

CHRISTIANITY,

AND NOT

OWENISM,

THE REGENERATOR OF THE WORLD :

BEING THE SUBSTANCE

OF AN ADDRESS,

(*With some Additions,*)

DELIVERED IN THE NEW HALL, LEICESTER,

BY J. F. WINKS,

On Wednesday Evening, August 22, 1838,

IN REPLY TO

FOUR LECTURES DELIVERED BY MR. ROBERT OWEN

IN THE SAME PLACE :

WITH AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING SOME ACCOUNT OF A DISCUSSION WHICH FOLLOWED,
AND REMARKS ON THE SOPHISTRIES OF OWENISM.

"Talk they of morals, O thou bleeding Love!
Thou Teacher of new morals to mankind,—
The grand morality is love of Thee!"

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Having been requested at the close of the Meeting when this Address was delivered to 'publish it, and having since then received intimations that its publication might do good, I venture, though with some reluctance, to commit it to the Press.

The notes which I used on that occasion, though copious, were not complete. Some things which I had written down to say were then omitted, and others, which occurred to me at the time are, as far as I can recollect them, now inserted.

I shall be amply rewarded if this humble attempt to expose the absurdities of Owenism, and vindicate the Christian Religion from his coarse and calumnious attacks, is rendered useful in reclaiming to more sober and rational views any of those young persons who may have adopted the sentiments of Robert Owen; and, especially, if by this means their attention should be directed to the candid examination and humble perusal of that "sure word of prophecy unto which we do well to take heed."

J. F. W.

Charles Street, Leicester,
August 31, 1838.

ADDRESS, &c.

IN coming forward to review the sentiments and system of MR. ROBERT OWEN, and to assert the superior claims of CHRISTIANITY, I assure this audience that I am much impressed with a sense of the importance of the questions which I am about to discuss, and that I am quite aware of the difficulties which surround my path.

My audience is doubtless aware, that this extraordinary man has for many years been engaged in the study and pursuit of this his favourite object. For this, as far as he attempts to ameliorate the condition of humanity, I blame him not. Every individual who desires to promote the happiness of his species is entitled to our esteem and respect. Had Mr. Owen confined himself to these desirable objects he might have been distinguished as a philanthropist. But that individual has deemed it essential to the establishment of his system, that all others should be subverted—that all the acknowledged maxims of wisdom and prudence which have obtained amongst men, and all the institutions which have resulted from the experience of ages, and the Word of God itself, should at “one fell swoop” be demolished and swept away in order to make room for the introduction of his visionary projects.

Often had we heard of this remarkable individual at a distance, and many of us regarded his proposals for a new state of society as the harmless day-dreams of some amiable enthusiast. But when we heard of his daring impiety, and his rash and reckless declarations respecting the Holy Scriptures, we consoled ourselves under the idea that the bold blasphemy would carry its own antidote along with it to the mind of every reflecting person. We forgot, perhaps, that in human nature a congenial soil would be found for the reception of such seeds of rank and rampant mischief, and that the peculiarly unhappy condition of many of our countrymen of the working classes, and the present state of our ecclesiastical affairs in this empire, would favour rather than retard his operations.

Mr. Owen seems to have been quite aware of these circumstances, and he has skilfully and industriously availed himself

of them, by personal visits to the populous districts, and by the diffusion of various papers, tracts, and periodicals.

Some of these papers found their way to this town. A few individuals appear to have adopted the sentiments of Mr. Owen. An attempt to lay those papers on the table of the Mechanics' Institute led to altercation and misunderstanding, and eventually those persons who had adopted the New System formed another Society. They engaged a room, and have held various meetings for the delivery of lectures and for the discussion of certain controverted points. I simply state these facts according to the best of my knowledge. I took no part in the matter when the subject was under discussion, and I only name them now in order to explain the circumstances which led to this visitation from the Apostle of modern infidelity.

Mr. Owen has visited us, and we have heard him. I attended his first lecture, and when I heard the astounding declaration that "all the religions in the world were equally bad, and that all the evils in the world had resulted from religion"—I did not wonder that a respected and useful clergyman of the Established Church left the Hall. But I resolved, though, at the expense of my feelings, to hear the whole of his lectures. I have heard the whole, and now proceed to the task of reviewing them.

I again assure this audience that I feel deeply the responsibility of my position; not that I am in the slightest degree alarmed for the safety of Christianity, but I do wish that the task had fallen into other hands. I say not this by way of mere apology, or as an excuse for the imperfections which may be, and doubtless will be, discovered in this address. But I say so from a conviction that there are in this town those, who, from the nature of their engagements and the extent of their acquirements, are far better qualified than myself to repel this rude attack on our social and domestic relations, and vindicate pure and undefiled Christianity from the foul aspersions which have been cast upon her. It would have been far more agreeable to me, and no doubt to all of us, if the startling and outrageous doctrines of Owenism had been met by the christian philosophy of one—the withering wit and splendid eloquence of another—or the logical acumen of the editor of Leland's Work on Deism. Yes: we have men amongst us who are able to meet in single combat this gigantic infidel: and though the arm of ONE now moulders in the tomb, before whose mighty prowess the enemies of Christianity cowered and fled, let not Robert Owen imagine that because ROBERT HALL is in his grave, he may venture with

impunity into the place, where our modern Apollos of the Church enforced her holy doctrines with a resistless eloquence, and adorned them by an amiable and upright example.

On the other hand, there may be some propriety in a layman undertaking this duty, since our opponents are ever ready to represent the ministers of the Gospel as interested individuals.

But I come before you, my respected friends, destitute to a great extent of the qualifications requisite for such a task. On these accounts I bespeak your patience and your candour. I could not sit still and hear that Holy Book which I prize above all price, and that Holy Religion which I believe is fitted and destined to renovate the world, defamed and despised, without venturing a word in their defence. I am but "a plain blunt man:" I can only speak plain things—but the religion I profess directs me to be always "ready to give to every one that asketh a reason for the hope that is in me." I never undertook a public duty which has given me more pain. I regret to be brought into contact with so much that is impious and profane. May we all escape the contagion, and may HE who "maketh the wrath of man to praise him," overrule this visitation to the vindication and furtherance of the Gospel!

