

# Heads of a Week-Day Lecture, Delivered to a Country Congregation in --Shire

by J.H. Newman

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*We should honor the Bishop as the representative of Christ and the shepherd of our souls, and follow the example of the Apostles in witnessing for Christ and suffering for Him.*

**Scripture:** John 15:18, Acts 20:28, 1 Timothy 5:17, Hebrews 13:17, 1 Peter 5:2

**Topics:** "Apostolic Succession", "Church Leadership"

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## Description

J.H. Newman preaches about the significance of St. Simon and St. Jude, the Apostles, who preached the Gospel of Christ and resembled Him in their deeds and sufferings. He emphasizes how the Apostles were chosen to be witnesses of Christ's power, mercy, and sacrifice for all. Newman explains how the Bishops today are the successors and spiritual descendants of the Apostles, standing in their place as the shepherds of Christ's flock, and deserving reverence for their office. He warns of potential persecution and suffering that Bishops may face, urging the congregation to honor and support them as representatives of Christ, even amidst challenges.

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## Transcript

BEFORE we meet again, we shall have celebrated the feast of St. Simon and St. Jude, the Apostles. You will be at your daily work, and will not have the opportunity to attend the Service in Church. For that reason, it may be as well, you should lay up some good thoughts against that day; and such, by GOD'S blessing, I will now attempt to give you.

As you well know, there were twelve Apostles; St. Simon and St. Jude were two of them. They preached the Gospel of CHRIST; and they were like CHRIST, as far as sinful man may be accounted like the Blessed SON of GOD. They were like CHRIST in their deeds and in their sufferings. The Gospel for the festival shows us this. They were like CHRIST in their works, because CHRIST was a witness of the FATHER, and they were witnesses of CHRIST. CHRIST came in the name of GOD the Father Almighty; He "came "and spoke," and "did works which none other man did." In like manner, the Apostles were sent to bear witness of CHRIST, to declare His power, His great mercy, His sufferings on the cross for the sins of all men, His willingness to save all who come to Him.

But again, they were like CHRIST in their sufferings. If the "world hate you," He says to them, "you know that it hated Me, before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye

are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also."

Thus, they were like CHRIST in office. I do not speak of their holiness, their faith, and all their other high excellencies, which GOD the Holy Ghost gave them I speak now, not of their personal graces, but of their office, of preaching, of witnessing CHRIST, of suffering for being His servants. Men ought to have listened to them, and honoured them; some did; but the many, the world did not, they hated them; they hated them, for their office-sake; not because they were Paul, and Peter, and Simon, and Jude, but because they bore witness to the SON of GOD, and were chosen to be His Ministers.

Here is a useful lesson for us at this day. The Apostles indeed are dead; yet it is quite as possible for men still to hate their preaching and to persecute them, as when they were alive. For in one sense they are still alive; I mean, they did not leave the world without appointing persons to take their place; and these persons represent them, and may be considered with reference to us, as if they were the Apostles. When a man dies, his son takes his property, and represents him; that is, in a manner he still lives in the person of his son. Well, this explains how the Apostles may be said to be still among us; they did not indeed leave their sons to succeed them as Apostles, but they left spiritual sons; they did not leave this life, without first solemnly laying their hands on the heads of certain of their brethren, and these took their place, and represented them after their death.

But it may be asked, are these spiritual sons of the Apostles still alive? no; all this took place many hundred years ago. These sons and heirs of the Apostles died long since. But then they in turn did not leave the world without committing their sacred office to a fresh set of Ministers, and they in turn to another, and so on even to this day. Thus the Apostles had, first, spiritual sons; then spiritual grandsons; then great grandsons; and so on, from one age to another, down to the present time.

Again, it may be asked, who are at this time the successors and spiritual descendants of the Apostles? I shall surprise some people by the answer I shall give, though it is very clear, and there is no doubt about it; THE BISHOPS. They stand in the place of the Apostles, as far as the office of ruling is concerned; and, whatever we ought to do, had we lived when the Apostles were alive, the same ought we to do for the Bishops. He that despiseth them, despiseth the Apostles. It is our duty to reverence them for their office-sake; they are the shepherds of CHRIST'S flock. If we knew them well, we should love them for the many excellent graces they possess, for their piety, loving-kindness, and other virtues. But we do not know them; yet still, for all this, we may honour them as the Ministers of CHRIST, without going so far as to consider their private worth; and we may keep to their "fellowship," as we should to that of the Apostles. I say, we may all thus honour them even without knowing them in private, because of their high office; for they have the marks of CHRIST'S presence upon them, in that they witness for CHRIST, and suffer for Him, as the Apostles did. I will explain to you how this is.

