

WHAT IS SOCIALISM?
AND
**WHAT WOULD BE ITS PRACTICAL
EFFECTS UPON SOCIETY?**

A
CORRECT REPORT
OF THE
PUBLIC DISCUSSION
BETWEEN
ROBERT OWEN & MR. JOHN BRINDLEY,
HELD IN BRISTOL,
On the 5th, 6th, and 7th of January, 1841,
BEFORE AN AUDIENCE OF MORE THAN 5000 PERSONS.
J. S. HARFORD, ESQ., OF BLAIZE CASTLE, IN THE CHAIR.
WITH THE
PRELIMINARY CORRESPONDENCE
Between Mr. Owen and Mr. Brindley's Committee;
AND
AN APPENDIX, CONTAINING A DISTINCT DECLARATION
OF PRINCIPLES.

NOTE.—This Discussion is particularly valuable, as it contains a correct statement of Mr. Owen's views upon RELIGION, RESPONSIBILITY, MARRIAGE, and the PRACTICAL EFFECTS of SOCIALISM upon SOCIETY, as given by himself; and his own replies to the misstatements of his opponents, and to the numerous quotations from his writings, which have been selected in order to give a false colouring to them.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY
THE HOME COLONIZATION SOCIETY, 57, PALL MALL;
AND EFFINGHAM WILSON, 18, BISHOPSGATE STREET WITHIN
HETHERINGTON, 126, STRAND; CLEAVE, 1, SHOE LANE,
FLEET STREET; WATSON, 15, CITY ROAD, FINSBURY;
HEYWOOD, MANCHESTER; HOBSON, LEEDS;
AND SOLD BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.

1841.

[*Price Eighteen Pence.*]

In publishing this Discussion, the Preliminary Committee of the Home Colonization Society wish it to be distinctly understood that the Society is not confined to any particular class, sect, or party, but invite the cooperation of individuals who will unite in *practical* measures for the permanent relief and amelioration of humanity.

A Committee attends daily at the office, 57 Pall Mall, to answer inquiries, and give explanations of the measures proposed, &c. Letters addressed to the Secretary will be attended to.

[ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.]

PREFACE.

THE following is a correct Report of the late Public Discussion held in the city of Bristol, between Robert Owen, the Founder of the Rational System of Society, and Mr. John Brindley, as the advocate of the opponents to the System, in that city—a discussion which produced the deepest interest among all classes in the town and neighbourhood, and created an excitement not likely to be again allayed until “The System” is proved, by high authority, to be founded in error; or is acknowledged by the governing influences of the civilized world to be true, and therefore most beneficial for permanent adoption.

It is evident, from the whole of this discussion, that the disputants have two totally different systems in their minds; and it is for the public to judge which of the two is the one advocated by Mr. Owen.

“The System,” as explained by Mr. Brindley, is most incongruous and immoral, and one that could not be imagined except by a mind habituated to the lowest scale of human conceptions. If the “Rational System of Society” be really of this character, the sooner its progress is arrested, the better for all parties; and the world will be for ever indebted to Mr. Brindley for his exertions in bringing it so prominently before the public, and fixing the attention of all parties to the necessity of its being put down by the highest authorities in the State. On the contrary, the System, as explained by its founder, is stated by him to be derived from permanent facts; and its morality and practical results to be of the very highest order; and only to be comprehended (previous to being seen in practice) by minds devoted to truth, and influenced by a pure and genuine love for, and a sincere desire to improve the condition and promote the happiness of, the human race.

We have attentively examined the Systems explained, and investigated the documents referred to, by each in the progress of the discussion, and we have been most anxious not to be misled by the feelings of either of the disputants. Under these circumstances our conclusions are, that Mr. Brindley, owing to causes which we shall not attempt to describe, has mistaken Mr. Owen’s views altogether; he does not appear to us to possess the powers of mind to comprehend an entirely new system in principle and practice; one truly opposed in its practical arrangements to the only system of which Mr. Brindley appears to have a knowledge; and we fear he is not fully informed of the evils inherent in that

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system, or he would not longer desire its continuance if a better could be introduced.

We regret that so much personality has been introduced into the discussion, as it can have nothing to do with the truth or error of the principles on which Mr. Owen has based his new views of society. In this respect we think both parties have erred, but perhaps, under the extraordinary excitement which the subject created, it could not have been well avoided. Mr. Owen, we think, may fairly leave his character, which is so generally known, with his friends to vindicate and uphold;—future ages will do justice to the powers of his mind, and to his love for the human race. Mr. Brindley's spirit, capacity, and general character, through his past public career, and throughout the whole of these proceedings, it is left to the public to appreciate. The discussion is printed from the carefully-taken notes of a competent and respectable reporter, sent from a distance, unconnected with either party; and the public may rely on the correctness both of the Report and of the Preliminary Correspondence. In reviewing the conduct of the Chairman, John Scandrett Harford, Esq., and the Committee, we accord to them that they acted with what *they* would consider strict impartiality, and, considering the treatment heretofore accorded to men so boldly attacking the institutions and what he considers the errors of society, as Mr. Owen does, he has perhaps reason to be thankful to them for the manner in which they performed their respective duties; but it will be evident to any one who knows Mr. Owen's principles, that throughout the whole of the correspondence and discussion, the prejudices of feeling and training were strongly manifested by the Chairman and Committee, and that their endeavours were solely directed to the upholding of preconceived opinions, instead of calmly and dispassionately inquiring into the *Truth* of what Mr. Owen advanced.

That much partiality and prejudice should have existed against Mr. Owen, particularly at Bristol, under all the circumstances of the case, we need not be surprised; and in common justice it should not be forgotten, that a high degree of unfairness, to heighten this partiality and prejudice, had been exercised by Mr. Brindley in his giving a series of Lectures on the same subject, in the same place, and immediately previous to this discussion; wherein he had not only grossly misrepresented and prejudged "The System" about to be investigated, but had also most audaciously maligned the character of Mr. Owen and his family. In consequence of these aspersions, Mr. Owen has shown to us letters which he has recently received from the several branches of his family in America, which prove that the most gratifying and harmonious affection prevails amongst them, and especially toward their revered parent, of whom they speak in terms of the sincerest love and veneration. It appears that Mr. Owen's eldest son has been repeatedly elected mem-

ber of the State government of Indiana, and was last year proposed for the Governorship of that State. Another of Mr. Owen's sons has received unsolicited a very responsible situation under the United States' government, and has recently been engaged in making an extensive geological survey of Iowa and Wisconsin, previous to the sale of public mineral lands; and in which arduous undertaking he has given the highest satisfaction. And another of Mr. Owen's sons has been lately occupied in drawing up a National Plan of Education, about to be submitted to Congress.

Mr. Owen has in the press a new work, which will speedily be published, entitled "A Development of the Principles and Plans on which to establish Self-supporting Home Colonies," an imperfect copy of which, in uncorrected proof sheets, he presented to Mr. Pinney, as Chairman of Mr. Brindley's Committee, previous to the Discussion. In this work Mr. Owen fully explains his views both in principle and practice, and proves that much superior results to any hitherto known may be immediately obtained, most advantageously for the whole population, at a much less cost of capital and labour than is required for continuing a system which now produces so much poverty, vice, crime and misery.

It will be for the public to examine and decide to what extent this work is calculated to effect the object for which it is written; but after a careful perusal of all its details, we are obliged to come to the conclusion that it is the most important work ever offered to the world, and is destined to overthrow all the errors and frauds which now exist in what is termed civilized life. Mr. Owen has in this work traced the causes of human misery to their source, and has laid open to the minds of the reflecting portion of the community—and it is to those only that he at present desires to address himself—a plain, easy, and practical mode whereby, whenever a sufficient number shall be imbued with his principles to act in a pure spirit of charity towards each other and their fellow-beings, they may immediately proceed in a business-like manner to form such a union as shall be irresistible to whatever attacks the competitive world can bring against them. Many may suppose this time is far distant; but we would only ask them to look at the present state of society—see its restless and agitated condition—review the progress which the last few years have made, and we shall be disappointed if they come not to the conclusion that some alteration must *now* be made. The progress which is being made towards a new order of society cannot be more forcibly or more beautifully shown than in a summary which Mr. Owen has made at the conclusion of the Preface to his new work, which we here extract:

"The almost miraculous decline of reverence for the priesthood over the world;—their insane dissensions in opposition to each other;—and, at this stage of society, their equally insane presumption over their more

PRELIMINARY CORRESPONDENCE.

No. I.

White Lion Hotel, 21st Dec. 1840.

SIR,—I beg leave to enclose for your consideration certain proposals referred to in a resolution passed this day at a public meeting, to which I have to request your early reply.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

CHAS. PINNEY, Chairman.

To Robert Owen, Esq.

Proposals to Mr. Robert Owen on the subject of a public discussion, agreed to at a meeting held this 21st day of Dec. 1840, at the White Lion, Bristol.

1st. That a discussion be held between Mr. Brindley and Mr. Owen, for three successive evenings, and for three successive hours each evening, on the questions, "What is Socialism?" and "What would be its practical effects upon Society?"

2nd. Equal times of alternate half-hours.

3rd. Each his own Chairman; and a moderator, whose decision shall be final, to be chosen by the meeting.

4th. All surplus proceeds to go to the Infirmary.

CHAS. PINNEY, Chairman.

No. II.

Bush Hotel, Monday Evening, Dec. 21st, quarter before 6.

Mr. Owen presents his compliments to Mr. Chas. Pinney, and acknowledges the receipt of his letter and inclosure. Mr. Owen never heard of the public meeting referred to by Mr. Pinney, neither has he the pleasure of knowing who or what Mr. Pinney is, except as the apparent friend of Mr. Brindley, and the professed Chairman of proceedings which, to Mr. Owen, seem somewhat irregular.

Mr. Owen will be most happy to see Mr. Pinney at the Bush, to have an explanation upon these matters; and then, if satisfactory to Mr. Owen, he will with pleasure communicate with Mr. Pinney, or any other respectable inhabitant of Bristol.

No. III.

Mr. Chas. Pinney, in acknowledging the receipt of Mr. Owen's note, begs to apprise him that the meeting which was held yesterday, and at which Mr. C. Pinney presided, was in the strictest sense, a public

meeting, having been convened by placards, the most effective method of public announcement to which recourse could be had at so short a notice; Mr. C. Pinney can assure Mr. Owen that the meeting was composed of some of the most respectable clergy and laymen in the city; and he begs that Mr. Owen will make inquiry as to the degree in which his (Mr. C. Pinney's) signature is entitled to accredit a public communication of the nature conveyed to Mr. Owen. If, after such inquiry, Mr. Owen shall still decline the public discussion proposed in the former communication, he will of course be subject to all the responsibility which attaches to those who disturb the peace of society by the promulgation of novel and exciting doctrines, and then shrink from defending them.

Mr. C. Pinney begs to add, that this communication being of a public nature, it is indispensably necessary that Mr. Owen's reply be made in writing, and Mr. C. Pinney depends upon being put into possession of Mr. Owen's determination before twelve o'clock tomorrow, at the White Lion Hotel, Broad Street.

Bristol, 22nd December, 1840.

No. IV.

Mr. Owen has received Mr. Pinney's note of yesterday's date, and he is now satisfied with Mr. Pinney's respectability and station in society to communicate with him as a gentleman. Mr. Owen's doubts on this subject, as a stranger, and before inquiry, were on account of his apparent connexion with so notorious a character as Mr. Brindley; and from Mr. Pinney's supposing that Mr. Owen would acknowledge the authority of any public meeting of which he had no intimation, and at which, therefore, he could not be present. As Mr. Pinney has so stated it, Mr. Owen doubts not the respectability of the clergy and laymen who were present at the meeting *called a public one*, but Mr. Owen desires to know if these gentlemen were all of one party, or whether any of Mr. Owen's friends were present?

Mr. Owen accepts the terms of the discussion, with the exception of Mr. Brindley for his opponent, with whom he can have no communication; because, 1st. There is an honest man in Bristol who knows Mr. Brindley well, and he has stated to Mr. Owen that he will undertake to forfeit fifty pounds, if, in two or three weeks from the present time, he does not bring most respectable witnesses to prove him to be a most disreputable person as to veracity and common honesty, and all the moral qualities of a gentleman. 2nd. Because Mr. Owen knows from previous frequent transactions of Mr. Brindley's, that much of this statement is correctly true. But Mr. Owen cannot imagine that there can be any want of respectable opponents in the City of Bristol, and Mr. Owen will not enter into public discussion with any but experienced, educated, and respectable, persons.

Mr. Owen being most desirous that the system which he advocates should be now most fully canvassed, he will be most happy to meet Mr. Pinney and any five more of his most experienced friends, to discuss every part of the system, which, to comprehend in its four departments, of production, distribution, the formation of character, and governing, requires more practical, as well as theoretical, knowledge, than usually falls to the lot of any half dozen individuals; and Mr. Owen has no desire for victory, but for the truth to be fully and fairly ascertained, for the general benefit of mankind.

Mr. Owen requests a written reply to this communication before twelve o'clock tomorrow.

That Mr. Pinney and his friends may be well informed of what this system is which Mr. Owen advocates, he sends Mr. Pinney some proof sheets, uncorrected, of a work* about to be immediately published, that the people of this country may learn from a better authority than Mr. Brindley, *what the Rational System of society is in principle, and what it will be in practice.*

Bush Hotel, 23rd December, 1840.

Sent at twelve o'clock, at noon.

No. V.

Mr. Chas. Pinney, in acknowledging the receipt of Mr. Owen's letter and its inclosures of this day, informs Mr. Owen that the following resolution was unanimously agreed to by Mr. Brindley's Committee, held this morning to receive Mr. Owen's communication :—

Resolved—"That, in the opinion of this meeting, the letter of Mr. Robert Owen of the 23rd inst. contains unfounded slander against Mr. Brindley, whose character and conduct are known and vouched for by gentlemen of the highest respectability, lay, and clerical, with whom he has been connected for the last fifteen years; and that they are further of opinion that Mr. Owen, knowing the weakness of his cause, dares not meet Mr. Brindley, who has already been chosen by the Christian public of Bristol as their advocate."

Resolved—"That a copy of the above resolution be forwarded to Mr. Owen."

CHAS. PINNEY, Chairman.

23rd December, 1840.

No. VI.

Mr. Owen, on returning late yesterday evening to his hotel, found Mr. Chas. Pinney's note of the 23rd inst., containing the resolution of Mr. Brindley's Committee.

By this note Mr. Owen understands that Mr. Pinney declines Mr. Owen's proposal, as made in his note of yesterday's date to Mr. Pinney; that is, to discuss with Mr. Pinney and any other five friends who he might associate with him; requiring that those parties should be experienced men of business, and educated to conduct themselves as gentlemen.

Mr. Owen also observes that Mr. Chas. Pinney, as Chairman of Mr. Brindley's Committee, has stated that Mr. Brindley "has already been chosen by the Christian public of Bristol as their advocate." As the Committee of which Mr. Chas. Pinney acts as Chairman have thus decided, and given their sanction to Mr. Brindley, as being the best and most respectable advocate of the Christian cause which they can find in Bristol, Mr. Owen, as President of the Universal Community Society of Rational Religionists, will immediately supply an advocate to meet Mr. Brindley in his own way upon the terms proposed by the

* A new work entitled "A Development of the Principles and Plans on which to establish Self-supporting Home Colonies," which explains Mr. Owen's views in principle and practice.

gentlemen composing Mr. Brindley's Committee;—an advocate who will effectually reply to all the calumnies and misrepresentations which Mr. Brindley has made in his lectures; being exactly the same often-told and as often-refuted calumnies and misrepresentations which Mr. Brindley has been repeating in various towns, for a livelihood, during the last eighteen months. But as he obtains support by these means, and at the same time prepares the public to inquire what the Rational System of society is, which now so alarms some parties, he is most usefully engaged, exciting by his peculiar manner, great attention to this new subject; and as attention to it is all that is required to fix its important truths permanently in the public mind, all parties by his proceedings will be ultimately benefited, and the truth will be made obvious to every one.

Mr. Owen requests to be informed by Mr. Chas. Pinney, as Chairman of Mr. Brindley's Committee, whether the Committee accept this proposal of Mr. Owen's to find an advocate to meet Mr. Brindley in his own way.

24th December, 1840.

No. VII.

Final Propositions to Mr. Robert Owen to meet Mr. John Brindley in Public Discussion on the question of Socialism, namely,—Will Mr. Owen meet Mr. Brindley on independent ground, and on equal terms, as shall be mutually arranged by committees on either side?

Bristol, Noon, Dec. 24th, 1840.

N.B.—This note—open—was brought to Mr. Owen by three gentlemen—strangers to Mr. Owen, and with them was Mr. Brindley. Mr. Owen reiterated his objection to meet Mr. Brindley, for the reasons before stated; but added, that if the town of Bristol would elect him as their acknowledged advocate, he would then meet him on the terms proposed. Mr. Owen was asked what he meant by the town's sanction? He answered, the Magistrates and Town Council: they replied, that this sanction could not be obtained; and asked what number of respectable names, appointing Mr. Brindley their advocate, would satisfy Mr. Owen? He replied, twelve of the leading gentlemen of the city. With this answer they retired.

In two or three days afterwards Mr. Owen was waited upon, at the Bush Hotel, by a number of gentlemen, who stated themselves to be Mr. Brindley's Committee, and presented document No. 8, and requested to know if he (Mr. Owen) was satisfied with the number and respectability of the names appended to it? Mr. Owen replied that he was, and that now he would meet Mr. Brindley on the terms proposed. They then asked him whether he would appoint a committee to act for him, or whether he would act for himself? He said, being a total stranger in Bristol, he would inform them at the first meeting of the committee, which was then appointed to take place on the Monday following, at three o'clock, in a room at the Bush Hotel. The names in paper No. 9 were given as Mr. Brindley's committee; and six of the number attended the appointed meeting the next day; two (marked thus †) being absent on private business. At this meeting, if possible to make it an orderly and useful one, Mr. Owen having confidence in this committee as gentlemen of character and honesty, declined appointing a separate committee, and chairman with a moderator, and requested that this committee, who had been appointed by Mr. Brind-

ley, would manage the whole business in their own way; which they agreed to do.

The committee then inquired when Mr. Owen would wish the discussion to take place? He replied, that as Mr. Brindley had given several Lectures in Ryan's Circus during the past week, inflaming the passions of his audience by misrepresenting Mr. Owen's system and conduct, he (Mr. Owen) would occupy Ryan's Circus on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, of the current week, to counteract the feelings Mr. Brindley had raised against him, and that he would meet Mr. Brindley any time the following week. The committee declined acting on Mr. Owen's lecture-nights as a committee, but might attend as individuals, if convenient; but waived all objections to his lecturing on those evenings he mentioned, in Ryan's Circus, and because some of the gentlemen agreed with Mr. Owen that many would attend his lectures in Ryan's Circus who would not attend them in the Hall of Science; after which, arrangements being agreed to, the document No. 10 was drawn up by the Rev. J. H. Woodward, and two copies were signed by all the persons present, and one left with each party.

To every member of the committee Mr. Owen presented copies of some of his works, which he had just received, part of which had been published by others.

No. VIII.

Mr. Owen having stated, that if ten or twelve gentlemen of leading character will appoint Mr. Brindley to meet him as their advocate he will do so, at a place to be agreed upon by the respective committees of the parties, We, the undersigned, do hereby appoint Mr. Brindley for the purpose above mentioned :

J. S. Harford	Robt. Phippen	Chas. Pinney
Chas. Buck	Henry Push	J. B. Clarke
Geo. Shapland	Jas. George	James Wood
Jas. Gibbs	J. W. Miles	P. F. Aiken
Wm. Fripp	George Cooke	Samuel S. Wayte
Mr. Bryant	Val Hellicar	W. H. Thimball
John Winwood	R. H. Webb	Thomas Daniel
Thos. Kington	Arthur J. Wade	Rich. Litchfield, Capt. R. A.
J. H. Woodward	Thos. Carlisle	H. R. Hall
W. B. Cross	Thos. James	W. M. Mackrell
Robt. Ivey	J. M. Payton	Edward Gallop
Thos. Smart	Jailmer Sheat	G. Ward
John Bryant	Wm. Field	John Davies
Edw. Harris	John Hellicar	W. C. Bernard
C. L. Walker	Wm. Cripp.	Walter Marriott.
J. Hall, B. D.		

No. IX.

Saturday, 26th Dec., 1840.

Committee appointed :

† Charles Pinney, Esq.
 Rev. T. Jennings
 R. H. Webb, Esq.
 † Rev. J. Hensman

P. F. Aiken, Esq.
 G. Shapland, Esq.
 Rev. J. H. Woodward
 Capt. Litchfield, R. A.

No. X.

At a meeting held on Monday, Dec. 28, 1840, between
 P. F. Aiken, Esq. Capt. Litchfield G. Shapland, Esq.
 R. H. Webb, Esq. Rev. T. F. Jennings Rev. J. H. Woodward
 on the one part, and

Robert Owen, Esq.,

on the other, it was agreed

That Mr. Owen and Mr. Brindley meet in discussion at Ryan's Circus, on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, January 5th, 6th, and 7th, 1841, at 7 o'clock, p. m.

That admission be at the same prices as at Mr. Brindley's recent lectures in this city.

That, after paying all expenses, the proceeds be given to the Infirmary.

That Mr. Owen requests the eight gentlemen whose names were presented to him to manage the entire proceedings.

That the Discussion be limited to three hours each evening, each speaker occupying half an hour at a time alternately.

That Mr. Owen commence and Mr. Brindley close on the first and second evenings; Mr. Brindley to commence the third evening, and Mr. Owen close the debate.

That it is the wish of the undersigned to procure the services of Mr. Harford, or Mr. Pinney, or Mr. Aiken, as Chairman at the proposed Discussion:

Robert Owen	J. H. Woodward	Thomas Jennings
Geo. Shapland	R. H. Webb	R. Litchfield, Capt., R. A.

At a meeting held on Tuesday, Dec. 29th, 1840, it was agreed that the subject for discussion between Mr. Owen and Mr. Brindley be, "*What is Socialism?*" and "*What would be its Practical Effects upon Society?*"

	Robert Owen.	
P. F. Aiken	J. H. Woodward	T. F. Jennings
R. Litchfield	George Shapland	R. H. Webb.

No. XI.

Note from Mr. Owen to the Rev. J. H. Woodward, one of Mr. Brindley's Committee.

Mr. Owen presents his compliments to Mr. Woodward, and he is much surprised that he should be informed this morning that Ryan's Circus was engaged the whole of this week by Mr. Brindley, and therefore Mr. Owen could not have it.

Mr. Owen took the Circus last night from Mr. Ryan's agent in Bristol for Tomorrow, Thursday, and Friday, in conformity with the full understanding with the gentlemen present at the meeting yesterday at the Bush Hotel, that he was to do so; nor did Mr. Owen hear a doubt expressed that he could not obtain it, or that the committee had engaged it for any other purpose than the intended discussions. Mr. Owen believes there must be some mistake on the subject, and he requests information from Mr. Woodward.

Bristol, Tuesday Morning, 29th Dec.

N.B.—To this note no reply was made, but at the next meeting of the committee it came out that this same committee denied to Mr. Ryan's agent that they knew anything about Mr. Owen's intention to take the Circus, and had never given their sanction to do so; although this subject was one of much interest, and the necessity of Mr.

Owen's lecturing for three days in Ryan's Circus, to counteract Mr. Brindley's gross misrepresentations in his previous four or five days' lectures, by them fully assented to.

No. XII.

Bush Hotel, Wednesday, 30th Dec., 1840.

Note to Mr. Brindley's Committee, sent at 12 o'clock on Wednesday Morning, 30th Dec., 1840.

Mr. Owen presents his compliments to the Gentlemen composing the Committee for the Public Discussion next week between himself and Mr. Brindley, and he informs them that the advisers of the working classes think it essential, for a fair and impartial hearing of both parties, that tickets should be issued and equally divided, both parties being answerable for the amount of each; but Mr. Owen informed these parties that the Committee seemed very desirous that no tickets should be issued, but the money taken at the doors, and that he had agreed with the Committee that they should have the direction of the whole business, on purpose that there might be no disorder or confusion in these proceedings.

Mr. Owen has no other wish on these matters than that the greatest number of those who have not yet heard Mr. Owen lecture should be present, and he therefore leaves the question of admission and the appointment of Chairman, not yet decided upon, to the Committee. Mr. Owen requests to be informed of these particulars as soon as they shall have been determined by the Committee.

No. XIII.

The Gentlemen composing the Committee for directing the proceedings for the Public Discussion between Mr. Owen and Mr. Brindley, present their compliments to Mr. Owen, and beg to state, that they have met today, and after fully considering what arrangements would best secure the fair admission of the most numerous audience, have come to the determination, that the plan specified in the enclosed paper would be the most advantageous for all parties.

They have accordingly announced the arrangements in the newspapers to be published this evening.

Bristol, 30th Dec. 1840.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

between Mr. Brindley and Mr. Owen on the following subject, "What is Socialism? and what would be its practical effects upon Society?"

The Public are respectfully informed that a Committee appointed by Mr. Brindley to arrange matters relative to a Public Discussion between himself and Mr. Owen, waited on Mr. Owen, and begged him to name a Committee who might, jointly with themselves, make all the preliminary arrangements; but Mr. Owen having requested Mr. Brindley's Committee to take on themselves the settlement of the whole proceedings, the Committee beg to announce the following particulars:

1st. That a Public Discussion between Mr. Brindley and Mr. Owen take place at Ryan's Circus, at 7 o'clock, on the evenings of Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, Jan. 5th, 6th, and 7th, 1841.

2nd. That the Discussion be limited to three hours each evening, each speaker occupying half an hour at a time alternately.

3rd. That Mr. Owen commence, and Mr. Brindley close on the first two evenings; and that Mr. Brindley commence, and Mr. Owen close the last evening.

4th. That admission be without tickets, at the following prices: Dress Boxes, 1s.; Side Boxes, 6d.; Pit, 3d.; Galleries and Arena, 2d.

The doors to be opened at Six o'clock.

That the proceeds, after deducting all expenses, be divided between the Bristol Infirmary and General Hospital.

CHARLES PINNEY, Chairman to the Committee.

Dec. 30th, 1840.

No. XIV.

Mr. Owen presents his compliments to the Gentlemen composing the Committee for the Public Discussion next week, and begs to inform them that Mr. Owen has been made acquainted with John Brindley's proceedings at his late lectures in Ryan's Circus, and of the gross falsehoods which he has promulgated there respecting Mr. Owen and his family, here, and in America.

