

unaccomplished prophecies, the darkness which veils particular objects, and hides from us exact dates and minute details, is assuredly not intended to conceal the great outline of God's future dealings with mankind. It is perfectly clear that while yet the generations of men are alive upon this earth, the day of the Lord, that day which is great and very terrible, will come; but so come, as a thief in the night, so silently, so unexpectedly, so fearfully. Upon that day will be accomplished the most dreadful retribution upon the unbelieving world. When these things shall begin to come to pass, there will be, as at all other periods, a large proportion of weak and wavering believers, neither prepared to take up their cross and follow the Lord, nor willing to renounce their hope of sharing in His final triumph; neither good soldiers of Jesus Christ, nor yet open deserters from His standard to the part of the rebellious world.

To such feeble and still not abandoned professors there are many merciful calls interspersed throughout those prophetic Scriptures, which denounce the terrible wrath of the Almighty against the enemies of His kingdom. More touching yet, perhaps, and more powerful, are the visible and terrible judgments with which He sometimes visits the earth, in compassion to weak man, who is so much more apt to walk by sight than by faith. We are, it is true, often disposed to endue with an exaggerated importance the occurrences of our own times, and the events which fall under our own observation. But on the other hand, it is at least equally certain, that the impression which these events produce upon our hearts and lives, is often far too slight and transitory. We are excited beyond the bounds of moderation for a moment; we fall back into the routine of worldly cares and worldly pleasures, and into the drowsiness of practical infidelity, as soon as the excitement is passed. Yet who can look back upon the occurrences of the past year, and not read in them the voice of God, calling us to repentance? The appalling loss of life through accidents (as men call them), by sea and by land, whereby thousands, without a moment's warning, have been hurried into eternity; the dread pestilence which stalked over the earth, and carried off its countless victims, and snatched the young, and the strong, and the fair from the embrace of loving friends;—do not, brethren, do not call these things chance; do not blaspheme God, by either doubting His power to restrain