

ROBERT OWEN'S
ADDRESS TO THE HUMAN RACE

ON

HIS EIGHTY-FOURTH BIRTHDAY.

May 14th, 1854.

(FROM THE REPORTER'S NOTES AND MR. OWEN'S MS.)

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REPORTER'S PREFACE.

A Soirée was held in the Literary Institution, John Street, Fitzroy Square, on the 14th of May, to celebrate the 84th birthday of Robert Owen, Esq. The Hall was crowded in every part, and upon Mr. Owen making his appearance he was received with the most cordial and affectionate demonstrations of respect and attachment by the company. Those near whom he passed on his way to the platform eagerly seized the opportunity of shaking hands with him, offering their personal congratulations on the recurrence of his natal day, and expressing their pleasure at seeing him look so hale and healthy at his advanced age.

C. F. Green, Esq., occupied the chair, and after the Apollonic Society had chanted an opening chorus, briefly opened the proceedings.

They were met, he said, to do honour where honour was due; and to testify to their esteemed and venerated guest the pleasure they all experienced at finding him still able to come among them and give them the benefit of his teaching and his great experience. They had not that opportunity often,—nor could they, in the nature of things, expect to enjoy it very much more in future. The Committee of Management had therefore made arrangements by which Mr. Owen would himself occupy the evening—an arrangement which they had all the more readily adopted, because they understood from Mr. Owen himself that he was anxious upon that occasion to make an important statement. (Hear, hear.) He would not therefore occupy more of their time, but would conclude by requesting attention to the statement of their venerable friend and guest.

Mr. Owen on presenting himself was received with renewed and prolonged applause. He said:

Mr. Chairman and Friends,—

‘I am happy to meet you on the present occasion; but I am not so young as I was when first I met you in this room. I am

deaf, and almost blind, and when a man attains his 84th year he should be in his dotage. I hope you will make allowance on these accounts. I will, however, endeavour to place before you some matters which I believe to be important, not for the present moment or the present meeting only—but for the human race and for all posterity. (Hear, hear.) I do not know whether I shall be able to accomplish the task I have set myself—but I will do as much as my powers will admit.* (Hear, hear.) He then read the following Address—commenting upon it as he proceeded. The comments, revised by Mr. Owen, are introduced where they were given, enclosed in brackets.

At the conclusion of his address, Mr. Owen said—"I trust that all the advanced minds of the world are looking to a real government of the human race on true principles. There will be no rest, or peace, in the world, until that shall be accomplished. There are only two systems by which the world can be governed—the one, is a false,—the other, a true system. You have hitherto only known the false one. The true one is yet to be known. But our education has yet to be begun. We have not been taught to compare system with system. Our minds have not been elevated beyond the prejudices of class, creed, country, and colour. We have been made, by our instructors, localised animals. That which is now to be done, is, to drop this localised education—to nationalise, or rather to universalise the instruction given to our race. I hope, - I still hope, that many of you will see the first step taken towards this change to which I look forward.

The following resolution was then proposed and seconded, and was carried in the midst of prolonged and repeated cheers :—

Resolved—"That this Meeting beg to congratulate Robert Owen, Esq.—their honoured guest—on his having completed his 84th year, and to thank him for his unwearied exertions for the happiness of the human race."

The choir then performed a song composed expressly for the occasion ; and the proceedings, which occupied nearly three hours, terminated.

ADDRESS TO THE HUMAN RACE.

It has been my practice occasionally on my birthday to publish important Truths intended to permanently benefit my fellow-men, and as I feel it to be extremely uncertain whether I shall live in health to appear in public or be alive on another birthday, I am strongly impressed to give on this day Truths to the world, which shall be held in everlasting remembrance.

Having now no object in life but the future well-doing, well-being, and happiness of all of human kind, I shall be wholly uninfluenced in what I am about to state by any temporal consideration. It will be "Truth without mystery, mixture of error, or fear of man,"—as far as knowledge has been given to me.

My first general impression is, that all of human kind are lamentably ignorant of themselves and nature;—that they are but just emerging from a low state of development;—and that this is a natural and necessary condition of humanity in its present stage of progress towards its ultimate destination.

That the nations of the earth are in a state of great ignorance of themselves and of nature appears evident from the fact, that all men are created with an undying desire to obtain and enjoy happiness, and yet that all, from the highest to the lowest, from the most learned to the most ignorant, are actively engaged in measures that must render its attainment and enjoyment impracticable and utterly impossible.

[Now, my friends, if we all desire happiness, and we are all actually engaged in measures which prevent the possibility of that happiness being realised,—what can we say of ourselves? We surely cannot be rational in such proceedings.]

There are certain conditions which must be created and adopted universally before the happiness which all desire and seek can be attained and enjoyed. And yet to this day the prejudices of our race and all their arrangements are strongly opposed to the introduction of the conditions—the only conditions competent to create peace and good-will on earth, and to give happiness to the population of the world.

[My friends, I have just uttered a word which I wish to remain on your minds. I have said the "conditions." Now we are all of us exactly what our conditions make us.]

But men do not know these conditions—because they do not know themselves—humanity—nature—or God.

All nations are now blindly acting in direct opposition to themselves, to humanity, and to nature.

Hence the disunion and misery of the human race, instead of its union and happiness.

[Without union there can be no happiness. Is there union at present in any part of the world? Is there union between employers and employed? Is there union between the different Governments of the world—is there union between the different nations of the world—is there union between the different sects of any one religion—or between the believers of different religions? No, my friends; while society continues to be based on its present principles, union can never be known. To attain union, the world must change its principles of action.]

It is a grave and deeply interesting question to have solved—“When will the human race be prepared to admit of the introduction of those truths and conditions which can alone give them wisdom, and secure their happiness?” How greatly to be desired is it that this time was come? and then would this terrible war terminate. This irrational war between professed religionists, whose doctrines are,—“to love their enemies—to do good to them that hate them—to love their neighbours as themselves—and to have charity for all men:”—while their glaring practice is,—*Not* to love their enemies,—but to do them all manner of harm and to hate them. *Not* to love their neighbours as themselves,—but to prey upon them and take every advantage of their ignorance and weakness. Is there common-sense or common honesty in such professions and such conduct, or in expecting happiness from the existence of conditions which produce, of necessity, these and similar results over the world? The most ignorant and undeveloped beings only could for a moment entertain such absurd expectations.

