

as, that affliction
and that excessive
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ear up and endure
the sufferer the
natural laws, by
occasioned, seeing
without being con-
laws to be as they
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ould be otherwise?
and what can infi-
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believed! Let a
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read ;

IV.

TWO SIDES OF A QUESTION, OR RIGHTEOUS OVER- MUCH, AND OVER-MUCH WICKED.

"All things have I seen in the days of my vanity : there is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that prolongeth his life in his wickedness. Be not righteous over-much; neither make thyself over-wise : why shouldest thou destroy thyself? Be not over-much wicked, neither be thou foolish : why shouldest thou die before thy time? It is good that thou shouldest take hold of this; yea, also from this withdraw not thine hand: for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all."—ECCLES. vii. 15-18.

It is a circumstance inseparable from a probationary state like the present, that the degree of outward prosperity which falls to a man's lot does not bear any thing like an exact and invariable correspondence to his character. A time is coming when every one shall receive according to his deeds; but the exact apportionment of recompense, whether it be of glory on the one hand or of shame on the other, is reserved for a future life. Here, for many reasons,—to exercise faith, to teach patience, to subdue corruptions, to wean the heart from sensible things, and to attract it to those which are invisible,—the righteous are often permitted to lie under a load of affliction, while the wicked are allowed to prosper. It could not well be otherwise, in a world where persons of all characters are mixed together, left free agents, and placed under laws which,