

who are in the midst of Jerusalem to depart out. And our Redeemer warns them in the words of my text to pray that their flight may not be in the winter, or on the Sabbath, when escape would be either impossible or against the law; the Jews on that day not being allowed by the law to travel more than one mile from the city.

That generation did not pass until all these things were fulfilled. In seventy years after the death of Christ the famous thundering legion encamped in the garden of Gethsemani and poured destruction into the devoted city. My brethren, the time is fast coming for all and each of us: no one in this generation can pass away without witnessing, in some sense, the signals which are written of the last days of Jerusalem; and of the last day which shall herald in the final judgment. We shall all in our turns be encompassed by the army of our spiritual enemies, and witness the sad extremities of the siege of death. For us too the stars shall fall from heaven, and the moon will not give her light, and through the shades of death our fading vision may discover the sign of the Son of Man as he advances with much power and majesty to judge us. That your flight may not be in the winter when the avenues of escape are blocked up, or on the Sabbath under circumstances when the law of God renders salvation perilous in the extreme, let us meditate upon the condition of a being upon whom the hour of death advances, and who has made no preparation for his safety.

I describe not then the child of ideal existence—I take human nature as it is; I take the cases as they occur in the ordinary pathways of my ministry. I enter the chamber of one who has, in the pursuit of the riches, pleasures, or occupations of this world, neglected his soul's salvation. What are his reflections when the hour of death approaches? It is announced to some sufferer, on his weary bed, that the physician has no longer hopes of him; it is, perhaps, but darkly insinuated to him by a sorrowing family; they have retired for the night; the door is closed, and he is left in awful communion with his God. "They tell me I am to die; the physician ought to know; and, truly, I must have been infatuated not to have known it before. I shall die in a few days—perhaps sooner; and how am I prepared? My God! from infancy I knew my destiny, in the words of Ignatius, 'unum de duobus: aut in æternum gaudere cum sanctis, aut in æternum cruciari cum impiis;' one of the two, either to rejoice for ever with the saints, or to be tortured for ever with the impious. Merciful heavens! This is an awful alternative, but I cannot escape it. I must weigh my chances now; would I had done so sooner. I go back to the hours of youth. They were good enough. O that all were such. I was brought up well; I knew the great

truths of Christianity; I never doubted of the truth of my religion, still less do I doubt it now. How happy were those days, when my soul knew God, and loved him. How naturally did every instinct lead me to God, when, on the mountain-side or vallies of my infancy, I adored Him as His Majesty shone in the worlds above me, or as His praises came sounding in upon the mighty billows of the deep. Happy, happy days were those when my father and mother blessed me—when I never forgot my prayers—when I used to go to communion and feel that peace which the world has never since given, nor could give. My God, and will those days count for me—intercede for me hereafter; or do they not rather serve to make the clouds of my subsequent ingratitude darker and darker still—so sad a sunset from so bright a rising? O terrible iniquity, to have blasted so fair a promise! O cruel ingratitude, to have profligated so great blessings."

Here, my brethren, the sufferer paused; for his bitter tears fell in agony over the recollections of departed virtue. He thought how his father and mother in heaven wept over his fall, and he thought, while his frame shook convulsively, shall I ever meet them there?

After a pause, he continued: "Here ended paradise, and now comes earth with its sorrow, sin, and death. I well remember how, in defiance of the admonitions of heaven and loud remonstrances of my conscience, I first dared to sin against the Creator, and lose my innocence. Sad as were my subsequent falls, this was the darkest, blackest. Nature appeared to disown me; and as I stood in the silent sanctuaries of my God I felt as the leader of the rebel angels, when he took possession of his dark domain, and bitterly gazed on the realms which he had lost. My companions came around me—rallied me; the darker emissaries of hell were not wanted. They said, in the language of the gospel:—'Behold, Christ is here.' The anti-christ of pleasure was before me; I forgot the admonition—'Go ye not out.' I again went out, ventured into temptation, sought the danger, and, of course, perished. My confessor told me what this would lead to: he charged me strongly, he invited, and he prayed. But I disregarded him—I began to dislike him—I have never been to him since, and among the misfortunes of my life I count this the greatest, that I rejected the advice of the physician, the kindness of this friend, the pardon which that ambassador was mercifully commissioned to dispense. Many and many a year has rolled over since this occurred, and what during that period did I do for my soul's salvation? I know that soon the scales of the sanctuary will be produced, and that, according to the Scripture, I shall receive the reward of my works, whether they be