[While we have conditions that must produce all manner of evil—how is it possible that those who possess anything like common sense can expect any other result than those which now take place day by day?]

The conditions which can alone give and secure permanent good and happiness to man are now hidden under a mountain of most injurious prejudices—of prejudices arising from the present undeveloped state of the human race.

It is useless to waste time and feelings in blaming or finding fault with individuals—classes—parties—sects—nations—or colours:—for *all* are involved in the same ignorance of true principles and of right practice, and are strongly opposed to their introduction for the Government of the world.

[It is most extraordinary, when we come to consider the subject, that all parties, (I can make no exception)—that all parties seem to have been so trained and placed as to set their mind in

direct opposition to the introduction of those principles and practices which can alone give happiness to humanity.]

The conditions necessary, and which alone can make the human race good, wise, united, and happy, are the following:—

1st.—The language of truth, in every word, look, and action:—a language that can only be attained by a new mode of forming character from birth.

[When shall we have that language, my friends? And yet, until we have that language, there can be no real unity, no real virtue or goodness. The universal language of the world is a language of falsehood, and the conduct of the world is the conduct of deception. (Hear.) I know the feeling of many on this subject. I know that it may be said, as it has been said, that the time will never come when the language of falsehood shall be superseded by the new language of truth. I deny that, my friends. Whenever we place society on a true and rational foundation, the language of truth will become the natural and only language of the human race. Shall we ever be able to introduce the true and rational principle on which to base society? I trust we shall; and I trust also that the time is not far distant.]

2nd.—A just equality for all—which, in training, education, and condition, will be found of easy practice.

[A just equality for all. When are we to have an equality of this kind? Do you think this equality can ever take place under the present arrangements of the world? While you have your upper, middle, and lower classes,—is there any prospect of this equality? And yet, my friends, until we have this equality, there will be no unity and no virtue among men.] (Cheers.)

3rd.—The true formation of character, from birth through life—physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual, and practical,—but of which the world is now ignorant.

[I see by the papers that there has been a debate in the House of Commons on the subject of a National Education for Scotland. If I wanted any convincing proof of the utter irrationality of the public mind, I have only to read the debates on that bill. (Hear, hear.) The greatest possible want of the human race is the want of a sound rational character from birth for every child that is born. That is an essential condition, before any other step can be taken for the permanent benefit of mankind. But not only has this bill been rejected for Scotland, but in this country, looking at the feeling of Sectarianism which prevails, there can be no national education. Why,—of what use can those Sectarians be, if they are to stand as the great obstruction to the attainment of that which is the birthright of every individual? If they continue to do so, they will be found to be the greatest evil in society.] (Cheers.)

4th.—The annual creation of a surplus, for all, of the most useful and valuable wealth. A surplus easily to be attained.

5th.—The introduction in every department of life of mechanism, chemistry, and all other sciences, to the fullest extent practicable.

[I hope—nay, *I* can hardly hope—but many of you will, I hope, live to see the day, when mechanism and chemistry will perform all the disagreeable labour of ~~society~~ society, and when all the children of the human race shall be trained and educated to be real ladies and gentlemen, in mind and manner far superior to any ladies and gentlemen of the present day. (Hear, hear.) I always have been a plain simple practical man, and as such, I make this statement. I never looked at theories or imaginary notions;—but ever looked at facts, and nothing but facts, and I draw all my conclusions from universal and demonstrable facts—not from those merely local or sectional.]

6th.—The character of each to be so formed, and each so placed, as to render all professions, civil and military, and all present arrangements for the distribution of wealth and money transactions, worse than useless.

[I have often said that the professions have been the great barrier to human progress. They are so at this day, and while you have *professions*, you will never have *realities*. There is no reality in these professions. I told you, my friends, at the commencement, that I meant to declare the truth to you without regard to any temporary consideration, and I shall pursue that course.] (Hear, hear.)

This universal character to be formed on a system new in principle and practice—a system which shall create a new regenerated being—filled with the spirit of love and charity for all of human kind. By new conditions, which will gradually supersede all existing human conditions;—because these last have been conceived on a false basis, and have emanated from erroneous principles—from principles which can never produce common sense or common honesty in any nation or people.

[Now,—what is this new character to be? Not any one of the characters which are now formed in any part of the world, by any class, sect, or party. These are all based on falsehood, and can never be of any permanent value.] “But,” say the learned ignorant, and the supposed well informed men of the world—“such conditions never can be created; and if they were, they could not be maintained.” [Who speaks thus of these conditions? Do the parties who speak so fluently about what is possible and practicable know what is possible and practicable? So far as I have examined these parties who thus declare that such and such things are impracticable, I have always discovered that they do not know what is practicable. They have had no experience on a large scale. They are, as I have called them, “learnedly ignorant.” They get all their knowledge in the study. When they come into the actual world of practice, they

are lost; and yet they take upon themselves to teach the world what they don't know themselves.] (Hear, hear.)

These parties know not what conditions can be created, or what results can be attained by the introduction of new conditions based on new principles.

It is true, no nations or peoples yet comprehend how to create the arrangements to form these rational conditions to produce these rational results; but there are individuals now spread over the world who are beginning to perceive that the principles and practices of all nations are based on falsehood and error, and that there is something fundamentally wrong in the principle whence the practical arrangements of society have arisen, and they are now eagerly in pursuit of this error—an error which will be probably made to appear in our day.

In fact, the principles and practices by which the conditions competent to produce these results may be created, are already known to a few, and these parties are now engaged in measures to circulate widely this new knowledge.

[Yes! my friends, I am happy to think there are spread over the world a few persons who understand the change that must take place; and these parties are doing as much as they can, considering the condition of society, to alter the mind of the public. But their progress has been slow, though I am surprised in some respects that their progress has not been slower; for every one who comes forward openly to declare the truth, without mystery, mixture of error, or fear of man, is always sure to be ruined. We are said to live in a land of liberty. Yes! liberty to starve if you speak the truth.] (Applause.)

