

**A JEWISH REPLY TO DR. COLENZO'S  
CRITICISM ON THE PENTATEUCH.  
ISSUED BY THE JEWISH  
ASSOCIATION FOR THE DIFFUSION  
OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE**

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A Jewish Reply to Dr. Colenso's Criticism on the Pentateuch. Issued by the Jewish Association for the Diffusion of Religious Knowledge by Various

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**VARIOUS**

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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It had been originally the intention of the Association to give a general reply to the whole of Dr. Colenso's work; and considerable progress had been made in preparing a rejoinder to the second and third volumes.

It appeared, however, that the later volumes, containing matter which could scarcely attract the general reader, had not been very extensively read. The first volume contained by far the most important strictures upon the Pentateuch, and was written in so popular a style that it undoubtedly produced a remarkable effect upon the public mind,—an effect which the numerous rejoinders hitherto published have not yet removed.

It has, therefore, been deemed expedient to issue this reply to the first part alone; and it will be a matter for future deliberation whether the publication of a rejoinder to the later volumes be desirable.

## PREFACE.

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SUPPOSE that you had a friend whom you dearly loved and esteemed, a friend whom you had trusted all your life as your counsellor and guide, consoling you tenderly in times of adversity and sorrow, and admonishing you wisely in times of prosperity and joy,—a friend whom you believed to be the embodiment of truth, of virtue, and of wisdom. And suppose that one day you were told you had been grievously mistaken in this friend: that he had gone into a foreign land: that, there, some clever people had discovered him to be an impostor, who had built up his position upon falsehood and deceit, and that his impostures had been proved, beyond a doubt, by his own words and deeds.

You would be astounded at the mere idea of an imputation upon the character of such a friend. You would indignantly tell your informant that it was impossible; that no one should dare, in your presence, to breathe a

word of calumny against your dear friend, whose honour you were prepared to vindicate to the last drop of your blood.

Gradually, however, the foam of your indignation would subside, and the sense of a more serious and practical duty make itself felt. You would say, I will go abroad and see that my dear friend has fair play, that no doubtful evidence be taken against him, that his words, spoken in a tongue unfamiliar to his accusers, be not mis-interpreted, and that his actions be not misrepresented by those who do not understand the spirit of his pure life.

The BIBLE is this our friend; to the Jew how great a friend, none but a Jew can tell. It has been his guide, his counsellor, his never-failing friend, endeared to him as the sole relie of the ancient glory of his race; beloved as the great solace of his exile; guarded as the mainspring of his dearest hopes on earth and in heaven.

Nor is this love a mere selfish love. For the Bible, which has been the friend of the Jew, has become the friend of the whole world; and, devoutly believing himself to be accredited as its custodian, the Jew regards it as his duty to protect it, not merely for his own sake, but for the sake of humanity at large.

This friend, then,—this Bible—has gone abroad into foreign lands; its influence has spread far and wide, and it has afforded, for ages, a standard of action for the



best and wisest of men. The virtues it teaches, the morals it inculcates, the precepts it enjoins, have formed the basis of the best codes of the civilized world, and taught men justice, charity, and love.

Suddenly, its character is assailed; its veracity is impugned. The accuser quotes the words of the Bible itself, as evidence against itself; strives to prove inconsistencies, incongruities, and contradictions, as the result; seeks to sap the foundation of the belief in its Divine origin by an appeal to its own facts.

The Bible, then, is on its trial, and ours is the task to defend it. It will be our duty to sift carefully the evidence of the assailant, to examine well the analogies on which he bases his attack, to see whether he correctly interprets the words of Holy Writ, whether he properly represents the spirit of the Sacred Volume. From such a trial we shall have nothing to fear for our Bible.

And here we may remark, that, to the Jew, the criticisms of Dr. Colenso present few points of novelty. Centuries ago, most of the difficulties raised by the bishop, and by the German critics whom he follows, were perceived by the authors of the Talmud and Midrashim, and by the later Jewish commentators; by Maimonides, Nachmanides, Ibn Ezra, Abarbanel, Isaac Arama, and others. These men were true biblical critics; but they did not criticise with an imperfect knowledge. They

were complete masters of the language—then still a living tongue—in which the Bible was written; and they were well acquainted with the ancient manners and local circumstances with which a large portion of the Bible History is connected. They brought to bear upon their work all the learning of the past, all the philosophy of their own times, and a thorough knowledge of the book itself. That learning, that philosophy, and that knowledge enabled them to explain every difficulty that criticism could raise; and the Bible came from their hands like gold from the furnace. To them it was indeed a well-trying friend, for they had tested it with their inexorable criticism, and had found it true and trustworthy.

And so, we feel assured, it will be found by the earnest and conscientious critic of the present day, when he conducts his criticism in a fair and proper spirit.

We shall endeavour in this rejoinder to indicate, rather than to assert dogmatically, the arguments which may be used in defence of the Bible. Many points of difficulty may admit of various answers, besides those which we shall venture to advance. The light of science is daily waxing brighter, and may, at some future time, render clear and lucid that which is now intricate and obscure.

What we shall say, then, we shall put forward with all humility, conscious of the imperfection of human

knowledge, mindful that the future must have a store of information greater than the past; but yet confident that the Bible will never be affected by time, that its teachings will be ever young, that its authority will be daily more and more acknowledged, and that the increasing wisdom of the world will but signify an approximation to the Divine truths of that Law which we devoutly believe to be the Word of the One True God.