Whilst bespeaking your patience and candour, I would also acknowledge my need of divine aid, and seek from the Father of lights, the wisdom which cometh from above.

"And chiefly thou, O Spirit! that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for thou know'st.

* * * * *

What in me is dark,
Illumine; what is low, raise and support;
That to the height of this great argument
I may assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men."

In reviewing the sentiments and system of Mr. Owen, it is my intention to take those reports of them which I find in the public papers, assisted by my own notes. In one thing I do not intend to imitate that individual.—I do not intend to withhold approbation of what is correct or good either in his sentiments or his system. I will give him every advantage which I can honestly concede. Mr. Owen did not act thus. According to him there is neither truth nor virtue upon earth;—there has been no system propounded which either in a greater or a less degree has removed the evils of which he complains. He concedes nothing—he allows nothing. He ventures to tell us that we are all wrong, and that he alone is right. In these things I

shall not imitate Mr. Owen; but whilst I shall be ready to concede what I think ought to be conceded, I shall faithfully and fearlessly expose and denounce what I believe to be erroneous and absurd. In proposing my own views, it is my earnest desire that I may be enabled to do so with modesty and respect. I neither wish to give unnecessary offence to my opponents on the one hand, or shrink from the faithful discharge of my duty on the other.

In looking over the reports of Mr. Owen's lectures in the public papers, I had no small difficulty in selecting, arranging, and reducing to anything like order, the strange mixture of good and evil of which those lectures are composed. In the first place I will refer to those things respecting which I agree with Mr. Owen,—and they are these—

That human nature is in a disordered state, and that a great amount of vice and misery prevails in the world.

That these evils exist in part through bad governments—and in consequence of false systems of religion having obtained in the world—and especially because the professors of Christianity have not acted in accordance with their avowed principles.

That man is, to a certain extent, the creature of circumstance.

That all men have equal rights, and that there is no truth in any principle that does not equally benefit every child of human nature.

And, as a matter of course, I agree with Mr. Owen in a sentiment, most applauded in his lectures, but which he borrowed without acknowledgment from Christianity—I refer to our well-known golden rule of equity, “DO UNTO ALL MEN AS YE WOULD THEY SHOULD DO UNTO YOU.”

I cheerfully concede to Mr. Owen all the commendation and honour which are his due, for the good he may have effected in improving the condition and circumstances of numerous families at Lanark, and especially for the surprising and gratifying results of his pauper system in Holland, where, he asserts, it has so completely succeeded that not one pauper is to be found in the country! If these things are indeed so, and I am neither prepared nor disposed to disprove them, then Mr. Owen is entitled to our respectful esteem, and we shall lament that he has not bent the whole of his energies to the introduction of some improved and practicable pauper system in this country, instead of wasting his own strength in raising expectations never to be realized, or in exciting disgust by his visionary projects and his bold impiety.

I allow further that the proposed system of Mr. Owen is philanthropic so far as war and slavery are concerned. Neither of these “scourges of humanity” could exist under his system. But let it not be forgotten that Christianity has always denounced them, and that under her pure and peaceful sway they will be known no more.

In these things, more or less, I agree with Mr. Owen. I must next notice those from which I differ.

Mr. Owen imputes the evil and mischief which are in the world to the adoption of false principles. This is not sufficiently clear. When, and where, and by whom were they first adopted? Of these necessary facts we are not told by Mr. Owen, but he lays down this as his fundamental principle or groundwork, and building his theories of organization and classification on this questionable foundation, his whole system is unsound and unstable.

Hence it is that his schemes are impracticable. He has not gone to the root of the evil. Setting out with wrong views of the cause of human misery, he stumbles at every succeeding step of his progress upon those insurmountable ~~objects~~ *obstacles* which naturally arise from the deep-seated and radical corruption of the human heart.

Allowing, therefore, that Mr. Owen could get money to build his splendid paradises, which I think far from probable, yet he would not find men (or rather angels, according to his views,) to inhabit them in peace and order. Mr. Owen has already confessed that he finds some difficulty in obtaining suitable individuals, and hence his plan of probation in a sort of purgatory previous to their being permitted to partake of all the privileges of paradise! They must all cordially unite, he says, ere the blessings of his scheme can be realized. But will they? The testimony of ages is against Mr. Owen here, and he will find that human nature is human nature still, with all its propensity to selfishness and envy, whether it be found in a poor-house or a palace—a purgatory or a paradise.

Against another radical error in the proposed plans of Mr. Owen, notwithstanding it has been represented in one of our local papers as a question "entirely of a trivial and domestic character," I dare take my stand against his whole system. I refer to the management of infants. I pass over as ridiculous nonsense, unworthy of serious refutation, the positive and oft-repeated assertions of Mr. Owen, that in his new world all infants *must* be born perfect and rational—all from the moment they are born will have a sound moral, intellectual, and physical organization—all wise, amiable, and beautiful! But I refer to the care of the infant when born. It is to be placed in College, number one. The mother is not to have the entire management of her child. Against this unnatural and monstrous proposition, I repeat, I dare take my stand against the whole system of Owenism. What! is the mother to be deprived of

the richest reward of her sorrow and suffering—the inexpressible delight of nursing her own infant? Mr. Owen professes to found his system on the circumstance of his having gathered into his capacious and new-formed mind all the “facts which have been admitted by the good and well-informed through past ages,” and this forms his “standard of truth.” I stand front to front with Mr. Owen here, and on this one count I am willing that the whole case shall be decided—“the good and well-informed of all ages” shall be the jurors, and their unanimous voice and verdict is “Let the mother have her babe!”

Mr. Owen affirms that parents are incompetent to teach their own children. I need only say, this is another daring attempt to subvert the order of nature and the commands of scripture.

But under the New System they will be equal in education, manners, and abilities! Surprising! no dunces or blockheads then—a royal road to learning will be cast up, and all will walk therein! What next?

Why, there will be no lunatics! And who will guarantee this? Mr. Owen!

And again, all the employments of these paradises will be delightful. What *all*? yes, all; for so says Mr. Owen.

Children, from twelve to fifteen, will cook the dinner. What a change!—We of the old world have enough to do to teach them to eat it decently!