Had this man possessed one quality of a gentleman, or a spark of honesty, or any principle of fairness, he would have refrained from these topics until he had met Mr. Owen in the coming discussion agreed upon through the Committee's interference, without which Mr. Owen would have had no communication with a man whose character is so lost, that Mr. Owen had until now real pity for him. But he has taken the most unfair advantage of his position to put forth the most unfounded slanders respecting Mr. Owen and his family; falsehoods the most notoriously known to be the very opposite of the truth—and known to be so, because Mr. Owen and his family lived for nearly thirty years in the midst of a population of 2500 persons, who were more devoted to them than were, perhaps, any population to any other family. To the correct conduct of every member of that family during that period, and until the day they left their residence at New Lanark, that population will *now* testify.

Mr. Owen has always considered his private character to be so far beyond the attack of the most bitter enemy to his system, that he has hitherto rested conscious in the integrity of his intentions, and the good which he has effected for the world, rather than attend to any newspaper absurdities, or to Mr. Brindley's inventions of the most glaring and monstrous falsehoods; except once, and which he thought and hoped would have cured him of this lying propensity.

This was in the theatre in Nottingham, before a most respectable audience of a thousand persons. Mr. Owen was asked before this audience, why he would not hold a public discussion in Nottingham with Mr. Brindley? He replied; because Mr. Brindley did not know how to conduct himself as a gentleman, and because he had over and over again, to Mr. Owen's knowledge, proved himself to be a — a — and a — before the audiences which he had previously addressed in various towns, respecting Mr. Owen and the Rational System. The substance of this statement was given at that time in the Nottingham newspapers, to which reference may now be made; yet Mr. Brindley has taken no notice of this charge on his character. Mr. Owen, under these—to him, with his views for peace and the general amelioration of society—most disagreeable circumstances, is, in defence of the character of himself and family, under the necessity of posting

the character of this man, as the only means left to Mr. Owen of immediately stopping this mistaken man's progress, and to terminate his swindling transactions through the country, as well as to open the eyes of the Committee to the real character of the advocate chosen by so many of the respectable gentlemen of Bristol.

Mr. Owen has therefore to request of the Committee to publish this communication in all the Bristol newspapers published tomorrow. Mr. Owen deems this proceeding due both to the Committee and to himself.

Mr. Owen will be happy to see the Gentlemen of the Committee as early as convenient to them, that he may give them authentic proofs of the statement now made being true, beyond the possibility of denial.

Bristol, Jan. 1st, 1841.

No. XV.

The Committee for arranging the Public Discussion between Mr. Owen and Mr. Brindley, present their compliments to Mr. Owen, and beg to acknowledge his letter of the 1st inst., which, owing to Mr. Pinney's absence at Bath, they could not meet to consider before this day.

It is possible the statements referred to, as having been made by Mr. Brindley on Thursday evening, may not have been altogether correctly reported to Mr. Owen. They were *inferential* rather than positive,—to the effect “that Mr. Owen having in various publications condemned, in the strongest terms, the existing arrangements in the *Old Moral World*, regarding marriage, &c., it might justly be inferred that he spoke from personal experience respecting his own family, and the families of his friends and acquaintance, &c. &c.”

Be this as it may, the Committee feel they have no more right to dictate to Mr. Brindley than to Mr. Owen, what he shall say at his lectures.

Their office is confined to the arrangements for the approaching *Public Discussion*, and they have the satisfaction to inform Mr. Owen that they have named, as the Chairman on that occasion, John Scandrett Harford, Esq., of Blaize Castle, a gentleman of the highest respectability and character. Mr. Harford having accepted the office, they have no doubt he will use every endeavour to regulate the proceedings with moderation and equity.

Bristol, Jan. 2nd, 1841.

No. XVI.

Bush Hotel, Jan. 2nd, 1841.—Saturday, 6 o'clock.

Mr. Owen presents his compliments to the Gentlemen of the Committee for arranging the Public Discussion between Mr. Brindley and Mr. Owen, and acknowledges their note of this date, which informs him of the appointment of John Scandrett Harford, Esq. for Chairman of the Discussion, and his acceptance of the office. From the information which Mr. Owen had previously received, he would himself have given his voice in favour of the same gentleman, and he has no doubt that impartial justice will be done to both parties in the debate. The issuing of placards to announce the days of the debate, and the appointment of those who are to admit the public, and take the money at

the doors, are yet unexecuted. Perhaps the Committee will inform Mr. Owen of their wishes and intentions upon these two subjects, that he may satisfy the enquiries of others respecting them.

Mr. Owen has but just discovered that he was the other day led into a mistake, which to him is a painful one. Shortly before he met the Committee, the first day, he received a parcel of his own publication, sent at his request, from one of his Committees in London; and never suspecting that these contained any writings except his own, he without hesitation presented a copy of each to, or for every gentleman, upon the Committee. It is only within the last hour that he has discovered in *some* of them an Appendix from Shelley, which to Mr. Owen's mind and feelings is the most obnoxious that could have been introduced into any of his works; and he would have been the very last person to have presented such a work to any gentleman, much less to respectable Clergymen of the Church of England, to whom it must be peculiarly offensive. The Committee will, Mr. Owen feels confident, not attribute any such motive to his conduct. Mr. Owen's object was to make the Committee acquainted with his conscientious opinions upon those subjects which were likely to be introduced into the proposed public discussion—not wishing to conceal his opinion upon any subject connected with human improvement and happiness. Mr. Owen now sends one of the authenticated copies of his much misrepresented Lectures on Marriage, and regrets that he has not a copy for each member of the Committee. Mr. Owen has, tonight, written for more of these copies, and also to the person who published the work on his own account, to learn how this gross error had arisen*, and to stop the circulation of those to which he has appended that, in many respects, most offensive and obnoxious addition from Shelley, who was too young and inexperienced to write in his day upon subjects that required the best thoughts and reflections of matured age to develop to the world. Mr. Owen apologizes for sending so long a note to the Committee, but he could not satisfy his own mind without this explanation.

Bush Hotel, Bristol, Jan. 2nd, 1841.

No. XVII.

The Committee who are managing matters for the approaching discussion on the subject of Socialism, beg to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Owen's letter of Saturday.

They beg to state that large placards, announcing the Discussion, will be posted this evening, and that they are now appointing persons to admit the public, and receive the money and tickets.

The Committee beg to forward to Mr. Owen six Chairman's tickets for his friends, and they do likewise with Mr. Brindley. These tickets admit, without payment, to the platform, by a separate door.

Jan. 4th, 1841.

* The Publisher's Reply is inserted in the Appendix, p. 68.

DISCUSSION

BETWEEN MR. OWEN AND MR. BRINDLEY.

FIRST EVENING.—*Tuesday, January 5, 1841.*

THIS discussion, which has caused such intense interest in the City of Bristol, was held in Ryan's Amphitheatre, the largest place which could be obtained, and which could not have contained less than six thousand persons. The amphitheatre was filled in every part, and hundreds returned, not being able to gain admittance. The meeting was rather a noisy one, which must naturally be expected where such conflicting systems were to be contrasted together; but through the interference of the Chairman, and by his persuasive manner, ill-feeling was restrained as much as possible by both parties. At seven o'clock the proceedings commenced.

J. S. HARFORD, Esq., the Chairman, said, that on that, and the two succeeding evenings, Socialism was to be put upon its trial, and they would be called upon on the third night to express a deliberate opinion, after hearing the conflicting evidence which would be brought forward as to the moral effects of Socialism, and the consequences that would be likely to follow if it were to pervade the great mass of the people. It would ill become him, occupying the place he did, to offer any remarks of his own; but it was his bounden duty, as Chairman, to entreat all, and he did it most earnestly, to honour the Chair with their kind confidence and support, and he would discharge his duties with fairness and impartiality (*hear*). It was only by supporting the Chair that a meeting so awfully numerous as the present could be maintained in an orderly manner, where so many questions of heart-stirring interest were to be agitated; but he could not go to the length of requesting the meeting to restrain the expressions of their feelings on the various points, for many of those points came far too near home to their hearts and bosoms to render it possible that they should do so (*cheers*). He would earnestly entreat them to remember when their feelings were the most excited, that the end they had constantly in view was the refutation of error and the advocacy of truth, and that end could only be served by rendering a candid, patient, and impartial hearing to both the disputants (*cheers*). The Chairman then called upon P. F. Aiken, Esq., to read the rules of the discussion, which had been mutually agreed upon.

The following are the laws of the discussion:—

1. That a public discussion between Mr. Brindley and Mr. Owen take place at Ryan's Circus at seven o'clock, on the evenings of Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday,—the 5th, 6th, and 7th of January, 1841, J. S. Harford, Esq. in the chair.

2. That the discussion be limited to three hours each evening; each speaker occupying half an hour each time alternately.
3. That Mr. Owen commence, and Mr. Brindley close on the first two evenings; and that Mr. Brindley commence, and Mr. Owen close the last evening.
4. That admission be without tickets, at the following prices:—dress boxes, 1s.; side boxes, 6d.; pit, 3d.; galleries and arena, 2d.; the doors to open at six o'clock.
5. That the proceeds, after deducting all expenses, be divided between the Bristol Infirmary and the General Hospital.

MR. OWEN, upon rising, was received with mingled cheers, hisses, and groans. He said, Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen; I have been generally supposed to be, and I suppose I am, the founder of this system. I will therefore explain to you what it is in plain, simple, direct language (*hear, hear*).

What is Socialism? And what would be its practical effects upon society?

In ancient or modern times, two more important questions have never been put to any audience or people.

These questions, involving the well-being and happiness of the human race, are not to be answered by personal abuse*, or by arousing the passions or prejudices of those who are yet unacquainted with the principles or the practices of the system about to be explained, and explained now by a man who has spent fifty years of close application to form the system, and to bring it to its present state of perfection (*cheers and groans*).

Is it not probable that the founder of such a system knows it, in all its parts, spirit, and tendencies, much better than a young man full of words, but who is evidently without any practical experience in all the essential business of life? (*laughter*). In giving the explanation which I am about to do, I claim the birth-right of an Englishman, to be heard fairly and fully in my own defence (*hear and cheers*).

I was speaking, my friends, of the importance of understanding truth from error. Truth is always consistent with itself; and not only so, but with every known and well-ascertained fact: and it is by this criterion I trust ultimately the system which I advocate will be judged by this assembly, and by the world at large. There has been, my friends, an immense mistake made with regard to names. Names have given authority hitherto, and not facts. I will explain what I mean. Suppose that the most honourable, trustworthy, and conscientious inhabitant in Bristol were to say we are not here present at this time, it would not be true, although that conscientious individual stated that it was so; while, on the contrary, if the least creditable individual in Bristol said we were here present, the fact would be so, although it were contradicted by the most conscientious, and affirmed by the least conscientious individual. I have stated these circumstances to show you that that which is true upon a large and extended scale, must be in unison with each part, while every part must be in perfect unison with every known law of nature, or with every fact that has been well ascertained (*hear, hear*).

I ask for no favour, but I ask for strict impartiality and fair justice between man and man; I ask not—I wish not for more (*hear, hear*).

* Previous to this discussion Mr. Brindley had delivered a course of Six Lectures in Bristol, in which he had grossly misrepresented the Rational System, and basely calumniated Mr. Owen and his family.

Then to the question, What Socialism is? I reply, that the Social System, or that which I have always called it, the Rational System of Society, is derived solely from nature; that is, from facts which have never yet been known to change, and therefore from the undoubted words or language of the *Great Spirit of the Universe*.

These facts form a new association, or language of ideas, in perfect harmony among themselves; and also with all that is known respecting human nature. And this unison, or harmony of facts and ideas, is the sole criterion of truth. For truth is always consistent with itself and with all facts.

From these facts, so united, two Sciences have been formed, 1st, of Human Nature, and 2nd, of Society; sciences, that as soon as the passions and prejudices of men can be calmed, so as to admit of sound reflection and accurate reasoning upon these subjects, will be found to be productive of more practical good and permanent happiness to the human race, than all the physical sciences that have yet been discovered.

For these sciences develop,—

1st. What human nature is, as respects the individual.

2nd. What society is when men unite in numbers for their own benefit.

3rd. What are the proximate causes which have formed man with individual and national characters in all countries as they have been described in the past histories of these countries.

4th. These sciences enable those who fully understand them to discover the proximate causes of the evils which our ancestors have experienced through a long night of ignorance, superstition, division, war, and bloodshed.

5th. They make evident now, the real cause of all the past and present divisions between man and man, nation and nation, and of all the evils resulting from these long-continued contests.

6th. They equally open to view the proximate causes of the past and present ignorance of the human race, of its poverty, of its diseases, vices, crimes, and miseries.

7th. They disclose the causes of the real want of charity and kindness among the human race.

But these sciences will speedily effect much more: they will soon enable society to remove the proximate causes of all these evils from every district of the world, and accomplish this change through a straightforward proceeding uninjurious to all; and thus gradually terminate vice and misery, both being unavoidable results of those causes now removeable by human agency.

And more: these sciences, when fully understood, will enable society to go one step further, and most beneficially to create and introduce new causes, which shall, without chance of failure, ensure great intelligence, good conduct, sufficient wealth, and rational enjoyment for every individual born with a sound or *healthy* constitution, and speedily remove the causes of *unhealthy* constitutions.

These great and extraordinary changes will be effected by a very simple and straightforward process, by *practical* measures, in which there will be neither magic nor mystery.

All who are experienced, and reflect, of every religious creed and political party, must now admit, that man is, to a great extent, the creature of the circumstances in which he is born and lives.

With few exceptions, the causes of which exceptions these sciences easily explain, it is a fact,—1st, That when men are placed within inferior and bad external circumstances from birth through life, they will neces-

sarily acquire inferior or bad language, habits, and conduct, as do the inhabitants of St. Giles in London, or similar places in other towns, and in all places in towns or country which are formed of low, vicious, and unfavourable external circumstances.

2nd. That when men are placed from birth within the ordinary dwellings, and surrounded by the usual habits of the middle classes, in which there is some mixture of better, yet with many unfavourable circumstances, the general language, habits, and conduct of the individuals born within them will be the necessary effects of these middle-class circumstances; and, more particularly, such as the buying-cheap and selling-dear arrangements of the middle classes force on the individuals who have been made subject to those injurious arrangements.

These circumstances, with the exceptions as before stated, can create only middle class, or buying and selling, minds and conduct. It is the bad system, and not the individual, who forms this character.

My friends, when I thus speak of systems, I wish it to be distinctly understood, that I never refer to any individual (*cheers*). I know that their characters are formed for them by the circumstances in which they are placed; but now I must say what has been made known to me, for I am familiar with all these divisions of society. I must now distinctly say, that so long as a system shall prevail throughout society to train young persons from an early period of their life in the habit of endeavouring to buy cheap and sell dear, that of necessity the human mind must and will be formed of a low grade, of a far inferior mould to that which we have now a fair opportunity of placing it in. And I will venture to say, without fear of contradiction, that so long as the governors of society shall maintain this system, the human race will be involved in disease, in contention, in vice, crime, and misery, to which there will be no end (*loud cheers*). Rejoice with me that the time has arrived—ay, and this assembly is the most direct confirmation of it—when this low state of human proceeding, when this inferior mode of forming the human character, shall speedily cease, and we shall discover, my friends, another and a superior state, that shall sink all that has yet been done low, low indeed. I will, before I leave this city, make this true, this practical system, this system in accordance with every known fact, so plain to the working, middle, and upper classes, that all shall understand it fully and clearly, so that those who run may read (*cheers and hisses, cries of no, no, and yes, yes*).

3rd. That when men, from their birth, are placed within better external circumstances, as some of those are by which the upper classes are usually surrounded, they necessarily, with very few exceptions, acquire the language, habits, conduct, and usual association of ideas which, by many, are so much admired in those who are deemed fashionable men and women, or people who know the world, and can practise its superior manners.

It is in consequence of individuals being thus placed from birth in the midst of those circumstances which are calculated to create the language and manners they possess, that they become what we see them, and I hope that soon the time will come when every one of these manners and habits will be founded in honesty and sincerity; for, my friends, the system which I advocate will be based, not as your present system is, upon principles of deception, but will be formed upon truth; it will be a system in which there shall be no motive for any individual to express a falsehood either in look, word, or action (*oh! oh!*). You must not be surprised at these statements, there are many extraordinary things yet to

come. You have already lived to see many things which, sometime back, were not only deemed extraordinary but impossible. When I was a boy it was thought impossible to spin more than one or two threads at once, and now I see one individual spinning twelve hundred at the same time. Now, persons fly across the country, from twenty to forty miles an hour; but I remember when it was thought by all to be impossible to drive a mail-coach more than seven miles per hour: so is it with this system (*uproar and confusion*). My friends, I am not a boy; I have had great experience in all the great divisions of life. I have been a practical man from my youth, and I have studied these matters for more than fifty years (*interruption*).

4th. That, with very few exceptions, which exceptions these two sciences easily explain—those who are born of Jewish parents and continue to live among the Jews, are, by all the circumstances which surround them, daily more and more prejudiced against the Christians, Mahomedans, Hindoos, and all other religions which differ in name from their own; while they are, every hour of their lives, more and more prejudiced in favour of their own (“*half hour up*”).

Mr. BRINDLEY, in commencing his reply, observed, that they were met to discuss, as had been judiciously remarked, a question of great importance; and in order that they might do so with advantage to themselves, it was necessary that they should be strictly open, honest and candid in their investigation. He should not be performing his duty to the public did he not treat the question in that straightforward, candid manner in which he meant to do. They had not come to hear a partial view of what Socialism was, but they were come to know what it was in all its length and breadth, and in all its applicability to society at large; and he (Mr. B.) fully intended to thoroughly search into it. They had heard one half hour's statements from Mr. Owen; but for his part, as an opposite counsel in that cause—for Socialism was a sort of prisoner at the bar, and that large and respectable assembly were an honest and intelligent jury, and he (Mr. B.) and Mr. Owen were counsel against and for the prisoner at the bar—as an opposite counsel, then, he (Mr. Brindley) thought the subject needed but little argumentation upon his part. They had heard one half hour's address. Now he (Mr. B.) had no reply to make to it. They were met to inquire “What Socialism was?” but he had not heard the thing spoken of or inquired into yet (*yes, yes, no, no*). Well, he would take care they should hear something of it, whatever his opponent might say. Now for the question: “What is Socialism?” He would tell them what it was; and he should do so only by establishing his charges from the documents which had been placed in the hands of his (Mr. B.'s) committee by Mr. Owen himself. He would take their own accredited works, and from them substantiate the charges he would have to make. What is Socialism? It was, in his opinion, a system that aimed at the destruction of all our institutions that are now in existence—their destruction both in principle and in practice. It was a system that would take away from man all power of choice and action—all accountability to his fellow-man or to God. It was a system that would throw down every moral standard, and declare that man ought to have full, unbounded liberty to think, speak and do as he liked on all occasions, because he could not help it; because there was no praise or blame, no merit or demerit, no reward or punishment for any action whatsoever. It was a system that went a step higher: it positively denounced every kind of marriage in principle and practice, and it denounced all religion, of every kind and sort; and then it posi-

tively denied the existence of one personal, intelligent Being, which we call God. It denied all future rewards and punishments, as Mr. Owen himself declared, and that it would be well for the world if all those writings, that we hold sacred, could be placed in one huge pile, and consumed till not a fragment remained (*confusion, and cries of no and yes*). He (Mr. Brindley) held in his hand a work of Mr. Owen's entitled "Socialism; or the Rational System of Society—Three Lectures delivered to the Mechanics' Institution, London, 1840, in reply to the Misrepresentations of Socialism in both Houses of Parliament." In the opening speech of the first lecture he said, "In the lecture I am now about to deliver I intend to explain two different states of human existence—two different modes of human society—two opposite modes of thinking and acting through the life of every human being—two worlds formed by man's immediate agency, emanating from two principles, the antipodes of each other—in fact, two worlds, governed by opposing spirits; in fact, by spirits which lead to the most opposite practices from the birth to the death of every individual, and in the conduct of all nations and all people." Again, "these two worlds are so opposite to each other in theory and practice, that they never can be united in principle, spirit, or conduct; and all who shall attempt this task will labour in vain, and be grievously disappointed. I shall attempt," says Mr. Owen, "no such impossibility." Now then, observed Mr. Brindley, he distinctly affirmed that the new world was entirely opposed to the present world in all its theory, principle, practice, spirit, conduct and everything else; that they could not possibly be united, and that he (Mr. Owen) would not attempt such an absurdity. Socialism was not a system that was going to amend and improve the people and the institutions which now exist. No; it was to be altogether opposed to the old world. In the Book of the New Moral World, page 12 of the Introduction, it is stated as follows:—"It must now be evident that the New Moral World will have little in common with the old, except humanity as it comes into existence at birth, and the simple materials of nature; and even these will be made to receive forms and qualities so superior to those which have hitherto been given to them, that the inexperienced would scarcely believe their natures to be the same." The only thing which was to be similar to the Old World was humanity, and even that was to be totally different, so that it would scarcely be believed to be the same! The first point, then, he (Mr. Brindley) considered, proved, viz., that Socialism was a system which was in direct opposition to everything which now exists, and it was a system replete with the most consummate folly. Those were grave charges, but they could be fully proved. The Book of the New Moral World was a most foolish book. In the 10th page of the Introduction Mr. Owen promises "that other arrangements are to be formed to enable all,"—mark this—"as soon as they shall have been made rational, to live in superior habitations, surrounded by gardens, pleasure-grounds, and scenery far better designed and executed than any yet possessed by the monarchs of the most powerful, wealthy and extended empires." Now he is going, then, to put you all into these superior habitations, more beautiful than the palaces of the mightiest monarchs of the most extended empires. This, I say, then, to my mind, is a piece of folly, folly, folly, of the very foolishest order. To go further: he (Mr. Brindley) had to charge that book with a great deal of ignorance and absurdity, although he was sorry to do so; he was sorry to compete with a gentleman of more than "fifty years' experience"! He (Mr. B.) had had but little experience; but if it pleased God to spare him fifty years, he could not tell what he

might say, for he now believed the Book of the New Moral World to be the most foolish, nonsensical piece of composition that ever he met with in his life. But to come to the proof, for he liked to meet things fully and fairly. They would begin with "fact 2," on which all the other "facts" hinged; it went to prove that man was not a free agent, but an irresponsible being; "that man is compelled by his original constitution to receive his feelings and his convictions independently of his will." Now that was brought before them as a "fundamental fact," discovered by a man of "fifty years' experience," and by discovering five such "facts" he was enabled to build up a "New Moral World"! There was no discovery in it. There was not any man of sound mind ever imagined that the will formed the feelings and convictions. Why, I might as well tell you that that candlestick would never give a good light unless there were a candle in it (*a laugh*). Now don't laugh; it's a "fact." He (Mr. B.) then charged Mr. Owen and his system with ignorance and absurdity, for bringing forward as a discovery—a piece of practical nonsense which nobody would pretend to deny. He (the speaker) would tell Mr. Owen that man is a free agent, although his will does not form his feelings and convictions. They were formed by man's perception, reflection and judgment. That was an important part of the subject. Man's feelings and convictions are formed by his powers of perception, reflection and judgment, and then came in the office of the will, and what did it do? It had a twofold power: first it made man a free agent, and by his will he could choose what amount of perception, reflection and judgment he would devote to any matter; and when the convictions were arrived at, whether his conduct should be or should not be in accordance with those convictions. At page 4 of the Book of the New Moral World, is another piece of most profound absurdity. Mr. Owen there tells how man's character is formed; and how did they think it was? "The effects of the action of external circumstances upon the original constitution may be thus described: Suppose the organization at birth to be represented by A, and the first circumstance acting upon it be represented by B; A and B, unite and make a compound, represented, we will suppose, by C. The second circumstance which influences the organization shall be called D, which then unites with the last compound C, making a new compound of character which we will call E. The next external influence, which we will call F, must now make another compound, not, however, by uniting with A or C (which peculiar compounds have been lost for ever), but with the last new compound E, and together making the fourth compound, which we will denominate G; and in this manner the character of each individual undergoes a continued change, or makes a constant advance towards maturity, and afterwards to old age. Now it should be always held in remembrance, that the individual, after each new compound of his character has been effected, has had some change made in it; and his power and inclination to re-act upon external circumstances will be in accordance with this change." There, then, was what he (Mr. Brindley) called Mr. Owen's extremely whimsical formation of character. External circumstances B, popped into original organization A, and, as he had before frequently told them, "chemically and mechanically formed a compound," which they called C. At page 13 of that book, Mr. Owen says, that "the consequences to which all these facts lead, are true morality and real virtue; and all will have universal charity for the personal appearance, for the feelings, thoughts, actions, and general character of all individuals, whatever may be their colour,

language, religion, habits, or conduct; and there will exist also of necessity a universal sympathy of feeling, which will compel each one to love his neighbour not merely as well, but much better than himself." Whatever may be his actions, love him better than yourself. If he half kill you, or knock off your head, never mind, you are bound to love him much better than you do yourselves. A most splendid piece of knowledge, truly, which Mr. Robert Owen, a gentleman of fifty years' experience, had laid before them! (*time expired*).

MR. OWEN said he was glad to find that Mr. Brindley kept them in good spirits by explaining the Social System; but his (Mr. Owen's) Social System and Mr. Brindley's system were as opposite as any two things they could imagine. He would proceed with an explanation of his (Mr. O.'s) system:—

5th. That in like manner those who are born of, and who live solely among Hindoos, Chinese, Christians, Mahomedans, or any other persuasion, are daily prejudiced in favour of their own and against every other religion, and thus the divisions and hatred of man to man and nation to nation are created, and fostered, and encouraged, as though ill-will, anger, hatred and opposition to our fellow-men were really virtues, instead of being rank vices of the worst and most deplorable character.

6th. That the religion, government, state of agriculture, manufactures, with the public institutions, education, &c., &c., in every country, tend to form, and do form, the general national character of all nations. And that, in like manner, the particular local circumstances of provinces, countries, towns, and rural districts, form the provincial and more local character in language, habits, association of ideas, and prejudices for or against persons and things.

My friends, whatever you may hear from other parties, the system I advocate is intended in practice to introduce that universal charity and kindness which we have heard so much of, and of which, at the present time, we see so little (*cheers and hisses*).

In this manner the general character of the inhabitants who have been born, and who have lived all their days in Bristol, has been formed for them.

Any local differences between them arise from the difference among their organizations, or bodily and mental powers and faculties at birth, and of the rich, middle, or poor, and other varying external circumstances in which they have been placed through life.

And it must now be evident to those who reflect, that the infants thus born in Bristol did not make the differences which at birth existed between them in their constitution of body or mind, or in the rich, or poor, or other circumstances by which each has been surrounded from his birth.

Also, as they did not *form themselves at birth*, or the great mass of overwhelming general external circumstances by which they have been surrounded *from their birth*, and as these two sets of circumstances combined have formed all the individuals to be what they have been, and now are, it follows, beyond all doubt, that their characters, such as they now are, whether good, medium, or bad, have been formed *for* them in the manner now described.