The first measure necessary to prepare for this change is to be convinced of the errors in principle and of practice in which all are involved;—principles and practices forming a system for the government of the population of the world at this day too absurd to be gravely stated in the presence of common sense.

This system pre-supposes, as its base, that each one has the power to form, and actually forms, his own physical, intellectual, and moral qualities—and that the individual should be made responsible to God and society for those qualities and their results in practice.

On these suppositions, as now stated, rest, as their base, all religions, laws, and governments, and all political, social, and commercial arrangements, over the world.

[“What,” it may be said, “all religions—all laws—all governments—all commercial and social arrangements—based upon a falsehood?” Yes! my friends, whoever dives, as I have done, to the foundation of society, will find that all these are baseless. There is not a word of truth in the foundation on which they are all based. If we had truth, we should find none of the disorder which now exists in the world, and that will continue to exist

until the truth becomes the basis of all Societarian arrangements. And we must have this truth. At least, my friends, all I can do shall be done to introduce in our day the knowledge of these truths into the world.] (Applause.)

And yet, this base, on which the system of the world has been and is to this hour conducted, in all the departments of life, is a rank and glaring *lie*,—proved to be such by all past and present facts known to man. And a melancholy *lie*, too :—for it is the real cause of all sin and misery. It is the father of lies ; and therefore the root and origin of evil.

Let men abandon this gross and palpable error, and adopt for the foundation of another system of society the certain knowledge “that God, through nature, creates all the qualities at birth of man, and that society gives to those qualities from birth a wise or a foolish direction, and may now give them a wise direction through life”—and you will have immediately the commencement of the true millennial existence of the human race, and the future days of man will be a succession of progress in peace, unity, wisdom, and happiness.

But that which is most truly absurd in the present proceedings of the human race, is, that no one upon reflection can believe this error, and yet society is based alone on this error, and all its affairs are conducted in accordance with it.

Come, now, let us at once try the fact, for it is the great turning point in human life. Is there one among you who decided he should be born at this period of the world? No.—Or within the British dominions? No.—Or with his peculiar and singular combination of physical, intellectual, and moral qualities? No.—Or that he should be born of parents in the lowest, the middle, or the upper class? No.—Or that he should be taught the English language? No.—Or who decided who his parents should be, or what character they should possess? No.—Or what religion, habits, and manners, they should teach him? No.—Or whether he should be educated or not? No.—Or who should be his early playmates, companions, or teachers? No.—Or what these should teach him? No.—Or how he should be put forward in early life? No.—Or through what circumstances he should pass from his birth to death? No.

So far these must be your answers. Then tell me which of your qualities or powers do you possess independently of your creator and of society? Not one.

May not the same questions be put to the individuals of all nations and peoples over the earth, and must they not give the same answers? Truly they must ; and this knowledge will prove ere long to be the highest and most important they have ever received. It will make all men to become rational, and it will secure peace and good will, prosperity and happiness, over the earth. It will open up the means by which all from their birth will become good and wise, and have their greatest pleasure in

promoting the progress in excellence and happiness of all of human kind.

I have now explained that you have been born, educated, and have so far lived, in a system based on a most deceiving falsehood—an error unsupported by one fact through all time,—a system, to use a vulgar yet strong term, that is, not only a thorough delusion, but the greatest of all humbugs ever practised on man; for it includes every other humbug and delusion now so universally practised in all nations:—a system which, as I have often stated, is the root of all evil and misery.

[It has always appeared to me one of the most extraordinary events in human history, that the whole of the human race should have so tenaciously adhered to this falsehood, and rejected the truth, while the falsehood is as sure to produce a pandemonium, as the truth to produce a paradise. (Hear.) But it is objected by all the sects and religions in the world, that if we take away responsibility from man, the world would be in a state of utter confusion. I mean to prove that it is the very instruction given by these parties on this point, which produces all the misery, sin, and confusion in the world. Whenever the world shall determine to create good conditions upon true principles, we shall have a paradise instead of a pandemonium.]

But let us be just. How has this destructive system to rationality and happiness been made? By the ignorance, inexperience, and undeveloped state of our early ancestors, who imagined a falsehood to be truth, and who have transmitted this falsehood as an undoubted truth through all past generations. It would be unjust, therefore, to blame, and much more so to punish individuals, classes, sects, parties, countries, or colours, now existing, for this error, or for any of its innumerable evil consequences. These parties call for our pity and commiseration in consequence of the injuries which they suffer under this system of tyranny and slavery. The feelings created by the true system of society will be those only of love and charity for our race, regardless of creed, countries, or colours. When the true system shall supersede the false system for forming character and governing the population of the world, anger, hatred, or ill-will will be unknown.

Having thus denounced the system of the world as being directly opposed, through every department of life, to the well-being, well-doing, and happiness of all,—rulers and governed, rich and poor,—I am called upon in fairness to explain another system to supersede it—a system based on eternal truth, consistent in all its parts, and which shall be beneficial in all its practice; and beneficial, not to a few individuals or families—not to any one class, or creed, or party, or country, or colour,—but to every one of the family of man, and for ever:—a system in which the language of truth only shall be known and spoken:—a system

which shall be without contest or competition,—freed from ignorance and superstition,—without fear of death,—poverty and degradation unknown,—wealth always abundant,—health of body and mind sound,—a superior character formed for each from birth, physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual, and practical,—and each one filled with the pure spirit of universal love and charity, and with an ardent desire to promote the progress, excellence, and happiness of all of human kind, and to be merciful to all that has life.

[That is the system which I have ever advocated and recommended to the human race to adopt, and I shall endeavour to introduce measures which shall make it necessary for the governments of the world to introduce the system before long.]

Would you like to see the commencement of this system? Would you like to make your children and their descendants heirs to this system? Yes, you would, if you knew how to attain and secure it.