But I am tired of quoting such worse than childish nonsense.

There is one serious matter, however, which must not escape our notice. Mr. Owen does not state distinctly whether what we call “marriage” will be recognised in his new order of things—but he does tell us that “no immorality can exceed that which is sure to arise from society compelling individuals to live continually together, when they have been made, by the laws of their nature, to lose their affection for each other, and *to entertain them for another object.*” Verily, Mr. Owen is not the man to deliver lectures on the evils of licentiousness!

For these, and other reasons which I have not sufficient time to notice, I object to the proposals of this bold Innovator. His scheme is plausible but impracticable. Even if fairly started, the contention of parties would soon disturb the harmony of the scene, or the inroads of death would destroy that proper balance of classification which Mr. Owen deems so essential to the working of his system.

I am compelled then to pronounce the whole scheme vain and visionary—calculated only to mislead and disappoint. And he is not our friend who excites expectations which can never

be realized—who leads us by an *ignis fatuus* of his own creation, dancing through bog and quagmire till we sink in vexation and despair—or who, by hoisting a false light, draws our frail bark, already well nigh sinking, amidst the breakers of a rocky shore, to perish there, with all we hold valuable in time and sacred in eternity.

But Mr. Owen proposes to improve, not only the physical and intellectual, but, the moral condition of our species. He would erect, not only splendid temporal paradises, but a grand moral “temple for truth.” And on what foundation? Let us examine it; for if it be unsound the whole fabric will be insecure. We of the old world have always been taught to regard the doctrine of man’s responsibility to God and his fellows, as the solid ground—the firm rock, on which every principle of morality, virtue, and religion must be built. Not so Mr. Owen. In erecting his temple, he rejects this foundation. He boldly affirms that man is not a free agent—that he has no control over his belief, thoughts, or actions—that he never has formed, never can form, and never will form his own character, and therefore he is not responsible!

And how does Mr. Owen prove these fearful dogmas? How: why he proves them by a process of illustration, which is as novel as it is amusing. To prove for instance that you have no control over your belief, he asks you to believe that he does not hold the instrument which he is then holding in his right hand. And if you cannot believe, in opposition to the evidence of your senses, you have no control over your belief! You are then asked to believe, in five minutes, that Mahomet was a true prophet; and if you do not, you are again told, that it is evident you cannot control your own belief. So because we cannot believe what is not true, (Mahomedanism) without evidence, we are not to believe what is true, (Christianity) with evidence. For all these sophisms are only so many assassin-like blows in the dark at our Holy Religion. Again we are told to try to love a thief, and if we cannot make up our minds to respect, esteem, and love such a respectable personage, we are told that we have no control over our love, and that there is as much propriety in our being told—“we ought to fly,” as that “we ought to love.” So because we cannot but dislike a hateful object we cannot love a lovely one! And this, according to Robert Owen, is logic—or the right use of reason! And on this sandy foundation, the temple of truth, in his new moral world, is to be erected!

But how does Mr. Owen propose to reform and regenerate

the human race, so as to prepare and qualify them to become inhabitants of his new moral world? By a system of training children from their infancy. "There is no other way," says Mr. Owen. Here we find him in another radical error. I am most ready to admit the importance of training: it makes a tree look neat and ornamental, and causes it, probably, to be more fruitful. But training alone will not effect the purpose. It never has, it never will, it never can, and for this plain reason—the tree itself is a bad one. You may train a crab tree for ever but it will never bear apples. Christianity proposes to graff this corrupt tree with a branch from a pure stock. "Either make the tree good and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt and his fruit corrupt; for the tree is known by his fruit"—says our Divine Teacher.

JESUS CHRIST was a radical reformer. He stood not trimming or training the branches, but he aimed a blow at the root. He pointed out the *source* of the evil—"Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts." To this he directed attention as the corrupt fountain from whence issued the various streams of human depravity.

But Mr. Owen should speak for himself. He shall. I will read to you from the *Chronicle*, which is, I presume, correct, the description he gives of his materials, and the manner in which he proposes to bring circumstances to bear upon them—that is, to train them and form their character.

"I will explain to you the manner in which circumstances act. We will suppose first the organization at birth, and then those which occur after birth."—Mr. Owen then explained in somewhat the following manner the action of circumstances. He would suppose the number one to represent the organization. The first circumstance which came into contact with the organization did not enter into a mere mechanical, but a chemical compound, with the organization. The second circumstance entered into a similar compound with, not the first circumstance alone, or the organization alone—but the two united in the manner already mentioned; thus altering the nature of the subject acted at every step in its progress. It was thus that every human character was made."

Now, do you understand it? I do not. I will read it again—now do you? It is, to use Mr. Owen's words "a compound of absurdity"—a sentence involved in hard technicalities. No plain person can tell what he means by it; yet this is the man who complains of mysteries—and at the first step of his progress we find him up to the neck in a muddy mystery! I leave him to get out as he can.

I can go no further here. I maintain that Mr. Owen's first principle is founded in error;—that setting out in a wrong path the further he goes the wider he wanders from truth, and thus loses himself, and all who follow him, in a wide wilderness of error and impiety.

I proceed to prove this by noticing—

His inconsistencies.

The *Chronicle* reports, that Mr. Owen disclaimed any intention to oppose the present institutions of Society. Yet, according to my notes, Mr. Owen declared that he should never be satisfied till he had destroyed the old world root and branch. If my note is disclaimed by Mr. Owen, the whole tendency of his lectures is against his opening declaration as reported by the *Chronicle*.

Mr. Owen declares that anger is insanity, and when others are angry, and excited, and perplexed, he is perfectly calm. I do not charge Mr. Owen with insanity, but I will assert that he was far from being “perfectly calm” when questioned on the authenticity of the Scriptures, and whether he was the author of the Social Bible.

His unfairness and misrepresentations.

It was unfair of Mr. Owen to refuse answering Mr. Rice's question, whether he was the author of the Social Bible or not, because when we consulted a doctor or a lawyer we did not ask him of what faith he was, and then yield to me the propriety of proposing certain moral questions to him the next evening without such objections.