And that the general circumstances and their own associates in Bristol have chiefly formed them to be as they are.

7th. That these persons so formed, and who have lived all their days in Bristol, might have been taken soon after their birth, one half to the

East Indies, and left to be trained and educated among the tribe of Gentoos, and consequently the language, habits, manners, prejudices, and conduct of the Gentoos would have been given to each of them; while the other half might have been taken and left to be trained among the cannibals of New Zealand: in which case, in like manner, the language, habits, manners, prejudices, and conduct of these cannibals would have been given to this latter half, as certainly as those of the Gentoos would have been given to the other half.

Now if the audience present will reflect upon what I have said, they will discover principles and practices (which, if truly and honestly acted upon by those who have the government of this and other countries) would do more good than could possibly be conceived of. I am obliged to Mr. Brindley for saying that the system I advocate is indeed one altogether different from that in which we have hitherto lived. Had it not been different, I should not have devoted upwards of half a century, a large fortune, and every day of my future life to effect the change. But when I see an audience such as I see before me now, and when I know that these principles, if they had been acted upon fifty years ago, would have placed you all in good habitations, and well fed, well clothed, well educated you, and made you all intelligent, rational beings, I exert myself to the utmost to take the steps necessary to effect this change; and I trust that not only you, but the other respectable individuals in this city, will fully investigate the principles and practices which I advocate and recommend. If they should be found, upon a full and fair intelligent investigation, to be true, then, I trust, Sir, I shall not only have your aid, but that of every enlightened, well-disposed individual, to enable me to put an end to poverty, and the fear of poverty, for ever. If I am right, there ought never to be one individual hereafter brought up amidst low, dirty, vicious, inferior circumstances; for I am well assured, from all the experience of my long life, that superior circumstances around these individuals, from birth to death, will have the result of inducing superior habits, manners, language, and conduct.

8th. That all men may be so placed from birth, that they may be taught any language, and any creed or religion, with any general habits and conduct; and be led, step by step, from one prejudice to another, firmly and most conscientiously to believe that that particular religion, whether it be Jewish, Christian, Mahomedan, or Hindoo, is of divine appointment and authority, and that all other religions are false; and, that all who profess other religions have been deceived by *their priests*, who have taught them to believe that their religion could have been of *divine* authority. (It is quite as easy to create this belief in favour of *any one* of these religions as of any of the others, and thus in all countries human belief and conscience are manufactured regularly, like a piece of cloth, or any other thing or fabric) (*loud noise and confusion*). Groans are no arguments. I mean to bring forward arguments for everything I advance, and if they cannot be supported—nay more, if any one here can convince me that I am wrong in any one principle of my system, for I hold it that every principle which I advocate is true, or that none of them are true—if then any one can convince me that I am wrong, I will as strongly take up the other side of the question, and declare my conversion to that which they will make appear more true (*cheers*). My friends, I would not have sacrificed so much time as I have for anything which I believe to be untrue. I am not come with a view to injure any of you. My sole object is to benefit every one of you. If I err, it is a want of judgment: but if it be a want of

judgment, perhaps there is no individual that has taken more pains to prove whether that judgment be correct or not (*cheers and groans*).

9th. That any infant may be trained most conscientiously to believe that *any* book contains the word of God, or of the over-ruling spirit of the universe. And in this manner millions are conscientiously trained to believe, as the Jews are trained to believe, that the Old Testament alone contains the real word of God. The Jews believe that the New Testament is *not* a divine book, but the production of ordinary and designing men; while millions of Christians, trained as we have been, have been taught to believe that both the *Old and New Testaments* are *divine books*, and contain the only word of God; but, more especially, many Christians deem the *New Testament* of a more pure and higher character than the *Old Testament*.

Again, many millions of Hindoos believe their Shaster to contain the only true word of God; while as many millions of Mahomedans most conscientiously believe that the Koran contains the only true word of God; and more millions than any two of these religions put together are carefully taught from their birth to believe that their sacred books, as they call them, written by Fo and Confucius, alone contain the only true word of God.

And thus are all men, unfortunately for the peace, rationality, and happiness, of the human race, taught these opposing creeds and dogmas, and are thus regularly and systematically made to hate, instead of being, as it would be for the interest of all that they should be made, cordially, heartily and sincerely to love one another; and to have none of these fatal contending mysteries forced, while children, into their tender and unresisting minds.

The Rational System of society explains the true causes of all these mistakes among men: why they are now uncharitable and unkind to each other; and why vice and misery are making such rapid progress through this and other countries, while the means abound to make all men kind and charitable to each other, to remove poverty, division, vice, and all the bad passions, and to make all well-informed, rational, and happy beings.

This then is my first and general answer to the question, What is Socialism? In our subsequent proceedings I will more and more open this subject to you, in order that, if now practicable, all, of every party and creed, may learn what the Rational System is, which alone I have ever advocated, and what my motives and objects for advocating it really are. In my next speech I will answer the second question, What would be its practical effects upon society?

Now it is necessary I should say something as to the system of Socialism as explained by Mr. Brindley. I say then at once, that every part of the system which he has said to be the rational system of society, which I advocate, is quite contrary to the fact. In the first place, with regard to marriage. I have again and again stated that so long as the present system shall remain, marriages must take place as they now are, until the Government can be induced to alter the laws. The passages which Mr. Brindley has read to you on former occasions, referred to the marriage system in this country before the late Registration Bill was passed. I do object, and I always will object, to anything which is contrary to nature, and it appeared to me—whether right or wrong you must judge—that to make a law that young people should promise and swear to love each other to the end of their lives, when the power of loving or hating was not with man, was certainly a great

mistake. Instead of there being anything to recommend sexual immorality, the system was devised purposely to put an end to that extent of sexual immorality which now prevails throughout the world; and in all my thirty years' experience at New Lanark I never saw—and thousands of individuals will bear me out in the assertion—I never saw a more virtuous population in any part of the world. I do not wish you to take my word for it; I am ready to bring many respectable individuals as witnesses, who have taken great pains to investigate thoroughly into that institution (*cries of "Who?" "Prove it!"*). This which I hold in my hand (continued Mr. Owen), is an official report made by three delegates, appointed by the town of Leeds, to come to New Lanark, to inquire into its condition*. At that time all the manufacturing districts were in great distress, and they came there because they heard that the inhabitants were in a more prosperous and better state than in any other establishment in the kingdom. This is an extract from the report of these gentlemen—I regret that I cannot have time to read the whole of it:—

“ In the adult population of New Lanark we saw much to commend. In general they appeared clean, healthy, and sober: intoxication, the parent of so many vices and so much misery, is, indeed, almost unknown here.” That was long before teetotalism commenced. “ The consequence is they are well clothed, well fed, and their dwellings are inviting. The Scotch character has in it, no doubt, something to dispose to a more exemplary observance of the Sabbath than is generally to be met with in England, and this appeared quite manifest in the New Lanark system, in the tendency to improve the religious character; and so groundless are the fears of religion suffering, that we agree with Mr. Owen in his assertion that the inhabitants of that place form a more religious community than any manufacturing population in the United Kingdom.”

Yes, my friends, not merely a religion of *words* but a religion of *practice*; for in reality there was charity, there was kindness, there was brotherly love. I never saw two thousand individuals so united, so moral, and so happy, as those were for the time that I had the direction of them. I may just state that Mr. Brindley has been informed, as I understand, that I was not a partner in this establishment at first, but that it was in consequence of serving Mr. Dale that I became his son-in-law, and a great variety of most extraordinary ridiculous reports. The fact was, I purchased the New Lanark estate with other partners, and at that time Mr. Dale had not the slightest idea that I should ever be his son-in-law; and my fortune at that time was equal to Miss Dale's; and for ten years previous to having the New Lanark estate I conducted a large establishment in which there were more than five hundred men, women, and children (*time expired*).

MR. BRINDLEY said, if they were met to discuss a certain question why was not the question mutually grappled with in order to answer it, instead of occupying the time half hour by half hour in reading papers which could not possibly anticipate what might be said? If Mr. Owen had such confidence in the goodness of his system and his principles as he professed to have, why had he not grappled with that one essential fundamental principle on which his whole system rested? If he would positively be induced to give up all his principles—if he (Mr. Owen) could prove me to be false, let him speak to the point. He

* These gentlemen were, Edward Baines, Esq., M. P., a Dissenter; John Cawood, Esq., a Churchman; and Robert Oastler, Esq., a Methodist.

(Mr. Owen) must do one of two things. He must either give up his principles or disprove his (Mr. B's) positions. Now he (the speaker) had met Mr. Owen's principles fairly. He had fired his principle—the great gun of non-free-agency, and he would challenge him upon that point. Mr. Owen had told them if he erred it was not owing to external circumstances: no, it was not owing to his organization: no, but what was it? It was a want of judgment (*laughter*). Want of judgment forsooth! He (Mr. B.) thought it was A and B popped into C and made D. Whoever heard of a want of judgment? Where did he get it from? his eyes, his nose, or his teeth? (*laughter*). They had not met to hear statements, but to discuss principles, and he (the speaker) wanted nothing but principles. Mr. Owen had spoken of our present principles as being opposed to his, and which he says,—i. e. these opposing creeds and dogmas—are most fatal mysteries to man, and he included among that class Christianity, the Old Testament, and then the New and the Old united. Now then he (Mr. Brindley) thought it his duty to defy Mr. Owen to prove that they were mere dogmas and fatal mysteries. They were now beginning to grapple with the question—they were now getting the monster from his lair. What was it? It was stalking infidelity; it was now beginning to be naked infidelity, and he (Mr. B.) would boldly face it. If a man came before them and told them that a book and a religion, on which they had built up their hopes through hundreds of years, and in which hundreds and thousands of the greatest men had lived and died; if he told them that those things were fatal mysteries, and that it was from those whence all the errors of society had arisen, then he (Mr. Brindley) would boldly say he must clearly prove it, and he was an impudent impostor if he did not do so.

The Chairman rose and said, Mr. Owen had whispered in his ear that the question was, what is Socialism? as though he conceived Mr. Brindley to be running from the point. But certainly he (the Chairman) conceived that Mr. Owen had thrown out a slur on both the Old and New Testaments, and that was the part of the subject on which Mr. Brindley was then about to speak. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Brindley said it was precisely as the honourable Chairman had stated. Was he (Mr. Owen) a man that should dare to hurl the dart of slander against the rock of our Holy Covenant? If he dared to meet the question, let him do it; but if he dared not, he would not allow him to insult the meeting by his vile slander. They must be strong and pointed. As Christians they held the Word of God sacred, and either Mr. Owen must be silent upon that point, or else he must not throw out his slander and aspersions upon it, or like a man, he must defend his statements. To go on a little further, and he (Mr. Brindley) could prove from any one page of his book, that it was an absurd, blasphemous, and immoral system. Mr. Owen had saved him some trouble, for he (Mr. Owen) had done what otherwise would have devolved upon himself; he had told them that one grand absurdity which the New System was to do away with was this: that young people should not promise to love each other through life to death. Now then if they were not united by affection, by attachment in marriage, and by this promise of love and affection, by what means were they, and upon what principles were they to be united together? Mr. Owen had told them about New Lanark, and of the prosperity and virtue of the inhabitants, but was that carried on by this “no-promise system?” They either were married people, or they were not; and if they were married, then

their prosperous, virtuous condition was the result of it. He should like to ask Mr. Owen that question, and for him to answer it, without giving half an hour's rigmarole more of such flimsy matters as he had brought forward. Would Mr. Owen be kind enough to tell that meeting whether the people of Lanark ever rejected the Bible, and whether they ever ceased to be taught by Christian teachers from the Word of God? He (Mr. Brindley) would now have a slap at the religion of the New Moral World. At page 28 of the book of the New Moral World, was Mr. Owen's opinion of this subject. "Men have been taught by the priests, who have been at the head of every worshipping sect, that they ought to believe the particular dogmas of the religion which they teach; that men are good, and deserve, and will receive, reward, in proportion as they believe in these dogmas; and that they are bad, and deserve, and will receive, punishment, according to their disbelief." He (the speaker) would defy Mr. Owen to prove that. The fact was this: the ministers of the Gospel placed in the hands of every Christian, man and woman, not their own dogmas, but the Word of God; and they did not tell them they should have eternal reward or punishment, according as they either believed or disbelieved them, but that it would be according as they were pleased to accept the atonement through the Saviour of the World. Page 29 was as follows: "Theology, when stripped of useless words, and of the mysteries with which all religions are veiled from the common eye, is founded upon this simple dogma; and as the law of nature, stated at the head of this section, is a true law confirmed by all known facts, then of necessity all the religions established on a false notion of human nature directly opposed to this law, must be errors of the imagination, and lead, as they have done, to every evil experienced through the past ages of the world."

Could Mr. Owen say that religion was a mere creation of the imagination, and from it flowed all the ignorance and wretchedness that exist? Yes, such was the infidel system, that it declared that to be the case. He (Mr. Owen) said, "This error, with another (which is marriage), to be explained in the succeeding section, is the evil genius of the world, the Devil of the Christians, and the real and sole cause of all lies and hypocrisy." Those were momentous questions. Did Mr. Owen, as the author and president of the Social System, believe, or did he not believe in the Bible as the Word of God? That was the question, and he would have that answered too with the permission of the Chairman. At page 52 of the same work it stated, "That the religions found under the names of Jewish, Budh, Jehovah, God, or Christ, Mahomet, or any other, are all composed of human laws in opposition to nature's eternal laws; and when these laws are analysed they amount only to three absurdities—three gross impositions upon the ignorance or inexperience of mankind—three errors now easily to be detected by the most simple experiment of each individual upon himself. The fundamental doctrines or laws of all these religions are, first—Believe in my doctrines as expounded by my priests; second—Feel as these doctrines, thus expounded, direct you to feel; and third—Support my ministers for thus instructing you. 'If you faithfully perform these things in my name,' say the priests of all these religions, 'you will have the greatest merit in this world, and an everlasting reward in the next.'" The priests of the Christian religion never did say, "in my name," but in the name of God; if they applied that language to God, then it would be true. "Believe in my doctrines as expounded by my priests; feel as these doctrines direct you to feel;" that was the proper appli-

cation of it. Mr. Owen had no right to charge a body of men, "priests," as he calls them, with what he had.

He (Mr. Brindley) was no priest, nor was Robert Owen, but laity to laity; he (Mr. B.) would put his puny boyhood against Mr. Owen and his fifty years' experience, and if he could not prove what he had stated he had put out a lot of arrogant impertinency. He said in continuation, "All religions and all codes were built on the preceding dogmas, and all pre-suppose the original power in man to believe and to feel as he likes." He even denied the existence of a superior Being whom we call God. He said all religions and codes of laws are built on absurdity; and then he told them that the error concerning free will led man to create a personal deity, the author of all good; and a personal devil, the author of all evil; while he affirms that there is not a single fact to prove that such personalities exist; and he (Mr. Owen) concludes by stating after that there is no God or devil; that in consequence all the mythology of the ancients and all the religions of the moderns are mere fanciful notions of men, whose imaginations have been cultivated to accord with existing prejudices, and whose judgments have been systematically degraded from their birth. Mr. Brindley concluded his address by recapitulating the points which occupied the former part of the speech, and called upon Mr. Owen to prove that the system he advocated was not a system which denied the existence of a God. (*Cheers. Time expired.*)

MR. OWEN—I must state to you distinctly, after what has been said, that I have never in my life written or spoken anything either against the Christian religion or against the Bible (*considerable uproar*).

The Chairman then read the following from the Book of the New Moral World: "The error respecting this law of human nature has led man to create a personal deity the author of all good, and a personal devil the author of all evil; to invent all the various forms of worship of the former, and in many instances of the latter also; and the modes of propitiating the favour of the one and avoiding the supposed evil doings of the other. And yet, when the mind can be relieved from the early prejudices which have been forced into it on these subjects, it will be discovered that there is not one single fact known to man, after all the experience of past generations, to prove that any such personalities exist, or ever did exist; and, in consequence, all the mythology of the ancients, and all the religions of the moderns, are mere fanciful notions of men, whose imaginations have been cultivated to accord with existing prejudices, and whose judgments have been systematically destroyed from their birth. There is no practical advantage to be derived from the supposition that the Power of the Universe is an organized being, or that it should be personified in any manner whatever; but, on the contrary, all attempts which have been made to describe the cause of motion, of life, and mind, have been injurious to the true interests of the human race, and every attempt to force a belief upon mankind on this subject, can lead only to error, confusion, and crime." He (the Chairman) was called on to say what were his opinions of that passage by Mr. Brindley, and certainly, in his common sense, he should conceive that there was a direct attack on Christianity included in that passage.

MR. OWEN—I have never in my life attacked any particular religion. I will read to you my religion, that you may know it as contrasted with yours. Recollect, "no man, by searching, can find out God." It is upon that principle I proceed. My religion is the religion of the New Moral

World. [*Considerable interruption ensued for some time, but when comparative quiet was restored,*] Mr. Owen then proceeded to read

‘THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF THE RATIONAL RELIGION.’

“1st. That all facts yet known to man indicate that there is an external or an internal Cause of all existences by the fact of their existence; that this all-prevailing Cause of motion and change in the universe is that incomprehensible power which the nations of the world have called God, Jehovah, Lord, &c. &c.; but that the facts are yet unknown to man which define what that Incomprehensible Power is.

“2nd. That it is a law of nature, obvious to our senses, that the internal and external character of all that have life upon the earth is formed *for* them and not *by* them; that, in accordance with this law, the internal and external character of man is formed *for* him and not *by* him; and therefore he cannot have merit or demerit, or deserve praise or blame, or reward or punishment.

“3rd. That the knowledge of this fact, with all its important consequences, will necessarily create in every one a new, sublime, and pure spirit of charity for the convictions, feelings, and conduct of the human race, and dispose them to be kind to all that has life—seeing that this varied life is formed by the same Incomprehensible Power that has created human nature, and gives man his peculiar faculties.

“4th. That it is man’s highest interest to acquire an accurate knowledge of those circumstances which produce EVIL to the human race, and of those which produce GOOD; and to exert all his powers to remove the former from society, and to create around it the latter only.

“5th. That this invaluable practical knowledge can be acquired solely through an extensive search after *truth*—by an accurate, patient, and unprejudiced inquiry into *facts* as developed by Nature.

“6th. That man can never attain to a state of superior and permanent happiness until he shall be surrounded by those external circumstances which will train him from birth to feel pure charity and affection towards the whole of his species—to speak the truth only on all occasions, and to regard with a merciful and kind disposition all that has life.

“7th. That such superior knowledge and feelings can never be given to man under those institutions of society which have been founded on the mistaken supposition that man forms his *feelings* and *convictions* by his *will*, and therefore has merit or demerit, or deserves praise or blame, or reward or punishment for them.

“8th. That under such institutions, formed in accordance with the Rational System of society, this superior knowledge, and these superior dispositions may be given to the whole of the human race without chance of failure, except in case of organic disease.

“9th. That in consequence of this superior knowledge and these superior dispositions, the contemplation of Nature will create in every mind feelings of high adoration, too sublime and pure to be expressed in forms or words, for that Incomprehensible Power which acts in and through all Nature, everlastingly composing, decomposing, and recomposing the material of the universe, producing the endless variety of life, of mind, and of organized form.

“10th. That the Practice of the Rational Religion will therefore consist in promoting to the utmost of our power the well-being and happiness of every man, woman, and child, without regard to their class, sect, sex, party, country, or colour; and its Worship, in those inexpressible feelings of wonder, admiration, and delight, which, when man is sur-

rounded by superior circumstances only, will naturally arise from the contemplation of the Infinity of Space, of the Eternity of Duration, of the Order of the Universe, and of that Incomprehensible Power by which the atom is moved and the aggregate of Nature is governed."

This then (continued Mr. Owen) is the Religion of the New Moral World ("*Question,*" and cries of "*Do you believe the Bible?*" with considerable uproar, which lasted a long time). There were many passages in the Old and New Testaments, which even to the learned gentlemen on that platform appeared incongruous, but none of these incongruities occurred in the New Religion ("*oh, oh!*" and "*Where did you get it from?*"). It was entirely in accordance with the doctrine of the Old and New Testaments.

Mr. Brindley wished the Chairman to ask Mr. Owen whether or not he believed the Old and New Testaments to be the revealed will of God, which he then did (*great uproar*).

MR. OWEN—Now then, to come to the question (*cheers*): he would go to the foundation of all belief (*cheers and hisses*). He would state then, most distinctly, that it was his firm and long-felt conviction, that no man of himself could ever believe or disbelieve, love or hate; and that every man, woman, and child, according to the laws of our natures, were compelled to believe according to the strongest convictions made upon their minds. No man could force his belief. Could the honourable gentleman in the chair, or any other individual, force himself to believe that he was not in the chair? (*a laugh*). No, they could not; it was an instinct of their nature, and they could not believe otherwise. That assembly had been so placed from birth, that they believed in the general truths of Christianity; and could they, then, by exerting a power of their own, believe, for only five minutes, that Mahomet was a true prophet? (*cheers and disapprobation*). No, their natures having been made such as they were, they could not do so; and therefore he (Mr. Owen) would say again, that there is no merit or demerit for any belief they were compelled to have. There was not an individual in that assembly that could change his conviction unless there should be a stronger conviction forced upon his mind. Any institutions, therefore, which were founded on the supposition that men could do so, were injurious to the happiness and well-being of the human race.

To go a step further: could any of those present, if they possessed a great regard for any one—could they force themselves to dislike that individual? (*another scene of confusion ensued, which was speedily quelled by the interference of the Chairman*) The question on which he (Mr. Owen) had been speaking was a most important one. It could not be determined by noise—noise was but a poor argument against truth; it required the most considerate attention which they could bestow upon it. It was a question intimately connected with the history of our race, and to the wrong understanding of it might be traced all the crime, all the ill-will, and all the error of the world. From his (Mr. Owen's) long and patient examination of the subject he could not be angry with any individual, however he disagreed with, or was hated by him, because circumstances must so have acted on him to compel him to act and believe as he did. So it was with all the human race; and if they could but all clearly understand those points, they would soon see the system prevail which Christ came into the world to establish—the system of universal charity and good-will, and men would then not hate their enemies as they do now, but even love them, and try to do them good (*cheers, and cries of "query"*). He would venture to say, that until those points were decided upon, and fully understood and practised, it would be in

vain to expect that we should ever see the time when "swords shall be turned into ploughshares and spears into pruning-hooks" (*a voice, "that is a matter of opinion"*). So long as the world was deceived with regard to the power of believing or disbelieving, loving or hating—vice, crime and misery must be the lot of the whole human race. It was by beginning upon a new foundation, and by taking a new course, that the new system had been raised, and it would be found upon examination to be a philosophic system, founded on data that no man could impugn or deny; and it would prove of such essential benefit to all classes, that in a short time they should have all the real blessings which the long-promised millenium was to confer (*agitation*). He was not surprised at their agitation; it was what he (Mr. Owen) expected from the beginning. There was always opposition when anything new and important was introduced into the world ("*why don't you answer Mr. Brindley's question?" and great confusion*).

THE CHAIRMAN said he thought the meeting would give him credit for strict impartiality; but he must again put the question of Mr. Brindley to Mr. Owen, as the interruption could not be allayed until he (Mr. Owen) had answered the question distinctly and categorically. Did Mr. Owen believe the Holy Scriptures—the Old and New Testaments—to be the revealed will and word of God? (*cheers*.)

MR. OWEN.—I believe everything—every word that is spoken, to be the revealed word of God. I believe no individual has power of himself; everything comes from God; all truth comes from God; therefore I believe the Holy Scriptures to be the Word of God (*dissatisfaction and groans*).

THE CHAIRMAN said the question for discussion was, "What is Socialism, and what would be its practical tendency upon society?" and he supposed that by Mr. Owen's not answering the question of Mr. Brindley, he (Mr. Owen) conceived it to be out of order. Mr. Owen had certainly thrown out a slur against the Bible. (*Mr. Owen*.—"I deny it.") Well, Mr. Owen denied it. Did not he (the Chairman) himself read a passage to prove that he had done so? and did he not say, when appealed to to decide the point, he should not have exercised common sense had he not decided that there was evidently a great slur thrown out upon the Christian religion? Could Mr. Owen deny that? No, he could not dare to do it. He would request Mr. Owen, in order to restore order to the meeting and mutual satisfaction, to manfully, openly, and categorically answer the question respecting the Old and New Testaments.

MR. OWEN.—First of all, of what consequence is it to you whether I answer it or not? (*another scene of uproar ensued for a long time*.) I believe, after the most careful investigation, that much of it is true; when there appears any opposing passage in the same work evidently, I cannot be compelled to believe them both. (*Great uproar, groans, and hisses*.)

THE CHAIRMAN again rose and requested Mr. Owen, if it were only to restore harmony to the meeting, to state his belief on that question, whether or not the Bible was the revealed will of God?

MR. OWEN said, they must remember all the different sects of religion claimed the right of private judgment, in explaining the Word of God according to their own notions, and he (Mr. Owen) believed he had a right to explain them according to his mind, as other sects of religion do. He could not answer yes or no to the question with-

out preliminary explanation. He believed all that was true in the Bible. (*Great uproar, and cries of oh! oh!*)

THE CHAIRMAN again called upon Mr. Owen to state his belief in one word without hesitation, and he would much oblige the meeting by doing so, as well as set aside the suspicion which would otherwise be attributed to him.

MR. OWEN.—I will never utter a falsehood in this or any other assembly. I believe the Bible as far as it appears to me to be true (*oh! oh! and groans*). I believe a great deal of the Bible. (*Terrific groans and hisses completely prevented Mr. Owen from proceeding, during which time Mr. O. whispered something to the Chairman.*)

THE CHAIRMAN having obtained order, said, Mr. Owen had told him that he had given the only answer he could to that question, and that he declined answering it further in the way he was required; but he (Mr. Owen) requested him to state, lest he might have been misunderstood before, that he believed a considerable part of the Bible, but that there were other parts in which discrepancies appeared, and he would say of those passages, that he did not understand them. (*Great uproar.*)

MR. OWEN presented himself to the meeting, but could not be heard.

THE CHAIRMAN was obliged to call to order. They had heard all the statement Mr. Owen could give on that point, and they must be satisfied with it. It was the duty of the meeting, then, to listen to what further remarks Mr. Owen might have to make, and consider that subject, for the present, as passed by.

