

LOST OPPORTUNITIES.

Suppose, during the last twenty years only, we, with our connections, had put forth, by increased unity, love, and self-denial, twice the measure of energy which we have employed; are we not authorised to assume that, at the lowest, twice the quantity of good would have been accomplished? Most of that good, however, cannot now be done. Multitudes of those who should have been the objects of our attention, have passed away from the sphere of exertion and of prayer. They lived, but are dead. They died in ignorance—we might have instructed them; without hope—we might have unfolded the heavenly state to them; without Christ—we might have pointed them to "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." And others also are dying! Now, while I speak—while you listen—they are dying! See! how they pass along, melancholy, sad, and speechless, sinking down into endless night! Oh, if they would only stay till we could yet make one attempt for their salvation! No; they would, but cannot, stay. They are gone—they are gone! We shall meet them next in judgment!

Then Judge of all! how shall we meet them?—how shall we meet thee, then? We are verily guilty concerning our brother! If thou shouldst be strict to mark iniquity, O Lord, who could stand?

Brethren, the crisis of the world is come! Are we prepared for it? Can we resign all the interests of an earthly life, and identify ourselves with the will of God and spiritual excellence? Can we stand in the whirlwind, talk with the thunder, and look calmly on heaven, when God looks forth in indignation on a guilty world? Are we prepared for the scenes of that dreadful day, for the events of that dread hour when the plagues of heaven shall fall on the wicked, and the earth shall be filled with wailing and blasphemy? Are we prepared to sympathise with man, and are we ready to resign our leisure and our self-indulgence, in order that we may promote his eternal welfare, and thus for the future guard against "lost opportunities?" This is to act the Christian's part.

GOING ON IN SIN.

A man going on in sin is like a man going down a hill, every step he takes makes his ascent more difficult, and his return less likely. Sin is like a fire. If you allow a fire to burn for a day, do you think it will be as likely to be quenched *then* as it is *now*?—Sin is like a river, the farther from the fountainhead, the mightier becomes its power, and the more resistless its career. It is like a tree, the longer it grows, it strikes its

roots the deeper, and lifts its head the higher till the sapling that might be bent by an infant's arm, laughs at the hurricane, and defies the storm.

You cannot continue in sin without the heart growing harder, and the conscience becoming more seared, and the distance between God and you daily growing greater. And the sinner goes down into hell as a rock loosened from its summit goes down a hill,—the longer it rolls, it bounds and dashes and whirls along with more rapid and resistless force.

How tender is conscience in childhood, for instance, compared with that of the grey-headed sinner! We have seen a child with few sins on its head, and few spots on its heart, tremble at the thought of eternity; and we have stood by the deathbed of the grey-haired man, and we have thundered in his ears the terrors of the law, and held before his eye the light of Calvary; and never a tear ran down his furrowed cheeks, nor muttered prayer moved the lips whose curses were recorded in the book of judgment.

I know there is no heart so hard but God can break it, and there is no man so far gone in sin but God can bring him back. But, as was once said to a man who asked, when speaking of the perseverance of the saints, "how long may I sin, and yet be saved?"—"Don't try the experiment." It is a dangerous experiment. We know God's patience to be *lasting*, but it is not *everlasting*. O! be prevailed on to "seek the Lord while he may be found, to call upon him while he is nigh."—*Dr. Guthrie.*

SINGING IN CHURCH.—At a soiree in Cupar Angus, Dr. Guthrie, in denouncing those who sit mute in church during singing, said—"People seem to forget that of all parts of this earthly worship the singing is the only part we shall take with us to heaven. There will be no preaching there; there will be no praying there; but there the sound of God's praise is never to cease. For myself, I know nothing more revolting than to see a fine lady sit down at a piano on a fine evening, and warble out the finest music, who, when she comes to the house of God, sits mute there, as if God's praises were not worthy of being sung!"—[Gospel Messenger.]

A GOOD CONSCIENCE.—No bed so soft no flowers so sweet, so florid, and delicious as a good conscience. It is here a perpetual comfort, it will be hereafter an eternal crown.—*Jeremy Taylor.*