It was unfair to impose such a fallacy upon Mr. Hackett as, that man is what he was made to be, as a piece of calico or muslin is, allowing no distinction between a piece of mere material and an intelligent being—himself, for instance, although he has collected all the wisdom, prudence, and infallibility in the world into his own proper person. Mr. Owen no more than a piece of calico!—What a slander!

It was unfair to keep back the fact that Romohun Roy was a believer in the Christian religion—a believer in the precepts of Christ, and the excellence of his example, if not in his atoning sacrifice for the sin of the world.

His misrepresentations of Christianity are shameful; and I distinctly charge Mr. Owen either with gross and culpable ignorance of the genius, design, and effects of Christianity, or of wilfully misrepresenting the most notorious facts. Let him choose his position. Of course I refer to Christianity as I find it in the New Testament. I am not here to defend any anti-

christian principles or proceedings, though disguised under the garb, and assuming the name of Christianity. I disclaim all coercive measures. Pains and penalties, inquisitions and tortures, bullets and bayonets, warrants and distresses I am not here to defend, but to condemn; for the New Testament condemns them. If we examine the sacred records, we shall find that all force is forbidden—that nothing but reason, argument, and persuasion, were used in the propagation of Christianity. “Paul, as his manner was, reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you, is Christ.” The Bereans, who searched the Scriptures, to see “whether these things were so,” ere they believed, are mentioned with distinguished honour, as noble-minded men. Christianity wishes “every man to be fully persuaded in his own mind.” How then could Mr. Owen dare to affirm that the ministers of the New Testament *force* their religion upon the people?

Mr. Owen charges Christianity, as well as other systems of religion, with grounding her serious truths and solemn requirements on the hopeless condition of humanity, as if she were some infernal demon armed with fiery scorpions coming to a human being and saying, “I know your ignorance and helplessness—I am aware that you can neither think, nor act, nor believe as you please; and therefore I command you to say that you believe what I tell you, without daring to ask for evidence of its truth. I’ll scourge you, and send you to hell for ever if you will not believe; but only believe, and give me plenty of money, and you shall go to heaven!”

Thus, what is more or less true of heathenism, or of an anti-christian system in the dark ages, is applied more than once in one sweeping charge against New Testament Christianity—that Christianity which has abolished such practices in our country and in many other parts of the world. Is it possible that Mr. Owen could be ignorant of these facts?

Mr. Owen never once mentioned the name of JESUS CHRIST, although the sentiments most applauded in his Lectures were those which he had borrowed, without acknowledgement, from our Divine Teacher. In this conduct Mr. Owen stands alone. A fair and generous opponent will concede what he knows to be due to another, even if he should be vastly his inferior. Sir Isaac Newton would not, in a treatise on Astronomy, have thus neglected to mention the first rude attempts of the Chaldean shepherds. Captain Cook would not thus have treated the

maps and charts of Ptolemy. Neither would Mr. Owen himself, as a manufacturer, lecturing on the History of Manufactures, have thus omitted to mention the rough looms and shuttles, the cards and the spinning-wheels of our ancestors. But JESUS CHRIST, as a Reformer of the world, to say nothing of his being its : edeemer, was not worthy of being noticed when Mr. Owen had to advance his high claims to superior distinction.

His Uncharitableness.

Charity, it appears, is to be the distinguishing characteristic of the New World. But where do we find it in its founder? He tells us distinctly that we have no charity amongst us. Where did he find it then? In the book he has defamed? Yes : he has acknowledged this, though he has done it as clumsily and ungraciously as he well could. He tells us too, that our domestic arrangements are full of vicious circumstances—that there is neither truth nor virtue amongst us—that we are living in Pandemonium ; (that is, we are devils, and our children are imps,) but if we will follow him, he will place us in purgatory now, and by and by in Paradise. Verily we have need of the charity that “suffereth long.”

His questionable statements.

There were some things stated by Mr. Owen the veracity of which might be fairly questioned, especially the declaration, that Confucius taught the doctrines of Christ, hundreds of years before the appearance of our Redeemer. But one thing I do flatly and deliberately contradict, and that is—that any man in this country is a slave, in the proper sense of the word—or that any man can do as Mr. Owen said, viz., “sell himself.” He may be a slave to habit or custom—a victim of oppression—a sufferer, hardly pinched for want of labour or its adequate remuneration, but I deny that any man in this country is, or can be, the *personal property* of another, and if so, he cannot be a slave in the sense Mr. Owen used the words—worse than any in our Colonies or America.

His excessive arrogance and vanity.

This bold man has the presumption to come and tell us that we are all wrong, and he alone is right. Until we dismiss all old notions we cannot form one rational idea, for the two would be as oil and water—a compound of absurdity. Now, for the first time in the history of the world, man is to act as a rational being. Yea : when we are rational in the *slightest degree*, we shall then see as he does : but now, there is not one man in Europe or America that understands these things. He knows that there is *not one* among us who does. But his system will

exclude all evil ; and as for himself, he says—(I quote now from the *Mercury*)—

“ All minds have been confused and perplexed from the first moment to the present time, but when we shall understand what truth is then a falsehood will not be permitted to enter this place. I could not now, were I to be killed—were I to be murdered—admit an incongruous idea into my mind. (Hisses and cheers.) No, my friends, strange as it may appear to you just now, the process of forming my mind has been very different to that which has been applied to all other minds. (Renewed uproar.) It is true, having early been obliged to discover that there could be no inconsistency in truth, important results would necessarily follow ; and, taking up those facts which have been admitted by the good and well-informed through past ages to the present time, those were the most likely to be eternal and everlasting truths. I picked out a certain number of these, such as no man ever doubted, and these formed the standard of truth by which I compared all doubtful ideas ; for I read for five hours a day for twenty years at least, so that I had an opportunity of inquiring into almost all the ideas that had ever been presented to the human race. I picked out those which were in accordance one with another, and I have been well paid, for in doing so a new mind was formed—a mind that I would not exchange for all the wealth the world could give. That process has enabled me to collect from the past history of the world, from all that exists around me, those ideas which are in accordance with each other and with all facts known, therefore, when others are angry, and excited, and perplexed, I can be calm, knowing the cause which makes these individuals believe, and feel, and act as they do ; and that calmness is increased, and rendered a most delightful sensation from the certainty that the means may be developed by which all the human race may acquire the same state of mind, the same happiness, and ultimately far more intelligence. (Cheers and hisses.) This, my friends is a digression, but unless I explain, many of my expressions cannot be understood by the minds of the old world.”