MR. OWEN.—I am very glad, my friends, that you prefer me to speak truth, rather than that I should speak falsehood. To proceed then. The first question was, what is Socialism? The second, what would be its practical effects upon society? He now came to that part of the subject. He had given them the foundation of what Socialism was, reserving for himself, on future evenings of debate, to explain fully what would be the effects of the rational system which he had always advocated, and which he would state he had laboured to bring to perfection for upwards of thirty years. (*A voice, "It is time a man of your age knew better."*) What would be its effects? His reply was, that it would gradually confer extensive benefits on every class, from the sovereign to the beggar; it would effect an entire change upon society; remove the cause of error, poverty, destitution, and misery, from the lower, and many evils and great danger from the upper classes; and it would place all in a much better condition than any were in now. It would effect that change which nature had rendered inevitable in one way or other to meet the progress of natural events, and especially the extraordinary increase, in various ways, of mechanical and scientific inventions and discoveries—these having now so far advanced as to render manual labour, in many places, of little value; and in their natural progress, they would soon reduce its value over the whole world. This system, if it were true, and fully introduced into practice, under the sanction of the civilized governments, would make a change in the situation of the human race, the most glorious the world had ever experienced. (*Groans and hisses.*) Mr. Owen was about to give his reasons for this, when the Chairman informed him that his half hour had expired.

MR. BRINDLEY was loudly cheered. He said it then devolved upon him to close that debate. He had half an hour to reply in, but he was not aware whether it would take him so long to give his remarks. They

came there to hear and to investigate what Socialism was. He (Mr. Brindley) had read quotations showing his view of it from Mr. Owen's acknowledged works, and yet Mr. Owen had not attempted to disprove any one of them. He (Mr. Owen) had stated that all views were erroneous which now exist; he had made a distinct charge upon all religion, and said it must all be done away with, before his New Moral system could come into operation. (*Mingled cheers, and cries of "chair, chair."*) He (Mr. Brindley) could not go forward any further in that debate until he knew what ground Mr. Owen occupied with reference to the question. He (Mr. B.) still maintained that Mr. Owen ought to answer yes or no, to the question, is the Bible true? (*Cheers.*) He had often been charged with misrepresenting the Socialists, but he would not do it then. They might all witness for themselves how Mr. Owen evaded that question. Ought he or ought he not to answer it? (*Yes, yes! no, no!*)

THE CHAIRMAN said (a conference having taken place between him and Mr. Brindley for a minute or two) for Mr. Brindley, he must get to know whether Mr. Owen would answer yes, or no, to the question. (*Yes, yes! no no!*) Was it the desire of the meeting that he should answer categorically in that way? (*A show of hands were then taken as to whether it should be answered or not, when it was decided that it should be so.*)

MR. OWEN.—I have a question to put to Mr. Brindley.

MR. BRINDLEY.—Yes or no: yes or no.

A SOCIALIST in the arena.—I say it's an improper thing to ask such a question. (*The Chairman invited this speaker on the platform, and he was accordingly pushed forward and handed up by the side of the Chairman, for the remainder of the evening.*)

MR. OWEN.—I do not believe that every word of the Bible is true. (*Tremendous groaning.*)

MR. BRINDLEY.—Now then the question had been answered: he (Mr. Owen) did not believe it. (*Great disapprobation.*) He (Mr. B.) hoped therefore that the meeting felt perfectly satisfied with the charge he had made, that Socialism was of an infidel character. He had there a report of the public debate in America, between Mr. Robert Owen and the Rev. Mr. Campbell, and at page 399 of this work, Mr. Owen said, "He had derived far more wisdom from calmly and attentively watching children from their earliest age, than he had acquired from all the writings, both sacred and profane, that he had ever read. The writers of those works assumed facts which did not exist—reasoned upon them as though they were true, and had hence run into all kinds of error. Hence the mythologies of the Pagans, the mysteries of the Jews, Christians, and Mahometans; and all the sacred and theological writings of Pagans, Hindoos, Christians, and Jews, were of no value—nay, instead of real value, they were the greatest evils existing among men, for they deranged or destroyed all the superior faculties and feelings of the human race, and made man, as he is at this day, more irrational than any animal of the creation. For the brute creation, as they are called, act agreeably to their nature, and enjoy it, while man, governed by the caprice of his imagination, acts contrary to it and is miserable." So then they were all to be raised to the level of the brute. "The millions of volumes of writing of this kind with which the world has been burdened, have had but one object, and that is to derange all the faculties of those who read them. It were happy for mankind if they could all be collected into one heap, and a fire placed under it, so

that they might be consumed till not a fragment was left. (*Tremendous groaning and hissing.*) Now the conflagration would be the greatest blessing that could be conferred upon the human family, for until those ideas which they give shall be extracted from your minds, and even to their very foundation—until your minds shall be regenerated, and made to receive other and wholly opposite ideas founded on principles which are true, and therefore all consistent with each other, you will see nothing except through a glass, so dark and obscure that you cannot perceive one object as it exists in nature. I have said (says Mr. Owen) that all the sacred and theological writings of all religions are of no value, for they have not taught us a practice that is of any utility—they cannot teach one." At page 31, Mr. Owen expressed his opinion, after speaking of the Power which directs the atom, and controuls the aggregate of nature, thus: "That when any priest in ancient or modern times, says 'that God has said so and so,' the only true and rational reading is, that some priest or cunning man of that district has said or written so." Now then he (Mr. Brindley) defied Mr. Owen to show in what time, and in what country, any "cunning man" wrote what the word of God contains. Without multiplying proofs, they had enough evidence to show that Socialism was a positively infidel system, denouncing all religions of every kind, and Mr. Owen himself had declared it would be well for the world if all their books could be collected together, and burnt till not a fragment remained. It would be a matter of duty with that meeting to enter upon record their deliberate opinion as the people of Bristol, upon what Socialism was. It had been fairly examined into—its infidel principles made fully manifest, and that it denounced all religion, and made man an irresponsible being. He wished the Chairman, therefore, to be kind enough to put a question to the meeting as to their opinion upon Socialism, and whether or not he (Mr. B.) had proved it what he had represented it to be.

THE CHAIRMAN, after a few observations, said he thought they had not quite arrived at the point for putting that question. He thought as Mr. Owen had not finished his statements, that they should give him an opportunity of bringing all his proofs forward, before the audience could come to any decision upon the subject. (*Hear, hear.*)

MR. BRINDLEY readily acquiesced in this decision of the Chairman, and the next evening he would prove it to be a most disgusting immoral system—that it denounced all marriage, all parental affection, and desired to make brutes of men. He did not know how far it would be necessary to bring passages forward of a somewhat filthy * description, but he would merely throw out that hint, and leave parties to decide for themselves upon their attendance. If Mr. Owen did proceed in maintaining that his system was a moral system, he (Mr. Brindley) would then bring out his brutalities. He would first prove the principles, and then he would pin upon those principles the practice which was properly attached to them. He, however painful it might be to him, would give examples of individuals who had had all the benefit of Mr. Owen's teaching and training, and he would prove even that there were public notorious cases of his (Mr. Owen's) own son—who should have been the very one to have shown the virtues of Socialism in his practice. He (Mr. B.) would not do this to hurt Mr. Owen's feelings, but there were books in print containing these statements,

* We have carefully examined Mr. Owen's voluminous writings, and we have not found *one* filthy expression throughout the whole of them.

and he should, if necessary, certainly bring them forward, without entertaining the slightest ill-feeling against Mr. Owen*. Then, again, his Social missionaries—he would prove their practices. He (Mr. Brindley) had missed letters from a certain town in Cambridgeshire for some days past, and he had discovered that they had been lying at Gloucester for above a week, and he was able to prove from letters now in the possession of the Rev. Mr. Woodward, from Mr. Franks and John Smith, Esq., a banker, of March, that the calumny put out against him (Mr. Brindley) by one Barton†, was altogether a lie, and that they never knew Barton, notwithstanding his affirmations to the contrary. Mr. Brindley then thanked the audience for the kind attention with which he had been favoured, although he was such a stripling, and had not had “fifty years’ experience,” and assured them that on the next evening he would take care to prove the blasphemous, atheistical, immoral character of Socialism, and then on the third night, he would prove its swindling practices.

THE CHAIRMAN then declared the meeting adjourned till the next evening; the audience quietly dispersed after giving three hearty cheers for the Chairman.

SECOND EVENING.—Wednesday, January 6, 1841.

IF it were possible, greater interest was stirred up in the City this evening than on the preceding one, and long before the time announced for opening the doors, the streets around the Circus were crowded with every class of persons anxious to hear the proceedings. On the arrival of Mr. Owen at the scene of disputation, he was assailed by the loudest marks of disapprobation. Mr. Brindley was cheered. Throughout the whole of the evening, Mr. Owen was constantly interrupted in the course of his statements, so much so was this the case, that he frequently returned to his seat, as if despairing of obtaining a hearing, until order was restored.

THE CHAIRMAN begged to return the audience his thanks for the support which the Chair had obtained on the preceding evening, from by far the great majority of the meeting, and he intreated *the few* upon whom his powers of persuasion had not been equally successful, to give both the disputants a candid hearing (*hear, hear*). He had also to say that he could not expect, when questions of so heart-stirring a nature were brought before them, *that they should be able altogether*

* This refers to a work entitled “MORAL PHYSIOLOGY,” published by Mr. Robert Dale Owen, in America, without Mr. Owen’s knowledge—a work proceeding from the best and most humane intentions, to counteract the evils of the Malthusian theory, which the author at the time believed to be correct, though Mr. Owen has always maintained the opposite opinion, and has, therefore, always disapproved of the publication; being of opinion that, under the Rational System of Society, the greatest want of the world, for ages to come, will be a sufficiency of population to “replenish the earth and subdue it,” and render it a delightful habitation for mankind. The work, however, is highly approved by many scientific men.

† Luke Barton has publicly declared that upon this point he is ready any day to come to proof with Mr. Brindley.

to restrain their feelings, still he hoped, that with a view to the illustration of truth and the refutation of error, that gentlemen would allow the speakers to continue their address. (*Cheers.*) He would then call upon Mr. Owen to open the proceedings.

MR. OWEN.—Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen (*groans*). I have now, Sir, again to claim your kind attention; I have now again to claim the right of an Englishman; I claim an impartial hearing (*hear*); I claim impartiality from the gentlemen on this platform, for I am a stranger among you, and I have entrusted myself into your hands. (*hear, hear.*) Now I was attacked in my private character, and my family's also, in the last speech of Mr. Brindley, last night. I am quite ready, at any time, to enter fully and fairly into an account of my own character, and that of my family, for the last fifty years; and year by year I can, Sir, not only compare my character with Mr. Brindley's, but I am quite ready to have that character investigated in the most severe manner in which it can be. (*Cheers.*) I will undertake to prove that Mr. Brindley in a most infamous manner traduced me in direct opposition to the most glaring facts, which may be proved, not by one man only, but by tens of thousands. (*Uproar and confusion.*) And, Sir, if you will appoint any day or any hour with any respectable individuals, I will—and am prepared with proof too—show that Mr. Brindley has most grossly misrepresented me and my family, and not only so, but most grossly misrepresented the system which I advocate, which is altogether different from what he (Mr. Brindley) states. I therefore, Sir, wish to know, whether we are to enter into this investigation of character now, or whether we are to have another day appointed for that purpose?

MR. BRINDLEY, interrupting Mr. Owen, said it was customary on these discussions to have a Chairman for each party, and a moderator between the two. He would submit to the Chair, as having confidence in him, whether on the last evening he (Mr. B.) attacked the private character of Mr. Owen and that of his family. Did he or did he not? (*Cheers.*)

THE CHAIRMAN.—You have heard the way in which I have been appealed to. It appears to me, for I cannot recollect the exact words that were used, that the best way would be to request Mr. Owen to state what he understood Mr. Brindley to say.

MR. OWEN.—Mr. Brindley distinctly stated that my son, Robert, had written a book which he described, in his own language, as most bad, and he inflamed the passions of this meeting as strongly as he could do. I do not know what my son did in America has to do with the business of this meeting, but I am ready to meet Mr. Brindley upon that or any other subject. (*Hear, hear.*) Then, gentlemen, I wish it now to be understood, that I have given Mr. Brindley a fair challenge to investigate my character, and that of my family, at any time and in any place. Mr. Brindley finished his last speech by asking me what was the state of the inhabitants of New Lanark, with regard to their marriage or no marriage. I will state to you that I have here a report made at a county meeting in Lanarkshire, called to investigate a report the council called on me to make, of the state of New Lanark. There were six gentlemen appointed to examine that report, and to report upon it. I will read it. Mr. Owen then read the following, after observing that at that time the country was in very great distress, and that the report he drew up at the request of the county contained plans to remedy it.

Extract from the Minutes of the General Meeting of the County of Lanark, held at Hamilton, on the 16th November, 1820.

At Hamilton, the sixteenth day of November, 1820, being a General Meeting of the Noblemen, Freeholders, Justices of the Peace, and Commissioners of Supply for the Shire of Lanark :—

Which day Sir James Stewart, Bart., laid before a Meeting a Report of the Committee named by Minutes of a General Meeting of the County, held at Lanark, on the first of May last, relative to Mr. Owen's plan for ameliorating the condition of the working classes, of the following tenor :—

“ In obedience to the remit from the County of Lanark, at their Meeting on the first day of May last, your Committee embraced an early opportunity of hearing Mr. Owen at great length, upon the nature and details of the plan recommended by him for the relief of the distresses of the country.

“ Your Committee feel relieved from the necessity of reporting their opinion on the principles which are at the foundation of Mr. Owen's system, as that individual has with the same liberality which has uniformly marked his conduct, agreed, on the suggestion of your Committee, to print for the information of the gentlemen of the county, the detailed statements which have been laid in manuscript before your Committee; and, indeed, without an opportunity of individually and deliberately considering those statements, your Committee would not feel warranted in recommending for adoption a system, which, in many of its prominent features, is acknowledged by Mr. Owen himself, to be at variance with those principles which are sanctioned by the approbation of some of the most enlightened political economists of the age: and your Committee are of opinion, that by being submitted to the ordeal of public discussion, this system will undergo that full and candid scrutiny which is indispensable either to its ultimate adoption or rejection. With regard to many of the more practical parts, your Committee are of opinion that in a variety of situations they may be acted on with great advantage to the community. Your Committee more particularly allude to the extension of the spade husbandry, the beneficial results of which are so clearly elucidated by Mr. Owen, and proved by the documents to be submitted in an appendix to his detailed statements; and on this point your Committee are of opinion, that a few comparative experiments, on however small a scale, attentively conducted and reported by practical agriculturists in different parts of the country, would go far to ascertain the value of a mode of agriculture, which your Committee cannot help conceiving is fraught with important advantages to the agricultural and manufacturing population.

“ Your Committee cannot conclude this brief report without expressing the extreme satisfaction which they have experienced on visiting the highly interesting establishment, under the immediate direction of Mr. Owen. There the benevolence of that individual is portrayed in the most pleasing features; and an inspection of the splendid manufactory at New Lanark, must convince the most sceptical to how great an extent the amelioration of the manufacturing population may be carried, when the views of the managers are governed by that spirit of philanthropy which actuates the partners of the New Lanark works, whose means of controul over their population are only exceeded by their desire to direct them to the most va-

“ luable purpose, that of promoting the comfort and independence of
 “ the parents, and of training up the children, from their earliest in-
 “ fancy, by such a gentle, but at the same time such a systematic course
 “ of education, as in the opinion of your Committee, cannot fail to
 “ render them very valuable members of society. Your Committee
 “ should perhaps apologize for this seeming digression, and which the
 “ personal observation of most of the individuals for whose inspection
 “ this Report is intended, may have rendered unnecessary; but they
 “ could not help seizing the favourable opportunity of bearing the most
 “ unqualified testimony to the internal regulations which have been so
 “ zealously and benevolently instituted at the New Lanark cotton
 “ mills, for the comfort of the present, and the amelioration of the
 “ rising generation; and which they humbly conceive might, in various
 “ degrees, be advantageously adopted in most large manufactories, and
 “ which would go far to mitigate many of the evils which have been
 “ found to result from the extension of manufacturing establishments,
 “ and the subsequent concentration of so large a population of the
 “ United Empire. Your Committee are at the same time credibly in-
 “ formed that these arrangements, instead of involving any pecuniary
 “ sacrifice, are found to operate beneficially in a commercial point of
 “ view.

(Signed) “ NORMAN LOCKHART, Convener.
 “ JAMES STEWART,
 “ T. GORDON,
 “ HUGH MOSMAN,
 “ WILLIAM HONYMAN,
 “ HENRY STEUART.”

Which having been read to the Meeting, Sir James Stewart moved that as Mr. Owen's publication, alluded to in the above Report, was now in the press, with the view of being circulated throughout the county, he (Mr. Owen) should be allowed to add the Report as an appendix thereto; and the Motion having been seconded, the same was unanimously agreed to. Sir James Stewart next laid before the meeting a proposal by a respectable gentleman of the county, for granting a lease of ground sufficient for the purpose of making trial of the plan proposed.

In consequence of this statement (continued Mr. Owen) a subscription was commenced in England for the purpose of carrying one of these experiments into execution, and 50,000*l.* were subscribed. I required 100,000*l.*, and in consequence of no more being subscribed, I declined entering upon the experiment until arrangements could be made, and a larger place could be obtained.

MR. BRINDLEY.—Name the place.

MR. OWEN.—Motherwell. Now it will be said that I have tried my plan somewhere. It never has been tried by me anywhere, and I hope before I leave this city to have an opportunity of stating what my plan really is. My plan is one, I assure you, intended for the benefit of every class in society; from the highest to the lowest; I know of no distinction. I feel more for the working classes because they suffer more, still I know but one family, and that is the family of mankind. Mine is an universal plan. (*Uproar, and cries of question.*) With regard to the question which was put to me last night, many gentlemen have said they thought it was unfair. However, I say nothing on that subject;

only I wish to say that there are many truly religious people, who express exactly the same sentiment with regard to the Scriptures that I have done. (*Name, name.*)

MR. BRINDLEY.—Name one.

MR. OWEN.—The Rev. Pye Smith; the celebrated and well-known Calvinistic minister. He objects to the Song of Solomon. He says it is not part of the regular Scripture. (*Great and long-continued confusion.*) The real question for discussion is, "What is Socialism, and what would be its *practical* effect upon society?" I gave you last night only a faint outline of "What Socialism is," but the question I have now to answer is, "*What would be the PRACTICAL effects of Socialism upon society?*"

MY REPLY IS,

"1st. That it would gradually, peaceably, and most beneficially for every class, from the sovereign to the beggar, effect an entire change in society,—that change which is now so urgently required to remove the causes of ignorance, poverty, destitution, prostitution, and misery from the lower, and many evils and great danger from the upper classes, and place them all in a far better condition than they are now." [Sir, it has been my lot to be the first individual who investigated and brought to light the extraordinary amount of new scientific power in this country.] At a time when the first political economists and the most learned individuals in the kingdom little suspected that the new power was equal to the labour of two millions of men, I proved that the new scientific power was performing a labour more than three hundred millions of men, and that was the first time, in the year 1816, any light was thrown on the subject.

"I have had occasion since to investigate its progress, and I find it now amounts to a power more than equal to six hundred and fifty millions of labourers. I do say that is a new feature altogether in society; it has deranged all the old system, and all parties are saying, "something must be done, we can't go on as we are." That something is the introduction of measures to give a right direction to this wonderful and extraordinary power; and, whatever may be thought by any parties here, it will be found, not only by our government, but by all the governments of the civilized world, that they will make a rapid progress whenever they can make arrangements in accordance with this extraordinary and wonderful power. Although in 70 years this power has increased from a power equal to 12,000,000 of men to a power equal to 600,000,000, yet it is but in its infancy, and there is, in truth, no limit to it. I hope, Sir, that the practical gentlemen of this city, whom, I am delighted to say, have introduced so many laudable improvements in science and mechanism,—I hope a committee of these gentlemen will be formed to make a full and fair investigation of all the principles and practices which I recommend; and if, upon the examination of such men, they find that it is a system which cannot be carried out with advantage to the people—if the principles are erroneous, and the practice not beneficial, then I will give up both.

"2nd. This system, if introduced into practice, would effect that change, in fact, which nature has rendered inevitable, in one way or another, to meet the progress of natural events; and especially the extraordinary increase in various ways of mechanical and other scientific inventions and discoveries; these having now so far advanced as to render manual labour in many places of little value, and which

sciences, in their natural progress, must soon reduce the value of manual labour over the whole world ; as it is now rapidly decreasing it in the British Islands and over Europe." It is utterly impossible the system can go on much longer without causing four or five times the present amount of the working classes of this country to emigrate. It will be utterly impossible that, with this progress of machinery, anything like means can be found to support the working classes ; while, under the new system, not only the whole of the present population, but three, four, five, or even six times the amount, shall be all permanently employed, beneficially for the working classes, and beneficially for the classes above them. The next benefit which will arise is,

"3rd. The Rational System, if it were fairly and fully introduced into practice, under the sanction of the civilized governments, would make a change in the condition of all classes, and of the human race, the most glorious that the world has ever experienced." (*Half hour up.*)

MR. BRINDLEY rose amidst cheers. He said—Ladies and gentlemen, we have had to-night, in the opening of the debate, a very sympathetic appeal to your feelings. Poor unfortunate Mr. Owen has discovered (*confusion and groans*). You don't know what I was going to say ; you don't know what important circumstance I was going to bring forward (*hisses*). I don't know whether that was a Socialist or not. I have paid a little attention to natural history, and I find (*question*)—yes, this is the question most distinctly—I find there are only two sorts of animals that ever hiss—the goose and the serpent (*laughter*). Mr. Owen had made a distinct declaration at the commencement of his address, to the effect that last night he (Mr. Brindley) had attacked his (Mr. Owen's) personal character, and his family's. He (Mr. Brindley) most distinctly repudiated anything like a wish to show virulence to him personally ; but if it were necessary, in order to establish what he (Mr. Brindley) had undertaken to do, he must bring that question before them, and the published documents which had been printed and advertised, and sold by his son, Robert Dale Owen. He (Mr. B.) had a right to do it, and he would do it again. (No, no, from Mr. Owen.) Mr. Owen knew something of the courtesies of life ; and he certainly had not acted as he ought, and in a handsome manner, in interfering with me. I did not do so with him. (*You did, you did.*) But to drop all that, and to come to the question. They were told last night by their worthy Chairman, that he (Mr. B.) had a little overstepped the mark in wishing to bring them to a conclusion so soon. He would that night bring stronger proofs of the atheism and infidelity of Mr. Owen and his system. In the second half hour he would devote himself to an exposure of his marriage views ; and the third half hour to a practical application of his beastly principles. They were going to have a little "truth without mystery." He was going to take up the Socialist dogma, that they were to think, and to speak, and to act as they liked ; and he (Mr. B.) liked, because he could not help it, to do this. Mr. Owen had said he never wrote anything against the Christian religion. Now then he (Mr. Brindley) quoted from a book, the authority of which Mr. Owen seemed to doubt. There was the book.

MR. OWEN.—I do doubt it.

MR. BRINDLEY.—The only rational man in the world ! I don't wonder at his doubting it. He doubts everything. He's a doubter altogether ! He's all doubt from the bottom right up to the top. Well, then, here's the book. I suppose you don't doubt it's a book ; and I dare say, if you read these letters, you'd not doubt what they said—"De-

bate on the Evidences of Christianity; Mr. Owen and the Rev. Mr. Campbell in America." At page 4 of the preface they were told that it was written by Mr. Simms, the stenographer, a man chiefly embracing Mr. Owen's views, so that there could be no doubt as to its correctness; and Mr. Owen himself corrected all the speeches after they were reported*; and further, the original document of the stenographer had been placed within the public library of the city of Cincinnati; and he (Mr. B.) would be ready to prove at any time, from the original document, anything which Mr. Owen doubted. Mr. Owen charged him with misrepresentation. He, not as plain John Brindley, but as the advocate of the city of Bristol, would stake a hundred guineas; and he knew if he wanted such a sum for a honest cause, that he should have it—against Mr. Owen's. After Mr. Owen had sold his share in that work to the Rev. Mr. Campbell, what did he do? He published his own garbled account of it. Mr. Owen told them there were only two classes of persons in the world—"fools and rogues!" he (Mr. Brindley) would have Mr. Owen to say to which he belonged when he wrote it.

THE CHAIRMAN said he would make every allowance for the heat of debate, but he hoped Mr. Brindley would allow him to repress every thing which had in it anything like an appearance of harshness and asperity.