I will tell you how this great thing is to be accomplished. Spend no more money, labour, and talent in war, in ecclesiastical disputes and fooleries, and mystical superstitions, or in supporting human-made foolish laws in opposition to nature's wise laws—human laws all founded on a lie—and unnecessary trading and commercial speculation, to take money from the pocket of one to put it into the pocket of another—

[Or in trading upon a system under which all are trained to buy cheap and sell dear. (Hear, hear.) As long as you feel obliged to spend money, capital, and time in these operations, you can never expect a better state of society than you now have.]

Or in strikes, to create poverty and feelings of hatred between employers and employed—or in building prisons, and supporting other punishments for your poor deluded and unjustly treated ignorant and degraded fellow men—or in paying, what are called, Ministers of Justice, for administering unjust and cruel human laws, in opposition to nature's ever just and most merciful laws.

Instead of thus most insanely fooling away enormous wealth, labour, and talent,—you would become rational and wise were you to expend them in creating new conditions throughout society, to give a good, useful, and valuable character to every child from birth, by duly cultivating every natural faculty—a character not created by any of the existing modes of forming it;—for the most highly educated, under the existing system, have a most inferior and injurious character formed for them—one well calculated to put every obstacle in their way to become rational, or good, wise, and happy.

[I have told you often, and I now repeat it, there is no rational education in the world. That is, you will say, a strong expression to use when so much is written and so much is said about education. It is now more than fifty years since I introduced another system

of forming the human character. It was in the midst of sectarian prejudices on this subject that I invented the Infant School. (Hear, hear.) That is, I intended the Infant School to be as far a first step to a rational education as the prejudices of society would admit. The system which I invented in these schools was to teach facts, and to teach these facts, not through books, but to teach them through sensible signs and familiar conversations with the children;—and when the world shall understand the difference of teaching through books, and teaching by allowing the children to ask their own questions from seeing the objects themselves—I now say, whenever that system shall be universally introduced and adopted, children will acquire more knowledge in one week, than under the present system they can acquire in one year. That will be a new way opened to the human race; and instead of teaching being a source of annoyance to the teachers, and most disagreeable to the children, I am certain from my experience that it will be most delightful to the children, and most agreeable to the teachers.] (Applause.)

To expend them in combining superior conditions to create, at all times, with the greatest economy of labour and materials, an abundance of the most useful and valuable wealth to fully supply all, without necessity for money transactions of any kind; and to create this wealth in such manner as shall give high health and enjoyment to its producers. To expend them in laying out and cultivating our earth so as gradually to form it into a garden of Eden, occupied by beings trained and educated and placed from their birth to be rational in feeling, thought, and action, and made to be so in consequence of their characters—physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual, and practical,—being scientifically well formed during their lives,—for the formation of character ceases not from the day of birth to death.

[It also ought to be well understood by society that the formation of character never ceases. You are now in the act of listening to me. What I am saying to you must produce some change upon your character, so far. But instead of your being surrounded from your birth to your death by the most inferior conditions, I would have every child surrounded from his birth to his death by none but good conditions; and as these conditions are, so must men and women become.]

It would require but a small part of the wealth, labour, and talent, which are now so injuriously applied, to make these new good and superior conditions—conditions competent to change ignorance into knowledge,—poverty into wealth,—disunion into union,—hatred into love,—competition, contests, and wars, into cordial disinterested co-operation,—and the language of falsehood, into the language of truth. In short, to change evil into good over the earth; and all the people to be governed by attrac-

tion and disinterested influences, instead of repulsion and ignorant self-interest.

[You are and have been governed by ignorant circumstances. I say ignorant circumstances,—because when man shall be wise—when he shall know his real interests—he will discover that there are no means by which his interests can be so well promoted—so highly raised—as by his using his utmost powers to promote the interests of his fellow creatures. That will be found to be the only true self-interest.]

But the professors and devotees of all the superstitions in the world will now ask,—what conditions are to be formed for publicly teaching and promulgating religion?

My reply is, most decidedly,—None whatever. None will ever be asked for in a rational society. They will be altogether unnecessary. The superstitions of the world, past and present, have produced, and at this day continue to produce, all the sin and misery experienced over the earth; and they are the only obstacle now to the rapid progress of the human race in all excellencies; they are the only prevention to permanent rational enjoyments, and to the will of God being done on earth as it is in Heaven. Man must communicate direct with his maker in private.

[My friends, these are strong sayings in the present state of the public mind; but I now declare, after the experience of a long life, that so long as these religions shall be taught in the world, there can be no truth, unity, or happiness. (Sensation.) But do not be angry with any of the persons who profess these religions. They have been taught from their birth to consider it the highest good. What, then, it may be said, would you exclude all religion from the world? My friends, I hope the day is approaching when the truth only will be taught to mankind, and then it will be discovered that the only true religion that can be taught to man, will be that of doing good to the human race. Jesus Christ taught no religion to the world. He taught that we should love our neighbours as ourselves, and should love God. But as we are not enabled to see God—the only way in which we can show our love to him is by showing our love to our neighbours. (Applause.) And when the religions shall take this course—when their priests shall simply teach their hearers to love their neighbours as themselves,—there will be no occasion for anything more to be added.] (Cheers.)

Who has yet taught the simple truth respecting Nature and God?

At this day, ignorance of both universally prevails.

Some teach that there is no other creating power than unconscious Nature, blindly acting by fixed laws:—that this earth, so wonderful in its compounds and adaptations for varied existence and happiness, and which may now be made a paradise,

but which, within an illimitable and boundless universe, is a mere speck,—that this universe itself, and all which it contains, are the work of nature, produced by attraction and repulsion, without intelligence or mind.

[Now this is the doctrine at present of the most profound thinkers—of those who deem themselves the farthest advanced in knowledge—who imagine themselves released from all superstitions—and this is their proof.]

These very wise and profound philosophers of the present day, say there can be no mind or intelligence without perceptible senses, organized with a brain; therefore there can be no mind superior to the mind of man, and no future existence in another life:—that there is no *First Cause*, because the universe being eternal, there can be no first or last.

Others teach, that there is an uncaused God, who created nature and all things except himself, and that without him nothing was made, and without him nothing is done—that he made man, and sustains him through life.