Now if this be not arrogance and vanity, then we are literally and truly the very ignoramuses Mr. Owen has described—we have not one rational idea.

But really this is almost too much for poor human nature to bear ; fallen indeed we are, but not so far as to be gulled in this way. Mr. Owen boldly and openly does what he slanderously affirms of the Ministers of Christianity—he requires his followers to shut their eyes and stop their ears, to first believe themselves ignorant and irrational and then implicitly follow him whithersoever he shall lead them. When we were lads such tricks could hardly be played upon us. If a boy had said to us, let me tie this handkerchief over your eyes and I will lead you where you shall find a hat full of cherries, should we not

have suspected that he wanted to lead us into a ditch and then laugh at us?

Really, if Mr. Owen is right, what a pity it is that he, who by his own account, is the only man who of all earth's myriads has been able to collect into one focus the rays of truth—what a pity it is, I say, that he did not visit our world earlier. As a blunt friend of mine observed, "What has the man been poking about all this time? why did he not come 6000 years ago?"

But I must refer you to one subject of grave and serious importance. I mean—*His bold and unblushing impiety*. For he declares that he professes none of the religions in the world. No reference to a future state escaped his lips, except in reply to a question, and then it was very ambiguous. Sunshine is pictured on his terrestrial—but shadows, clouds, and darkness rest on his celestial paradise. On what terms are we to enter Mr. Owen's terrestrial paradise? Are we to renounce all hope of a celestial paradise? Yes: for he tells us that our Bible is not a revelation from God—that it is inferior to other books, which have been written by men. I defy him to the proof—I challenge him to collect from the writings of all men of all ages, so perfect a history, so correct a chronology, such pure philosophy, such sublime eloquence, and above all, such excellent morals, as are to be found in the Holy Scriptures.

But here let me make way for others:—

LORD BACON.—"There never was found in any age of the world, either philosopher, or sect, or law, or discipline, which did so highly exalt the public good as the christian faith."

JOHN SELDON (called by Grotius, the Glory of England.)—"There is no book upon which we can rest in a dying moment but the Bible."

JOHN MILTON, the immortal poet.—"There are no songs comparable to the Songs of Zion; no orations equal to those of the Prophets; and no politics like those which the Scriptures teach."

SIR MATTHEW HALE.—"There is no book like the Bible, for excellent wisdom, learning, and use."

THE HONOURABLE ROBERT BOYLE.—"It is a matchless volume; it is impossible we can study it too much or esteem it too highly."

JOHN LOCKE.—To a person who asked this profound thinker, which was the shortest and surest way for a young gentleman to attain to the true knowledge of the Christian Religion, in the full and just extent of it, he replied, "Let him study the Holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament; therein are contained the words of eternal life. It has God for its Author, Salvation for its end, and Truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter." At another time he said, "It is all pure, all sincere; nothing too much, nothing wanting."

SIR WILLIAM JONES.—The following words were written with his own

hand in his Bible :—" I have carefully and regularly perused these Holy Scriptures, and am of opinion, that the volume, independently of its divine origin, contains more sublimity, purer morality, more important history, and finer strains of eloquence, than can be collected from all other books in whatever language they may have been written."

I oppose then these deliberate opinions of some of the most excellent and learned men in the world to the flippant sophistries of Robert Owen—men who spent more time in forming their opinions than Mr. Owen did in gathering into his single person the wisdom of the world.

"A year," says Mr. Owen, "is a long time in my life." It is, and it would be well if Mr. Owen could be reminded that he is, in the beautiful and significant language of that Book which he despises, "A wind that passeth away."

In a few years he will pass "the bourne from whence no traveller returns;" and then, in the light of eternity he will discover, whether he has been doing "the worst, or the best actions a man can perform." At all events, he is incurring a terrible responsibility.

Having thus taken a brief review of the sentiments, the system, and the conduct of MR. OWEN, I now advance to the second part of my subject—the superior claims of CHRISTIANITY.

I presume it will be allowed by all present, that the Great and Blessed Creator has a perfect right to require the voluntary worship of his intelligent creatures; and that in order to prove the sincerity of that worship some test is necessary. From all we know of the conduct of God towards his creatures in heaven or on earth, a test or trial of some kind or other has been provided. Hence we read of Lucifer and his angels rebelling in heaven, from whence they were cast down to hell, whilst others remained faithful in their allegiance, and maintained their first estate.

Our first parents were created in the image of God, and were surrounded by such displays of his wisdom, power, and goodness, as were calculated to excite their admiration, reverence, and love. A test was provided, guarded by a malediction. In an evil hour they listened to the tempter, and incurred the threatened penalty. Sin having entered, death followed, together with ignorance, crime, and guilt. The children of men have ever since that fatal period displayed a natural tendency to evil rather than to good. And the history of our species, in all ages, proclaims the humiliating fact that man is fallen, and he is not now what we might reasonably suppose he would have been had he never transgressed the righteous requirements of his

Maker. All nature too, testifies that some terrible moral convulsion has disturbed and dislocated the world.

This, then, I affirm to be the source of the evil—the grand fundamental error—and not the adoption of false principles, as stated by Mr. Owen.

The Great Parent of the universe did not, however, leave his creature man as a prey in the hands of the seducer. Infinite goodness and wisdom devised a scheme of rescue and reconciliation. From the thick cloud of displeasure a star of hope appeared, and the voice of mercy was heard, “The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent.”

From this eventful period, onward through succeeding ages, God, like a kind and tender parent, never forgot his deceived and disobedient children. At sundry times, and in diver manners,” he revealed to them his will and purpose.

It is true he visited them in judgment for their sins ; but as the moral Governor of the world he was perfectly competent to do so, and in any way he deemed most expedient. And it is equally true that he never punished his offending creatures, whether Jew or Gentile, without giving sufficient warning, and at the same time promising to withhold the stroke providing they repented. How then could Robert Owen blasphemously represent the God of the Scriptures as a cruel and vindictive tyrant ?