MR. BRINDLEY continued: at page 27 of that book, Mr. Owen, with reference to the inspiration of religion and the Scriptures, said that "the wildest and most strange flights of the imagination of individuals have been received as the inspiration of some single or compound divinity, and these have succeeded, at different times, in various parts of the earth, in promulgating by fraud or ignorance the most unnatural fables and obscure contradictory doctrines." In page 36 a most direct attack was made upon the Christian religion. Referring to a letter which appeared in the *Times*, he (Mr. O.) stated that "he did not stand pledged to prove the follies of the Christian religion apart from other religions; to him (Mr. O.) they all appeared the same in principle and in general practice, except the difference in the rights and ceremonies, which he (Mr. Owen) deemed mere forms. He believed that *all* the religions of the world were founded in error—the Christian religion was included in the word *all*." Page 53, Mr. Owen said, "the responsibility which I have assumed"—what, Owen assumed responsibility! responsibility! He (Mr. B.) thought there was no such thing as responsibility in the world—"the responsibility which I have assumed in my continued earnest endeavours to subvert all the religions of the world, and thereby deprive many individuals of their present only mode of support, has been always one of serious consideration." What a kind man!—"It has occupied much of my thoughts."—What a profound reasoner! Page 163, Mr. Owen says, against the Christian and all religions again—"When I was very young I was very religious." Now here's a great change! "To seven, eight, nine, up to ten years of age, I only read what are called good books; but at ten years of age I became convinced from these books that there was error somewhere." What a profound reasoner at that early age! "I discovered so much contradiction between different religions and various sects of the same religions, that I became convinced there was some great

* It is true that Mr. Owen corrected his speeches, but he never saw the work after it was printed, to see that it was correct.

error pervading the whole subject. I was very desirous to distinguish truth from error, and I studied with great industry the three following years"—at thirteen years of age!—"with a determination forced upon me to find a religion that was true; but the more I read and reflected the more error I discovered in religion;"—What a wonderful man!—"and therefore the more I differed from Christianity and all other religions; until at last I was compelled, sorely against my will, to believe Christianity and all other religions to be founded on error." Page 177, he (Mr. Owen) spoke against God, heaven and hell, and all future rewards and punishments. "My belief then is, that in all the religions of the world it is a fundamental principle that man has a free will, forms his own character, determines his own conduct; that he has the power of believing and disbelieving in God; that he will perish hereafter if he does not believe in a God; that he is accountable for his feelings and thoughts," &c., &c.—"I believe it is a fundamental in all religions, that prayers, forms, ceremonies, are necessary to enable individuals to know God, and that it is necessary to contribute money for all godly purposes: therefore," says Mr. Owen, "I am an infidel, for I believe none of them." (A scene of indescribable uproar followed this reading, which could only be allayed after a prolonged time by the earnest entreaties of the Chairman.) In continuation, "I have to show," said Mr. Owen, in the work above referred to, "that no man has the power of believing or disbelieving in a God; that he has no means of ascertaining the qualities and attributes of any Being whose mode of existence cannot be cognizable to his senses. I shall therefore endeavour to show in detail what a monstrous absurdity it is to suppose that man, constituted as he is, can be accountable for his feelings, thoughts, will, or conduct. I mean to prove that there cannot be one particle of merit or demerit in any man's believing the doctrines of the religion in which he has been trained. I intend to demonstrate the utter fallacy of the notion that man will go to heaven for his belief, or to hell for his disbelief." These then were plain terms (continued Mr. Brindley), and Mr. Owen should prove them to be true, or withdraw them. "I intend to show that religious forms and ceremonies are most useless; and if men were not more ignorant than the beasts of the field they would never pay money to a priest for showing them the way to Heaven." Mr. Owen then had declared that no man could know God, and that it was a monstrous absurdity to believe in future rewards and punishments—heaven or hell. Now it would be for him (Mr. O.) to prove it, or acknowledge his positive atheism and infidelity, which he had openly avowed in that book. He must defend them, or he would stand before them a self-convicted atheist—a self-convicted infidel, without the ability to speak for himself (*applause*); and he (Mr. B.), without intending to appear harsh to Mr. Owen, said, he charged him with being an open infidel and atheist (*Cheers and groans*). At page 395, he (Mr. Owen) began to doubt the whole Bible, both the Old and New Testament, notwithstanding last night he gave them to understand that he believed a great portion of the Bible. He said, "at this day there are, as Christians say, but few sincere believers in the history of Adam and Eve, the apple and the serpent; and in the birth, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ." I say (observed Mr. Brindley) it is a vile slander. On behalf of the people of Bristol, who have made me their advocate, I give the lie to that statement. Where did he get the "apple story" from? There is nothing of the apple in the Bible! Here, Sir, is the Bible—(producing one, the sight

of which drew forth the loudest cheering)—the word of God. I now offer this copy to Mr. Owen, and bind him to prove the history of the apple and the serpent from the Bible. I defy him to do it. I defy him to touch the word of God and show one word of inconsistency, from the first chapter of Genesis to the last chapter of Revelations. I will, so long as it please God to grant me health and strength and ability, and his blessing upon my humble endeavours, defend that word to the utmost. I have undertaken an important duty, but I trust not in my own strength and ability; I give that to God, and let him now enable me to defend his cause. Page 395: "But reason," says Mr. Owen, "would ask ten thousand pertinent questions, to not one of which could a rational answer be given. I should only offend my intelligent hearers by pursuing such a heterogeneous mass of incomprehensible absurdities as these, and I will therefore conclude this part of my subject by asking Mr. Campbell what evidence in these days would be sufficient to induce him to believe that a virgin could conceive and be delivered of a male child, and that when he rose from the dead, and with a material body, was seen ascending into heaven, or without it?" What evidence would now be sufficient to make us believe what the disciples of Christ believed? What happened then—the very same miracles, the identical same signs, which God alone could give, and which he consigns alone to his own true messengers. "I know," continued the extract "that as I am constituted, and as millions of my fellows are, no power could induce me to believe other than that the whole is but an invention to frighten weak men, women and children out of their sober senses, and to render them irrational beings." (*Half hour up.*)

MR. OWEN, in commencing his reply, said he denied most distinctly that he was either an infidel or an atheist, and he could prove both. He objected to all the religions in the world that had been formed upon the foundation that man had within himself the power of believing and of feeling as he liked (*hear*). He would briefly state that they were all founded on that base; and not only all the religions were so, but all laws, ancient and modern, were based upon the same error; and further, all the governments of the world, ancient and modern, had been based upon that same error likewise. He cared not who opposed him in what he said, for it was true. So long as the human race shall be educated in those false notions, would poverty, ignorance, vice, and crime, continually increase; and so long as children should receive those errors from their birth—and they *must* receive anything they are taught—it would be utterly impossible ever to bring the beautiful precepts of the Christian system into practice. I say then, (continued Mr. Owen,) never will there be charity, or love, or kindness, among the human race, so long as these two errors shall be forced into the human mind. Instead of the religions which have been based upon these errors, I propose another religion not based upon them; I propose a rational religion (*oh, oh, and hisses*), a religion founded upon those facts which can now be demonstrated—FACTS, the knowledge of which can alone produce virtue, peace and happiness in the world. Do you suppose that I fear anything? No: I am here purposely to speak these great, noble, and important truths, which no other individual dare to speak (*tremendous uproar*). My friends, if you knew what my life has been (*a laugh*), yes, if you really knew what my life has been, you would know that I have devoted that life in the most extraordinary manner. Whatever you may think, I have now, for upwards of thirty years, put my life in your hands, to do for you the most important good that can be done for you.

It is my belief—I am compelled to have that belief, I cannot have any other—I believe that were this system in principle and in practice to be introduced peaceably, and under the sanction of the governments and the authorities of the country, which I have always requested, it would effect more for the morality, for the peace, and happiness of the world, than all the religions that have ever been produced (*confusion*). Were I now to read you the account which I have here of one of the most talented and popular ministers of this time, giving an account of the state of the British metropolis, it would indeed explain to you all that the past systems of the world had done. It is from the Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel :—

“ But what think you of the fact, that one-third (thirty-three per cent.) of all the men married in England during the very last year were unable even to write their own names ?

“ There is something, my Lord, unspeakably painful in the contemplation of this mass of immortal beings in such close juxtaposition with ourselves, living, as we have reason to fear, without God and without hope ; 500,000 Sabbath breakers, at the very least, in total neglect of the restraint of religion, communicate the plague of ungodliness to all around them ; 10,000 of these are devoted to play ; above 20,000 are addicted to beggary ; 30,000 are living by theft or fraud ; 23,000 are annually picked up drunk in the streets ; above 100,000 are habitual gin-drinkers ; and probably 100,000 more have yielded themselves to systematic and abandoned profligacy.”

Now, Sir, it is to put an end to this profligacy and misery that I, as a practical man, know the means by which, step by step, the whole of this system could be removed, and these 500,000 in London, and the same proportion in all your other large cities, might, every one of them, be sure to be made good, valuable, and useful members of society (*query*).

THE CHAIRMAN said, several gentlemen had requested him to ask Mr. Owen whether he acknowledged those passages in the Report between himself and the Rev. Mr. Campbell, which Mr. Brindley had read ? Would he allow them to be his in substance ?

MR. OWEN.—I have no doubt they are in substance, but I have never seen the book since it was published, eleven years ago (*hear, hear, and cheers*). Now, Sir, would it not be a practical benefit to reconcile man to man, instead of allowing them to remain in the condition in which they are at present ? Would it not be of infinite importance to reconcile nation to nation, instead of such transactions taking place as occurred lately at Acre, where 1200 human beings were blown up in one minute ? And for what ? Because men had been trained from their birth to believe that they had power over their convictions and feelings to turn them as they liked. Again I assert, without fear of contradiction, that there are no principles under heaven that will produce peace and goodwill upon earth but these principles which I am now stating (*prove it*). At all events, it is desirable that man should be reconciled to man, and nation to nation ; and I think that that individual who spends his life and fortune, and runs the risk of his life daily (*no, no, and uproar*), is surely entitled to your attention. The rational system will be superior to every other, and for the following important reasons :—

“ 1st. Because it will reconcile man to man, and nation to nation, throughout the whole extent of the globe.

“ 2nd. Because it will introduce, and permanently establish in every

mind, the genuine spirit and the daily practice of CHARITY for the thoughts, feelings and conduct of every man, woman, and child, of every clime and colour."

It was owing to these convictions having been early made on my mind, that I was enabled for thirty years to govern a population of 2500 men, women, and children, directly opposed to me in religious opinions and feelings, for twenty-nine years, without ever once applying to a lawyer or to a magistrate, or inflicting one single legal punishment on this population. I will venture to say there is not another establishment in the world where the same thing has been done, or can be done, upon any other principles than those I have now stated. These individuals, when I first purchased the estate, were worse indeed than the generality of the manufacturing population. They were immoral and ignorant; but did I blame these poor creatures, with my knowledge of these principles? No; I said to myself, "These poor men and women have been the victims of the unfavourable circumstances by which they have hitherto been surrounded. I am now made their master, and master of their circumstances, and it is my duty, rather than to blame or find fault with, or punish, these individuals, to employ the capital which has been entrusted to me—a capital of several hundred thousand pounds, and all my influence, to remove all the inferior, vicious, and unfavourable circumstances which has made them thieves, intemperate, and immoral in every point of view. I patiently waited until I could withdraw one unfavourable circumstance, and then another, until I withdrew the greater part of those vicious, inferior, and unfavourable circumstances; and then I had a most delightful task to perform. It was, instead of these, to introduce others of a totally different character (*what were they? name*). It was then and there I established the first infant school, which is a new combination of superior external circumstances in which to place children, instead of the inferior and injurious circumstances within and without their confined and most inconvenient dwellings. Accordingly, at an expense of £10,000, I founded two new institutions for the formation of character, for children from the time they were able to walk until their education was completed (*loud cheers*). By pursuing this course, which is not known now to me alone, but to thousands, not only in England, Ireland, and Scotland, but in every nation in Europe and America, during twelve years, I had more than 2000 strangers annually to see the wonderful results, arising simply from removing the bad, vicious circumstances from around the children, and replacing them by others of a superior character. This work, my friends, delighted me so, that I have not words to express the gratification I derived from it; and the characters of the individuals improved far more rapidly than my most sanguine expectations had led me to believe they would, until at last I had a population such as you have heard described by six of the principal gentlemen of the county. This establishment I threw open to the world, that our own countrymen and foreigners of every description might come and stay an hour, or a day, or a week, and examine for themselves, that they might be sure there was no deception (*cheers*). And accordingly, strangers from all parts of the world came. The present Emperor of Russia, and twelve of his nobles, were my guests for two days and a night; many bishops were my guests also.

A voice in the arena—They did'nt know you then (*a laugh*).

MR. OWEN.—Yes they did; better than you do now. I had princes and nobles from every country in Europe, and they were all entertained at my house, for there was not a single public-house in the village.

"3rd. It will imbue all with the spirit of true kindness for every individual of the human race, and generate a merciful feeling for all that has life."

These are not mere words, my friends. No; for the last forty years I have felt the spirit of kindness for the human race. I have sacrificed all that the world calls comfort, that I might, against all the accumulated prejudices of all past ages, endeavour to effect this great good to our fellow-men (*hear*); and I simply want now that those who have the power should adopt some practical measures to remove the injurious circumstances from around the great mass of our people. Witness what I have read to you. Consider, my friends, that in a population of upwards of a million and a half, one-third should be in the state which I have described to you. I will undertake, if I had 500 men and 500 women, picked from the very worst part of London, and were only allowed to create new external circumstances around them, that in five years I would effect so great a change upon that thousand individuals, in their language, habits, manner, and conduct, that they should be equal to any thousand in society (*oh, oh, and hear*). I say so from the effect produced upon the population of New Lanark. The children of those—the lowest members of society—from being so acted upon, became the admiration and the envy of individuals in the highest stations in life. Ladies have come to me, time after time, after examining the children throughout the day going through their mental exercise, and their physical exercises, and said to me, with tears in their eyes, "Mr. Owen, I would give any money if my children were like them." *The time being expired, Mr. Owen gave way to*

Mr. BRINDLEY.—He said he thought, as they were then approaching near to the middle of the debate, it would be exceedingly important that its nature be distinctly kept in mind. The subject was, "What is Socialism? and what would be its practical effects upon society?" They were not assembled to hear the particular opinions which it might suit the convenience of his opponent to bring forward, but to go fully and fairly into the subject, to know what would be its practical effects upon society. Mr. Owen, in the two half hour's addresses that night, had not given one word of authority about Socialism, and he had not even read his own books upon the subject, but had given just his own view of the case. He (Mr. Owen) had said a deal about New Lanark, and something about charity, and about his mode of regenerating 500 men and 500 women in five years, but he had not attempted even to deny, much less than to disprove, the charge of atheism and infidelity. He (Mr. Brindley) had proved positively, not by his words, but from the authorities of Socialism, that it was a system advocating the entire irresponsibility of man, denouncing *all* religion, including in that term the Christian religion, even by name, and declaring that it were well for the world if all the books that are now in existence on the subject of religion could be collected together with a fire underneath them, till the whole were consumed, and not a fragment remained; and he (Mr. B.) had proved beyond Mr. Owen's power of contradiction, that Socialism was a system advocating downright, flat, positive atheism, declaring that no man can have any knowledge of a God. He would then, having proved those points, go on to the next with this premise, that he entirely denied the substance of all Mr. Owen's statements on New Lanark (*cheers*). He would offer to Robert Owen, that if he could prove his principles were ever carried out into practice at New Lanark Cotton Mills, to forfeit 100 guineas; and would his (Mr. B.'s) committee

Quote

be responsible for the sum? (*yes, yes, from the platform*) and Mr. Owen's committee, if he had one, should be called on to do the same, in case of his failing to do so. What was sauce for the goose, also did for the gander. Here was a second challenge, one of the boldest he (Mr. Brindley) ever made in his life. On Friday, in the next week, he would meet Mr. Owen in that place, and he (Mr. B.) would prove from positive testimony from gentlemen of the highest respectability, living at New Lanark, that they never were carried out, and in the interim he would visit New Lanark for the purpose. Mr. Brindley, anxious to have the challenge in a legal and more correct form, dictated the following, which was taken down in writing for Mr. Owen to sign:—

"It is hereby mutually agreed that we, the undersigned, will respectively forfeit the sum of one hundred guineas to the charities of the city of Bristol, if we do not severally prove the proposition to which we have hereby set our hands and seals this sixth day of January, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Forty-One.

"First, on behalf of John Brindley, being one of the undersigned. That he will prove, by fair and solid testimony, from gentlemen now resident at New Lanark and neighbourhood, that the principles of Socialism, as advocated by Mr. Robert Owen in his acknowledged publications, never were carried out into practice, either at the time of Mr. Owen's residence at New Lanark, or at any subsequent period of time. The New Lanark Cotton Mills establishment, originally conducted by Mr. David Dale."

MR. BRINDLEY was about calling upon a legal gentleman upon the platform, to examine this document, as he said it was of great importance that it should be a sufficient one, when

THE CHAIRMAN observed, before he (Mr. B.) gave himself any further trouble about altering it, Mr. Owen wished to say a word (turning to Mr. Owen). Will it be to the point?

MR. OWEN.—All my proceedings are to the point.

MR. BRINDLEY would rather Mr. Owen accepted the challenge before they proceeded to anything else.

THE CHAIRMAN said he was anxious not to lose more time than was necessary. He hoped Mr. Owen would meet his wishes by either accepting or rejecting the challenge at once.

MR. OWEN.—Mr. Brindley has taken a deal of time in bringing that document as far as he has. I claim an equal time to make an objection (the Chairman, certainly). Mr. Brindley is quite sure *he* shall not lose his 100 guineas (*hear*). Rome was not built in a day. I will bet Mr. Brindley, or his committee, any sum I can raise, that I conducted New Lanark for nearly thirty years *upon the principles* I have explained to you this night. Mr. Brindley knows I have recommended a full and complete community; now New Lanark never was intended to be a full and complete community, because I was only one of a number of partners carrying on a manufactory for the general benefit of the whole, and we could not obtain the laws necessary to form a community upon the principle carried out to the utmost extent. (*Tremendous confusion and noise followed for some time, which with great difficulty was quelled by the Chairman.*)

MR. OWEN.—I will offer a challenge if you will please to allow me.

THE CHAIRMAN hoped it would be to the point.

MR. OWEN then went on to speak, and to explain how far the principles were acted on at New Lanark, when he was assailed repeatedly by the

most deafening yells and groans, which totally prevented him being heard. Mr. Owen, after waiting some time for a hearing, ultimately sat down. In the mean time, Mr. Owen's challenge to Mr. Brindley was prepared, and

THE REV. MR. WOODWARD read the following :—

"I offer 100 guineas to the charities of Bristol if I do not prove that I governed New Lanark twenty-nine years on the principles I have described tonight, so far as the local circumstances of New Lanark admitted; and that the application of those principles caused all the benefits which I have stated."

MR. BRINDLEY, apparently much elated, rose and said, now I have done with the challenges. Mine shall be in public print on the walls of Bristol tomorrow. Mr. Owen has put forth a quibble that means nothing (*cheers*). He had told them he governed New Lanark so far as the "local circumstances" would permit of. Aye, he did; and what were the local circumstances that would not allow him to bring in his infidelity, atheism, and vice? They were the local circumstances of the Bible. That was it. Yes, it was that sacred volume which he (Mr. Owen) had not dared to touch since he had placed it near him (*tremendous applause*). He thanked God that they were surrounded by such external circumstances, and that they would at all times prove sufficient to prevent the introduction of such principles as those which had been alluded to, and which were detailed in the writings of Robert Owen. He (Mr. Owen) ought either to have accepted the challenge as an honest man, or he knew he could not prove that his views had been carried out there. There was no loop-hole for him to escape; either he must accept it, or he had thrown overboard his principles. Now for the marriage question. He was then about to place in the hands of the Chairman a copy of Mr. Owen's Lectures on Marriage, which identical copy Mr. Owen last sent to his (Mr. B.'s) committee, declaring that the previous copies which he had forwarded to them had accidentally contained quotations of which he was not aware. That was then an acknowledged copy, but he (Mr. Brindley) had compared it with the former copies, and there was not a word different. (Mr. Brindley then, with the Rev. Mr. Woodward, compared the first and last words of the pages, and they were found to agree, although that was no proof of the copies being similar.) Page 4: Mr. Owen called marriage "an unnatural and artificial union of the sexes," and a "satanic institution." Page 7: he called it "the sole cause of all prostitution;" and then he went on to say, "that until you put away from among you and your children for ever this accursed thing, you will never be in a condition to become chaste or virtuous in your thoughts and feelings, or to know what real happiness is*." Now mark the

* Though Mr. Brindley has here and elsewhere endeavoured to make it appear that Mr. Owen speaks thus of *all* marriage, it is only necessary to read Mr. Owen's various works, to see at once that his denunciations are directed solely against the promise of loving each other as long as they live, required by the priesthood—love being independent of the will,—and the *indissoluble* nature of the bond which unites man and woman "*for better, for worse, until death them do part,*" however unsuited to each other, and consequently miserable the parties may prove to be. Mr. Owen is quite satisfied with the marriage ceremony according to the New Registration Act, passed since his lectures on marriage were delivered, and only desires, further, a common-sense system of divorce, equally applicable to rich and poor; and not even this, until the new arrangements of society are formed effectually to provide for the children.

apology for this: "for now almost all who are in the married state are daily and hourly practising the deepest deception, and living in the grossest prostitution of body and mind" (*great sensation*).* In the name of the married people of Bristol, he (Mr. Brindley) gave the lie to that statement. He was also, as Mr. Owen was, a stranger in Bristol; but he would state his honest conviction, that although he hated Socialist principles, he believed there were hundreds and thousands following in their wake who had no idea of the depths of wickedness which belonged to them, and he did not believe that they, as Socialists' husbands and wives, had any right to be charged with practising gross prostitution. Page 7: "Your fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives and children, are all suffering most grievously from this opposition to nature; from the ignorance of your own organization; from this unnatural crime, which destroys the finest feelings and the best powers of the species, by changing sincerity, kindness, affection, sympathy, and pure love"—oh the purity!—"into deception, envy, jealousy, hatred and revenge. It is a satanic device of the priesthood to place and keep mankind within their slavish superstitions, and to render them subservient to all their purposes. There is, therefore, no hope whatever for you until you acquire sufficient strength of mind to overcome this evil, and openly denounce it both in principle and practice." A little lower down, he says, "You therefore commit a crime against the everlasting laws of your nature when you say that you will 'love and cherish' what your organization may compel you to dislike and loathe even in a few hours." Now, according to Mr. Owen, "truth was consistent with itself." If, then, "the laws of our nature are everlasting laws," how can we "hate and loathe"? What an absurdity had he committed! Page 8, said Mr. Owen—"Not speak of the married state and its endless crimes; why, what absurdity yet remains in the public mind! Not to speak of and expose the greatest of all the practical sources of vice and misery!" Page 9: "Under this baneful crime against nature, man must continually degenerate in his physical, mental, and moral powers." Page 11: "Also in the present state of moral evil, it is esteemed a high and superior virtue to be chaste according to the unnatural notions and imaginations of a most degraded order of men, called the priesthood." He (Mr. Brindley) would challenge Owen to prove it. Let him take those of the priesthood who were present on that platform, and prove them a degraded order of society. Take them by name. If he did not, he had put forth a foul calumny, and had no right to insult them so. There was something yet left of the knowledge of right and wrong, and something like attachments, in this old immoral world. They were the men who, in the hour of sickness, in the hour of trouble and of death, soothed down and softened all our sufferings, and they ought not to be so ill-used. The Bible had given them that holy institution of marriage, and they also blessed God that he had been pleased to give such instruments as the "priesthood," to teach the way unto life eternal. Mr. Owen said they were all gone mad, by the senseless irrational ravings of those priests; but would they bow down to the wisdom of Robert Owen? He had called them all either "fools or rogues," but they would tell him they would not stand under it. Page 12. Mr. Owen stated, "that the priesthood have invented for

* Any person reading Mr. Owen's works fairly, could never come to any other conclusion than that the prostitution here referred to, is that of the feelings and sentiments, and not the vulgar prostitution inferred by Mr. Brindley.

their gain, this unhallowed and grossly absurd ceremony, called marriage." When did they invent these? "In the New Moral World no such destruction of common sense; of our most refined and best feelings; of our just and natural rights and privileges; of our open-hearted sincerity; and of our highest enjoyment and purest happiness, will ever be required or permitted." Page 13: "I now denounce the marriages of the Old World, as I then denounced its religions." Page 16 was more of the purity of the New Moral System: "The secrets of nature will therefore be no longer unwisely hidden, and man and woman will acquire more knowledge of themselves, and of human nature in one day, than they have hitherto attained in a hundred years*." I owe an apology to the women of England for reading such base and filthy things as these; but at the same time, I am not sorry some are present, that they may know what was the system that would thus root up and destroy all that, to them, is endearing in this life. It is marriage alone makes woman honoured and honourable †; and it is as a wife she alone can bring forth those true endearments and refinements that bind her near to our hearts, and make us value her as we do. Page 32, Mr. Owen says, "It has been discovered that it is practicable materially to change and improve the organization of many animals for particular purposes. The subject is so well understood, that it is known by some men almost as a science; so accurately can they attain the points and qualities of the animal formation, which they desire to obtain. Now it is much more important to the well-being and happiness of man, that the human organization should be advanced, and essentially improved, than that the organization of any of the inferior animals should be thus made more perfect. The improvements of the organization of man, however, have been neglected, and must be neglected, as long as the marriages devised by the priests and sanctioned by governments as a divine institution, and conducted on the principle of individual competition for individual wealth, shall remain the law of the land. While this irrational and truly impious practice shall be the law, and sanctioned by the public opinion of the most civilized, or rather, least barbarous states, the original constitution or organization of human nature will remain, not only unimproved, but it must be annually deteriorated;‡." And what said Mr. Campbell, Socialist Missionary, in a discussion in Coventry with the Rev. Mr. Bannister, deputed as Mr. Campbell was by the Central Board, of which Mr. Owen was President? "Now, my friends, some of you may laugh at this idea, but take the trouble to inquire rationally and fairly. Prizes should be offered for the best children. Several societies have been formed by Christians for the purpose of giving prizes and medals for the best dogs, horses, sheep, cows and hogs, yet the human animal has been left unregarded and uncared for." (*Loud tokens of dissatisfaction.*) (*Half hour expired.*)

MR. OWEN came forward during the greatest confusion. He said, I am not at all surprised at these feelings of yours from the statements

* Because, as Mr. Owen frequently stated in this and other of his published writings, "truth alone" would be the language of every one, upon every occasion, in his rational state of society.

† When it is a marriage of real affection, but the reverse when it is a marriage of interest or mere convenience.

‡ Superior organized children can be expected only from marriages of affection. Mr. Owen is not answerable for the opinions of the missionaries, who are appointed by the Annual Congress, and not by Mr. Owen.

which you—(*Most terrific groans and yells rendered the conclusion of the sentence perfectly inaudible. This having continued about five minutes.*)

THE CHAIRMAN rose and said, they were met together to discover what Socialism was, and therefore they were bound to give a patient attention to what Mr. Owen was about to say.

MR. OWEN.—I was going to say, when I was interrupted, that the view which has been given to this subject by Mr. Brindley tonight, is the very reverse of the truth. I will explain to you. You recollect, my friends, I stated tonight that there are two great errors at the foundation of human society; the one is, with regard to our convictions, and the other, with regard to our feelings. Now when I wrote that work, there was no law passed similar to the Registration Act, and I believe that those lectures were the cause of that alteration of the law.

THE CHAIRMAN.—He begged to call Mr. Owen's attention to the fact which had just been communicated to him, that a new edition of the work on Marriage had been printed in 1840, in which the objectionable passages were to be found.

THE REV. MR. WOODWARD said, that he had been requested to state that it was published again since the passing of that Act.

MR. OWEN, in reply, said, it was a reprint from an old edition, and that he did not publish it. He had stated that the marriages of the priesthood were the objectionable marriage (*confusion*). He was not speaking of those respectable gentlemen then present; all his writings were directed to the whole world, and not to particular individuals. They all knew how many millions had been sacrificed in consequence of the divisions of those priests. (*Renewed excitement and noise.*) He stated that he objected to the marriages in which the individuals were compelled to promise that they would love each other to the end of their days, when they could not tell whether they should do so or not, because they had not power over their wills. Mr. Owen proceeded to remark, that he had been shamefully misquoted by Mr. Brindley, upon which

THE CHAIRMAN asked whether it had been done that night?

