening to reason, when the contrary conduct would have removed them farther from the light. We ought to avoid evil men and seducers, in order to shame them; to deprive them of that credit, whereby they may do hurt; to make them to return to a right mind; and that we may avoid the snare ourselves.

Disputes.

The primitive Fathers were ever modest upon religious questions. They contented themselves with resolving such questions as were proposed to them, without starting new ones; and carefully suppressed the curious, restless temper.

May I receive from Thee, O GOD, at all times, the rules of my behaviour on these occasions.

GOD judges otherwise than we do of these things. He knows the good He intends to bring out of evil; either for the sanctification of the righteous; conversion of the wicked, By His goodness in bearing with them; or leaving them without excuse.

One single soul is worth the utmost pains of the greatest Minister of CHRIST. But, then, let us take care, when it is brought into the fold, that he be a better Christian than before; that he be not two-fold more the child of hell than before.

OXFORD,

The Feast of St. Simon and St. Jude.

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