

LIVING PREACHERS.

SEEKING AND FINDING.*

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"Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon him while He is near."—Isaiah lv. 6.

In this chapter, as in many others, there is exhibited both the Divine and the human side of the plan of salvation. On the one hand we have presented the great long-suffering and willingness of the Almighty to pardon; and on the other, the obligation that rests upon every sinner to avail himself of the pardon that is offered, and the means by which it may be obtained. Whilst there are many things obscure to our understanding connected with the work of redemption, and which must necessarily remain so in our present state, there is nothing dark or uncertain as to our duty. We may not be able to explain God's sovereignty and man's free agency; how the Spirit operates and how we become co-workers with the Spirit in the matter of conversion; but this much is abundantly manifest, that man's ability to repent is never once called in question. Therefore the prophet no sooner describes the infinite provision made for the wants of a dying world, than he calls upon men to drink of living waters. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near."

Let us at present consider the human side of the plan of redemption, and the call addressed to men to repent and accept of offered mercy.

Seek—call; He may be found; He is near.

I.—*The exhortation.* "Seek." "Call."

We need hardly explain what is meant by seeking the Lord. It is again and again used in Scripture to denote an earnest desire after forgiveness and peace through the death of Christ. It is said of the good King Josiah that "while he was yet young he began to seek after the God of David his father,"—implying singleness of purpose and aim; one object paramount to all others claimed and absorbed his attention. In striking contrast with the conduct of his predecessors, whose lives were stained with gross licentiousness, he sought to mould his public and private life in conformity with the will of heaven. The claims of God were of more importance in his estimation than the honours of his kingdom. David the Psalmist also uses similar language. "With my whole heart have I sought thee," intimating that above and beyond all else God was the great object of his desire.

The text does not imply that the object of search is afar off or difficult to be found, or that he tantalizes and evades the sinner by repeated disappointments; but that wherever there is a sense of sin and human weakness, there will be a corresponding desire for the Saviour's presence, and active efforts to secure all those blessings that his coming brings.

The seeking of the Lord is a personal act. In one sense we seek the Lord in the sanctuary, in the prayer meeting and at the family altar. But seeking the Lord in the true sense of the word means an outgoing of the

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