

"CALL YE UPON HIM."

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(ISAIAH lv. 6.)

We ought to be fully persuaded of these two things,—viz., that the Saviour is always "near," and that He is "waiting." The former is asserted in this very clause, the latter in chap. xxx. 18. If so, we are taught to "call" upon One both near at hand and attentive to our voice, for He is waiting to hear. We do not need to exert ourselves in the vehement effort to stop One going away, to bring toward us One at a distance, to arrest and turn round One who was not minding us or looking our way. On the contrary, He is near, and He is in the attitude of waiting for us. His "Call ye upon Him," tells us that He wishes you to avail yourself of His nearness. "Call;" "Call" on Him.

But what is this "Call?" It is not a long time spent in prayer. It is not a series of prayer. It is not what we call earnest or vehement prayer. Indeed, strictly speaking, it is not prayer at all, in the usual sense. What is it, then?

It is the soul's appeal to the Saviour for acceptance. *It is the sinner pleading what he sees in the Saviour.* The drowning man, who perceives on the shore one able to help and rescue him, presents his case to the man on the shore by calling on him for help. But he puts no stress on the manner, or number, or reiteration of his cries—his expectation lies in the man's kindness and compassion. So it is with the sinner. Out of the many waters of sin and guilt, he, as one needing deliverance, and utterly helpless, calls on the Saviour, whom he now discovers to be such a one as he needs.

The call is drawn forth by "apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ," by what is revealed concerning Christ. He turns his thoughts to that quarter now, because in no other can he discern what meets his sad case; whereas in Jesus he has been enabled to see the law fulfilled and the law's penalty borne, and all this held out to the sinner's acceptance. His call, therefore, is simply a decided recognition of the Saviour, as having all this provision for sinners; an appeal to Him

on that ground; the presenting of a plea for pardon and acceptance, founded entirely on the merits of Him to whom the sinner speaks.

Look on His life-obedience, and His pouring out of His soul unto death; look on it all as provision made for the guilty soul's approach to God; and, resting your eye on all this, "Call." Like the dying thief, cry, if you choose, "Lord, remember me." Be as Esther; she first made sure that the king was well-inclined toward her, by watching the stretching forth of the golden sceptre, and then she told her petition and request, asking her own life and the life of all her people. It is even thus you are to act. You read in the Word the sure testimony,—"We have a Great High Priest, who is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God; let us, therefore, come boldly, that we may obtain mercy," (Heb. iv.) You see in these words the stretching out of the golden sceptre of the King of kings; and, emboldened hereby, you "Call." You ask, "Save me." And if you ask on grounds like these, He cannot say Nay. If this be your pleading, His reply forthwith is, "Yea, Amen."

Yet, more simply still; the Lord, by the offered sacrifice, by the blood that speaketh peace, calls on you. He stands pointing to that blood, and calling on you, "Sinner wilt thou present this as thy plea to the Judge and be pardoned Thy part is to respond, "Yea, Lord." This is real calling, for this is thy heart's expression of its desire to be saved in this only way.

And, after all, we have this other remark to offer, You are to put the emphasis of the clause on "the Lord." The Prophet is summoning us away from other objects in which we seek rest, and happiness, and satisfaction; and he had shewn us the Lord of whom he speaks, as "waters" to the thirsty. He had told us of His coming into our flesh, doing our work, dying our death, all for our sakes; and here, with his finger still pointing to that object, he addresses us,—"Call ye upon Him." Try no other; apply to no other; beg of no other. Leave off your constant application to the creature and to self. Come now and "Call on Him." In the first moment of thy reasoning with Him, there shall be