

the people, is one of the strongest proofs which experience affords, that virtue was the design of our creation. And we know not how more emphatic demonstration can be given of a virtuous Deity, than when we find society to have been so constructed by His hands, that virtue forms the great alternative on which the secure or lasting prosperity of a commonwealth is hinged—so that for any aggregate of human beings to be right physically and right economically, it is the indispensable, while at the same time the all-effectual condition, that they should be right morally.

11. Nothing can be more illustrative of the character of God, or more decisive of the question, whether His preference is for universal virtue or for universal vice in the world, than to consider the effect of each on the well-being of human society—even that society which He did Himself ordain, and whose mechanism is the contrivance of His own intellect, and the work of His own hands. It may not be easy to explain the origin of that moral derangement into which the species has actually fallen ; but it affords no obscure or uncertain indication of what the species was principally made for, when we picture to ourselves the difference between a commonwealth of vice and a commonwealth of virtue. We have already said enough on the obvious connexion which obtains between the righteousness of a nation and the happiness of its families ; and it were superfluous to dilate on the equally obvious connexion which obtains between a state of general depravity, and a state of general wretchedness and disorder. And the