

**THE BIBLE, AND THE BIBLE  
ONLY, THE RELIGION OF  
PROTESTANTS, A LECTURE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649231690

The Bible, and the Bible only, the religion of protestants, a lecture by J. M. Neale

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Cover @ 2017

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**J. M. NEALE**

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*South Church Union Lectures*  
**South Church Union Lectures.**

THE BIBLE, AND THE BIBLE ONLY,

THE

RELIGION OF PROTESTANTS.

A LECTURE

*Delivered in the TOWN HALL, BRIGHTON, on Thursday Evening,  
the 19th of February, 1852.*

BY THE

REV. J. M. NEALE, M.A.

LONDON:

JOSEPH MASTERS, ALDERSGATE STREET,  
AND NEW BOND STREET.

MDCCLII.

1306 f. 14

NOTICE.

I HAD no intention, when writing the following Lecture, that it should be printed. But as several of those who heard it wished to be able to read it, while by others it was misunderstood or misquoted, it now appears, with one or two slight alterations, as it was delivered. I cannot but express my gratification at the good humour with which it was listened to by an audience, many of whom differed very widely from its sentiments.

It is proper to add, that the South Church Union is not responsible for the *details* of the Lectures delivered under its auspices.

SACKVILLE COLLEGE,

March 5, 1852.



## THE BIBLE, AND THE BIBLE ONLY, THE RELIGION OF PROTESTANTS.

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ALTHOUGH I have not the slightest intention of preaching a sermon on the present occasion, I shall begin with a text. It is not indeed to be found in Holy Scripture; but, to judge from the number of times one hears it quoted, and the stress that is laid upon it, people seem to value it quite as much as if it were. My text, then, for the present occasion will be this: "The Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants." This is quoted triumphantly at lectures, on platforms, in sermons, as if it were an unanswerable argument against Tractarians,—as if whatever else they could get over, that must be too much for them. Now I am going to show you, in the first place, that this celebrated text has nothing to do with the subject: and in the second, that if it had never so much to do with it, it is not true.

I say, it has nothing to do with the subject, and I say so for this reason. I can allow no force in it as regards myself, because I am not a Protestant. I can allow no force in it as regards the Church of England, because the Church of England never was, is not now, and I trust in God never will be, Protestant.

Yes: I know that this statement does not please you. And I trust that no one will run away with thi-

one sentence of mine without taking what follows. For perhaps when we come to inquire a little into the meaning of this famous word, Protestant, we shall not disagree so very much. What do you mean when you say that you are Protestants? What do you mean when you talk of the Protestant Faith, and the Protestant Religion?

The word *Protestant*, in its simple and original sense, means clearly, some thing, or some person, that protests. Therefore, in one sense, all forms of Christianity are Protestant. They all protest against vice, immorality, infidelity, and so forth. In that sense, of course, I desire also to be a Protestant.

Again, in another sense, the word Protestant means one that protests against the errors of the Church of Rome; and in that sense also I have no objection to call myself one.

But this is not the original meaning of the word. According to that, a Protestant is one who protests against the Diet of Spire, which was summoned by the Emperor Charles V., in 1529, and who appeals from that to a General Council. Now, as I very much suspect that few of you could tell me what was done in the Diet of Spire, and as I am sure that fewer would appeal to a future General Council with the intention of submitting unhesitatingly to its decrees, it is plain that you do not call yourselves Protestants in the sense in which those early followers of Luther called themselves so. And if another proof were wanting, take this:

In the sixteenth century, those who had separated themselves from the Church of Rome, were divided into two great parties: the one called Protestants, that is, the followers of Luther: the other called Reformed, that is, the followers of Calvin. And these two would have no more communion with each other than either would with the Pope. And the railing they used against each



other was perfectly frightful. Luther's gentlest terms for Zwingle, the Swiss reformer, are "dog," "beast," "hog," "Antichrist," "devil." When Luther had ended a long and useless conference with Carolstadt, the German leader of the reformed doctrines, they bade adieu to each other thus: "I trust," said Carolstadt, "that I shall live to see you broken on the wheel." "And I hope," returned Luther, "that I shall hear of your breaking your neck before you reach home."

