

"Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed : thou oughtest, therefore, to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take, therefore, the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance : but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Our Bibles, my Brethren ! do not speak in palliating terms of the careless and supine, as if God would regard their slothfulness as a small and insignificant offence, but they denounce against them the most tremendous threatnings, and at the same time hold up to our view a bright assemblage of earnest and zealous contenders for the crown of salvation, and say to us, these are your models, these are your examples ; be "followers of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

Some such characters have always been found within the pale of God's church. In the darkness of Patriarchal ages, such persons lived and shone forth as lights amidst the surrounding gloom. Under the Jewish economy their numbers were increased, and the beauty of holiness which adorned their lives wore a more radiant lustre. Under the Gospel their numbers are greater still ; there are now, blessed be God ! a vast multitude of almost "every nation, kindred, tongue and people," who are united by the common principle of love to Christ, and who can say with truth, as the Apostle did, "the life which we now live in the flesh, we live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave himself for us."*

* Gal. 2. 20.