But they also teach, that men can, and do, act independently of God, and contrary to his will and intentions.

Now, if it be sound philosophy, as I have ever believed and taught, that truth is always consistent with itself, and in accordance with all facts,—then neither of these two opposing statements can be true; and truth on these all important subjects is yet to be made known.

It is from facts and experience that true and accurate knowledge is to be obtained.

What do facts and experience now declare?

That nature exists, and effects all we see and know;—that her operations everywhere exhibit order, system, and a wisdom passing man's understanding; for her ways are invisible, and to us most mysterious. Yet earth, plants, animals, are produced in regular succession, with the food and climate adapted to each.

Surely in all this there is foresight, knowledge, and wisdom, surpassing the human mind. Where is the intellect that comprehends how these things are devised, arranged, and conducted? Who knows how a seed is created? Who knows the power contained in the germs of things? Is it probable—Is it possible, that the earth, with its seeds, plants, and animals, with the conditions requisite for their growth and existence, could be the work of chance, or of laws without intelligence?—That there is no superior mind or power to design, foresee, construct, and control these operations of nature? Or that unintelligent laws of nature made and continue to make the beautiful and perfect flower, and man, wondrous in his construction, and equally wondrous in his progression from the gross undeveloped savage towards a rational and refined being?

No sane mind that has observed the operations of nature and

studied its own faculties, can suppose that the things around us and all within the universe are works of chance or of blind or unintelligent laws of nature?

Listen, now, and I will endeavour to make these matters plain to the understanding of all accustomed to think on these hitherto perplexing and violently contested subjects,—although when men shall be made rational there will be no violence or contest in discussing *any* subject.

It is certain that from nothing, something could never arise ;—but something exists ;—therefore, that something must eternally exist.

That something, it appears to me, are the elements of the universe, with their inherent unchanging qualities ; which qualities, in the aggregate, constitute the supreme mind of the universe, or God and Nature ; of that universe—"whose body Nature is, and God the Soul."

These co-exist eternally ; and as there could be nothing before them, they are the uncaused Great First Cause of all compounds within the universe ; and there are only these elements, their concentrated essence or God, and these compounds, existing. They include all that is called matter and spirit, although it will be presently seen that these are two terms for the same things under different conditions.

The elements of the universe, their general inherent qualities, and their aggregated qualities, forming the Supreme Mind, constitute Nature ; and the general unchanging qualities of the elements are what is called the laws of Nature.

Thus God and Nature are one and the same.

God, being the essence of the aggregate laws of Nature, cannot alter them, for they constitute his own existence. To alter those laws which are eternally fixed and unchangeable is an impossibility even to God.

[That is, God, being the essence of the eternal inherent qualities of nature,—his powers thus become limited. He can make compounds of the elements of the universe to an illimitable extent ; but he cannot alter their own nature ; and therefore the doctrine of necessity and free-will. These laws of necessity create an impression that everything must be done in accordance with them ; which is true. But they are susceptible of indefinite and illimitable combinations, changes, and modifications. The material for cotton, for instance, cannot be altered ; but we can change its form and shape, by the operation of our intelligence upon the raw material.]

What, then, it will be asked, is God's province and power ? To compose, decompose, and recompose the elements of the universe, into all the compounds which have existed, now exist, or ever will exist :—to progress creation, through the changes required by the unchanging laws of nature, to final universal

harmony, as soon as the conditions to produce this result can be obtained.

It has been said that matter and spirit are the same, under different terms for one thing.

The elements of the universe are matter and spirit:—one condensed, to be discovered by human senses—the other too rarified to be detected or recognised by the gross unassisted senses of man.

Many erroneously imagine that there is nothing, or that nothing *can be known*, beyond the ordinary senses of humanity.

This, as will be soon seen, is a vulgar error, arising from the undeveloped state of the human race.

By the aid of magnifying powers, facts are made known, which were previously beyond human conception, and without the sphere of any of our senses.

In a drop of water, innumerable beings exist, with quick motion, vigorous life, and strong instinct or mind, for their size and condition.

Have we any instrument by which we can detect the weight of the elements of nature in one of these organised beings? Or discover of how many parts it is composed?—Or by what means the motion, life, and mind are given to it?

Here then is a complete organisation, which for unnumbered ages has been unknown to the human senses—an organisation too refined for their detection.

But if so small a compound of these divine elements of the universe produce such extraordinary motion, life, and instinct or preliminary mind—what must be the power of motion, life, and mind, from the aggregate of these divine elements, filling universal space, and to which there can be no limits.

[Most likely all of you have witnessed the spectacle of these little beings, seen in a drop of water under highly magnifying power, the existence of which we could not detect by our unassisted senses. As there are millions of beings below us in existence, not cognizable by our unassisted senses, so I believe there are millions of beings above us, which cannot be detected except by persons in a highly magnetized and clairvoyant state; and in this state persons can see those organised beings above us, in the same manner as we can see the smaller beings in the drop of water. The beings so seen must be organized;—all is organized, from these little beings up to God himself.]

There is an increased compound of these elements in man, with a proportionate increase of motion, life, and mind.

Yet man is but the fraction of a speck upon the earth, itself a speck in the universe.

But this fraction of a speck possesses power within certain limits, to make new compounds of the elements of the universe: as God can make them without limitation, to the extent that their inherent eternal unchanging qualities will admit. Hence

the suns, stars, and other celestial bodies innumerable in number and kind throughout the Universe, far beyond all human knowledge or estimate, and hence the endless variety of plants and animals upon the earth.

[Man is endowed to a limited extent with power similar to God; because by our late scientific improvements we can decompose, dissolve, and recombine some of those elements. Yet these powers are very limited. But God can compose, decompose, and recombine all the elements of the universe; yet he cannot alter the inherent qualities of these elements. I hope by this repetition I have made myself clear.]

Yet we ourselves are the most extraordinary compound of these divine elements within our sphere of knowledge:—formed without our consent, and sustained through life we know not how:—guided by our instincts, which we call mind, with the appearance of a voluntary will within a very limited circle—a will, too, which induces us to create new compounds of these elements, with some kind of control over them—all of which is at the same time a mystery to our faculties—for we do not know what manner of beings we are.