MR. OWEN did not complain of the offensive misquotation having been made then, but in one of the tracts put out by Mr. Brindley. A quotation from Shelley was actually given as his (Mr. Owen's), and he would engage to prove it the next evening. He wished to give some explanation then of his views of the marriage system. He considered that to be a most important part of the Social system, and he hoped that every man and woman would treat him fairly, by giving him liberty to be heard on his own behalf. Then he (Mr. Owen) had never objected to marriage. (*Groans, hisses, and great interruption.*) He objected only to that marriage which was contrary to the law of nature. His intention was, that the married life should be made much more pure and happy than it ever had been yet. (*Oh, oh.*) He had proceeded with respect to marriage as he had with every other part of the system. He endeavoured to discover what were the causes of unhappiness in married life, and what was the cause of the dreadful prostitution that pervaded almost the whole of Europe, and the civilized world. His object, and his sole object, was to discover the means by which those numerous miseries and evils might be reduced to the smallest amount; and he had discovered that the first cause of it was the want of a sound good practical education for those who were afterwards to be married. It was quite necessary that they should be well educated, and their judgment well formed, that they might be enabled to make a judicious

choice when they had to perform that most important act of their lives. He therefore had arranged, that under the new system every child, from its birth, should be well and soundly educated, physically, intellectually, morally and practically. (*Hear.*) And then the next thing he had discovered as a cause of unhappiness and prostitution throughout society, was, the hasty and the ignorant marriages made by those who were not aware of what they were going to do. The Socialists, so long as they remained in the old world, must abide by the laws of the old world, and never act in opposition to them; but whenever there was a state of society formed such as he (Mr. O.) recommended, then the new marriages would be most beneficial. Young people should not be allowed to marry until they had, first of all, publicly, before the assembly of their elders, upon the sabbath, given intimation that they wished to form such a union. They were then to return home, live three months under those circumstances, and if their friends knew of their intentions to be married, and they found upon further acquaintance that their dispositions and habits were accordant, and likely to produce a happy marriage, then, *at the end of the three months*, they were again to come forward in the same public manner; and the marriage was to be witnessed by their friends and the parties concerned. Such had been the practice of the Society of Friends, and it was exactly the same law which they had found so beneficial, that was wished to be introduced into the new system. It was stated that he (Mr. Owen) recommended promiscuous intercourse. He (Mr. O.) denied that most flatly, and he defied any individual to bring a single sentence that had reference to such a state of society; for the whole of his arrangements had been to prevent it, and they would do so to a hundred-fold greater extent than the present system did. Then after the marriage was made, as no individual first of all could know the character of the other, and as all characters are in the habit of changing—men become from being sober, intemperate—women become intemperate—and men from being regular, good characters, become gamblers—and as these changes in character are continually going forward during the lives of individuals, although there would not arise, with taking this precaution, frequent necessity for change, still these would have no right to make any complaint to the elders if their marriage proved unhappy, *until the end of twelve months*; and if it was then found that more misery than happiness was likely to result—more vice than virtue, and they wished to be separated, this official complaint would be entered in the official books of the establishment, but the parties would be obliged to return and live with each other *six months longer at least*, to prove whether the application they had made did not arise from a temporary quarrel, or from any other removable cause (*uproar*). *At the end of these six months, if one party only complained, they would have to live together another six months (great confusion)*, to give the other a fair opportunity, whether male or female, to recover the affection that had been lost. If Mr. Brindley had any better plan than that to render the married life more virtuous and happy, he (Mr. Owen) should be glad to know, for he would certainly introduce it into the New Moral World. Of course, continued Mr. Owen, it would be impossible to bring such a plan into operation, unless all the children were well provided for. Under the proposed arrangements, it would make no difference whether the children went to one parent or to the other, for they would all be brought up as children of the same family, receiving the best instruction, and pro-

vided for in a very different manner to what children are now; and whenever the parents felt desirous, they would have an opportunity of visiting, and being with the children at any time, from birth till the children were eighteen years of age. The system was to be a system of truth, where there would not be a motive to express a falsehood by look, word, or action. There would be no motives to marriages, except the genuine marriages of affection, and when the manners and whole characters of the individuals would be best suited to each other. There would, therefore, be a probability that not one in that state would be desirous of change, for every hundred who, in the present system, are so desirous; nay, under those arrangements, it was very much to be doubted whether there ever would be a desire for change at all. Many marriages now were made for money. (*Great uproar.*) Did they not find it frequently the case? (*No, no, and renewed confusion.*) He begged then to say, with reference to his private character and his proceedings, that his own conviction was, that he had lived a life as pure up to the age of 70—as he would be in May next—as any man living, either religious or infidel; and he was most willing that any investigation into his character should be made any day, and that scrutiny might be as severe as they liked. Could he state more than that? He had explained many of his arrangements to them, and he must say, that up to the present time he had not been able to discover any that would not produce more comfort and happiness than the present mal-arrangements of society; which it must be acknowledged were the cause of much misery and unhappiness. In the arrangements proposed for the new state of society, he most heartily desired to improve the condition of every class. Could he have any other motive than that great object? He could not think what other proof any parties wished for with reference to the system he had then laid before them; but he thought if persons would only take the trouble to investigate his history, and he was sure all who knew him would confirm it, they would find he had devoted the whole of his life—every day of it—to endeavour to produce an amelioration in the condition of his fellow-men. He was the first who drew up a bill for the relief of children employed in factories, and not being in the House of Commons himself, the late Sir Robert Peel introduced it; but the bill which he proposed was very different to the bill which was carried (*question*); he was speaking of what his motives were in every part of the system which he had endeavoured to diffuse for the benefit of all people, without any exception whatever, and he did not mean to shrink from any investigation into his views, and he wished them to be well understood. Mr. Owen concluded by repeating the statement he before made respecting his writings which referred to marriages, which were written previously to the passing of the Registration Act; and those copies which had been printed since that Act had passed, were not published by him, nor had he anything to do with them. (*Half hour up.*)

MR. BRINDLEY, as usual, was loudly applauded. He commenced by remarking that they would recollect in his last address, he gave them many statements from Mr. Owen's writings, to which all that he (Mr. Owen) could say was, in the first instance, that he (Mr. B.) had shamefully misquoted him, and then afterwards, upon being questioned, that he had not misquoted him at all; for, in fact, he had not made use of the tract in which the objectionable passage of Shelley's occurred.

THE CHAIRMAN said his own impression, and that of the meeting was, that Mr. Owen said Mr. Brindley had shamefully misquoted him

at that meeting: but Mr. Owen not meaning that expression, it was therefore withdrawn.

MR. BRINDLEY continued.—Then every statement which he gave in his (Mr. B.'s) last address was clearly the plain view of the question, and the truth. Mr. Owen had told them in his address, that he did not object to marriage according to the Registration Act, and that when he published those Lectures it was years since. Now that was very curious, because Mr. Owen, ten days ago, sent to his (Mr. Brindley's) committee a copy of those Lectures, and a day or two after sent another copy, with a very polite note, stating his extreme pain at having previously sent them a copy which contained misquotations, which fair copy had been before the meeting that night. Now, was not a man bringing forward a reprint of any book virtually a reproduction of what had been before the public. If the man did not object to marriage as it stands at present, why did he not state it in the edition of his book printed since the Marriage Act was passed? * Even in his book of December 1840, he did not only denounce "marriages of the law and gospel," but "marriages of the law alone." He (Mr. Owen) had said he never did object to marriage, but that would be for that respectable auditory the next evening to decide upon. He, too, talked of his marriage views. What day were the young people to come up on? On the Sabbath. As he was so learned, and had collected so much wisdom, and moreover, had had "fifty years' experience," perhaps he would be good enough to tell them all about the Hebrew root of the word; about the Sabbath as the holy day on which God rested from the work of the creation, and as the day appointed for man to rest from his labour (*applause*). Under the New Moral World arrangements, they were to have three months' trial, and then, if they did not like their wives, they had only to come and say so, and take somebody else upon trial; and so, as an honest friend down below says, "I suppose we are to take our wives quarterly" (*loud laughter*). † What, then, would become of all the little things? Mr. Owen did not tell you. Oh yes, he did, I beg his pardon; he said all the children must be well taken care of, and whether they went to their own parents or not, it would be no object whatever. That he distinctly declared. He positively affirmed it as a very wise plan, and that it makes the three months' arrangements quite practicable

* It is most distinctly so stated in this book which Mr. Brindley had in his hand, as the following extract from the appendix (and which is taken from Mr. Owen's Manifesto) will show:

"Since the publication of my views upon the old system of 'Marriage by the Priesthood,' the *form of Marriage*, by the New Marriage Act, has been made exactly to meet my ideas and wishes; and all that I now desire, is to see another law enacted, by which *Divorce*, under wise arrangements, and on principles of common sense, may be obtained equally for rich and poor; to remove the chief cause of so much existing deception, prostitution, promiscuous intercourse, and crime, and the dreadful evils which necessarily flow from them to both sexes, but especially to the poor unprotected part of the female sex, whose extremity of suffering is so much hidden from the world. And this change in the *law of Divorce* is all that is now required to enable me, legally and immediately, to introduce to the world the most splendid practical arrangements, easy of introduction, for the emancipation of man from ignorance, poverty, division, and crime, that have ever yet been conceived, even in the most fervid and sanguine imaginations of poets, philosophers, and reformers, of past and present time."

† A specimen of Mr. Brindley's usual misrepresentations.—See Mr. Owen's previous statement of the marriage regulations he proposes, by which it appears that *eighteen months* is the shortest period which must pass before parties will be able to obtain a divorce.

— (*a laugh*). Mr. Owen told you he could challenge me; he dared me to prove that ever he recommended promiscuous intercourse. I feel the wretched character of such a question to take up, but as he has challenged me, I will prove it now positively, clearly, and plainly by his own works and language. He has positively recommended that men, as brutes, shall be governed solely by the laws of their nature in these matters*. I hope it is clear that Mr. Owen tonight has not said one word about Socialism; because he has not quoted from any book; he dared not touch the original, and has only given his own *gloss* of the matter. Had I not known the course from past experience which Mr. Owen would be compelled to adopt; had I not known this, and proved it to you by the little tract I am glad to see so many of you hold in your hands, he would have given me the lie at every quotation. At page 146 of the debate in America, which Mr. Owen had corrected himself, it stated, "The division of society into governors and governed, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, into single families, into sects and parties, and into numerous tribes and people taught to have opposing feelings for each, tends to degrade society, and to give a wrong or unnatural direction to every kindly feeling of our nature, and to render it difficult, or almost impossible, in most cases, for individuals to associate at pleasure with those for whom they cannot avoid having the most regard or strongest affection. In the new state of existence, this great evil will not be known. Every obstacle to the free, open, honest communication between mind and mind will be removed. In this state of society all intercourse between human beings of both sexes and of all ages will be at all times what is termed confidential; that is, they will express, under all circumstances, their genuine thoughts and feelings, without any reservation whatever." Page 147: "One thing is most evident; that nature, by keeping the power of new impressions to herself, never intended that men or women should perjure themselves by promising to each other that their sensations for each other shall continue the same till death. In the new state of existence, this crime of perjury will be unknown, for there will be no indissoluble marriages or giving in marriage; on the contrary, all will at all times possess the power to seek the society of those for whom nature compels them to feel the strongest regard or affection" (*disapprobation*). I say (said Mr. Brindley) there is broad, unadulterated promiscuous intercourse.

MR. OWEN.—I never had the slightest idea of it†.

MR. BRINDLEY.—Why, he uttered those words in his speech, corrected his speech, and sold it to Mr. Campbell, and now he does not know of them. It is then a scandalous fraud tried to be practised on Mr. Campbell. One of the Old Immoral World cannot help speaking the truth sometimes. I will give him one a little later back, as he does not seem to recollect that. Book of the New Moral World, page 31, last edition: "If man had attentively examined facts, he would long ago have discovered that liking or disliking, loving or hating, were never in a single instance an act of the will, but always an instinct of human nature; and made an instinct for the most important of all purposes, &c. It is in

* When human beings shall be trained to be rational, it is evident "the laws of their nature" will cause them to act, *not* "as brutes," but as rational beings.

† It is only by wilful distortion of Mr. Owen's writings that, after the many explanations that have been given, the meaning inferred by Mr. Brindley can be attached to Mr. Owen's language.

reality the greatest crime against nature to prevent organized beings from associating with those objects in whom nature has created a desire to unite (*confusion and disapprobation*). Nature, when allowed to take its course throughout the whole life of organized beings, produces a desire to combine or unite with those objects with which it is best for them to unite, and remain united so long as it is most beneficial for their well-being, physically, intellectually, and morally." Mr. Owen had stated that all marriages produced vice, crime, and misery (*Mr. Owen, "some marriages."*) But Mr. Owen was a married man; then Mr. Owen's had produced vice, crime, and misery, and yet he challenged any one to make the severest scrutiny into his character, and he defied them to find any fault with it. The speaker next directed attention to that part of Mr. Owen's address, where he stated many persons married for money, and assured the meeting such was not the case with himself; for when he (Mr. Brindley) was united in those sacred bonds, he was scarcely possessed of seven or eight shillings in the world, still they were united by the strongest ties of attachment, and would not be disunited for all the world. If Mr. Owen thought so many married for money, he could soon convince him to the contrary. He (Mr. Brindley) would put it to the married Socialists then present, that all who married for money should hold up their hand, and then let Mr. Owen see how he was mistaken. (*Only one hand was held up, and this was a person on the platform near Mr. Owen. The greatest noise and tumult that can well be imagined immediately commenced; the groans and hisses being interspersed with cries of "who married for money?" This was subsequently explained by the Chairman. The individual, a single man, had misunderstood the question, and therefore unconsciously rendered himself the object of such universal execration.*) Mr. Brindley continued, having elevated himself upon a raised part of the platform. Throughout the whole debate he had not often jumped up there, but he felt that night, at the close of the second debate, more elevated than ever he had done before. He had shown the difference between their views in a great measure. He rejoiced that a stripling youth could take higher ground by virtue of the goodness of his cause, than a man of seventy years of age and "fifty years' experience." In Holy Writ they read that when the armies of the living God were threatened by the Philistines—and it was the armies of the living God that were threatened—He was their protector and preserver; and how did He exhibit his power? Did He call forth hundreds and thousands of mighty men and overcome the Philistines? No! But to show his power, and that there was no surety in man's contrivances, against this Goliath of the Philistines came forth, under the arm of the living God, the little David (*loud cheers*); and what were his weapons? A little smooth round pebble from the brook: smooth, uniform, consistent, in all its parts: one continuous thread, that you cannot show where there is a breaking off, or where there is a beginning, or where there is an ending. What was that stone? It was the word of God; and (*pointing to it*) there it lies (*loud cheers, waving of hats, &c.*). Then since they acknowledged that it was God who had given them the power, let them then give to Him all the honour and all the glory, and all the praise, for to Him alone was it due. When they looked at the Apostles and the Christians of early days, when a Nero pitched them in sacks from precipices, and lighted them up as flambeaux to illuminate his unholy games; when they saw too that they have testimony of the sincerity of their professions handed down to after times; and when they saw, in later days, the Protestant Reformers bleeding at the stake,

and the gibbet, and suffering at the fires—[*Mr. Owen rose*—he (Mr. B.) found these were precious moments—they came closely home to his opponent: he only wished that Almighty God would bring them closer to him. Might he (Mr. Owen) be enabled to feel that our holy faith was one of undoubting undying assurance within us; not a mere bugbear of the imagination; not given to us by early prejudices, but that which made life alone bearable, that which made life valuable, and that which would make even death sufferable. It was thus we had our highest blessings. The Christian religion was more widely spreading and circulating among us, and it was now we could begin to realize those aspirations and to say “it is good for us to be here.” It is good for man to have religion, and the means of communicating that religion to others; and it is good for him to die, and depositing his mass of clay below, to commence the still onward progress of a higher, happier, and holier existence (*loud cheers*). Let us tonight go home with a strong assurance, that although we have had everything which we held dear attacked, we have not had one single institution proved to be bad and false, and absurd. Not one. Therefore every man and woman now, of an honest, virtuous, English mind, must go to his home tonight, and feel prouder of, be more delighted with, and more deeply interested in, all those divine ordinances and appointments which our Christian religion has given to us; and feel that in his own home and in the bosom of his family, blest by those Christian ordinances of his own Christian altar, he may worship his God and ask his blessing; and that he may feel ten thousand times more endeared to all these things, and more deeply indebted to the God who gave them (*prolonged applause*).

The discussion was adjourned at about twelve o'clock, having been protracted to that late hour in consequence of the numerous interruptions which were continually made throughout the evening.

THIRD EVENING.—*Thursday, January 7th, 1841.*

THE CHAIRMAN having opened the business by addressing the meeting in similar terms to those he used on the second evening.

MR. BRINDLEY, on commencing the debate, begged for a moment to occupy their attention by introducing a letter which had just been placed in his hand by a gentleman to whom he was a perfect stranger—Mr. John Ivey, Temple-street, Bristol. Having seen a certain bill which was put out against him (Mr. Brindley), containing among other things a letter from the Rev. Mr. Howarth, curate of March, he (Mr. Ivey) took the liberty of writing to Mr. Howarth to know what his opinions of Mr. Brindley were. Mr. Brindley read extracts to the meeting. Among other things it stated that Mr. Howarth's name had been attached to the bill in question without his knowledge, and had never had his approval; and then it went on to say that he was never aware that Mr. Brindley's conduct had been such as was prejudicial to Christianity or its interests. Three letters he had addressed to Mr. Wise and had received no answer, for Mr. Wise had never received one of them. Mr. Owen, he thought, as an honest man, must admit those letters of Mr. Franks, the butcher; Mr. Smith, the banker; and Mr. Howarth, the clergyman; and would see that the aspersions which had

been cast out were without foundation. He (Mr. Brindley) begged to assure Mr. Owen that he had not uttered one word against him personally, and he would assure him that he should be most careful for the future, after what he had seen of Mr. Owen's advocacy. He would never again say one word that might be personally offensive to Mr. Owen. It was the principles alone a man had a right to attack. There was no parallelism between the cases, of attacking him (Mr. B.) as the advocate of Christianity, and his speaking about persons professing Socialism; because Socialist principles led to and recommended such principles and conduct*, and Christianity did not. Last evening they went a great length in that debate. He (Mr. B.) had proved, and Mr. Owen had not attempted to disprove or even to contradict the statement, first, that the system held man to be irresponsible for his actions and conduct; secondly, it positively denounced all marriage, all religion, and denied the existence of a personal intelligent God. But a little matter had to be proceeded with touching the question of no marriage. Mr. Owen had told them he did not denounce every kind of marriage; but he (Mr. B.) would prove it, from a book given to him by Mr. Owen, and admitted to be his. Mr. Owen had not once quoted from his published works, but had merely given his own gloss of Socialism†. He could not imagine what Mr. Owen meant to read the next day; and therefore he thought he had not been dealt fairly with in not having had a copy of all the written documents Mr. Owen had brought forward, with which he (Mr. B.) could not possibly be acquainted. He therefore most respectfully entered his protest against Mr. Owen reading any more written documents which had never been put into public print (*cheers*). He hoped, as a matter of justice, the meeting would insist on Mr. Owen using those public works with which they were all acquainted (*a hiss*). Was it possible a man could be so dishonest and so destitute of anything like a principle of justice, as to object to such a thing? Were those written documents fair, or were they lies intended to deceive them? It was time they knew what Mr. Owen's intentions were. Mr. Owen, then, with the permission of the meeting, should not read a written document in support of Socialism; and if he did so, he (Mr. B.) would call on them to support the chair, and call Mr. Owen to the question. To finish up the question of marriage, a few short quotations would suffice:—Page 41 of Owen's book, and they must remember that it stated, "the marriages of the law and Gospel united, or of the law alone, where they obtain and create the necessity for single family arrangements and interests, drive pure and genuine chastity far from the abodes of men." Then he (Mr. Brindley) would say that Owen's system was entirely against marriage—regardless of the New Marriage Act; and if he again said he did not despise the marriages of the law, he (Mr. B.) would call upon the meeting to make him read for himself‡. To go on with the quotation: "genuine chastity is far better known and practised among all other tribes of animals (*disapprobation*), who are content in this essential part of their nature, as well as in every other instinct, to be governed by the laws of their respective natures." A very plain quotation! Page 49, Mr. Owen said, "and now all married pairs, with a very few exceptions,

* This is most decidedly untrue, as Mr. Owen has declared, and all his writings prove.

† As the founder of Socialism, Mr. Owen's words were of equal authority with his writings; and on a fair examination they will be found consistent throughout.

‡ But Mr. Owen says "where they obtain and create the necessity for single family arrangements and interests.

are living in a state of the most degrading prostitution, enforced upon them by the laws of human marriage." It was very painful to him to read such things, but still it was right that they should hear it, that they might know what Mr. Owen and his opinions really were. It was true Mr. Owen might be quite sincere, but his being sincere made him not a bit the less mistaken in it. A man who so boldly attacked all married pairs, was called upon to prove the truth of the charge. He had no right to libel the married people of Bristol in that way, and they would not suffer it without repelling it with indignation. He (Mr. B.) believed it to be a most unfounded calumny. At page 54 of his book, Mr. Owen said, "I resume the subject of marriage because it is the source of more demoralization, crime, and misery." He (Mr. B.) wondered what sort of a man that could be, who found it so in his own personal experience—"the cause of more demoralization, crime, and misery than any other single cause, with the exception of religion—(*great confusion*)—and private property. These three together form the great trinity of causes of crime and immorality among mankind." They could then see what Socialism was. It was reduced to a small compass—it was there brought into a nut-shell. First, there was marriage; then religion; and thirdly, private property—the great trinity of evils; but marriage was the greatest of all of them. Every one had a right to think and speak as he liked upon all occasions, to be accountable to no one but his God; but he (Mr. O.) had no right to rush in between man and wife, and make her who was the object of the affections, the mere panderer to the brutal passions (*hear, hear*). When they saw that a man, and a band of men, could be met with, daring to advocate such principles in open day, they who had wives, they who had daughters, they who had sisters, would say he should not, in order to get rid of the prostitution which now exists, he should not make this entire world one universal brothel! Those were plain terms, but he trusted that no virtuous-minded woman would feel other than honest indignation at such principles (*cheers*). He could say on behalf of the operatives of this county, that as a rule they were not as Mr. Owen represented: they were a virtuous-minded set, and therefore they did not want the foul offer of being allowed to take their three months' trial (*applause*). If they met an honest Englishman going to be married, what did they see? He was dressed in his best clothes, and looked cheerful and happy. Suppose a man met him coming from church, and were to say, "Where have you been to?" "I have been to be married." "For how long?" The other would say, "For how long! What do you mean by that?" "Yes," says the man, "I'm a Socialist, and I've been married for three months." (*a laugh.*) I say, how would he meet it if he said, "No, we've been married for life." Here was the source of our highest enjoyments, our purest happiness, our greatest satisfaction, that we are not merely married to the object of our affections for a time, but we are wedded to them for life. It was that alone which made the union one of that pure unadulterated pleasure and enjoyment which marriage was when rightly and properly consummated, and blest by God by the rites he had given in his holy ordinances in the Bible. It was a delightful thing to know that, although they had this New Marriage Act, by which every man and woman might have a sort of "broom-stick" marriage, for all that they had not embraced it, and did not feel satisfied with it. Page 59 of Owen's book it said, "Is there any sexual crime or prostitution known among other tribes of animals? (*confusion*) Do they act wisely or viciously in their sexual inter-

course? Is there more virtue among any race of animals in eating, drinking, and sleeping, than in continuing by the same natural laws the existence of their species." I won't, said Mr. Brindley, go on with this matter, it is too filthy (*time expired*).

MR. OWEN said (*after the interruption had subsided*) he was very much gratified to hear Mr. Brindley come forward in the way in which he had, at the commencement of his speech, and he was not surprised at the termination of his speech, because he thought he (Mr. B.) had received impressions which could readily be removed from his mind. (*Hear.*) I find that Mr. Brindley has made the same mistake that a great number of others have, who call themselves Socialists. There was a book published under the title of the Social Bible. That book was published not with my name, and I never knew anything of it till nine months after. However, when I did see it, I discovered that almost the whole of it, though taken, virtually, from some of my own works, was in direct opposition to my sentiments. I will state what it is. Mr. Brindley has made a mistake on the marriage question, which was an excusable one. There was an extract appended to a work published in my name, which was not by me, and I have a letter from the editor to prove it. There was in the work half a sheet to spare, and the printer and publisher added extracts which I had never before seen or heard. (*Oh, oh.*) I am very desirous that we should not divide any parties, but unite all parties, and I request that those who are friends of my views, or my supposed views, will not, on any account, interrupt Mr. Brindley in any of his remarks. (*Loud cheers.*) Now I have been charged with the foulest proceedings on the subject of marriage, and I wish to show how this falsification has arisen, and I think I have a right to do so. (*Yes, yes.*)

THE CHAIRMAN remarked that he thought the right and manful thing for Mr. Owen to do, would be to meet the passages Mr. Brindley had just read, and which had called forth such strong expressions of disapproval from the meeting, and after that Mr. Owen might make any representation he liked.

MR. OWEN.—Were I to do justice, I should read the whole work. The whole bearing of that work is directly opposite to what appears from those short passages. I could take any work, I could take the Bible, and make short extracts, which would appear different to what they really are. (*No, no, and uproar.*)

THE CHAIRMAN (*interrupting Mr. Owen, amid loud cries of "chair, chair"*) said he never would fill the chair in this Christian country, and hear it asserted by any man that he could produce a single sentence out of the Bible that could be made to appear different to what it really is. (*Applause and confusion.*) He was aware there were many passages in the Bible which described sin, and the disgraceful practices of the human heart, but it always discountenanced sin, and showed it was against God's law, and marked in the Bible by his malediction; and the Bible did not speak of those sins to influence the bad passions of the heart, but to reprove and put down all sin. He had no doubt that the sentence fell from Mr. Owen inadvertently, and that it might be misconstrued and misunderstood, were he not to notice it.

MR. OWEN proceeded.—Mr. Brindley I find has made a mistake. No individual could possibly understand, that I stated yesterday there were to be three months' marriages. I stated that there must be three months' notice given of the marriage, before it could be allowed. It is stated in Mr. Brindley's tract, as a quotation of mine, that in Socialist commu-

nities there will be no such thing as husband or wife, father or son, mother or daughter, for he declares that the only foundation on which the temple of happiness can be erected, is a rational commonwealth divided into communities of property, wherein no artificial distinctions will be known—where the irrational sound of master and mistress, husband and wife, will not be heard. (*Mr. Brindley, hear, hear.*) Now I have explained to you about the Social Bible and the Lectures on Marriage; *not one word of this ever came from my pen or my thoughts, or is mine in any way whatever.* That is one explanation. The next is this: in page 11 of Mr. Brindley's tract, "The Marriage System of Socialism," in that "faithful digest," and I am sure Mr. Brindley will be ready to withdraw it after what he has said, for nothing was ever more shameful, if done intentionally, than to introduce this passage as my writing—"Chastity is a monkish and evangelical"—

MR. BRINDLEY.—What page?

MR. OWEN.—Page 11: "Chastity is a monkish and evangelical superstition; a greater foe to natural temperance even than unintellectual sensuality; it strikes at the root of domestic happiness, and consigns more than half of the human race to misery that some few may monopolize according to law. A system could not well have been devised more studiously hostile to human happiness than marriage. That which will result from the abolition of marriage will be natural and right, because choice and change will be exempted from restraint. In fact, religion and morality, as they now stand, compose a practical code of misery and servitude; the genius of human happiness must tear away every leaf from the accursed book of God, ere man can read the inscription on his heart. How would morality, dressed up in stiff stays and finery, start from her own disgusting image, should she look in the mirror of nature!" *Now not one word of that is mine, or ever was.* I will show you that every one of these passages is from Shelley. These are Shelley's words. Page 78. Mr. Owen was then reading the above passages from Shelley, when

MR. BRINDLEY said, read your own works. (*Great uproar.*)

THE CHAIRMAN.—Mr. Owen wishes to inform the meeting that these are not his words, but Shelley's.

