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"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem! let my right hand forget its cunning."—Ps. 137, v. 5.

SERMON,

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"But the righteous hath hope in his death."—PROVERBS XIV. 32, last clause.

THE Book of Proverbs is distinguished both by the extent and variety of the moral instructions which it contains. Almost every verse sets forth the declaration of some important truth relative to the subject of Wisdom, contrasted with its opposite, Folly, suggesting an argument to recommend the one or to dissuade from the other. The verse where the text lies presents a very remarkable instance of this. The wicked is there said to be "driven away in his wickedness." He dies as he had lived, in the practice of wickedness; and he does not retire willingly, but is driven away, like an exile, into banishment. Having made the world his hope, he grasps it with eagerness and resigns it with reluctance, and from necessity. Had religion nothing else to recommend it, the comfort which it secures in the hour of death would alone render the wicked inexcusable. "The latter end of the perfect man is peace." "The righteous hath hope in his death." The text, in the first place, describes a necessary character; and, in the second place, attached to it is a blessed privilege.

I. *The character of the righteous man claims our first attention.* This is not a natural, but an acquired character. The Word of God has expressly affirmed, and universal experience has clearly demonstra-

ted, that "there is none righteous, no, not one. All have gone aside; they have together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." But God has, in His goodness, set apart a people for Himself. They are, in many respects, different from each other. But one thing is common to all, and this thing is peculiar to all of them: they are all righteous. Many distinguished examples have been preserved in the sacred record. Abel, the first martyr, was righteous; so was Enoch, who walked with his God; likewise Noah, Job, Abraham, and Lot, with Zacharias and his wife, all of whom obtained testimony that they were righteous. But to be more particular:

1st. We observe, that *the Righteous represents a justified person.* "Abraham believed God, and his faith was imputed unto him for righteousness." There is, therefore, the righteousness of faith, as well as the righteousness of works. The Apostle has called it the righteousness of God by faith. It is a righteousness wrought out in the person and by the obedience of Him "who is God manifest in the flesh, and which is unto and upon all them that believe, who are justified from all things; as by the offence of one, that is, of the first Adam, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One, that is, of Christ, the second Adam, many, even all who believe in Him, are made righteous, having the righteousness of the law fulfilled in them, being accepted in the Beloved, and made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." In this way, the sinner becomes perfectly righteous through righteousness imputed or accounted his, and by faith on his part re-