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THE
CATECHISM
OF
THE NEW
MORAL WORLD.

BY ROBERT OWEN.

“Sacred to Truth without Mystery, Mixture of Error, or
Fear of Man.”

Manchester:

ABEL HEYWOOD, 60, OLDHAM-STREET,
LONDON.

H. Hetherington, 126, Strand, Cleave, Shoe Lane, Fleet-
street, Watson, City Road, Finsbury.

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CATECHISM.

QUESTION. What is man?

ANSWER. An organized being, or, an animal possessing certain physical, intellectual, and moral powers and faculties, and attractive and repulsive propensities.

Q. Wherein does he differ from other animals, or known organized beings?

A. By being endowed with higher intellectual and moral faculties than all other animals, and being thus enabled to obtain the mastery over them. He is, therefore, the chief of animals.

Q. How has man being produced?

A. Facts are not yet known to enable any of the human race to give a rational or satisfactory answer to the question. All that can be predicated with truth upon this, at present useless enquiry is, that man has been generated by a power unknown to him, in like manner as all other organized substances have been generated; each of these organized substances being formed with its own propensities, or peculiar powers of attraction and repulsion, which are the laws of its nature, or the natural laws of each species; each one possessing the general and individual law of its species.

Q. What are the attractive propensities of man's nature?

A. They are, generally, the desire of pleasurable sensations; but particularly, the desire of food, and attachment to those who supply him with it when he is hungry or thirsty; the desire of sleep or rest when he is exhausted in body or mind; the desire of propagating his species according to the laws of his nature; the desire of the due exercise of all his faculties and powers, physical, intellectual, and moral, by which alone he can become healthy and happy; the desire always to speak the truth, or to express all his sensations without guile; the desire to promote or extend to others the happiness or pleasurable sensations, which he himself enjoys; the desire always to experience pleasurable sensations, and therefore

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to change one sensation for another as soon as the first ceases to give pleasure; and the desire for full freedom of action.

Q. What are the repulsive propensities of man's nature?

A. Generally, aversion to whatever gives pain to the individual, physically, intellectually, or morally; but particularly, to whatever withholds his food, or prevents him, when hungry or thirsty, acquiring as much of it as satisfies his nature: aversion to whatever prevents him taking his natural rest or sleep; to whatever prevents him propagating his species when his organization naturally stimulates the desire; aversion to whatever prevents him the free use of his physical, intellectual, and moral powers and capacities, whenever his organization impels him to exercise them; aversion to whatever restrains him from freely expressing the convictions and feelings which his organization compels him to receive or experience; aversion to whatever prevents him receiving and enjoying pleasurable sensations; to whatever inflicts painful sensations on those who have not offended his organization, or that prevents them enjoying pleasurable sensations; and to whatever prevents his freedom of action according to the natural impulse of his organization.

Q. Did man form for himself all or any of these propensities?

A. No: he is incapable of forming for himself the least part of any one of them.

Q. Can he be justly or beneficially praised or blamed, rewarded or punished, or in any manner made responsible to man, or to any other existence, for the formation of them, or for any of their peculiar qualities or powers?

A. No; the notion is most preposterous, and it has proved most pernicious in practice.

Q. Are these propensities of man's nature good or bad?

A. They are all in a high degree good, all of them being necessary to form an intellectual, rational, and happy being, and to continue the species in existence.

Q. In what does man's happiness consist?

A. In pleasurable sensations, or in all the wants of his

nature being satisfied to the point of temperance.

Q. What practical measures are calculated to insure, through live, to all the individuals of the human race, the greatest amount of the most innocent or healthy pleasurable sensations?

A. Arrangements which shall call into healthy or innocent action, at the proper period of life, all the physical, intellectual, and moral powers and faculties of man's nature, and insure the regular temperate exercise of them, according to the organization or constitution of each individual; and which arrangements shall also preclude the desire to fall short of, or to exceed that point because it is alone competent to give the highest active and permanent enjoyment to man.

Q. In what does man's misery consist?

A. In painful sensations, or in the wants of his physical intellectual, or moral powers remaining unsatisfied.

Q. Under what conditions will man become a good or rational being?

A. When all the wants of his organization shall be regularly satisfied to the point of temperance.

Q. When does man become a wicked or irrational being?

A. When the wants of his nature or organization remain unsatisfied.

Q. Under what circumstances will man be the most easily governed?

A. Under arrangements that will enable him at all times to supply or satisfy the wants of his nature to the point of temperance.