MR. BRINDLEY.—I have never quoted it, Mr. Chairman.

MR. OWEN.—Perhaps you don't know you give them in your tract as my words.

MR. BRINDLEY.—Here are two copies of the published Lectures on Marriage, and this contains the quotation made. Page 91, about Chastity.

MR. OWEN.—I distinctly deny that that is my *publication*.

After a few remarks by the Chairman, Mr. Owen said, he should proceed to read an extract from his "Manifesto."

THE CHAIRMAN said, he thought as the quotations made by Mr. Brindley had caused such a strong impression to be made on the meeting, that they would not be satisfied unless Mr. Owen met those statements fully.

MR. OWEN.—Then I state that those single short passages read by Mr. Brindley, give a totally different colouring to the whole of that work, to what the spirit of it would give, if they were to take it altogether. (*Great disorder prevailed in the meeting for some time, and completely put an end to all business. Upon silence being restored.*)

MR. OWEN said, now, Ladies and Gentlemen, I rejoice to have such an opportunity of reading any work of my own, because I am quite

sure there never was a single line from my pen that was not written in the spirit, and with the direct intention, of benefiting every one of my fellow-creatures. (*Disorder.*) I am sure that I can prove that, even by reading this. Page 4: "In my previous lectures I have stated that the chief of the satanic institutions of the world, though somewhat varied in name and form, are the priesthood, the lawyers, and the magistrates." (*Oh, oh, and laughter.*) When I wrote this, I had not one unpleasant feeling for one individual belonging to those professions. I respect many of them highly. Many of them are my most sincere friends. I have only to state the fact, and it will surprise you, that when I asked for a subscription to put the experiment into practice, the present Lord Abinger, then Sir James Scarlett, gave 1000*l.* (*Great confusion.*) The magistrates, lawyers, and military, are among the institutions which are doing essential injury to the whole human race—not intentionally, but because their institutions are founded on evil bases; because all these institutions take their sole foundation from the belief that man—(*disorder*).

THE CHAIRMAN.—You have called on Mr. Owen to give his views, and it is unreasonable not to allow him the opportunity.

MR. OWEN continued.—From a belief that man has the power to believe and to feel as he likes. If it were not for that fundamental error, there would never have been an order of priesthood, of military, or magistrates, required. There would never have been one of those institutions, and I will make it plain (*hear*); society would have discovered that it possessed the power to form the character of every individual; and, instead of punishing or rewarding him, would have taken especial care that not one child should be trained up without being placed in those circumstances that should have made each individual good, virtuous, and happy. (*Applause and hisses.*) It is those institutions which prevent man from being now made intelligent, virtuous, and happy. I state without fear, that those institutions have created all the error, and that they are at present a bar to a virtuous and happy state of society. I can prove that every individual member of those institutions, whether of the law, the priesthood, the military, or the magistracy, suffers greatly by his being so, and that when the arrangements which I advocate are carried out, there will not be one of these. Page 1 of the tract; "The unnatural and artificial union of the sexes; individual and national competition and contest; and the single-family arrangements or universally disuniting arrangements of society; and the metal or any other medium liable to change in value, for the circulation of wealth." I impugn all those institutions as flowing from the same source, and all of them are now standing in the way of human improvement. ("Hear" from Mr. Brindley.) What did I mean by "an unnatural and artificial" union of the sexes? I mean a union formed from any other motive than that of pure and natural affection. Natural affection is the only thing that will ever produce happiness among mankind; and so long as there shall be strong inducements in society for individuals to unite who have not these natural affections, I do say these motives are the cause of a vast amount of misery to those parties; and of great vice throughout society in general. (*Loud applause.*) The single-family arrangements? It has been generally supposed when I object to single-family arrangements, that I object to marriages. No such thing. There never has been any such idea. My objection to single-family arrangements arises from a knowledge of the old state of society. These single-family arrangements are—what? The present

nucleus of society consists of a husband, wife, and their children—this is what I call single-family arrangements—living quite independent of all other single-family arrangements; and these are all opposed to each other, as those who are in the same trade, or line of business. (*Tremendous confusion.*) You are very little prepared to know what the new system of society is. Single-family arrangements carry in their nature a direct opposition and competition with all other family arrangements. I am for *uniting* the human race. Every one is trained naturally now to say, “*my wife, my house, my child, my everything.*” (*Hear, hear.*) This all creates selfish feelings (*No, no*); I say this creates to a very great extent, unnatural and selfish feelings (*No, no*); I have been obliged to dive into the foundations of science to discover these evils, and the remedy for them; and I find that one of the chief evils which must be removed before we shall be in that state when “every man shall sit under his vine, and under his fig-tree.” (*Oh, oh, oh, and uproar.*) The problem which was to be solved was, how great a number of individuals could be associated together, to secure permanently to each man, woman, and child, the greatest amount of happiness, with the least inconvenience. I find from the Science of Society, which you must understand before you can judge whether I am in error or not, that the number that could be associated most advantageously for manufactures, for education and government, is from 800 to 1200, which is the best possible number; 500 is the minimum, and 2000 is the maximum. By a union such as I now state, the advantages in the production of wealth; in the distribution of wealth; in the forming of the character of the children from birth; and in the government of the whole; that number is the most advantageous; and by this plan, the same quantity of land which now maintains one individual, would, with the same ease, maintain four; and all the physical and mental efforts of the people might be so combined and arranged, that one-fourth the physical and mental labour would produce at least four-fold more beneficial results. This, with many other things, I hope to have an opportunity of telling you; but without previous study you will very ill comprehend the arrangements of the new system of society, which would employ 1000*l.* worth of capital and 1000 individuals more beneficially than 4000*l.* worth of capital and 4000 individuals can possibly be under the old system. I did not mean that these individuals should not have their own wives, and their own children, and every thing else within their own house, but that they should have all these, and tenfold more. (*Cheers and hear.*) (*Half-hour up.*)

MR. BRINDLEY then rose to reply. He said they had half an hour's exposition of the Social system, and had had shown to them the kind of straight-forward fair mode of dealing with the question which would take place in the New Moral World. Mr. Owen had charged him (Mr. B.) with shamefully misrepresenting facts, and began by bringing up the Social Bible, which had never been quoted during the discussion; and then Shelley, which he likewise had not referred to on either of the nights.

MR. OWEN.—No, but you give it as mine in your tract.

MR. BRINDLEY proceeded to remark, then from what Mr. Owen had said, that the single-family arrangements were to be precisely the same as in the Old World, and that they would say *my husband, my wife, my children, &c.* (*Mr. Owen shook his head.*) He was sorry to see Mr. Owen shake his head. Why did he not contradict what had been said, and prove that it was not correct? Mr. Owen had not proved that

marriage was a satanic institution, and an accursed thing, and that he would have no marriages either connected with religion or the law. He would defy him to do so, or he (Mr. B.) would forfeit one hundred guineas. He would also defy him to prove that all married people, with a few exceptions, were a lot of prostitutes. Then Mr. Owen went on to tell them about the unfortunate half-sheet that had slipped into his Marriage Lectures, but the quotation happened not to be on that half sheet at all. At page 77 of "Owen's Book," it said, "thus have men and women been duped to lead a life of open opposition to each other's feelings or of consummate hypocrisy, that they might be called by the priests, solely for their (the priests') gain, chaste and virtuous, when, in fact, they have been living a life of prostitution and vice." (*Mr. Owen shook his head as if in dissent*); and Mr. Owen shakes his head in approval. They could all see his poor shuffling evasiveness, in passing over questions and charges which he could not prove. He ought to be called upon to retract those charges, or else resort to books to prove them. If Mr. Owen did not give proof that they were all a lot of prostitutes, then he (Mr. Brindley) would say he was a "*foul-mouthed libeller*." The passage was page 49: "And now all married pairs, with a very few exceptions, are living in a state of the most degrading prostitution, forced upon them by the laws of marriage." He hoped they would not allow Mr. Owen to utter another word till he had proved or retracted that gross insult upon all the married people in England, and he (Mr. B.) knew Mr. Owen could not prove it; then it would have to go forth to all the world that Mr. Robert Owen had been confronted and convinced of the folly of his writings, and that they could not be substantiated. (*Hear, hear, and cheers.*) Mr. Owen spoke of the delight he felt in reading one of his own books. How strange! His books had been lying on the table the whole of the three nights, and yet he had not taken an opportunity of reading or supporting himself by one of them. The speaker next referred to the passage concerning "Chastity as a monkish superstition," which Mr. Owen had repudiated and stated to be Shelley's, which notwithstanding Mr. Owen's declaration to the contrary, he argued upon precisely as though Mr. Owen admitted it. The next point to which Mr. Brindley directed attention, was to a copy of the "Book of the New Moral World," published 1839, which he said also contained the same unhappy half-sheet as the former edition which he submitted to Mr. Owen.

MR. OWEN said,—I never put it there, nor did I know it was there.

MR. BRINDLEY.—And mark—those copies were advertised for sale in Mr. Owen's own Moral World newspaper*.

MR. OWEN.—Who advertised them?

MR. BRINDLEY.—Who advertised them! How should I know? Here they are, advertised week after week; and then he comes and asks me, who advertised them? Oh, for shame! We have seen what Socialism is in its principles, and now we will proceed to show what it is in its practice. It was a system which pandered to the vilest passions of men; and as he (Mr. Brindley) should be able to prove, even Mr. Owen's own son, who had had the greatest advantage in training in the New Moral World system, had written and published a book which was openly sold in all Socialist places of meeting, which book the

* The "New Moral World" is not Mr. Owen's paper, nor does Mr. Owen take any part in the management of it.

Chairman would pronounce to be one of the *filthiest, vilest, most disgusting things* this age or any other ever produced; and it recommended practices so revolting that he would not even name them. Such a book was not fit to be read to gentlemen; and if the Chairman would not believe him, he would hand over the book to him and beg him to read it. [*The Chairman looked at the book which Mr. Brindley here presented to him amid loud cries to "Name the title!" in which Mr. Owen joined.*] No (said Mr. Brindley), I will not name it, it is too beastly to be named (*great confusion*).

THE CHAIRMAN said he should certainly not allow the book which Mr. Brindley had given him to be read in that assembly; he could not do it for common decency's sake. [*The name of the publication did not transpire at all*]*.

MR. BRINDLEY then affirmed, because the Socialists thought man could not believe as he liked, think as he liked, love and hate as he pleased, and was not bound, when united in the bonds of matrimony, to love till death, that the state he had described would soon follow the introduction of those principles, and would lead to that filthy kind of conduct which that book (Mr. Robert Dale Owen's) recommended; and the principles being laid down so clearly, the practice would follow of course. The tract, "The Immoralities of Socialism," had been before the public now twelve months, and it had never had any reply made to it; and why? because they knew it was true. How could they meet him? They put forward such men as Luke Barton, who published charges against him (Mr. Brindley), but now it was not convenient to meet him, and he was what was vulgarly called "making himself scarce;" for if he could find him, and thought he was worth £50, he would most certainly prosecute him†. There was Mr. George Alexander Fleming, "The apostle Paul of the Socialists," as they called him, the editor of their weekly newspaper, removable from office by the Central Board, of which Mr. Owen was president; he had deserted his wife‡ and family, and also a poor helpless girl. He (Mr. Brindley) had the girl's letters (Eliza Gray's) in his possession, and those he produced in the Huddersfield Hall of Science fifteen months ago; and since that time he could never gain a sight of George Alexander Fleming. He said he would meet him (Mr. Brindley) in Leeds, and he went there and stayed a week, but Mr. Fleming did not go near; and then he advertised in the "Moral World," that as Mr. Brindley was so shifty, he perhaps would not be there, so he went to Bradford to meet him in Leeds (*laughter*). Mr. Brindley said here was the last chance for Mr. Fleming: if he would meet him in Bristol within three weeks from that time, he would engage to do so, or forfeit a hundred guineas (*cheers*); and if George Alexander Fleming did not accept that challenge, he (Mr. Fleming) would stand a self-convicted criminal in that matter before the people of Bristol (*hear*). With regard to their religion, and the beautiful practices to which it led—they recommended all that they held sacred, all the religious books—Christian as well—to be placed in a large heap, and with a fire under it burnt till not a fragment remained (*groans*). Why, such blasphemies had never been heard even

* Moral Physiology; mentioned in a former note (page 23).

† We understand that Mr. Luke Barton is a very respectable man, and is ready to prove everything he has said of Mr. Brindley.

‡ This statement was publicly contradicted by Mr. and Mrs. Fleming before a large audience at Leeds, as published in the "New Moral World." See *Appendix*, page 68.

in the worst times of infidel France! The "New Moral World" newspaper of June 15, 1839, contained the Christian creed, put in by the editor, Mr. G. A. Fleming, from a work called the "National," which beautifully harmonized with Social views: "Their right faith is this. That the omnipotent and all-merciful God condemned all mankind to eternal torture, because one had eaten an apple, through the temptation of the devil, who thereby thwarted the desire of God. In consequence of God's own predetermination in repenting of the evil he had done, God discovered by the power of his omniscience that there was only one way of remedying his error, and in furtherance of this designed redemption, seduced"—mark

THE CHAIRMAN.—I won't have it read; I know what's coming; I won't, while I'm chairman, have the ears of any Christian assembly polluted by such horrid horrid blasphemies, fit only for the murky atmosphere of hell (*great sensation.*)

MR. BRINDLEY.—Then I say that these principles and practices are fairly drawn out from their own accredited writings; and I now call on you to make Mr. Owen prove that charge against the married people of Bristol or withdraw it, and not let him be heard again till he has done so (*cheers—time expired.*)

MR. OWEN was about to commence his reply, but such was the tremendous uproar which existed that he could not proceed.

THE CHAIRMAN, having obtained order, said Mr. Owen would have to prove "that all the married pairs, with a very few exceptions, are living in a state of the most degrading prostitution."

MR. OWEN then said, first he wished to say, that for any person to understand that single passage it was necessary they should know and have read carefully the whole of the book. They must do so before they could know the spirit of it (*question, question*). Every one who read that book with a desire to know the system—(*interruption*).

THE CHAIRMAN hoped Mr. Owen would be allowed to go on without interruption.

MR. OWEN made an attempt to speak, but could not be heard; when THE CHAIRMAN again, in the most earnest manner, entreated the meeting to restrain their feelings.

MR. OWEN said, I state distinctly that the whole of that work was addressed to the whole of the human race; and it is well known that there is a very large proportion of the marriages of the world not based on that affection which I have stated to be the only true and genuine marriage that can take place between individuals (*question, question*). I have said, Sir, that unless there is an affection between the parties that are married, there is much more vice and misery produced by any law compelling them to remain together, than if the parents were separated, and the children taken care of in the way I propose (*great confusion*).

THE CHAIRMAN said he thought Mr. Owen had thrown out a slur upon all married people, with a few exceptions, and that the audience required him to come to close quarters, and prove it.

MR. OWEN.—Now, Sir, *all those married individuals who are living without affection, are living in a state of prostitution.*

The discussion was continued between Mr. Owen and the Chairman for some time, THE CHAIRMAN observing that they intended to pin Mr. Owen to the proof of prostitution between all married pairs.

MR. OWEN then said, that any individual reading that work would never understand that any other was meant than a prostitution of the affections.

THE CHAIRMAN said, at page 1 of the tract it stated, that "almost all

the married pairs are daily and hourly practising the greatest deception, and living in a state of the grossest prostitution, both of body and mind." Perhaps Mr. Owen would withdraw the expression "*almost all.*"

MR. OWEN.—If they are to be understood in the manner they are now put before the meeting, I should certainly withdraw them (*hear, hear*).

THE CHAIRMAN.—Then I beg, on the part of the speaker, to say that those two words, in the offensive sense in which we understand them, are withdrawn (*Mr. Owen nodded his head*). Mr. Owen assents.

(*This announcement was received with the most tremendous and deafening cheers and waving of handkerchiefs, which lasted nearly ten minutes. The audience then appearing perfectly satisfied, Mr. Brindley ripped the tract to pieces and then burnt the fragments, and declared that whenever he saw another tract containing those words he would rip out the leaf containing them; and further, he would never again bring those words forward against Mr. Owen.*)

MR. OWEN said (during which the greatest attention was paid him), I am very much indebted to this Christian assembly for showing me their feelings in the manner they have done (*hear*). If you deemed me in error, do you think you have taken the most rational mode of convincing me of my error? Was it in accordance with that religion about which so much has been said, which is a religion of kindness, and charity, and love for all religions? And, my friends, although I have been received in the manner you have witnessed just now, I have not had, nor can I have, the slightest degree of anger or ill-will towards any individual in this assembly (*hear, and cheers*). If I am in error, take the proper mode to convince me of my error. Treat me kindly; argue fairly (*hear, hear*). I am sure, from my earliest days, I have been an ardent admirer of truth only. I have, I think, convinced the world (*no, no—order*), that that which is in my power—my wealth, or influence, or even my life—I shall always be ready to afford for the cause; and so long as I live, while I possess my natural faculties, as I have hitherto done, I will defend what I believe to be true, even though I stood against the assembled world. My principles, I contend, ever have been, and are now as pure as the principles of the most religious individual in this assembly (*no, no*). I came to this room tonight with a great desire to heal all the differences that had apparently existed between us. My life has been devoted to the endeavour to relieve my fellow-creatures from all those innumerable difficulties by which they have been, and are now, surrounded. I have devoted the best faculties of past days to dive into the foundations of those evils, and to find a peaceable and rational remedy for them. I want to have formed a committee, composed of the leading part of the clergymen, merchants, and manufacturers of this city, and for them to investigate all the principles and practices, which appear to me to be of so much value, not only to Bristol, but to the whole world. If, upon examination, they find the principles to be unsound, and the practices to be injurious, I will again re-investigate every principle and every practice, and if I cannot make it clear and distinct to those gentlemen, I will give it up. I have no objection to Mr. Brindley being a member of such committee, that by his remarkably acute powers of mind he may point out every thing which is not in accordance with the principles which I have advocated. Professions are not only to exist in mere words: they are to be the actual *practice* of every day and every hour, in the life of

every individual. Why, my friends, only think for a moment: here, according to the statement of a very respectable individual in the town of March, in Cambridgeshire, Mr. Brindley commenced a school with a hundred good children, and with his feelings and his views he brought them down to eleven (*proof, proof*).

THE CHAIRMAN observed, such statements should not be made without proof.

MR. OWEN said, well, he would admit Mr. Brindley to be the most religious individual in Great Britain.

THE CHAIRMAN said he thought Mr. Owen had better come to the subject, "What is Socialism, and what are its effects upon society?"

MR. OWEN bowed to the decision of the Chairman.—He said, I first of all reclaimed, and made excellent servants and good subjects of 500 men, women and children, in Manchester; and I afterwards made an inferior population the most sober, industrious, well-disposed colony that ever existed. (*cries of "Where was it?"*) At New Lanark. Recollect, I read last night the testimony of six of the most respectable gentlemen in the county of Lanark.

THE CHAIRMAN.—I think we are departing from the discussion.

MR. OWEN.—I think we have before now departed very much indeed. I was going to state what were the effects of the Social System I introduced at New Lanark.

THE CHAIRMAN thought the matter somewhat irrelevant after what had taken place respecting the challenge the preceding night.

MR. OWEN continued.—The Rational System of Society would insure justice, for the first time, to man from his birth, and thus reconcile him to his own nature, which, when it shall be accurately known, will be discovered to be most excellent; and this knowledge will put him at once in the way of being made a good and happy being.

2nd. It would insure a sound and rational education of the extraordinary faculties possessed at birth by individuals; that is, under this system every one would have his bodily powers and mental faculties as well cultivated—physically, intellectually, morally, and practically—as the original constitution of the individual will admit; every individual constitution being capable, under a right direction, of most valuable attainments.

3rd. It would supply the means of permanent, beneficial, and pleasurable occupation for every one whose powers and faculties had been well educated, physically and mentally, as stated in the previous sentence on education. Because, by individuals being so educated and employed under the arrangements which this system will form for them, far more wealth will be easily and pleasantly annually produced, than it is possible for human beings, who shall be so trained, educated, and placed, to wish to consume.

4th. It would enable society immediately, easily, and most beneficially for all its members, to form arrangements to lodge, clothe, feed, and rationally amuse every one, in such a manner as should be found by experience to be the best for the permanent health and enjoyment of human nature; society being *now* in possession of a superfluity of means to secure these results to all, from the greatest to the least.

5th. By this education and beneficial occupation, the system would enable society to produce, with ease and pleasure to all its members, a new arrangement of land, buildings, manufactories, trades, and occupations, that would not only beautify and fertilize every part of the country, but carry on education, manufactures, trades, and commerce, far more eco-

nomically than they ever have been, or ever can be, carried on, as long as this old, now worn out, system shall be maintained.

6th. The system would introduce and maintain in sincerity a cordial good feeling between, and a right understanding of each other's true interest among, all, from the oldest to the youngest; and, in one generation, destroy the desire for a longer continuance of the system of individual opposing contending interests,—a system which has produced, and is producing so much poverty, vice, and misery among the human race. The desire for extra individual property, under these new arrangements, will gradually cease, and die a natural death, without any one thereby sustaining injury.

7th. The system now advocated would, through these very superior new arrangements, soon form a truly enlightened, good, useful, and valuable society, every member of which would have his greatest pleasure in promoting the well-being and happiness of every one around him; a society in which all would clearly perceive that the interest of each was truly the best and highest interest of all.

And lastly, this system will enable society to attain all the advantages that can be acquired from the knowledge of the past ages of the world; because the system has been purposely devised to unite all those external circumstances which that experience has proved to be beneficial to man, and to exclude all those that the same experience has proved to be injurious.

The Rational System, therefore, presents a character new in the history of mankind. The present system of society was formed before man knew himself, or had acquired any accurate knowledge of the laws of nature, or made much progress in inventions, improvements and discoveries, compared with those which have been made within the last century; and, especially, before the new and mighty power of steam was discovered, and made to supersede manual labour to the enormous extent to which it has been used, and to the much greater extent to which it may be now applied.

In fact, the Rational System of society, which I have always advocated, and which I now advocate, in opposition to all other human systems, will, upon full and accurate investigation, be found to be the only system that, in practice, can produce peace and good-will to mankind, or create universal charity and kindness, and compel men not only to forgive, but to have compassion for, their enemies, and to endeavour to improve them, and to do them good.

I have now, my friends, in a very brief manner, on this and the former evenings, stated what the Rational System is, and have given a very brief outline of the very important practical results that have arisen and would result from its introduction into use. It will be for the gentlemen who are present, in their cool moments,—and I rejoice to see them taking notes,—calmly and fairly to reflect on the whole of my system; and they will discover that there has been but one spirit throughout the whole of my life; and but one practice; both which have had solely the happiness of the whole human race in view. It is true that those Lectures on Marriage were taken by a short-hand writer, and it is extremely probable that an individual, in the ardent desire to do away with the present evils, and to introduce that which he believes will effect so much good—it is reasonable to suppose that he may have used stronger expressions than might appear to be quite proper (*hear, hear.—time expired*).