But facts prove that we are matter and spirit, or a compound of the elements of the universe—more gross or dense in our external bodies, and more refined or etherealised in our interior mind:—the matter without and the spirit within:—both equally and similarly organised:—the one visible to our ordinary senses,—the other visible only in a highly mesmerised clairvoyant state, or when the internal sight is highly magnified. The one after a time ceases to remain condensed:—it sinks to the earth, to be decomposed and recombined or refined. While the other ascends through our grosser atmosphere into one more refined or ethereal. This we learn from ancient and modern revelations direct from these spirits or ethereal beings, through facts, which, when fairly tested and examined, no sane mind will dispute or deny.

As nothing could exist before these divine elements of the universe,—these being eternal—nothing can exist after them. They are therefore *first and last and everything*; for without them there is *nothing*—no existence material or spiritual. They are, however, apparently, capable of everlasting new combinations, at the will and under the direction of their own aggregate essence—the supreme mind or God.

The wisdom, science, and power, displayed from the most minute to the most extended compound of these elements, so far as the human faculties have been created to perceive them, appear to be as perfect as the inherent eternal laws of these elements will admit; and their perfection far exceeds human comprehension.

But suffering and degraded feelings are experienced by sentient beings, and by man especially. He is made to feel both material

and spiritual pain, and often, mind and body are afflicted. This is called evil; and men naturally, in their present undeveloped state, ask,—“If God is all powerful and good—whence evil?”

The true answer is—that although God is all goodness, he is not all powerful. He cannot change the laws of nature, or the eternal inherent qualities of the elements of the universe. These are the material which he must use to form the wonderful compound which he creates, and to obtain desired future results—the ultimate happiness of man upon earth. For instance,—there must be an infancy and growth of progress before the ultimate can be obtained, and in this unavoidable process, the laws of nature inflict the bodily pain and mental misery.

Thus, it is not God, but the eternal unchangeable laws of nature, which produce temporary evil, to obtain great ultimate permanent good.

We are now prepared to understand the past, present, and future of humanity.

[Do not imagine that I am presumptuous when I tell you, that I see all the steps by which the future is to be attained. It is a necessary result of the past and the present, and without the present and the past it could not be obtained. The laws of nature prevented its being attained in any other way.]

The past, with all its grosser material evils, was necessary to produce the present—necessary on account of the unchanging laws of nature,—as the present, with its more refined evils, is necessary to produce the future—a future in which all evil will gradually cease and die its natural death.

Our dense earth and atmosphere will then become more closely united with the more refined regions of the spiritual world, existing in the more pure electric and magnetic atmospheres.

What effect will this new knowledge have upon the human race?

I reply, to refine and improve all their senses, and gradually to spiritualise the earth and its inhabitants—to remove evil and all obstructions to the increase of goodness, wisdom, unity, and happiness. Also, to prepare our race for peace and goodwill, charity and love, with unceasing rational enjoyment for all of human kind; and to the animal creation, through man's elevation of character and condition, a large increase of goodness, knowledge, and happiness.

But how is this advance to a superior state of existence to be obtained and secured.

Only by a new formation of character, based on a new principle, and carried forward under new external conditions; and by new arrangements for the creation and distribution of wealth.

This new character and these new conditions will supersede all necessity for any formal religion—or religions of human invention—or for human laws—or for any past or present governments—or for commercial competition or speculations for money

profit, or for any trading transactions, involving human subsistence, freedom, and happiness.

They will also supersede any supposed necessity for contests and wars, civil or religious, and render unnecessary and destroy the language of falsehood and all conduct of deception.

The new character and conditions will also give to man and woman their natural independent rights, and make each a free citizen of the world, entitled, through their own active and mental exertions in the general interests of humanity, to the full use of the world's productions and to all its enjoyments, without money and without price.

[In this change, my friends, there will be such an alteration as no one at present expects. As soon as society shall be based on true principles, the means now exist to secure to every one all that can possibly be given to a human being. There will be nothing to prevent society from giving to every child who comes into the world, enjoyments far superior to those which can now be given to any sovereign. Remember, I speak to you as a thoroughly practical man; for I have spent a long life in obtaining this practical knowledge. And I had to discard all the prejudices of class, party, sect, and country, before I could get to the bottom of this knowledge, and thoroughly understand the subject.]

All will be permanently united in a bond of brotherhood—with one language, interest, and feeling; and there will be none to make them afraid.

The whole earth will be under the government of love and charity, directed by sound practical wisdom and experience.

Let me now ask if the repulsive principles from which have emanated the past and present system of society will ever produce one of these results? No—never, were they to be continued to the end of time.

These old principles are most efficient for producing the evils which every where super-abound.

Our present statesmen are deemed among the advanced men of this now worn out and most corrupt system of falsehood and deception. Read the secret correspondence between them and the Emperor of Russia; and also the proceedings in the Congress of the United States of North America respecting the admission of slavery into Nebraska—and well may it be said—"How are the mighty fallen!!!

[The publication of the secret correspondence between our government and the Emperor of Russia will do more to promote a beneficial change, than anything that has taken place for many years. It opens to the mind of all who reflect, the utter imbecility and incompetence of those who now govern the world. But, my friends, who maintains them and the other governments? Why, you all do. The peoples, and the nations

of the world, maintain them in that position. And I am obliged to pity both them and you; and when I say you, I mean the whole human race; for you are all involved in a most wretched, most false, and most injurious system. And that which is now necessary, is to change the system.]

But to these and similar measures the two most advanced and enlightened populations of Europe and America quietly, passively, and most obediently submit, making no effort to free themselves from the bondage of ignorance, imbecility of mind, and brute force.

May I ask—When will the people of these two nations arise in their strength and power, as full formed men and women, to assert the rights of humanity, and to become an example to the other nations of the world?

How long will the inhabitants of these two advanced nations in territory, scientific knowledge, and power, continue to exhibit themselves merely as localised beings of class, sect, party, country, or colour?

