

**A PLAIN REPLY TO BISHOP  
COLENZO: RESPECTFULLY  
ADDRESSED TO THE  
LAYMEN OF ENGLAND**

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A Plain Reply to Bishop Colenso: Respectfully Addressed to the Laymen of England by Walter Chamberlain

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**WALTER CHAMBERLAIN**

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# A PLAIN REPLY

TO

## BISHOP COLENZO.

RESPECTFULLY ADDRESSED TO THE LAIENEN OF ENGLAND.

BY

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AUTHOR OF "THE CHRISTIAN VERITY STATED," &c., &c.

LONDON:

WERTHEIM, MACINTOSH, AND HUNT,

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1863.

"FOR THE PRIEST'S LIPS SHOULD KEEP KNOWLEDGE, AND THEY SHOULD  
SEEK THE LAW AT HIS MOUTH; FOR HE IS THE MESSENGER OF THE LORD  
OF HOSTS."—MAL. II. 7.

## TO THE LAYMEN OF ENGLAND.

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MY BRETHREN,

A BISHOP of our beloved, National, Church has published a dreadful book. It denies the historical veracity of the first six books of the Holy Bible; those which we are wont to call the Pentateuch, or Five Books of Moses, and the Book of Joshua.

He has especially commended his work to your attention; and, certainly, by an ostentatious use of figures, it has a practical and business-like appearance, very well fitted to win your confidence.

I have had occasion, in the discharge of public duty, to read it, and must say that, though not neglectful of its figures, my attention was rivetted by its Hebrew words, and its principles. Upon a close examination, I find it full of errors; which this book (to which I invite your kind attention) professes to expose.

To you, men of law, and men of commerce, I especially appeal; and am content to abide by your decision. If the arguments in this book be sound, as I submit they are, then Bishop Colenso becomes utterly unworthy of any future attention, on similar subjects.

Allow me the honour of remaining,

MY BRETHREN,

Your respectful, humble Servant,

WALTER CHAMBERLAIN.

*Bolton, Lancashire, January 13, 1863.*





## PREFACE.

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SOON after Dr. Colenso's book was published it was suggested to the writer of the following pages that, owing to a particular course of reading, he might possibly be able to say a word or two in reply. By return of post he had become painfully conscious how it was he had so soon parted with six bright silver shillings; and, in the course of the day, he had ascertained the value of the production he had received for his money.

One was tempted to conclude that the book itself deserved no answer; but others seemed to think that it did. And if Dr. Colenso has done no other kind of good by its publication, he has certainly contributed very handsomely to the entertainments of the past Christmas season. Editors of periodical journals are especially indebted to him; they have been provided with leading articles for weeks. Till, at last, it is impossible not to feel a sort of pity for this erring Bishop; he has dropped, like a kid, into a herd of peccaries, who, naturally, enjoy the exhilaration of tearing him to pieces. One newspaper attacks him on the left, another shakes him cruelly (but cleverly) on the right, a third comes down with a ponderous article on his front, and a host of other papers administer much-deserved discipline behind. One gentleman takes up the Bishop upon his Hebrew. It is publicly stated, that a precise Irishman will conduct an assault (very desperate) upon Dr. Colenso's arithmetic. And now the author of these pages has arrested him for inaccuracy in the larder; a mere matter, among other questions, of sheep and pigeons. Indeed, whole communities of clergymen have been grievously moved. Rochester has burst into one universal groan, not unmingled with tears, on the attractive banks of Thames; and the sunny diocese of Winchester, with a haziness of view, like that which lends enchantment to the fields of Hampshire, has expressed a conviction, promiscuously, that the Bishop of Natal is sure to be refuted everywhere.

Yet, amid all this clamour, one thing is very noticeable—all these defences of the truth are *ad clerum*. And what need of them? The author will undertake to show, in the course of any one year, just 150 solid reasons, stamped with the Queen's authority, for believing that nothing can be right which assails those doctrines, for preaching which, the revenues of the Church of England are "dispersed abroad, and given to the poor" (clergy?). And he has such implicit confidence in the acquisitions of the Right Reverend Bench, that he is convinced every gentleman among them could produce, in the same short time, several thousands of reasons, equally good, for believing that Dr. Colenso must be wrong. The clergy do not require conviction; and we may all take comfort in the assurance, that, notwithstanding the Bishop of Natal's considerate and soothing appeal on behalf of his brethren, at p. xxxvi of his naughty book, not six among them all will there be, without sense enough to see the hollowness, and the wickedness, and the ignorance, of Dr. Colenso's attack upon the Pentateuch.

Under this conviction, the Author has prepared this "Plain Reply," not for the clergy, but for the laity—especially for the laity. Indeed, he understands, that two eminent divines (to the Hebrew learning of one of whom, all will pay respect) have announced their intention of replying to, and, no doubt, of refuting, Bishop Colenso. It is well, that, at least, one Bishop, should show himself quite a match for another, to the edification of all the clergy. So, stepping gently aside, and leaving these eminent men to those mutual amenities which characterize the affectionate little differences of distinguished clerics, the Author commends the pages of his "Plain Reply" to the consideration of laymen.

It will be found *very plain*. And "is there not a cause?" There are among the laity those who entertain, as they ought, sincere and profound respect for the name, and character, and position, and attainments, of an English Bishop. Whatever comes from the pen of any one such is likely to produce a serious, and lasting, impression upon their minds. They are prepared to give it implicit credence, because it was written by a Bishop. Or else, upon the assumption that even a bishop may be wrong, they begin to entertain in their minds certain deep questions, touching the strength and solidity of the bench upon which the prelates sit, to which it may, perhaps, be as well to make no further allusion. For this class of

laymen a plain reply is wanted. There is another class, which entertains such incorrect ideas concerning the state of the Church of England, that it verily believes the clergy generally are not competent to refute notions so unscriptural as those which have lately been published among them; or that, if they can, motives of self-interest, or the trammels of a complicated ecclesiastical system, prevent their doing so. For these a still plainer reply, to Dr. Colenso, is desirable.

The squabbings of Ecclesiastical Courts over matters of religious doctrine are much too tedious to retain the interest of stirring men of the world; and are notoriously distasteful, as well they may be, to all laymen.

Thus, addressing himself to laymen, the Author has been careful to frame his reply in such a way as seems most likely to induce them to read it; which reading he apprehends to be necessary to the utility of his undertaking. He hopes it will be found accurate, and critical enough, without being too laboured; and he trusts also, that it will prove to be so matter-of-fact, and homely, as to be felt convincing. It will, possibly, be thought that, in some places, his style is not becoming the gravity of the occasion. The Author protests that he is not able to regard Dr. Colenso's, as a serious attack upon the Pentateuch. Nor does he think it should be treated as such. It is desirable the laity should know this, and feel it. Such an attack proceeding from any one but a bishop, and an arithmetical bishop, would have been laughed to scorn. It would have been passed round slyly behind people's backs at evening parties; and when the unhappy delinquent made his bow, there would have been an universal titter. If any unfortunate "working" curate had sent out such a book, it would have made him ridiculous in his diocese; have laid heavily on his publisher's shelves; and, perhaps, have introduced him to what Lancashire lads call "the stone jug," *videlicet*, a gaol. In this case, for debt.

Now, "the Rule of Three" is an excellent domestic apparatus; and Dr. Colenso knows that as well as any man, but not better than most. Yet, before you can apply the Rule of Three to any author's statements, you must first be sure you quite understand him. Dr. Colenso has applied the Rule of Three to the Books of Moses. His misfortune is that he does not understand what Moses has said; so that, while his sums are all right, his calculations are all wrong.