MR. BRINDLEY, in making his last speech, said he would proceed with-

out delay to perform his last duty in that important discussion, for it was the most important one he had ever taken part in, for every reason. They had had that night one of the most splendid moral demonstrations which had ever been witnessed in this country. They had had an instance of just, honest, virtuous indignation standing out against the vile aspersions, which, had they allowed to be passed by in silence, would have made it appear as though they merited them. There was not one single charge that had been replied to by Mr. Owen. They had had a deal of beating about the bush, but at length the truth came out. The entire system of Socialism was directly opposed to every existing institution,—to which Mr. Owen assented. Mr. Owen had read from his deliberately composed written papers, and stated that the system was directly opposed to all existing institutions—it was an entirely new scheme of society—it took away all human responsibility—made man the mere creature of his own caprice or passions of his nature—would break up all sacred institutions—declared marriage must be entirely removed from the earth—would sweep away every homestead and fire-side, with which, as Englishmen, we are delighted, and from whence we draw so much of our joys, and would break every parental tie and affection, so that no longer should be heard the sounds of “my wife, my husband, my children *.” Whatever might be the bait held out to entice them to take up a system that would rob them of their homes, their wives, and their families, and which would sweep away all religion, and keep from them all knowledge of a God, they would never embrace it. Where was there a Socialist institution in the country, where ever there was a prayer offered up to Almighty God? Talk of their practice! These were the practical results:—That they met week after week—sabbath after sabbath—month after month—year after year—but in all their meetings God was never invoked—God was never thought of there—God was never acknowledged there—and there never came from human lips one single gratulation or requirement of blessings from Him who had given them reason, endowed them with speech, and given his only Son a living ransom for them, and who surrounded with his providence and was the support of every man’s existence. The Socialist would readily seize on all, grasp all within his reach, and be so ungrateful as never to thank the Hand that gave it, or Him who conferred it upon him. What ought to be their feelings of admiration? What ought to be their feelings of love? Sincere! What ought to be their feelings of prayer and praise to that Being who had given all things in time, and, when time shall cease to be, has promised an eternity of bliss—an eternity which would give them throughout millions and millions of ages, each of millions and millions of years’ duration, and yet still beginning; pleasures, blessings, delights, unlimited, without any fear of being plucked from those abodes, where “eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what was treasured up for the sons of God when they are made partakers of his blessings in an eternal world.” In winding up that debate he wished to tell Mr. Owen, that although he (Mr. B.) had expressed his feelings strongly, yet he could assure him that he entertained towards him the strongest sentiments of regard. Let Mr. Owen not go away with the idea that they had no Christian love in their hearts. They could tell him they hated his principles, and held them to be ac-

* Mr. Brindley appears to have been determined to adhere to all his misrepresentations to the last, notwithstanding the many and clear contradictions and explanations Mr. Owen had given during the discussion.

cursed principles, and fraught with the greatest possible mischief to man. They did not therefore hate the man. The worst design—the worst wish they had for Mr. Owen was this: that when that day, that hour, came when Robert Owen, as well as John Brindley, and every man, woman, and child present, must appear before the judgment-bar of Christ, to give account for deeds done in the body—their worst wishes for him were that he might hear the voice of Christ sending him to the right hand, there to enter into the joys prepared for the just (*loud cheers*). Yes, and they could still thank God that they had left to them untouched the Bible, to teach them the way to heaven. They had still that hallowed book; and he (Mr. Brindley) hoped they would never offer up another prayer to God without taking into that prayer an earnest, heartfelt, strong appeal, that for Christ's sake he would be pleased to have mercy upon, even his opponent, Robert Owen (*applause*). He (Mr. B.) could assure the meeting from the bottom of his heart, that, as he had reflected on the fact of a man at that age, boasting in his very long life, determining to live an unbeliever, he could not look on him without pity; he could not but feel compassion for him (*renewed applause*). Mr. Owen had begged them to read his books and study his principles. He (Mr. Brindley) had done so, and what had been the result? The more he looked at them—the more he became acquainted with them, and looked into the practice of such principles, the more he became convinced of the propriety of religion and the harmony of its views, and the more disgusted was he with the atrocious and abominable doctrines of Socialism. Let him then beg of Mr. Owen to do on his part what he advised them to do. If he (Mr. O.) would study the Bible till he was as intimately acquainted with it as was Mr. Brindley with the New Moral World, and with a desire, as he said, to understand it, and then—for “they who seek shall find, and to those that knock it shall be opened”—when that day came to which reference had been made, he might have reason to bless God that, as the thief on the cross at the eleventh hour, he might hear the voice of the Saviour, “This day thou shalt be with me in paradise” (*cheers*). The speaker directed attention then to the last part of the charge he had to make against Socialism. It was the fraudulent means which, he said, had been used to decoy the unwary into their schemes—the swindling practices of Socialism! He spoke of the community at Tytherley, in Hampshire, which, he said, in twelve months would be all broken up: it was now nothing better than a common farmstead. He (Mr. Brindley) had in his possession certain letters of certain Socialists that had been down there, and from these he proposed to make a few extracts. J. Armitage, of Sheffield, writes: “Dear Brother, do not make yourself the least unhappy, for I will do all in my power for our welfare and happiness; but give me the Old World, with all its competition and tyranny.” Isaac Ironside, Socialist missionary, writes to him in reply, “that he ought to be determined to be comfortable whether he can or not.” Samuel Phillips's letter to Armitage says, “They have willingly and obstinately opposed truth and reason, misrepresented and denounced the best members of the community, pursued a course of the most shameful secrecy, fraud, and deception, and yet it will not do.” Armitage said, in another letter—page 7 of the Tract—“Now, I say, with this before your eyes, besides seeing no probability of getting any more clothes when you have worn out those you have, could any of you who are so hearty in the cause think of stopping at such a place with poverty and starvation staring you in the face? Some of you state we had not tasted enough of

poverty to be contented to stay there. Shame on you, charitable Socialists! if your communities are to be such as an honest and industrious set of men cannot live in. Why, they are not fit for pigs.—Worse land I never saw.”*

At page 8 of the tract, John Armitage says, “Where is the intelligent man that would work hard, and very hard too, and be satisfied with coarse, I may say the worst of food? Some bread, black and bad—bacon bad. We had four pigs killed in April, and they were so badly managed that they were heated, but we were compelled to eat them or nothing; and Mr. Green the governor—I may say the governor, indeed! sent the good bacon to London to be sold; we had to eat the bad! The first day we were there, Mr. Green took the cheese and hid it, and first one thing and then another of this kind, till it was reduced to a worse state than the Bastiles. Mr. Green has been to Salisbury to buy meat more than once, all of inferior description! Things went on for a time in this state, until Green said we must have rigid economy, and then vinegar was called a luxury, and was ordered not to be brought upon the table. It was grievous to see the poor members’ money expended in this way. The excellent library among the steam in a wash-house! Men cannot be made community animals.” It

* The reader is requested to peruse the following letter, received from the same J. Armitage, and contrast it with the statement put forth in the letter published by Mr. Brindley (page 7 of his tract), from which the above extract is made:—

Copy of a Letter from J. Armitage to T. Heywood.

Queenwood, May 17, 1840.

DEAR FRIEND,—I have now found time to write to you, which you may have thought it strange I did not write to you sooner, for I have had no time, for I work late in the evening, and have to go to Broughton to sleep, which is inconvenient for us; my dear wife has now resumed her occupation again, but she will never be so strong again as she used to be. My son is quiet well, and is quiet happy, and myself is quiet well. I have no doubt that Mr. Ironside did mention to you that I wanted a water *Teu Iron* for my *new Shop*; if he has not named it, I trust you will not lose sight of it, he would say that you was the likeliest man to get one of Hatfield’s and Sanderson’s men; if you will give it your serious consideration you will ever oblige me in the Old World, and I will do the utmost of my abillitys to prepare you a place in this world, which I am now trying to establish for you and the rest of my Social brothers and sisters. *We have had at intervals this week a good supply of beautiful rain, which is of several hundred pounds value to the Queenwood Estate; everything on the estate looks very well.** We began to want rain, but we have a member which used to pray for rain every day for three or four days; and, behold, at last Providence supplied our most ardent desires. Yesterday Mr. J. Smith received a letter from Nottingham to say that Brindley was on his way to Tytherley, and behold he was not above two and a half hours of the letter; but did not Mr. Smith meet him very warmly, and he would not admit him; he would suffer him to walk within the gates. He

* See the printed Letter, page 6. Mr. Brindley’s Tract, No. 3, New Series.

was, observed Mr. Brindley, a gregarious system, one where they would all herd together, the same as their brother dogs, brother sheep, and brother swine. At page 11, from Armitage's Diary, kept by him at the community: "The room used as a dining-room and lecture-room was fifteen yards long and six yards wide; the room over it is divided into nine separate apartments for lodging-rooms; the divisions were made of canvas and paper, chiefly married people slept there; others slept in the granary and the old farm-house. Everything was to work well. Some, however, complained that they did more work than others; and the governor, who was to be all kindness, on Midsummer-day, whilst having a discussion with the members, lost all command of his temper, and said he would blow out the brains of any man that insulted him." In conclusion, remarked Mr. Brindley, I have to say, I have now brought before you all I possibly could in three nights with respect to Socialism. Nothing has been contradicted, and I trust every one will go away with the conviction that Socialism has been fairly "tried in the balance, and has been found wanting" (*cheers*). And let this go through the length and breadth of the land, that we have come to the conclusion that Socialism is a blasphemous, immoral, atheistical system; and so far as it had been tried in Hampshire on the unhappy

stood for about an hour with our members outside, telling them to alter their religious principles, or they would be an eternal damnation (after working and doing all the good we can); he was so closely attacked by one or the other of our members, that he wished us good-bye, and that God might prosper us, and change us; he and his friend left us for Winchester. We have some of the most beautiful walks that we could desire; the ——— of the avenue, which I am not able to give to you, no one could ever imagine the beauties of this splendid walk; and above all, we are accompanied with an abundance of nightingales; their sweet songs would glad the heart of some unhappy mortal. *We have the most picturesque views that any one can imagine; our hours of labour is not so long, but we all go for some employment or amusement of our own, such as gardening, &c.** Give my kind regards and sympathy to all enquiring friends, and accept the same yourself.

I remain, your brother Socialist,

(Signed)

J. ARMITAGE.

Excuse bad writing and mistakes; be so kind write an answer; my request. We have got the stuff for community dress, and will shortly have to wear them.

Mr. T. Heywood, at Mr. Harrop's,
53 Earl Street, Sheffield, Yorkshire.

(Postmarks.)

Broughton Penny Post.
Stockbridge, My 18, 1840.
Paid 19th My, 1840.

I, Walter Newall, of 7 Dyer's Buildings, Holborn, make oath and say, that the foregoing is a true copy of the original letter, of which it purports to be a copy.

(Signed)

WALTER NEWALL.

Sworn according to the Scotch form, before me, at the Police Court, Bow Street, this fifth day of January, 1841.

(Signed)

D. JARDINE.

* See printed Letters, page 7.

dupes who had been induced to go there, was a perfect failure. He hoped, he doubted not but that when the Chairman put the question to the meeting, they would record their protest against Socialism in an unanimous manner (*tremendous applause*).

MR. BRINDLEY then read the following bill (which had been printed beforehand, and was then being distributed in the meeting) :—

“ Mr. Brindley will wind up the public discussion on Socialism on Friday night, the 8th Jan. inst., when he will take a review of all that has been done, and introduce the subject in such a way especially that Ladies, who could not with comfort attend the discussion, may be present on that occasion. This meeting will be to celebrate the triumph of Christian Truth and Morality, under God’s blessing, over Infidelity, Atheism, and Sensualism. Of all the discussions Mr. Brindley has been engaged in, this is by far the most important on every ground; and the unparalleled demonstration of sound British Christian feeling, on the part of the people of Bristol, will be a lasting testimony that Englishmen not only value, but are ready to stand up in defence of the blessings that surround their altars and their homes. Women of Bristol, attend this meeting, and hurl back upon these Sensualist Socialists the foul slander, that your affections are to be purchased with ‘money!’ Let every husband bring his wife, every brother his sister or aged mother, and let the expressions of female indignation prove once and for ever that English women never will forget what is due to female virtue. Admission at same prices as during the discussion; tickets to be had at Lavars and Acland, Bridge Street; Richardson, Clare Street; and at the Full Moon, North Street.”

Before Mr. Owen replied, THE CHAIRMAN said he should not feel that he was doing his duty did he not say he thought Mr. Brindley was quite out of order in reading the printed bill before the discussion was concluded. He (the Chairman) begged pardon of the meeting for having made that trivial mistake, in allowing it to be done.

MR. OWEN (*in the midst of cheers, groans, and hisses*) said he had been almost as much amused as they had been. He had heard Mr. Brindley’s very ingenious statements of the community at Tytherley, and he had no doubt but that there might be *some truth* in it *at the time the letter was written*. What was it? A small colony commenced by a number of working men, who thought they knew sufficient to carry forward those measures which required the most experienced individual to guide. When the establishment commenced, he (Mr. Owen) was to have been the governor; but the parties who hastily adopted such premature measures said they wanted a working man’s community, and the working men should conduct it. He told them they would be sure to fail; they had not the experience necessary. They did not believe him, and they commenced, and brought it to the state nearly such as described by Mr. Brindley. They then again applied to him [Mr. Owen] to know what they were to do, and he gave them his advice, and appointed them an individual to superintend it. The advances they had since made had been very great, and he then held in his hand a statement from the community, and the Chairman would see from that that they were as comfortable, as united, and as happy as the same number of individuals could be with such small means as they had to act upon. The last accounts were perfectly satisfactory. He [Mr. Owen] had always told these individuals that what they were going to do was like an individual putting up a boiler, and expecting that to be the whole of a steam-engine. They

had but a very small part of what was necessary to form his system. It would have been better that they should never have commenced the undertaking, than to have commenced with less than 500 persons, and only with the working classes, who, in such affairs, were very inexperienced. Mr. Owen placed in the hands of the Chairman the official report, in which, so far as he could judge, every farthing was accounted for, and all appeared as prosperous as could be expected. He then said he should feel pleasure in presenting Mr. Brindley with a copy of a most authentic document respecting his system—it was the *Dublin Report*, published in 1823, out of which Mr. Owen read a few extracts from his address to the inhabitants of New Lanark on the first opening of his Infant School, delivered on the first of January, 1816. (*The book was received very politely by Mr. Brindley, who returned the compliment by presenting Mr. Owen with a little volume of his own publication, accompanied by an earnest desire that he would make himself acquainted with it.*) “With regard to myself, I have not anything to ask of you which I have not long experienced. I wish you merely to think that I am ardently engaged in the endeavour to benefit you and your children, and, through you and them, to render to mankind at large great and permanent advantages. I ask not for your gratitude, your love, your respect, for on you these do not depend; neither do I seek, nor wish for praise or distinction of any kind, for to these in the least degree I am not entitled, and to me, therefore, they would be of no value. My desire is only to be considered as one of yourselves, as a cotton-spinner going about his daily and necessary avocations. But for you I have other wishes. On this day the opening of the New Institution—the first introduction of the Infant School—a new era opens to our view; let it then commence by a full and sincere dismissal from your minds of every unpleasant feeling which you may entertain towards each other, or any of your fellow-men. When you feel these injurious dispositions beginning—for as you have been trained, and are now circumstanced, they will arise again and again—instantly call to your recollection how the minds of such individuals have been formed, whence have originated all their habits and sentiments; calmly investigate the cause of your differences, and you will learn to do them good. A little perseverance in this simple and easily acquired practice will rapidly prepare the way for you, and every one around you, to be truly happy.” The report then goes on to say, “The effect of such behaviour towards those who earned for Mr. Owen all the comforts, enjoyments, and riches, which he possesses in this life, is, as the reader may well suppose, most singular and unexampled. Whatever comes under the head of good shows itself at ‘New Lanark,’ and whatever merits the name of bad is rapidly disappearing from that happy village. To consult Mr. Owen’s wishes, and do that which will please him, is the principle of action of all the New Lanark inhabitants; and the consequence is that good-will to one another, cleanliness, sobriety, industry, and virtuous feelings, are their established character. The children are uniformly affectionate to one another, and far advanced in their education; and both young and old have seldom cause to say, ‘We have left undone that which we ought to have done.’” That which I am going to read now (continued Mr. Owen), I placed in the hands of the late Lord Liverpool, when he was prime minister of this country, and his reply was, after reading it, “Owen,” he said, “I wish all our opponents would write in the same spirit and the same language as you do. It is true you speak to us, who are the governors at the

head of society, in very strong language, but it is evidently the language of a friend—it is the language of kindness.” And I had exactly the same testimony from the late Archbishop of Canterbury [no, it *wo'nt do*]. I have a short paragraph to read to you [*interruption*]. I think one who has devoted all his life to your cause deserves to be heard; I have never made any difference between high or low, rich or poor. From *Essays on the Formation of Character*: “These *Essays* are intended to explain that which is *true*, not to attack that which is *false*, for to explain that which is true may permanently improve without creating even temporary evil; whereas, to attack that which is false, is often productive of very fatal consequences. The former convinces the judgment when the mind possesses full and deliberate powers of judgment; the latter instantly arouses irritation, and renders the judgment unfit for its office and useless. But why should we *ever* irritate? Do not these principles make it so obvious, and so place it beyond any doubt, that even the present irrational ideas and practices prevalent throughout the world are not to be charged as either a fault or culpable error of the existing generation? The immediate cause of them was the partial ignorance of our forefathers, who, although they acquired some vague disjointed knowledge of the principles on which human character is formed, could not discover the connected chain of those principles, and consequently knew not how to apply them to practice. They taught their children that which they themselves had been taught; and in so doing they acted like their forefathers, who retained the established customs of former generations until better and superior were discovered and made evident to them. The present race of men have also instructed their children as they had been previously instructed, and are equally blameless for any defects their systems contain; and, however erroneous or injurious to instruction those systems may now be proved to be, the principles on which these *Essays* are founded will be misunderstood, and their spirit will be wholly misconceived, if either irritation, or the slightest degree of ill-will shall be generated against those who even tenaciously adhere to the worst parts of that instruction, and support the most pernicious operations of those systems. For such individuals, sects, or parties have been trained from infancy to consider it their duty and interest so to act, and in so acting they merely continue the customs of their predecessors. Let truth, uncombined with error, be placed before them; give them time to examine it and to see that it is in unison with all previously ascertained truths and convictions, and an acknowledgment of it will follow of course. It is weakness itself to require assent *before* conviction; and *afterwards* it will not be withheld. To endeavour to force conviction without convincing the understanding is most unjustifiable and irrational, and must prove injurious to the mental faculties. In the spirit I have described we therefore proceed to the investigation of the subject.” Mr. Owen concluded his address by reading a letter from his son in North America, with a view of placing his character in a favourable light before the meeting, and showing that he could not possibly be the kind of man described by Mr. Brindley, as he was engaged by the American Government, and held very trustworthy and responsible situations under them. (*Time up.*)

THE REV. MR. WOODWARD then proposed the following resolution:—“That Socialism is a system of positive and gross infidelity; that it denies human responsibility, and therefore furnishes its votaries with

an apology for every species of crime ; that, by trampling on the sacred institution of marriage, it has degraded woman from her dignified position as the friend, companion, and solace of man, to the victim of his capricious passions ; and finally, that the principles of Socialism directly tend to annihilate all existing institutions, and tear up the foundations of civilized society."

C. PINNEY, Esq. (Chairman of Mr. Brindley's Committee) seconded the resolution. He felt glad to support the clergy in such a cause as they had undertaken. They would make their voice heard throughout the length and breadth of the land, and he hoped they would raise it louder and louder till it was heard and regarded by the rulers, and measures were taken to put an end to such a detestable system. He felt sincerely grieved for the poor deluded unfortunate people who had taken up that wretched system, for in a few short flitting years they would find that they were responsible for their conduct ; and if they continued their present course, and denied their Saviour, they would suffer eternal fire till time was no more, and then in eternity in millions and millions of years, which had but just commenced when millions had rolled on. Mr. Pinney urged upon the Committee the necessity of preparing parchment, that every man and woman might, as he hoped they would, put their manual to it, and send it to the Queen, to let her know that they would not have such a detestable impious system. He had heard that in their city there was put up a Socialist temple : he hoped that soon it might be converted into a temple for the worship of the living God, whence, instead of those unhallowed blasphemies, a solemn service and hallelujahs might arise to Heaven.

THE CHAIRMAN was about then to put the resolution to the meeting, when a person came forward and wished to move an amendment. His name was understood to be Field, a Socialist, and an inhabitant of Bristol. The audience were apparently determined not to hear Mr. Field, although the Chairman endeavoured to obtain a hearing for him. In the midst of the loudest confusion he began to say that the Rev. Gentleman had said Socialism was infidelity. Now it was not ; for there were Christians of all denominations who professed Socialist principles. The disorder rendering Mr. Field quite inaudible, he withdrew ; silence was then restored.

THE CHAIRMAN having put the resolution to the meeting, which was carried ; the following was also carried :—

"That the cordial thanks of this meeting be presented to Mr. Brindley for his very able, luminous, courageous, and satisfactory exposure of the absurdities and infidelities of Socialism."

MR. BRINDLEY returned thanks, and in doing so, he stated that he wished it to be known to all the world that he came there uninvited and alone. He came as a stranger, but he trusted he was well known then to the good people of the City of Bristol. He was also unpaid. Since he had undertaken that advocacy, he never was the paid agent of any society, or paid or supported by any private individual, and therefore he met Mr. Owen on very unequal terms, for it was well known that he was a Social Missionary, and had his expenses paid out of the common fund*. He was glad to find that he [Mr. B.] held a more

* Mr. Brindley is altogether mistaken. Mr. Owen is not a "Social Missionary;" nor are his expenses paid out of the common fund. But he has expended very many thousands of pounds, honestly earned by his own well-directed industry,—and always expends, to the last shilling, his surplus wealth in promoting the system which Mr. Brindley is making a living of, by opposing and misrepresenting.

honourable and dignified position by virtue of the goodness of the cause he advocated than his opponent, notwithstanding his age and his great experience.

The thanks of the meeting were presented to John Scandrett Harford, Esq., for his conduct in the chair, which he acknowledged briefly, and three times three cheers were given for the termination to which they had brought the proceedings, when it was proposed that they should sing a verse. "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow," was given out, and immediately after singing it, the immense assemblage separated, at about a quarter past one; and such was the interest kept up, that perhaps there were not fifty individuals who left before that late hour, at which the proceedings terminated.

APPENDIX.

DURING the excessive confusion which existed in the meeting at the time of the passing of the resolution moved by the Rev. J. H. Woodward, and seconded by C. Pinney, Esq., Mr. Owen withdrew; having placed his principles before the meeting, which was the sole object he had in view; and considering that, in the excited state of mind of the parties present, no further good could be accomplished. Considering, however, that the resolution proceeded from a total misapprehension of his real views, and is in direct opposition to the whole spirit and tenor of his writings, he has requested that the following declaration may be appended to this report of the Discussion:

I, ROBERT OWEN,

the discoverer, founder, and promulgator, of the Rational System of Society, and of the Rational Religion,

Hereby distinctly declare,

1st. That I am not, nor ever was, an enemy to *all* RELIGION. On the contrary, I repeat now, as I stated in 1817, that "my efforts have been, and will be, to secure the interests of *true religion*, and to establish it permanently throughout the world. I well know, and am competent to prove, that the real enemies to truth, to genuine religion, and to the happiness of mankind, among all people, are those parts of every religion that are in direct and palpable contradiction to existing facts, and which have been added to pure and undefiled religion, either by mistaken, or by weak, designing men. Withdraw these from the Christian system, and then it will become a religion of universal benevolence, competent to make, and it will make, men rational and happy. Let but this change be effected, and I will become a Christian indeed." [See my address delivered at the City of London Tavern, on the 6th of September, 1817, before one of the most numerous and respectable public meetings ever held under cover in the City of London. Extracts from this address will be found in the appendix to my Manifesto published by Effingham Wilson in 1840 (pages 42 and 59); and some copies of the address, reprinted from the London Papers, may still be obtained.] I have also, since that time, given to the world *my own religion*, entitled the "RATIONAL RELIGION;" a religion derived from DEMONSTRABLE TRUTH, as exhibited in the works of the Great Creating Power of the Universe; and which will be found to contain all that is truly valuable for practice in all the religions which have been taught to man*.

* This religion is given in page 17 of this Discussion,

2nd. That I do not, nor ever did, deny the necessity for the *practice of "RESPONSIBILITY" in the present state of society*; on the contrary, I have always maintained *that it must be continued* until the present system shall have been superseded by one just in principle, in unison with nature, and beneficial in all its operations; and until the population shall have had their characters formed, from birth, under such new and superior circumstances, as shall render all human rewards and punishments not only useless, but highly injurious. [See my *Manifesto*, page 45; and the "*Declaration of Principles of the Universal Community Society of Rational Religionists.*"] And so far am I from desiring to "*furnish an apology for every species of crime,*" that the whole object of my life has been to remove from society "every species of crime;" by acquiring an accurate knowledge of those circumstances which produce EVIL to the human race, and of those which produce GOOD; and exerting all my powers to remove the former from society, and to create around it the latter only.

3rd. That I do not, nor ever did, "*trample on the sacred institution of MARRIAGE.*" On the contrary, my object has ever been to render that institution far more sacred; by the introduction of measures:—1st. To give a sound, good, practical, education to every male and female; that their judgment may be well formed; and that they may be enabled to make a judicious choice, when they have to perform this most important act of their lives:—2nd. To remove all pecuniary or other obstacles to marriage at the proper period of life:—3rd. To remove all motives to form mercenary marriages:—4th. To remove from the ceremony of marriage all *promises*, the fulfilment of which does not depend upon the individual—as that of loving for life, while all intelligent persons must know that our feelings are not at our command:—5th. To remove all *compulsory obligation* to the perpetuation of the contract, when it is found that the parties are unsuited to each other, and consequently unhappy as husband and wife. The misery inflicted upon the human race by these causes, and the vice created by them, is incalculable; and my desire is to introduce a *virtuous and happy* state of society. And I would ask, on what principles of justice or common sense is DIVORCE accessible to the wealthy and not to the poor? or why are the comfort and happiness of the latter to be legislated for, and not of the former?—6th. To provide suitable arrangements for the domestic comfort of all married pairs, in which their individual and social feelings shall be duly provided for:—And, 7th. To provide for the well taking-care of the children of parties who may have separated: though, under the Rational System of Society, there will be no artificial obstacles to the permanent happy union of the sexes, and the affections will receive every aid that can be devised to induce them to be permanent; and there can be no doubt that they will be far more durable, and produce far more pleasure and enjoyment to the parties than has ever yet been experienced under the ill-devised and incongruous arrangements that have hitherto existed. Nor do I desire to "*degrade woman from her dignified position, as the friend, companion, and solace of man.*" On the contrary, I desire to see her in truth occupy *that* elevated position, for which she is formed, and to which she is most justly entitled; but from which she is too frequently "*degraded*" by the present vicious institutions of society, to be "*the victim of his capricious passions.*"

4th. I do not, nor ever did, advocate principles "*tending to tear up the foundation of CIVILIZED society.*" On the contrary, my object is to

elevate mankind to the highest possible degree of "civilization;" and I contend, and will maintain, that the principles which I advocate are the only principles upon which that great desideratum can be attained; because I know them to be derived from the Great Source of Truth—the Works of God, as exhibited to man in the operations of Nature; and because upon these principles I have effected, in a population of 2500, at New Lanark, improvements in their character and conduct, which would have been incredible to the world if they had not been witnessed and testified to by thousands. It is upon these principles that I feel confident of ultimately succeeding in the introduction of measures by which *all* of every population shall be elevated to a state of "civilization" never yet attained by man; and shall be permanently maintained in continued progressive improvement, without the slightest tendency to retrogression. And this change—the greatest of all changes in human affairs—shall be effected in peace, charity, and good-will to all who live; gradually, and with such order and foresight, that no individual need be injured by the change, in his pecuniary affairs, for one day; but that, on the contrary, it may be so arranged, as, through the whole of its progress, essentially to benefit all, of every country. After full examination of this System, and of the measures I propose for introducing it, the ignorant and weak-minded only will oppose its universal adoption.

Publisher's Reply to Mr. Owen's Letter, referred to in the Preliminary Correspondence, p. xvi.

Leeds, Jan. 4th, 1841.

DEAR SIR,—I am truly sorry, if the fact be as you state, that in some of the last edition of your "Marriage Lectures" the objectionable passage or quotation from Percy Bysshe Shelley has appeared. If it is so, it can only have arisen thus: when the last edition was printed, some odd sheets of the former edition were in the hands of the binder; and he, in making up the book, has used them among those last printed. Most certainly the sheet containing that quotation ought not to have appeared; and I may take this opportunity of stating that it appeared originally, in the first edition of the work I printed, without your knowledge or consent. Any attempts, therefore, to fix upon *you* the language or sentiments of SHELLEY, are grossly unfair, or dishonest; for the language in question is introduced by a few remarks, explaining how it appears there at all, penned by the editor of the work.

I forward three dozen of the last edition for your use; and you will oblige me by collecting the copies that have the appendix from Shelley, in order to their being put right.

I am, &c.,

JOSEPH HOBSON.

Extract from the "New Moral World," referred to in note at page 53.

"Mr. Fleming entered into a brief history of his life, and called Mrs. Fleming forward to bear testimony to the truth of his statement, that a more affectionate and happy family could not be found anywhere; and that the same affection had always characterized the whole of their married life, a period of fourteen years. Mrs. Fleming was received with cheers, and the explanation with every mark of satisfaction, corroborated as it was, and can be, by all who know Mr. Fleming and his family.

ANNOUNCEMENT.

HOME COLONIZATION SOCIETY.

Whatever may be said or written on the improvement of all classes of society, it is now evident to those who reflect, that that which is necessary to this end is A SOUND, GOOD, PRACTICAL EDUCATION, AND PERMANENT BENEFICIAL EMPLOYMENT to all who require them; in fact, that any other measures are mere palliatives, and can produce only temporary benefits, at an extravagant waste of time, capital, and labour.

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