When will they put on full humanity, and stand forward as independent inhabitants of our earth, knowing no class, sect, party, or petty locality called country?

When will they be prepared to form one brotherhood of our race, on a just equality, without distinction of class, creed, or country, and to give to suffering humanity universal peace on earth and good will to men?

To this state,—Utopian as it must now appear to the uneducated and ill-educated ignorant,—the population of the world is rapidly advancing, and it will overtake both the aristocracy and the democracy much sooner than either the one or the other imagines.

For “there is a good time coming”—when every one shall be so well educated and trained, under right conditions for the purpose, that a good character,—physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual, and practical—shall be given to every one from birth:—when poverty, or any fear of it, shall be unknown:—when wealth shall be always so abundant as to be had for use without money and without price:—when every one shall be filled with the spirit of love and charity, and with one universal desire, cordially to promote the progress and happiness of each and all.

Many will now be ready to say—“Do not tantalise us with this state of happiness upon earth, without telling us how it is to be obtained in practice.”

When the time shall come in the due order of nature,—that is, when men’s minds shall be prepared for simple and obvious truths, and to act consistently in accordance with them, the change, great as it may now appear, will be easily accomplished.

All that is required from society, to attain this good for all, is to abandon its glaringly false principles and their necessary prac-

ties, to adopt the true fundamental principle for forming character, and to reconstruct society on the same principle, making both consistent,—and the work will be completed.

But, you reply—We do not know how to perform this task.—I know it, my friends.—You have not been trained, educated, and placed, to comprehend a system formed through all its ramifications on falsehood, and to be able to contrast it with an entirely new system, based on truth, and made consistent in accordance with that truth.

None have yet been trained to understand entire systems of society, or been so placed as to be capable of contrasting a system false in principle and highly injurious in all its practices, with another, true in principle and highly beneficial in all its practices.

It was necessary for human progress that some one should overcome this difficulty—the conditions were made for me, by which I have been enabled to attain this knowledge.

Having attained it, I have been impelled from very early life to impress this knowledge, valuable beyond all estimate, upon the population of the world, that all might partake of its benefits, and that, in future, the inhabitants of the earth might enjoy peace and permanent happiness.

I wished, before I departed this life, to have taken an active part in directing the formation of common-sense conditions for forming a society as a model, that should secure the well-being, well-doing, and happiness of all placed within those conditions.

For this object I have petitioned our Parliament in vain for thirty years, and I have, also in vain, memorialised the Congress of the United States upon the same subject.

I may perhaps once more, this Session, petition our Parliament to take the subject into consideration for fair and full investigation; and it would be well for such petitions to be backed by other petitions from public bodies.

The experience which circumstances have given me would save much time and labour in forming the first new conditions for a rational state of human existence.

But whether I shall live to see the commencement of this change or not,—I shall be satisfied, without anxiety on the subject; knowing that whatever is for the permanent good and happiness of our race will be done.

In conclusion, I have explained that all things throughout the universe are composed of elements eternally existing, uncaused, uncreated, and possessing inherent unchanging quantities—qualities which in the aggregate form the brain or supreme mind of the universe.

That these divine elements, with their separate and united qualities, are called Nature,—and their qualities, Laws of Nature.

That Nature and God are therefore one undivided eternal

Power, competent to compose, decompose, and recombine, in endless compound and progression, these elements;—but not with power to change or alter their original divine qualities.

That the aggregate compound of these divine qualities are the Godhead or Supreme Mind of the universe, possessing all power to create and control these qualities, by uniting, disuniting, and re-uniting them.

That all disputes and contests about matter and spirit are senseless; for both are one element, more condensed or refined.

That the evident object of the supreme mind of nature in the creation, is to produce the greatest amount of happiness throughout the universe, with the least evil, or pain and suffering, that the eternal unchanging laws of the original elements will admit; and ultimately the harmony of the universe.

That this harmony can be attained only through new and varied compounds of these elements; and that some of these processes unavoidably produce temporary pain or evil to sentient beings. (It is not God, then, who creates evil; but it is the inherent laws of nature, in their progress to attain great permanent good, which make partial and temporary evil necessary.)

That man can do no good to these elements, or to God. That all worship or flattery of Supreme Power and wisdom is vain and useless.

That all that is valuable in what is called religion, morals, duties, &c., is for man to do good to man, and to show mercy and kindness, as far as practicable, to all that have life.

That creation has now progressed so far as to prepare man to advance to a new state of existence upon earth,—a state in which truth and honesty, love and charity, will be alone known in all the transactions of mankind.

That this change will be effected by men being taught how to make the conditions which are competent to produce these results.

That to create these conditions it is necessary only that governors and governed should unite in abandoning the principle of falsehood and repulsion, which creates the present disunion of the human race, and in adopting the principle of truth and attraction, which will cordially unite them as members of one family.

That they should cease to create inferior or injurious conditions; for as these conditions are, so must men become. They must create new conditions on new sites, in which to replace the human race—conditions that will with pleasure induce all, from birth, to become good, wise, and happy—and in all their intercourse with each other to use only the language of truth.

Thus easily, when the public mind shall be prepared, will the change from the temporary false and evil system of society be made, to the permanent true and good system for all.

It is only, in *principle*, to abandon the foundation of all falsehood and disunion, and to adopt the foundation of all truth and union.

And, in *practice*, to cease making inferior and bad conditions,—and to commence making superior and good conditions.

That is all which is necessary to change this pandemonium into a paradise.

But to more immediate practice. It is now evident, that if the rulers and people of the British Empire do not adopt the principles and practices now recommended, the United States of North America, having already adopted the best National System of Education, on old notions—a system which, although an imperfect mode of forming character, will be enabled to go so far a-head of other nations and of us—highly as we think of ourselves—that we and other nations must become secondary powers.

And if we do not arouse ourselves to some new great efforts in a right direction, both in principle and practice, this country must rapidly sink in the scale of nations, and continue to fall, unless the people determine to annex it with all its colonies to the new leading Empire of the world.

