

**THOUGHTS ON THE
RESPONSIBILITY OF MAN,
WITH A VIEW TO THE
AMELIORATION OF SOCIETY**

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Thoughts on the Responsibility of Man, with a View to the Amelioration of Society by Emma Meek

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EMMA MEEK

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ON THE
RESPONSIBILITY OF MAN,

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THE AMELIORATION OF SOCIETY.

ADDRESSED TO
THE HIGHER AND MIDDLE CLASSES.

BY EMMA MEEK.

To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.
JAMES v. 17.

Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou shalt be no longer steward.
LUKE xvi. 2.



LONDON:
J. HATCHARD AND SON, PICCADILLY.

1838.

190.

TO

THE REVEREND ROBERT MEEK,

RECTOR OF RICHMOND, YORKSHIRE,

(LATE OF BRIXTON DEVERILL, WILTS.)

THIS ESSAY,

BEGUN AND PUBLISHED AT HIS REQUEST,

WITH EARNEST DESIRES FOR HIS USEFULNESS

AS A MINISTER AND A WRITER,

IS DEDICATED,

BY HIS AFFECTIONATE WIFE,

EMMA MEEK.

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THOUGHTS
ON THE
RESPONSIBILITY OF MAN.

CHAPTER I.

NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY.

WE are not called upon in this work to prove that God governs the world. We are allowed to take it for granted that our readers receive the Bible in faith; and we may address each individual as St. Paul addressed his noble auditor, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest." If, then, we believe the prophets, we must believe that the Almighty Ruler of the universe looks down with interest on the concerns of this world which He has made; that the Most High ruleth over men, and to accomplish his mighty purposes, exalteth or depresseth those great princes who, while seeking their own will, have but subserved the

designs of Omnipotence. The Jewish people of old were chosen to be the depositaries of revelation, the guardians of truth:—they prospered so long as they fulfilled these high trusts; they were brought low when they neglected them. "Assyria, the rod of mine anger," was, as the Lord had threatened, raised up to humble them; and it would be easy, in reviewing the history of this distinguished nation, to point out how exactly their prosperity was proportioned to the faithfulness with which they fulfilled their high destiny, and how continually their lapses into that idolatry which they were exalted to destroy, were visited with the heaviest punishments.

The distribution of talents to nations, as well as to individuals, is diverse; but the responsibility which attaches to each is in exact proportion to the advantages received. The whole tenor of gospel teaching goes to prove the solemn fact, that "to whomsoever much is given, of him much will be required." The woes of Chorazin are declared to be greater than those of Tyre, because she had enjoyed the advantages of Christ's teaching and miracles, without profiting by them: and, even the doom of guilty

Sodom is pronounced less dreadful than that of Capernaum, which had been exalted to heaven in the enjoyment of gospel privileges, but should be thrust down to hell for her neglect of them. But, if the favours bestowed on these eastern cities were great, how much greater are the favours bestowed on Christian England: if their responsibility was heavy, how much heavier is our own? We have witnessed their punishment, let us take warning by their example; and that we may become sensible of our responsibility, let us take a survey of our privileges. For no worthiness of ours, but by the undeserved mercy of God, have we been distinguished as a nation; reared indeed, and educated amid the storms of adversity and the conflicts of faction; but only rendered by these trials, like our native oak, more vigorous and more firm. The moral and intellectual darkness, which during the middle ages wrapt Europe in its shade, extended to our western isle, but was not unbroken by some brilliant lights, and we were among the first to hail with joy the dawning of that glorious day, when the Reformation, bursting like the sun from the clouds of night, threw its brilliant and startling rays over the Continent, and lighted up