Q. When is man the most difficult to govern?

A. When the wants of his organization, physical, intellectual, and moral, are the least satisfied.

Q. How can all the wants of man's nature be satisfied to the point of temperance, beneficially for the individual and for society?

A. By the governing powers, among men making general arrangements to effect these results.

Q. Can this great desideratum in human affairs be now attained in practice by the means under the control

of the governments of the more civilized parts of the world?

A. Yes most beneficial for all men; and happiness will remain unknown to man until this grand result shall be attained.

Q. Has man ever been placed, in any country, by any government, under such circumstances as would admit of all the wants of his nature being regularly satisfied to the point of temperance?

A. No, never: nor in any degree approaching to such a rational state of society.

Q. Is it now practicable to place man under such circumstances as would admit him, beneficially for himself, as an individual, and also as a member of society, to have all the wants of his nature satisfied to the point of temperance?

A. Yes, for the most abundant means and materials exist to enable man to attain this happy state, and the concurrence of the public will is now alone the one thing needful to induce all governments, whatever may be their form, to begin, in right earnest, to effect this change in a peaceable and rational manner, beneficially for all individuals, and for all states.

Q. What are the obstacles which exist to prevent this change being now made in the public will, which you say can so speedily effect this great and glorious emancipation of mankind from ignorance, sin, and misery?

A. The most formidable obstacles are the fundamental errors by which the public will has been hitherto formed.

Q. What are those fundamental errors which thus so banefully stand in the way of universal improvement and happiness?

A. The fundamental errors from which all moral evil originates. and upon which all the institutions of all countries have been, and are now, based.

Q. What are these errors and institutions?

A. The errors and institutions which are now supported by the Priesthood and the governments of all countries in which there are Priests and Governors.

Q. Are the Priests and Governors benefited by these errors and institutions?

A. No, quite the reverse; for, as men, they lose all the superior advantages of their nature. But from their infancy they have been trained by Society to believe that they are individually much benefited by them, and that society could not be peaceably conducted without them, nor exist except in the greatest disorder and confusion.

Q. Has society then, the power to train the Population of this and other countries. to receive as truths gross errors, or to teach them from birth truths only?

A. Yes, and to compel such populations to receive, and retain through life, a strong impression in favour of error or of truth; but it would be much more easy to impress convictions of truth than of error, if the Priesthood did not direct the formation of the character of the people.

Q. What is society, whose opinion is thus all-powerful for good or evil?

A. It is a number of individuals of both sexes, formed into an association for their mutual support and comfort, and whose general sentiments, which constitute the public opinion, can effect, even suddenly, the most important changes.

Q. Is man, when acting individually and unsupported by his fellows, or when united in society, the most powerful to effect good and evil?

When he is united in society. Because, in this case, the powers of each member are greatly multiplied while the actions of each member can be effectually controlled and directed by society to produce far more of either good or evil.

Q. Can individual man do more to promote the happiness of the human race when his own interest is placed in opposition to society, or, when his whole interest is united and identified with society.

A. When the whole interest of the individual, and of society is identified as one family, whose powers, faculties, properties, and possessions shall be directly applied to promote the well-doing and happiness of each individual, without partiality, according to the peculiar constitution of each member of this large family.

Q. Is it then a proof of wisdom in mankind to adopt notions, and found institutions thereon, which of necessity

place the interests of individuals and of society in direct hostility to each other ?

A. No ; for these notions, and all the institutions founded on the supposition of their truth, tend to perpetuate ignorance, poverty, and disunion, and to generate inferior feelings, and the worst passions human nature is capable of receiving. These erroneous notions and institutions must, therefore, produce far more evil than good, or many more painful than pleasurable sensations, to the whole of mankind, and by which the earth is made a Pandemonium, when it might now be most easily made a Paradise.

Q. Then all the errors from which the laws, institutions, and the practices emanating from them, which disunite the interest of mankind, and place the apparent interest of individuals in opposition to the public real interest of the human race, are calculated to give far more pain than pleasure through the life of every individual male and female, whatever may be their rank, station, or condition ?

