

**THE OXFORD DECLARATION  
AND THE ELEVEN  
THOUSAND, BIBLICAL TRUTHS  
AND BISHOP COLENZO**

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The Oxford Declaration and the Eleven Thousand, Biblical Truths and Bishop Colenso by James Bouly

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**JAMES BOULLY**

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THE  
OXFORD DECLARATION

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Eleven Thousand;

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AND

BISHOP COLENSO.

BY

JAMES BOULLY.

Formerly Member of the Heidelberg University; Late Professor of English  
at the Royal Vitzthumshen and Blochmannshen Institute, Dresden;  
and Late Professor of Modern Languages at King William's  
College, Isle of Man.

Author of "The Tribunal where Superstition is Condemned and the  
Providence of God towards Mankind Justified."



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## P R E F A C E.

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IN a former work, entitled, "THE TRIBUNAL WHERE SUPERSTITION IS CONDEMNED AND THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD TOWARDS MEN JUSTIFIED," the author endeavoured, in accordance with his own notions of the subject, to take a short but comprehensive view of the arrangements of the Creator, manifested throughout the whole economy of the globe upon which man passes his existence, and to show the inconsistency of the notion, that either the original arrangements upon which the economy of the earth was based have become defective, or the creatures thereon, more especially mankind, have become depraved under the guidance of Infinite Intelligence.

This second work may be considered a sequel to the former one, illustrating and confirming the opinions therein advanced by the acts, opinions, and creeds of mankind, considered nationally, locally, and individually. In so small a work as the one now offered to the public, the more general affairs alone of prominent nations and of individuals can be noticed. Christian creeds and doctrines, in conjunction with other religions and creeds, are of course adverted to, and the records of the Old and New Testament are strictly commented upon. In short, all concerns which affect mankind, civilly and religiously, temporally and eternally, such as creeds, laws, education, art and science, trade, commerce, missionaries, sports, war, customs, climate, &c., have been brought under notice.

The object of this publication is, not to thrust any particular religious creed, opinion, or idea upon mankind, but, on the contrary, to allow every one to entertain the creed which the circumstances amid which he has been placed, and the capacity of intellect which his Maker has given to him, have allowed him to compose. Man's position in the world to come, may be totally independent of his course of life on this earth; for, if otherwise, Paul's tyrannical bigotry and complete deficiency in benevolence, might make the glory of his heavenly crown the least splendid of every other. Let the "Eleven Thousand" take this remark into consideration. The Creator alone can judge of the incitement to action; and no mortal can determine how far circumstances may render a man irresponsible for his actions. Truths in science and in political measures can only be proved by free discussion, or that great teacher—Experience. In like manner, all errors can alone be discovered by investigation. If, then, the Christian doctrines do not approve themselves to the whole world, and unite mankind by the bonds of concord and peace, let every individual be allowed to reject them and choose his own creed, without calling forth such an unwholesome document as is the "Oxford Declaration" of the "Eleven Thousand."



REASONS  
WHY  
BISHOP COLENZO  
SHOULD NOT BE CONDEMNED.

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" — Give me that man  
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him  
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart."

SHAKESPEARE.

To those who interest themselves in the differences which have arisen among the Bishops of the English Protestant Church, concerning the truth and credibility of Biblical history, and of the doctrines therefrom deduced, the consideration spontaneously suggests itself, What will be the result of this complication, and, can it be productive of benefit to those whom it affects?

Before any endeavours are made to obtain a satisfactory reply to these inquiries, it may, perhaps, be prudent to ascertain the nature and extent of the subject or subjects from which a solution is sought to be obtained. Many persons will readily allow that the subject is religion and Divine inspiration—that its nature is to instruct us in our duties to our Creator, and that it extends to our temporal and eternal concerns, but principally to our eternal.

This view of the subject may, as it regards religion generally, be correct; but in respect of the Jewish religion it is inapplicable, seeing that this latter had reference to ceremonies and ordinances of a purely temporal character. It is true that the religious and political government of the Jews were so intimately blended that they may be considered as one government. Such, at least, seems to have been the form of government which may be inferred from the accounts which the Jewish historians have given of their own people, especially in its

ancient form and during their wanderings; and, as a stationary or settled people, they were always more or less subjected to the political government of the nation under whose dominion they fell.

