

lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* I know it has become fashionable with many, to deride the idea of future punishment. But is it possible that the mere opinion of those, who have an interest in disbelieving this doctrine, can efface it from the records of inspiration? Must God cease to be just, because we choose to be wicked? Will he neglect to punish our sins, because we have forgotten their commission? Such thoughts as these are blasphemous and impious to the last degree. Rest assured, my brethren, that there is a time when divine forbearance, though long continued, will assuredly come to an end. You cannot weary God's patience, and finally prosper. You cannot follow the paths of iniquity, and pass unpunished. Though you may now affect to despise the day of retribution, and say to your souls, Eat, drink, and be merry, the axe may already be laid to the root of the tree, to cut you down as cumberers of the ground. The sentence of heaven may have already been issued; this year thou shalt die. A mortal disease contracted perhaps by your own irregularities, may now lurk in your vitals, which shall soon reduce your feeble body to a lifeless corpse, and dismiss your immortal spirit into the unseen world. And the longer the storm has been gathering the heavier it will fall. The longer the sword has been whetting the sharper it will cut, and the deeper it will wound. "The servant which knoweth his Lord's will, and prepareth not himself, neither doth according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes." The exercise of the divine patience and forbearance towards us, if it does not soften our hearts, will certainly aggravate our guilt and increase our punishment. "Because I have purged thee," saith the prophet Ezekiel, "and thou wast not purged,

* Matt. xxiv. 42—51.