A. Most certainly ; there is no law of nature more fixed and unchangeable than the law which determines the superiority of united, to individual interest, to insure, permanently, the vast superiority of the human race over all other terrestrial beings.

Q. Is it an evidence of sound wisdom, or of rationality in mankind, to adopt notions and found institutions to give pleasurable sensations only ; or to adopt such as will create painful sensations through the lives of all human beings ?

A. It is wise and rational to adopt principles and found institutions which can insure pleasurable sensations through life to all individuals. And it is most foolish and irrational to found institutions on imaginary notions, which are opposed to facts, and which must of necessity, produce incalculably more painful than pleasurable sensations through the life of every individual.

Q. What are the institutions founded on erroneous notions which give the most pain to the human race ?

A. The institutions which are derived from, and give support to the notions or imaginations that man is organized to be bad by nature ; that he has the power to form

his own convictions by his will. and to feel or not to feel at his pleasure, in opposition to the fixed laws of his organization, that is, to nature's laws, which compel him, regardless of his will or desire to the contrary, to believe in obedience to the strongest convictions made on his mind, and to feel as his individual nature compels him to feel.

Q. Can you more fully explain what these institutions are ?

A. Ycs; they are those which have been devised, and which are now supported, to teach the people the erroneous notions stated in the preceding article; and those devised to enforce, by what is called law, all the mischievous, unjust, and irrational practices, which necessarily emanate from those wild and absurd imaginations.

Q. Explain more particularly what are the institutions which emanate from these erroneous suppositions?

A. All the institutions for the support of the Priesthood and their temples throughout the world: for the support of the Lawyers, Judges, and Magistrates, and their Courts throughout the world. All the extensive arrangements for the support of the standing Military powers of the world; for the support of the buying and selling system of the world for money, not directly not honestly representing real property, or which money is changeable in its value, when estimated by a fixed quantity and quality of the first necessities of life. Also all the institutions which divide the interests and feelings of individuals; which tend to separate mankind into single families, into classes, sects, parties, and sectional divisions, called nations; which tend to oppose the apparent interest of individuals against the apparent interest of the public, when the real interests of both are eternally one and the same.

Q. Are there other institutions which give more pain than pleasure ?

A. Yes, there are innumerable others, but they emanate directly or indirectly from some of the preceding, that is, from what is called religion, law, marriage, and private property, all founded in opposition to nature's laws.

Q. How does the Priesthood of the world produce

pain than pleasure.

A. By always attempting to oppose the natural attractive propensities of man, by ignorantly calling them vices, and by ignorantly supporting his repulsive propensities by calling them virtues; and thus compelling him to become irrational or wicked.

Q. Is it wise then longer to retain the Priesthood and its various institutions?

A. No : for the reasons just stated, it is the greatest of all errors to retain any part of it, or any of the collateral institutions by which it is now supported.

Q. How are the codes of laws prevalent throughout the world calculated to produce more pain than pleasure?

A. By the same general means ; for they also have been made to oppose and prevent the action of the natural attractive propensities, and to support the natural repulsive propensities, or laws, of man's physical, intellectual, and moral nature. And man's attractive propensities are all good, and necessary to insure his health and happiness. Codes of laws devised and maintained in opposition to these attractive propensities are well calculated and are sure to make man irrational and wicked.

Q. Is it wise then longer to retain these codes of laws and institutions, and to support them?

A. No : for the reasons stated, it is the most unwise to retain them, or longer to give them any kind of countenance.

Q. How are the Military or Naval institutions of the world calculated to produce more pain than pleasure?

A. By being devised and employed to compel man by physical force, to act and speak contrary to his convictions, and in opposition to his feelings and natural attractive propensities, and consequently to force him, against his nature, to become irrational and wicked.

Q. Is it wise then to continue to maintain permanent Military or Naval institutions?

A. No, most unwise; for while they are allowed to exist, the human race must remain in a state of slavery and misery. And these institutions are now useless, for it is not necessary to apply physical force to make man

act in accordance with his natural propensities.

Q. How are the buying and selling of commodities, and the exchanging of artificial money, either metals or paper, for a monied profit, calculated to give more pain than pleasure?