At length God selected a family, which he multiplied as the stars of heaven ; and amongst this people he established his name and worship, and from them he declared the promised Deliverer should arise. In the mean time the world had wandered far from God. Proofs of his goodness and wisdom they saw in sun and stars—in showers and sunshine—in heaven and earth : and yet they worshipped idols. The world by wisdom knew not God. Philosophy tried her best and failed, and was found bending before a block. Men were universally groping in the dark. Some of the wisest and best of the ancient sages—Socrates and Plato, honestly confessed their ignorance, and described in the most precise terms the kind of Teacher the world needed, and the treatment he would receive.—I quote from Blackwall’s Sacred Classics.

“ In a conversation between SOCRATES and ALCIBIADES on prayer, Socrates said, ‘ In the proper time, a Divine Person would come into the world, who out of his care and tender regard to mankind, would remove all doubts, disperse all darkness, and fully instruct them how to present all their prayers and praises, and religious offerings to the Supreme Being, in a pure and acceptable manner.’ ”

“ PLATO, when he is describing the person whom Socrates had pre-

dicted, says, 'Such a benefactor to mankind will scarcely be endured by them; but probably he will be scourged, racked, tormented, have his eyes put out, and at last, having suffered all manner of evils and indignities, will be cut in pieces as the victims were, impaled or crucified.'

In the fulness of time—at the period predicted, this Divine Teacher appeared in the person of JESUS OF NAZARETH.

I need not detain you with a long recital of his eventful history. I remind you of his mysterious birth, and the remarkable phenomena by which it was accompanied, when his star directed the inquiring sages of the East to his humble abode, and his birthday song was sung by angelic choirs, whose celestial symphonies were heard floating over the plains of Bethlehem, "Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace, good will towards men.—I glance at his recognition as the Son of God in the waters of baptism, and on the holy mount.—I point you to those surprising displays of his power, attesting his divinity, which were wrought in open day, and in every place, without preconcertment and contrivance.—I ask you to listen to the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth, and tell me, —O, tell me! if the whole world can furnish such specimens of chaste and simple eloquence,—such lessons of peace and love? But I pass on to the tragedy of his death, the circumstances of which fulfilled alike the predictions of Isaiah and of Plato; "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep dumb before her shearers, so he opened not his mouth." Well might a French infidel exclaim, "Socrates died like a philosopher, but Jesus Christ like a God!"

He died: and, as at his birth, the most extraordinary scenes were witnessed.—He was buried, and although his grave was watched by a band of the most disciplined troops in the world, on the third day he rose again, and shewed himself alive to his followers, allowing the closest inspection as to his identity. After a few days he led them out as far as Bethany, and whilst discoursing with them of the affairs of his kingdom he was taken up, a cloud receiving him out of their sight. At the right hand of God he is now exalted—a Prince and a Saviour—thrones and dominions, principalities and powers being subject unto Him.

And what followed? I shall here avail myself of a paragraph from the opening address of Mr. Campbell, when disputing on these high subjects with Mr. Owen, in America.—

"Never was there such a moral phenomenon exhibited upon this earth as the first establishment and progress of Christianity. The instruments by which it was established, the opposition with which it was met, and the success which attended its career, were all of the most extraordinary character. The era of Christianity itself presents a very sublime spec-

tacle: the whole world reposing in security under the protecting wings of the most august of all the Cæsars; peace, universal peace, with her healthful arms encircling all the nations composing the great empire, which was itself the consummation of all the empires of the ancient world.—Polytheism with her myriads of temples and her myriads of myriads of priests, triumphantly seated in the affections of a superstitious people, and swaying a magic sceptre from the Tyber to the ends of the earth. Legislators, magistrates, philosophers, orators, and poets, all combined to plead her cause, and to protect her from insult and injury. Rivers of sacrificial blood crimsoned all the rites of Pagan worship; and clouds of incense arose from every city, town, and hamlet, in honour of the gods of Roman superstition. Just in this singular and unrivalled crisis, when the Jews' religion, though corrupted by tradition, and distracted with faction, was venerated for its antiquity, and admired for its divinity; when idolatry was at its zenith in the Pagan world, the Star of Bethlehem appears! The marvellous scene opens in a stable. What a fearful odds! What a strange contrast! Idolatry on the throne, and the founder of a new religion and a new empire, lying in a manger!

“Unattended in his birth, and unseconded in his outset, he begins his career. Prodigies of extraordinary sublimity announce that the Desire of all Nations is born. But the love of empire, and the jealousy of a rival, stimulate the bloody Herod to unsheath his sword. Many innocents were slaughtered, but heaven shielded the new-born king of the world. For the present we pass over his wonderful history. After thirty years of obscurity, we find him surrounded with what the wise, the wealthy, and the proud, would call a contemptible group; telling them that one of them, an uncouth and untutored fisherman too, had discovered a truth which would new-modify the world. In the midst of them he uttered the most incredible oracle ever heard. “I am about,” says he, “to found a new empire on the acknowledgment of a single truth, a truth too, which one of you has discovered, and all the powers and malice of worlds seen and unseen shall never prevail against it.” This is our helmet, breast-plate, and shield, in this controversy. What a scene presents itself here! A pusillanimous, wavering, ignorant, and timid dozen of individuals, without a penny apiece, assured that to them it pleased the Ruler of the Universe to give the empire of the world; that to each of them would be given a throne from which would be promulged, laws never to be repealed while sun and moon endure.

“Such were the army of the faith. They begin their career. Under the jealous and invidious eyes of a haughty sanhedrim at home, and under the strict cognizance of a Roman emperor abroad, with a watchful procurator stationed over them. They commenced their operations. One while charged with *idolatry*; at another with *treason*. Reviled and persecuted until their chief is rewarded with a cross, and themselves with threats and imprisonment. A throne in a future world animated him, and a crown of glory after martyrdom stimulated them. On they march from conquest to conquest, till not only a multitude of the Jewish priests and people, but Cæsar's household in imperial Rome became obedient to the faith. Such was the commencement.