In my Essays, published in 1812-13, on “A New View of Society,” it is stated, that the first nation which shall adopt a good national system of education will become the first nation in the world. The late King of Prussia adopted the idea, from that work; but from his position, surrounded by despots, he was obliged to make the National Prussian Education too military. The North Americans, being more favourably situated, adopted a more peaceful and better system of instruction. Yet advanced, by comparison, as the United States are, beyond other nations, they have yet much to unlearn and much to learn, before they can attain a rational national system of forming character and creating wealth. Little do the population of the United States yet imagine, that they have a much greater step to achieve than they have yet effected, before they can make themselves permanently the most advanced and powerful empire on this globe. They must introduce the rational national system for forming a superior character for each of their citizens from birth, with new conditions for creating and distributing wealth. If they have now sufficient wisdom to “go a-head” of other nations in these respects, they will make it the obvious interest of all other populations to be annexed as additional independent States to the States already united.

And by adopting the rational national system of forming character, they would, at once, peaceably and most beneficially terminate all hostile feeling between nations, and human slavery, and would thus remove the great stumbling block to the system of universal annexation, to universal peace and prosperity, and to a cordial and practical brotherhood over the world.

ROBERT OWEN'S

Last Legacy to the Governors and Governed of all Nations.

"The Population of the World must be saved from itself."

My mission has been and is to change the system of society in principle and practice over the earth—that is, to terminate the superstitions of the world,—the government of Aristocracy and Republicanism,—human laws,—commerce for a money profit,—all punishments of man by man,—all existing institutions,—and the language of falsehood and conduct of deception.

And, instead thereof, to introduce another principle and practice for forming the human character and for governing the population of the world:—to introduce the practice of the only true religion,—a new government, neither Aristocratic nor Republican,—Nature's laws, instead of human-made laws,—new social arrangements, instead of the demoralisation of commerce for a money profit,—and the language of truth and conduct of plain straightforward honesty.

The world is willing to admit the change if it be practicable, and asks how it is to be accomplished? The answer is—by truths being taught, consistent with themselves and in accordance with all ascertained facts,—taught in the spirit of love and charity, under the direction of sound wisdom, without mystery, mixture of error, or fear of man, and with patience and perseverance knowing no limits, until this work of mercy shall be completed, to save our race from ignorance, poverty, disunion, sin, and misery.

This change is now to be effected by the creation of good and superior conditions only. For man may be considered as a rule of three question—thus—"As is the organisation, and as are the conditions in which the germ of the organisation is placed before and after birth, so will the man or woman become."

The germ and many of the conditions are made directly by the unchanging laws of God, through nature. Others, and those most essential, are placed under the creation and direction of society. Man is therefore a creature made by God and society.

It is the highest interest of the human race, and to which there

is not a single exception, that all the conditions made by society should be as good and superior as the material and means, natural and scientific, at its disposal will admit.

Society now possesses the control over these materials and means, natural and scientific, sufficient to create a superior and good class of conditions for all of the human race, not only now, but through futurity.

But these conditions cannot be understood, and therefore cannot be created, until the fundamental principle of falsehood and repulsion shall be superseded in the public mind by the fundamental principle of truth and attraction.

When this fundamental principle of falsehood and disunion shall be abandoned, and the fundamental principle of truth and union shall be adopted, the creation of good and superior conditions will become a matter of simple, plain, straightforward business, easily to be understood, and far less difficult to execute than the new Crystal Palace at Sydenham.

But the first Crystal Palace, this its superior successor, and the railways, steam navigation, gas works, and electric telegraphs, are but useful preliminaries to enable society to comprehend the change from a system of gross error in principle and practice, to a system of everlasting truth, and good and superior conditions in practice.

Conditions of union, instead of disunion—of health, instead of disease—of wealth, instead of poverty or the fear of it—of rational and pleasurable activity, physical and mental, instead of over-toil or idleness—of just equality, with all our well-educated and placed fellow beings, instead of an artificial inequality, highly injurious to every one:—conditions without fear of punishment, or desire for individual reward:—conditions which shall secure to every one all the present advantages of town, country, and university, without any of their innumerable disadvantages:—conditions in which all will have a superior character formed for them from birth—physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual, and practical, and in which all will be placed within good and superior conditions only:—conditions in which mechanism and chemistry will perform all the labours of life, and men and women will direct these powers as a pastime for health and pleasure:—conditions, in short, which shall *prevent* evil and secure good to all.

The Sydenham Palace is an attempt by some of the most advanced scientific and practical men of the present day, to form good conditions under and for the old worn out system of society. For them it is a great and noble attempt; but it has no approach to a rational scientific arrangement of good and superior conditions for humanity.

The same expense and talent under a knowledge of the true principles and objects of society would have made an invaluable

model for the world to have come to see, and to have copied with such differences as climate would require.

These same men, with a knowledge of the true principles of society, and a little instruction respecting their right application to practice, would be enabled to create a new rational combination of good and superior conditions, by the advance of one million sterling, that when completed would be of far more value than ten millions, and of many hundred times more value to the world than the new beautiful Sydenham Palace.

The government should advance the money as a loan upon interest; because it should be a government measure, for the benefit, not only of this country, but of the human race.

The execution of this model of a new world might be well intrusted to the scientific and practical men who have derived such valuable experience by erecting the first and second Crystal Palace, and should be carried forward under the patronage of Her Majesty and her Royal Consort Prince Albert. These are the natural parties who should effect this change—the greatest ever made by humanity, and perhaps the greatest which can be made, as it will be a change from all evil to all good,—from a life of falsehood, fraud, force, and fear, directed by folly or insanity, to an existence upon earth of truth, charity, and love, directed by common sense and sound wisdom.

It is useless again to detail the folly, absurdity, and madness of the present system, while its conditions are such that one man, Nicholas of Russia, can force the populations of Europe and Asia to butcher one another against the will of both.

I ask, in the name of common sense, if a system capable of producing this gross insanity does not require an immediate change?

No one can desire to continue the present system, so fraught with falsehood and evil, except from imbecility of mind, or from force, fear, or a desire to continue ignorance, fraud, cruelty, and misery.

ROBERT OWEN.

Sevenoaks, 20th June, 1854.