Now, these things prove that, as then Protestants thus railed at Calvinists, while you, on the contrary, speak of the followers of Luther and of Calvin equally as Protestants, you must use the word in a very different sense from that in which the sixteenth century employed it.

Well, you may answer, but so we may. We mean by Protestant, those who protest against Popery. In that sense we say that we are Protestants, and we say that the Church of England is Protestant; and we have a right to call it so.

Not exactly. It is not enough that a word is capable of a good sense to justify you in applying it to others. I have no right to say, I am addressing an assembly of Unitarians; and yet, in the true old sense, Unitarians you certainly are, and so am I, for we all believe in one God. I have no right to say, I am addressing an assembly of Baptists; and yet Baptists you certainly are, and so am I too; for we all hold that Baptism is an ordinance of CHRIST. I have no right to say, I am addressing an assembly of Jesuits; and yet I trust that, in the true and holy sense, Jesuits we all are; that is, that we are endeavouring to be followers of Him, from Whose Blessed Name the word is derived.

Thus, you see, there is a certain conventional sense

which in the course of ages attaches itself to a word, and which individuals have no right and no power to detach from it. I will give you a more familiar example. The word *calamity*, in its original sense, means a driving storm of wind and rain that lays the corn. But how absurd would it be if I were to tell you that, the other day, as I was walking out, there came on such a *calamity* as to wet me to the skin!

Well, but you will say, that is the very thing. This conventional sense *does* apply the word Protestant to one who protests against the errors of Popery.

Then here we join issue. I say, this conventional sense applies the word Protestant to something very different. And I will prove what I say.

There is a Church, the most venerable for its antiquity in the world,—a Church, six hundred years older than our own,—a Church, that has kept up a continual succession of Bishops in the same Sees from the time of the Apostles till now; I mean the Eastern, or what people generally call the Greek, Church: a Church which contains about sixty-six millions of souls, and which does most strenuously protest against Roman errors and Roman usurpations. I will give you an instance or two. The late Patriarch of Antioch, Methodius (of whom I knew something) spent the whole of a long and active life in opposing the Latin missionaries; and his death, I believe, was hastened by his exertions in preserving from them the people committed to his charge. The present Patriarch of Constantinople, Anthimus, is exerting at this moment by sermons, by schools, by tracts, every nerve against Rome. Only a fortnight ago, I received from his press at Constantinople a book in two octavo volumes, called *Proofs against the Papists*, and a very good book it is. The present Metropolitan of Moscow, Philaret (of whom I also know something) and the present

Metropolitan of Novgorod and S. Petersburg, Nicanor, are both distinguished controversialists against Rome. But what do I talk of individuals? Thirteen years ago, two millions of Roman Catholics, including three Bishops, came over in one day to the Eastern Church: and the late Pope Gregory XVI., in his allocution to the Cardinals, of Nov. 16, 1839, spoke of this as one of the heaviest blows that had ever befallen Rome. One instance more. In 1848, Pius IX. addressed a general epistle to the Eastern Church, inviting it to return, as he called it, to a submission to Rome. On this, the four Eastern Patriarchs published a circular letter to their flocks. From that letter I will read you an extract or two; because the strength of its language, (which I do not for one moment defend,) is quite worthy of Exeter Hall, or of your own Brighton Protestant Defence Association. "Of those heresies," they say, "which have spread over a great part of the world for judgments known to the LORD, Arianism was one, and at the present day Popery is another. But like the former, which has altogether vanished, the latter also, though now flourishing, shall not endure to the end, but shall pass and be cast down, and that mighty voice shall be heard from heaven,—Babylon is fallen!" Why, you would think it was Dr. Cumming who spoke.

Again: "The Papal power hath not ceased to deal despitefully with the quiet Church of GOD, but every where sending forth the so-called missionaries, men that deal in souls, compasseth sea and land to make one proselyte, to deceive one of the orthodox, to destroy the teaching of our LORD, to bastardize the Divine Symbol of our faith. . . . All they that innovate, as do the Latins, whether by heresy or schism, have of their own free will put on, according to the Psalmist, cursing like a garment. Whether they be Popes, or