The land of Judea is smitten with the sword of the Spirit. Jerusalem falls and Samaria is taken. The coasts of Asia, maritime cities, islands, and provinces, vow allegiance to a crucified King. Mighty Rome is roused, and shaken, and affrighted. Sacrifices are unbought, altars moulder, and decay. Her pontiffs, her senate, and her emperor stand aghast. Persecution, the adjunct of a weak and wicked cause, unsheaths her sword and kindles her fires. A Negro and a Caligula prepare the faggots and illuminate Rome with burning Christians. But the scheme soon defeats itself; for anon 'tis found that the blood and the ashes of martyrs are the seed of the church. So the battle is fought till every town of note from the Tyber to the Thames, from the Euphrates to the Ganges, bows to the cross. On the one side superstition and the sword, the mitred head and the sceptred arm combine; on the other, almighty truth alone pushes on the combat. Under this fearful odds the truth triumphs. and shall the advocates of such a cause fear the contest now?

Yes, my fellow citizens, not a king nor priest smiled upon our faith, until it won the day. It offered no lure to the ambitious; no reward to the avaricious. *It formed no alliance with the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, nor the pride of life. It disdained such auxiliaries. It aimed not so low. It called for self-denial, humility, patience, and courage on the part of all its advocates; and promised spiritual joys as an earnest of eternal bliss.* By the excellency of its doctrine, the purity of its morals, the rationality of its arguments, the demonstrations of the Holy Spirit, and the good example of its subjects, it triumphed on the ruins of Judaism and idolatry. The Christian volunteers found the yoke of Christ was easy and his burden light. Peace of mind, a heaven-born equanimity, a good conscience, a pure heart, universal love, a triumphant joy, and a glorious hope of immortal bliss, were its reward in hand. An incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading inheritance in the presence of God, with the society of angels, principalities, and powers, of the loftiest intelligence and most comprehensive knowledge, brighter than the sun, in the glories of light and love eternal, are its reward in future."

Let us now inquire what Christianity proposes to do for man.

It interferes not with human governments; but exists under every form, despotic or democratic.—It seeks not the aid of earthly power:—"My kingdom," said its founder, "is not of this world." But it gradually infuses its mild and peaceful—its merciful and charitable principles, into the constitution of every nation it visits.—It directs obedience to all lawful authority; but it requires not a slavish submission to injustice. Paul, one of its preachers, was no truckler.—"They have beaten us openly, uncondemned, being Romans; and now would they thrust us out privily: nay, rather let them come themselves, and fetch us out," was his indignant protest against the conduct of his unjust judges. In short, its grand fundamental principle—its golden rule of equity is, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so

to them." Beneath the influence of pure and unadulterated Christianity, injustice and slavery, crime and cruelty, war and bloodshed, will be chased from the earth, and "they shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid."

Its aspect on our Social and Domestic relations is salutary.

It discountenances vice of every kind. To the thief, it says, "Let him that stole steal no more"—to the liar, "Speak every man the truth to his neighbour"—to the drunkard, "Be not filled with wine, wherein is excess."—to the licentious, "Go, and sin no more"—to the covetous, "The love of money is the root of all evil." It frowns a brow of thunder, and flashes an eye of lightning upon the formal hypocrite; and pours woe after woe upon the heads of those who unworthily intrude themselves into its hallowed sanctuaries from sordid motives. Neither does it spare the faults or failings of its own erring followers; but demands their expulsion from its ordinances, and only allows their restoration on bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. Again: it inculcates the practice of whatsoever is lovely and of good report—Husbands to love their wives: wives to reverence their husbands; mutual love in parents and children; kind consideration in the master, and cheerful obedience in the servant. Peace, love, kindness, and charity are its distinguishing characteristics, and without these it pronounces the loudest professions but sounding brass and tinkling cymbal.

And now, in the language of Mr. Owen, "what more would you wish for?"—I am happy in saying that the best is yet to come. Here we are in contrast with Mr. Owen. Darkness and death surround his prospects for futurity—life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel.

Christianity was designed not merely to ameliorate the condition of humanity; these are the blessings she scatters along her pathway in her march of mercy through the world. Her high commission is to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound. I shall state plainly what are, in my opinion, the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel. I take the best definition of it I can find in the Scriptures.—"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I also preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." This, then, is the groundwork of Christianity—the death and resurrection of Christ. Hence we have pardon for sin—peace for

the conscience—the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us—joy unspeakable and full of glory—hope that maketh not ashamed—the grace and favour of God through life—the Lord Jesus with our spirits in death, giving us the victory over the great destroyer—resurrection from the grave through the power of Him who shall change our vile body and fashion it like unto his own glorious body—restoration to the smile of God—and a happy immortality in his dwelling place.

This, then, is the religion we profess, and we profess it because we have felt its vital power. We follow no cunningly devised fable. We know in whom we have believed. We have found a reality in the Christian religion—a treasure to possess which a wise man will sell all that he has; and for what are we now called to part with it?—the painted paradises of Robert Owen!

But we have not done. Christianity, we believe, is destined to renovate the world. Mr. Owen denies this, and he denies that Christianity is calculated to remove, or that it has removed, to a greater or less degree, the evils which are in the world. When a man denies the plain facts of history, what are we to do with him?—what can we do with him? Let us try him by one fact. Two thousand years ago the inhabitants of this island were barbarians, wandering over our valleys and hills, their bodies painted like the heavens above them, whilst their minds were degraded and debased by the cruel rites of a bloody superstition. What has wrought the mighty change? Not heathenism—not Owenism. What then? Not Christianity, says Mr. Owen, neither in whole nor in part!

But why, it is asked, has not Christianity effected ere this, the Regeneration of the world. I reply, because she has not had fair play, and because her professors have not been faithful to their trust. The Divine Author of our Holy Religion launched her fairly on the world, attended by every requisite testimonial to her authenticity. Whilst yet an infant she met in mortal strife, and fairly overthrew the whole mythology of heathenism. Jupiter, Juno, Mars, Bacchus, Apollo, Neptune, Diana, and a whole host of filthy and polluted deities, each in their turn fell before her, like the fish-god of the Philistines before the ark of Israel. She went on conquering and to conquer, till there was not a province of Imperial Rome, where her converts were not found.