A. By the highly injurious effects which continual bargaining for a money profit makes upon the disposition, mind, and conduct of each individual when so occupied, tending, as this practice does most powerfully, to lower the character and make hypocrites of buyers and sellers, and also to engender a perpetual covetuous warfare among the whole of the human race; each one seeking to take advantage of the ignorance or weakness of others; and by giving all the advantages of human life to the idlers and worthless, and withdrawing them in a greater proportion, from the industrious producers. And also by placing the most formidable obstacles in the way of increasing the most valuable wealth, by limiting the increase of it to the amount of the artificial circulating medium which the producers of wealth can obtain.

Q. How is the system of individual competition for the necessities and comforts of life, and the arrangements of society requisite to maintain this competition, productive of more evil than good?

A. By it being now, whatever it might have effected formerly, well calculated to retard the progress of improvement to an incalculable extent; to extend deception and every evil passion throughout all the ramifications of society: by increasing the drudgery of human existence and the labour of man many hundred-fold; by forming man into an imagined cunning knave, when, at the same time, he is out-witting himself; by greatly diminishing his means of enjoyment; by deteriorating his intellectual and moral qualities, and by giving to each of these powers of his nature a false direction. It is also well calculated to train man from childhood to become both fool and knave, and to class him among the most irrational of animals. It is, in fact, with the existing materials for happiness among the human race, one of the great curses of the world; for it is the great waster and destroyer of

wealth, the great obstacle to its increased production, and the great preventer of its enjoyment.

Q. What ought the people and the governments of the world now to do to remove the causes of pain or evil, and to insure an everlasting progress in pleasure or good, without any retrogression through future ages?

A. To abandon all the fundamental errors, which produce moral evil, the source of all pain, and adopt the fundamental principles of moral good, the source of all pleasure. To allow the institutions established to maintain, pain, or moral evil in the world, to die, not a violent but a gradual, natural death, and immediately to form new insitutions, to introduce and maintain pleasnre, or moral good. That is, to form arrangements for all to preach and practice continually and in all sincerity, the principle of peace and truth, and that all shall cease to preach and practice the principles of violence and falsehood.

Q. Is it practicable to effect such a glorious change in human affairs, without throwing the whole of society into confusion and interminable disorder.

A. It is perfectly simple and easy to make this change; all the materials requisite to effect it, in the most ample manner in a short period, are now at the disposal of the Governments of Europe and America as well as of those in other more distant parts of the earth,

Q. Would Governments be injured by thus making use of these materials.

A. No, quite the contrary; they would be far more benefited as individuals than they can be now by the utmost success of all the plans they have hitherto devised, or now wish to accomplish under the reign of moral evil.

Q. Why then do they not adopt immediately, measures to enable them to make the change without delay?

A. Because they do not sufficiently understand the principles, and much less the practices, which are alone competent to effect the change; and because, if they knew both principles and practices, public opinion, which governs the world, has not been sufficiently enlightened to enable them, in opposition to it, to undertake so great a change in human affairs.

Q. Then the time for effecting this great change depends on public opinion?

A. Solely on public opinion.

Q. It then appears that the most important work in which man can be engaged, is to assist to create a new public opinion in favor of truth and in opposition to falsehood.

A. Most certainly this is now the great work which man has to perform, to remove the cause of all evil, and to establish everlasting good among the human race.

Q. How is this new public opinion to be formed?

A. By the friends of truth, who have sufficient moral courage to contend against popular error and extensive prejudice, coming forward to support public meetings, public lectures, public discussions, and cheap publications advocating the cause of truth in opposition to error; and by becoming members of an Association now forming to extend truth unmixed with error over the whole world.

Q. How are those public proceedings to be promoted and carried on with sufficient vigour and perseverance to effect in a reasonable time the grand object now proposed to be attained.

A. By effective, active, vigorous, well-considered measures of the Association mentioned in the preceding answer

Q. What is the name which has been given to it?

A. "The Association of all Classes of all Nations to form a New Moral World."

Q. How will this Association to promote the change of public opinion?

A. By calling public meetings and assisting to extend public lectures and discussions in the Metropolis, to promulgate these truths, and by forming lodges of similar Associations in every part of the kingdom, also throughout other nations until they shall extend over the world. By Associations that shall also protect themselves from pecuniary distress and from all the artificial ills of life arising from the present system of moral evil, or, in other words produce for themselves all that will be required to insure their permanent happiness.

A. HEYWOOD, PRINTER, OLDHAM-STREET, MANCHESTER.