Under the present liberal constitution of the British nation, the political government may be said to interfere in no way with the religious government, so long as the religious doctrines do not interfere with the political laws and ordinances. It allows religious doctrines to be an affair solely between man's conscience and his God; and in this respect makes religious government subservient to political. Now this is a most remarkable fact, and is truly the safeguard of the British Constitution; for, although the religious aspires to the direction of affairs of weightier concerns to man than the political government, yet the decrees of the former, being founded upon doctrines of such obscure and doubtful origin, are often more arbitrary and relentless than the political laws sanction.

That mankind should interest themselves in affairs which immediately concern their present and future life, is quite consistent. It is equally consistent, also, and most seemingly in accordance with the decrees of the Creator, that the present should more closely occupy their attention than the future; and thus, as a general rule, mankind intermeddle much more in the direction of politics than in religion—the arrangements of which they leave to those who claim to be its guardians.

There is another circumstance which may be assigned as the cause why mankind in general do not individually interfere in the regulation of religious affairs, which is this:—that its doctrines profess to be founded, not only on obscure revelations, but that they are actual mysteries; and, as human existence, like all other existences, seems ordained for enjoyment, the generality of mankind were content, rather than lessen the enjoyment of life by useless attempts to understand incomprehensibilities, to leave such doctrines and mysteries to the solution of the thereto appointed priests.

It is to be remarked that all the ancient governments appear to have been under the influence of the priests of that religion which was then and there dominant. This state seems to have arisen from the fact that there was no nation which had any form of rule approaching to a constitution similar to the British. All were tyrannical or hierarchal. The consequence of this condition was, that the people themselves took no interest in the prosperity of the State, remained in continued ignorance, and were only kept in subjection by force, or, since the tyrant himself could have no confidence in the agents whom he employed to enforce his orders, by religious superstitions. Hence we discover the origin of all supernatural agencies, revelations, and miracles, which more or less characterize all religions.

The Greeks seem to be the first people who introduced any approach to a constitutional government in their Republics. What result followed this intro-

duction? Each member spontaneously felt great interest in the prosperity of the State to which each severally belonged, and a natural desire arose in each to fit himself to fill any office in the State to which he might be appointed; and, as religious superstition was therefore no longer necessary to keep the people in subjection, arts and sciences flourished, and civilization sprang up.

From this Greek regeneration another still more advanced arose in the Roman nation, and which, by the liberality of its constitution, and by the freedom and privileges to which each member of the State could lay claim, raised it to such a high degree of rank among surrounding nations, that from it issued the germ of civilization for the whole world. There may have been religious superstition among the Roman people; but it was of that nature which is, as it were, inherent in humanity, especially when the people are unenlightened by education, and when they begin to regard Creation as a work of Divine influence. The rulers also, may have encouraged this sentiment for certain objects and on certain occasions, but they did not govern the people by it; nor, when their armies marched to conquer, and to spread abroad commerce and science, did superstitious priests follow in their steps to mar the effects of their rule.

It is well authenticated, that the Eastern nations were sources whence Greece and Rome drew much knowledge, and from which flowed streams of the highest intellectual refinement. The very accounts of the Biblical Jewish historians establish the fact that the Egyptians were far superior to the Jews in refinement as well as in morality. Witness the royal reproof to cunning Abraham for his cowardly devices; the punishments for immorality in Pharaoh's household; the liberality of the Egyptians in lending their gold and jewels to the Jews, who used, as a device for borrowing them, Abrahamic falsehood; and the liberal and protecting care of the Egyptian Government in fostering the infancy of the Jewish families.

When reading the Biblical writings, it would be prudent always to bear in mind, that they must necessarily be partial. Even in those instances which represent the Jewish people, or certain numbers, or even a certain individual of them, as stiff-necked or disobedient, the object in view seems to be the exaltation of the whole people, or of certain individuals, or of a certain prophet, priest, or king, for a certain purpose, viz., as an example for imitation, or as a reproof to the generation then living, or to those who might hereafter be born; and the writings themselves hereby become aids, or even laws, for the government of the people. With this view before us, it may be only a just conclusion, to infer that the Jewish accounts were written for the future government of the people, and not to exhibit their real past condition. There is nothing extraordinary in this circumstance, even should it be the fact; and, since the religious and political government of the Jews were united, it is not so surprising to find that honesty and morality were sometimes sacrificed to religious superstition, seeing that, even in