And what retarded her progress? *Money and Hypocrites!* The love of money, which is the root of all evil, induced sordid men to enter her pale. This opened the floodgates of corrup-

tion, and for many dark and guilty ages the greatest enormities were committed in her sacred Name. Still there were those who maintained the faith, and protested against the enormities and impositions of antichrist. But the true followers of the Lamb, in this and other countries, had to endure the fierce fires of persecution, and the bitter scorn of their cruel and powerful enemies. Civil and religious liberty, after many struggles for admission, at length visited our land, and took up their abode amongst us. And since then, Christians have not been idle. Roused by the zeal and eloquence of Whitfield and Wesley, the dormant energies of Christians were revived, and the last century witnessed the institution of Societies for the diffusion of Christianity, which have astonished the world. Millions of Bibles in the languages of nearly all the nations of the earth have been distributed. People of distant lands, and strange languages, have been visited by the missionaries of the Cross; and the men whose forefathers murdered Captain Cook, are now sitting down to read their spelling books, and hundreds and thousands hear with humble gratitude the preaching of Christ's peaceful gospel every Sabbath.

Much more than this I could tell you of the progress of Christianity in these our days had I time, and yet Mr. Owen affirms we have done nothing. Done nothing! we have done *one* thing, and we have just done it. The Christians of this land demanded in a voice of thunder, the unconditional freedom of the slave—the echos of that voice were heard in the islands of the west—the Planter heard and trembled, he relinquished his grasp, and the Slave is free!

Yes: and our Holy Religion shall go on to win her peaceful triumphs, until the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our God and of his CHRIST.

“The dwellers on the rocks and on the hills
Shout to each other; and the mountain tops
From distant mountains catch the flying joy,
Till nation after nation taught the strain,
Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round.”

Or, adapting for my purpose the most eloquent passage in the lectures of Mr. Owen, “A new and divine weapon has been discovered which shall sever the Gordian knot—that weapon is the Word of the Truth of the Gospel. Who will wield this weapon? A little band have cased themselves in divine armour; they have gone forth; victory already smiles upon their efforts; and they will never return till ignorance and superstition, sin and misery, are destroyed; and peace and charity, reason, truth, and justice, love and happiness, are triumphant!”

APPENDIX.

At the close of one of the Lectures of Mr. Owen, I informed him and the audience of my intention to reply to his statements by delivering a Lecture. Mr. Owen appeared anxious to be present, that he might ask certain questions, and enter on a general discussion. To this I objected, reminding him that he and Mr. Campbell had exhausted the whole subject, and that their discussion was before the public. He then inquired if I would permit his followers in this town to question me; to which I consented.

At the close of the above address, Mr. James Thompson of the Chronicle Office, came forward to complain of some remarks which I had made that evening respecting an opinion expressed by him as the Reporter of that paper. This I should not now have noticed had not the Editor of the *Chronicle*, after reporting my address in his next paper, inserted a letter from Mr. John Seal, in which he states that my observations on Owen and Owenism were a "most glaring misrepresentation of facts," and that he never read "a more faithful and correct report" than that which appeared in the *Chronicle* of Mr. Owen's Lectures. In reply to Mr. Seal—I am not conscious of having misrepresented Owen or Owenism, and as to the report in the *Chronicle* I never said or insinuated that it was not, upon the whole, a good report. What I complained of was, that the Reporter introduced his own opinion to my prejudice, and that he omitted certain strong points in Mr. Owen's Lectures, and materially softened down others. One among many I can refer to—"Had they (the Committee of the House of Commons,) heard him, they would have saved £150,000,000, and all the demoralization which had occurred through the introduction of the New Poor Law Bill." This sentence I do not discover, or anything like it, in the *Chronicle*. Neither do I find Mr. Owen's declaration that "he could not admit an incongruous idea into his mind."

The *Chronicle* had a perfect right to avail itself of the testimony of the Agent for the sale of Mr. Owen's publications in Leicester, if it felt the need of such assistance; but it does appear rather curious that on the subject of Owenism, Poor Law advocates and Poor Law opponents are reconciled.

After Mr. Thompson had retired, a young man, James Plant, came forward, but like Mr. T. he did not profess to be a disciple of Owen. He proposed several questions. The following is a sketch. "Can a man believe or feel as he *likes*?" "Yes: providing there be evidence."—"Then believe that gas is not burning." "That is against evidence."—"Is there any merit or demerit in belief?" "There can be no merit in the belief of a simple fact: but if you refer to the belief of Christianity, that includes a moral obligation."—"What is that moral obligation?" "Believing what God has commanded me to believe."—"I want a simple yes or no to the question—is there merit or demerit in belief?" "You will not have one without explanation first."—"My question then is not answered?" "It is: whether satisfactorily or not is another thing." Here, amidst some confusion, the meeting broke up.

How easily is such mere trickery as this seen through! A few general questions are first asked, and when we have gone just so far as will suit their purpose they descend to particulars. Who does not see that if it had been admitted, without explanation, that there was no merit in belief, the end of the Questioner was gained. "Then," says he, "the converse is true—there is no demerit in unbelief, and where is your Christianity?" A different answer from what was expected, would, probably, have been returned, if the plain question—"Is there any merit in us for believing Christianity" had been proposed. But the belief of Christianity is a comprehensive term including more than the mere belief of its historical facts. The devils believe these and tremble. Real Christian belief, or faith, welcomes the proclamation of mercy, and "*receives*" the Saviour, with all the blessings of his glorious Gospel. (See John i. 12. 1 Cor. xv. 1.) Unbelief refuses the offers of pardoning mercy, rejects the Saviour, and neglects the great salvation. (See Acts xiii. 46. Heb. ii. 3. x. 29.)

Since the above Address was delivered, I have received from the Secretary of the "Social Institute" an invitation to discuss Mr. Owen's five points in their room. I never sought a discussion with Mr. Owen or his followers, but rather declined it, and after the specimen I had on the evening when I delivered this Address, I felt no disposition to meet them, or to hold any correspondence with them.

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J. F. WINKS, PRINTER, CHARLES-STREET, LEICESTER.