

both conformists to prelacy, but who had herself imbibed better principles, along with an old woman of sixty-three, who had been guilty of the same crime (that of thinking and acting for herself in matters of religion, and refusing to hear the ungodly curates), were tied to the stakes, and left to be drowned on the advance of the sea. Margaret's relations used all their persuasions to get her to abjure what she considered the truth, by doing which, even at the last hour, she might have saved her life. The old woman being farthest out was drowned in her sight; and still she remained firm. At last the advancing waters covered her too; but ere the vital spark was gone, she was drawn up till she recovered the power of speech, and offered her life if she would yet take the oath her persecutors required. I doubt not those around, who had not her strong religious convictions, thought it strange she should hesitate. I doubt not that their sentiments, if not their words, were, "Be not righteous over-much, neither make thyself over-wise; why shouldst thou destroy thyself?" But integrity was dearer to her than life, and therefore she replied,—“I will not; I am one of Christ's children; let me go:” and the waters covered her for ever.

III. The Preacher, however, proceeds to intimate that, while the administration of God's moral government here is unquestionably such as to leave room for the existence of the argument on the side of iniquity, to which I have referred, there is AN OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE QUESTION. Verse 17,—“*Be not over-much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldst thou die before thy time?*” In other words, religion may have its temporal disadvantages, but in how much more awful a sense is this true of irreligion! Persons are very easily induced to think it a hardship to make the sacrifices which a strict adherence to the commandments of God would entail; but it would be