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FOR THE CHRISTIAN EXAMINER.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

We cannot study the history of God's providential government of mankind, without having the conclusion forced upon us, that the Supreme ruler, not only holds each individual responsible for his own acts, and deals with him accordingly as a moral being, but that he also regards men collectively, as they are grouped together, by his own ordinance, into families, societies and nations, and deals with them thus grouped, as if they constituted one responsible body.

This general law of individual and collective accountability and retribution comprehends a chain of securities for the preservation both of private and public virtue. To piety is annexed peace of conscience and many other personal advantages; to wickedness is annexed remorse and many other personal evils. To the proper observance of domestic discipline and religion is usually annexed the blessing of an enlightened and pious offspring, and that sweet harmony and affection which extracts from the relations of consanguinity their greatest happiness; on the other hand the neglect of domestic discipline and religion entails the curse of a disobedient and ungodly offspring, and that strife and bitterness within the family circle, which is a sure and immediate punishment for the neglect of parental duty. The law whose operation is thus felt in families extends throughout the whole social fabric, and regulates its well-being; for as communities and empires, revere and obey the King of

kingdoms, as they are guided by the immutable principles of rectitude, as they are enlightened, temperate, studious of truth, obedient to law, desirous of the public weal, emulous of moral pre-eminence, they are crowned with prosperity and happiness: while the reverse in national character will universally bring the reverse in national fortune. Nay, it may be asserted that this law of the divine government pervades the whole congeries of nations of which the human family is composed, and that, resulting from it, the sum total of happiness or misery to be found on earth is always proportioned to the virtue or vice with which the moral beings that dwell upon it are chargeable.

This law of moral retribution which has respect to man, not only as an individual, but as a social being, is specially adapted to human relations, and is designed as an enforcement of human duties. It is framed for the express object of promoting the happiness of the whole, by promoting the excellence of each individual member. Were each individual viewed as isolated and solitary, there could be no such thing as domestic or political virtue, for this grows out of the domestic and political relation. God has set mankind in families, and united them into states and kingdoms, to give scope to the social affections; and it is impossible for any man to separate himself from these connections, or fail in the duties resulting from them, without incurring guilt, and endangering, not merely his own, but the public well-being. What reason and revelation teach concerning these duties we are in