

**THE RELIGIOUS WEAKNESS OF
PROTESTANTISM;
THOUGHTS ON A FREE AND
COMPREHENSIVE CHRISTIANITY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649326594

The Religious Weakness of Protestantism; Thoughts on a free and Comprehensive Christianity
by Francis W. Newman

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

FRANCIS W. NEWMAN

**THE RELIGIOUS WEAKNESS OF
PROTESTANTISM;
THOUGHTS ON A FREE AND
COMPREHENSIVE CHRISTIANITY**

THE
RELIGIOUS WEAKNESS
OF
PROTESTANTISM.

9/13. 4.

THE
RELIGIOUS WEAKNESS
OF
PROTESTANTISM.

BY

FRANCIS W^{illiam} NEWMAN,

*Emeritus Professor of University College, London; and formerly Fellow of
Balliol College, Oxford.*

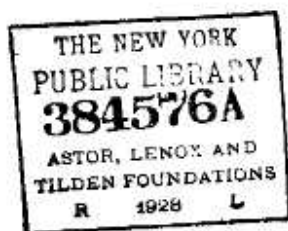


+L

PUBLISHED BY THOMAS SCOTT,
MOUNT PLEASANT, RAMSGATE.

1868.

~~20~~
Price 7d., post free.



It is proper to say that this tract appeared originally in a Review. No moderate change would suffice to make the tone natural to the author when writing in his own sole name. It has been thought better to leave the impersonal character which it bore from the first. Nevertheless, allusions to passing events which would now be misleading, are omitted or altered; one passage which was changed to please the Editor, is restored more nearly as it was at first written; and an erroneous paragraph has been corrected.

August, 1866.

F. W. N.



THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

*THE RELIGIOUS
WEAKNESS OF PROTESTANTISM.*

IT is humiliating to every Protestant to look on the map of Europe, and see the vast surface which is covered by Catholicism, and the numerical weakness of its nobler adversary. In less than forty years from its feeble origin, Protestantism made its widest European conquests; and thenceforward began to recede, nor ever again recovered the lost ground. Through the whole of the eighteenth century Protestant doctrine might have been preached with little molestation in the greater part of Europe, yet nowhere did it extend itself. Neither in Ireland, where a victorious Government was long bent to reduce Catholicism by severe and unjust law (in which they were far less successful than Catholic kings in their bigoted violences); nor in France, where unbelief laid the national religion prostrate and stripped the Church of its revenues; nor in the dominions of the Emperor Joseph II., who resolutely put down Romish pretensions, while remaining in communion with the Church; nor even in his kingdom of

Hungary, where the two religions co-existed in much good-will; nor under the Prussian monarchy, and elsewhere in Germany; nor in Tuscany, under the enlightened Leopold II.;—in short, nowhere at all has Protestantism, *even while she had a fair field and leave to speak truth*, been able to win anything perceptible on the field of history from her Papal antagonist. We submit, that this is a phenomenon too broad, too uniform, too decidedly marked, for any reasonable man to pass by as insignificant. And it is the more remarkable, because side by side with this religious weakness, Protestantism has more and more displayed its political and social superiority. Notoriously the Protestant cantons of Switzerland are superior in industry, neatness, and abundance to the Catholic cantons of the same land; while climate, soil, and race are the same. A similar distinction has often been observed between Catholic and Protestant farmers in Ireland. England, the largest Protestant State in Europe, has been the richest and perhaps the best ordered country, certainly that which stretches its power farthest. Nowhere else, not even in despotic countries, is the executive Government more energetic through the prompt obedience and concurrence of the citizens; nowhere else, not even in Switzerland or the United States, do the citizens exercise their right to criticize and to thwart the Government with a more loyal submission of the ruling powers; nowhere is there less desire of violent revolution than there has been for two centuries together in Protestant Great Britain (for the

ejecting of one Catholic king does not here concern our argument); nowhere is there a country, which, in proportion to its millions, is fuller of all the elements, mental and material, which kings desire and patriots extol. In Canada, where the two religions come into equal competition, the superior energy of Protestantism in everything that constitutes the grandeur of nations is manifest. Now it is a familiar fact, that such worldly superiority does in itself tend to the progress (at least to the superficial extension) of the religion in which it is found. It cannot be said that Catholics, like Turks, are so fanatically wedded to their creed as to be proof against all refutations; for it is notorious that in Catholic Spain, France, Germany, a disbelief in the national religion is very widely spread through the higher and middle ranks—a disbelief which sometimes pervades the ruling powers themselves. Yet, though they may cast off the Romish faith, they seldom or never adopt that of Protestants.

Probably all men who are thoughtful enough to abandon the Catholic Church, are also well informed enough to be aware what are the true causes of the energy, wealth, and intelligence of the Protestant nations; that it does not arise from the positive creed which they still hold, but from the private liberty which accompanies this creed or from the energetic public administration which this liberty enforces and maintains. In fact France, though nominally Catholic, vies to a great degree with England in all national developments; and the causes are

evidently either purely political, or inhere, not in religious faith, but much rather in religious scepticism. Out of that unbelief, which by the great French revolution of the last century broke down the power of the Church, has arisen much of the vigour of modern France; no part of it can be reasonably ascribed to the positive creed. Evidently then it is to the negative side of Protestantism that Protestant nations owe their energy and freedom, so far as the cause is ecclesiastical at all. It will further be observed that Russia, having a creed which from a Protestant point of view is in its essence neither better nor worse than Romanism, and being without the individual freedom which is to us so precious, nevertheless is on the whole flourishing within and powerful without, because of the energy of its central executive; an energy which is upheld by summary proceedings of the Royal House from within to secure an able occupant of the throne. In short, on the very surface of history is a broad fact, which is perpetually overlooked by the panegyrista of ecclesiastical Protestantism—namely, that while all Europe was still Catholic, every State was prosperous in a near proportion to its freedom, and the freest displayed exactly those points of superiority of which England or Prussia may now boast. Look to the Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella—a nation profoundly Catholic; in fact, more Catholic than now—for unbelief had not as yet pervaded its higher ranks, as in later days. The Parliaments of Arragon, of Castile, of Valencia were more spirited than those