There is a temptation which comes on many men to honour no one, except such as they themselves know, such as have done favour or kindness to them personally. Thus sometimes people speak against those who are put over them in this world's matters, as the King. They say, "What is the King to me? he never did me any good." Now, I answer, whether he did or not, is nothing to the purpose. We are bound, for CHRIST'S sake, to honour him, because he is King, though he lives far from us; and this all well-disposed right-minded people do. And so, in just the same way, though for much higher reasons, we must honour the Bishop, because he is the Bishop; for his office-sake; because he is CHRIST'S

Minister, stands in the place of the Apostles, is the Shepherd of our souls on earth, while CHRIST is away. This is FAITH, to look at things not as seen, but as unseen; to be as sure that the Bishop is CHRIST'S appointed Representative, as if we actually saw him work miracles as St. Peter and St. Paul did, as you may read in the book of the Acts of the Apostles.

But you will say, how do we know this, since we do not see it? I repeat, the Bishops are Apostles to us, from their witnessing CHRIST, and suffering for Him.

1. They witness our LORD in their very name, for He is the true Bishop of our souls, as St. Peter says, and they are Bishops. They witness CHRIST in their station;--there is but One LORD to save us, and there is but one Bishop in each place. The meetings have no head, they are all of them mixed together in a confused way; but we of CHRIST'S Holy Church (blessed be God!) have one Bishop over us, and our Bishop is the Bishop of --. Many of you have seen him lately, when he confirmed in our Church. That very confirmation is another ordinance, in which the Bishop witnesses CHRIST. Our LORD and SAVIOUR confirms us with the SPIRIT in all goodness; the Bishop is His figure and likeness, when he lays his hands on the heads of children. Then CHRIST, (as we trust,) comes to them, so confirm in them the grace of Baptism. Moreover, the Bishop rules the whole Church here below, as CHRIST, the true and eternal Sovereign, rules it above; and here again the Bishop is a figure or witness of our LORD. And further, it is the Bishop who is commissioned to make us Clergymen GOD'S Ministers. He is CHRIST'S instrument; and he visibly chooses those whom CHRIST vouchsafes to choose invisibly, to serve in the Word and Sacraments of the Church. And thus, in one sense, it is from the Bishop that the news of redemption and the means of grace have come to all men; this again is a witnessing CHRIST. I, who speak to you concerning CHRIST, was ordained to do so by the Bishop; he speaks in me,--as CHRIST wrought in him, and as GOD sent CHRIST. Thus the whole plan of salvation hangs together.--CHRIST the True Mediator above; His servant, the Bishop, His earthly likeness; mankind the subjects of His teaching; GOD the Author of Salvation.

2. But I must now mention the more painful part of the subject, i. e. the sufferings of the Bishops, which is the second mark of their being our living Apostles. I may say, Bishops have undergone this trial in every age. As the first Apostles were hated and opposed by the world, so have they ever been. I do not say they have been always opposed in the same way. In these latter times, they have experienced the lesser sufferings of bearing slander, reproach, threats, vexations, and thwartings in their efforts to do good. Time was, when they were even persecuted, cruelly slain by fire and sword. That time, (though GOD avert it!) may come again. But, whether or not Satan is permitted so openly to rage, certainly some kinds of persecution are to be expected in our day; nay, such have begun. It is not so very long since the great men of the earth told them to prepare for persecution; it is not so very long since the mad people answered the summons, and furiously attacked them, and seemed bent on destroying them, in all parts of the country.

Yes! the day may come, even in this generation, when the Representatives of CHRIST are spoiled of their sacred possessions, and degraded from their civil dignities. The day may come, when each of us inferior Ministers--when I myself, whom you know--may have to give up our Churches, and be among you, in no better temporal circumstances than yourselves; with no larger dwelling, no finer clothing, no other fare, with nothing different beyond those gifts, which I trust we received from the All-gracious GOD when we were made Ministers; and those again, which have been vouchsafed to us before and after that time, for the due fulfilment of our Ministry. Then you will look at us, not as gentlemen, as now; not as your superiors in worldly station; but still, nay, more strikingly so than now, still as messengers from Him, who seeth and

worketh in secret, and who judgeth not by outward appearance. Then you will honour us, with a purer honour than many men do now, namely, as those (if I may say so) who are intrusted with the keys of heaven and hell, as the heralds of mercy, as the denouncers of woe to wicked men, as intrusted with the awful and mysterious privilege of dispensing CHRIST'S Body and Blood, as far greater than the most powerful and the wealthiest of men in our unseen strength and our heavenly riches. This may all come in our day; we must do our duty; go straight forward, looking neither to the right hand nor the left, " in patience possessing our souls," watching and praying, and so preparing for the evil day. And after all, if GOD'S loving kindness spares both us and you the trial, still it will have been useful to have steadily thought about it beforehand, and to have prepared our hearts to meet it.

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