

still been travelling westward over the countries of the earth and has fallen with almost unexampled severity among ourselves, be found firm and faithful at our post; and warn those under our charge to "hear the rod * and who hath appointed it,"—to heed the voice from Heaven which speaks to them in this appalling affliction.—"Be ye ready also," it solemnly proclaims to us all. And when we shall be enabled to say, *one woe is past*—who knows that there may not be cause to add, *behold there come more woes quickly*.

It is not, indeed, for us to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power,—but who knows that this pestilence, coupled as it has been already with other signs alike presageful in former instances, of mighty change and desolation,—with wars and rumours of wars, commotion in divers countries,—the powers ordained by Heaven shaken upon their thrones,—distress of nations with perplexity,—men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth,—who knows that thus coupled, it may not be the prelude to other and yet sorer visitations? Who knows that convulsions are not at hand which will shake the earth, as it were, to her centre,—pangs perhaps marking the birth of future blessings to mankind, but designed while they last, as a searching test of the constancy of our service, and ordained to "try every man's work of what sort it is?"

My brethren, it was this kind of language which I, (among others,) was taught to hold, at the distance of time which I have mentioned, by a perusal of the lessons then presented in the course, character and tendency of earthly events. And if these twenty and odd years have passed away, and nothing has yet occurred visibly to disturb the condition or affect the prospects of the Church, but things to which the world may have often witnessed a parallel before,—shall we therefore, with reference to the coming of the kingdom of God with power, be prompted to borrow the language of the unbelievers described by the prophet, that say : *Let Him make speed and hasten His work that we may see it, and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come that we may know it?* or that of the *scoffers of the last days*, marked out by an Apostle, who asked : *Where is the promise of His coming for.... all things continue as they were?* No—rather shall we remember the prolonged notes of prelude to the coming of our Saviour Christ in the flesh,—the slowly developed yet strongly marked preparation of the train of affairs upon earth, for the disclosure of that *mystery* which, *from the beginning of the world had been hid in God*—the gradually awakened expectation of mankind, by a kind of afflatus from above, earnestly

* Mic. vi. 9. This rather unusual figure of speech will remind the classical scholar of an expression used by Virgil,

Neque audit currus habenas.—Georg. 1. 514.