

"SEEK YE THE LORD WHILE HE MAY BE FOUND."

A SERMON BY THE REV. THOMAS GUTHRIE, D. D.*

"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found."—ISAIAH IV. 6.

It may be said that many, at least some people, seek the Lord long before they find him, and some people find him who never sought him. Saul sought his father's asses, and he found a crown. Borne on his couch to Jesus, a man sought cure of his palsy, and he got the pardon of his sins. Perched among the branches of the leafy sycamore, the little publican sought a sight of the despised Nazarene, whose name filled the whole land; he climbed the tree to gratify his curiosity, and came down from the tree to have his house saved.

Now, as it was then, so it is still.—People sometimes find what they never sought; and in the church to which they come—from early custom, to gain a decent church-going name, to gratify, it may be, an idle curiosity, to see, like Zaccheus, or to be seen, like others—they find what they never sought and never expected, they find a Saviour! In the temple, where the anxious mother sought a son, she embraced her son—and in the temple, where some careless sinner never sought a Saviour, he finds one; or rather, I would speak more correctly were I to say, he is found of a Saviour, and the word is fulfilled, "I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not." Were it not for this, we would often come with great discouragement to the pulpit; and it is only from the knowledge that such cases have happened, and do still happen, that we take courage to preach to the most unwilling and most unpromising audience. It is on this ground, so to speak, that I take my stand, and lift up my voice and preach in a valley of dry bones; because I know, though the bones be dry, and very dry, God can give them life! It may be true, some dream not of conversion, while others care not; and I can imagine some coming to the house of God, actually determined not to be converted. Ah! if God were to determine otherwise, your determination,

poor sinner, would soon give way. He could roll you and huddle you in the dust, and kindle within your heart such a hell, that you would give the world for a cup of the water of life to quench it. He could make you look on your best beloved sins with such an eye that they would appear to you like a serpent, to be cast from you with horror. What are all the walls of sin before the power of God? Walls stronger than those of Jericho he could cast down and strew in the dust! And hearts harder than stone he could melt like ice before the fire! But I pray you to bear in mind that the promise is given to the seeker. I say the promise. God can find those who do not seek him; but God does not promise to be found of any but those who do. And I pray you to bear in mind, also, that a more cheering, comforting, encouraging truth does not exist than this, that, while it is a matter of black uncertainty if any man in this assembly who does not seek God shall ever find him, it is a matter of Bible certainty, and blessed certainty, that there is not a man now present but if he seeks God, he shall find him.

There are just two qualifications of this truth (if, indeed, they can be called qualifications) to which we pray your attention. The first of these we shall simply touch—the last we shall for a little dwell on.

We say there is no man but shall find God if he does seek him, provided, in the first place, that he seeks him in a right way; and in the second place, that he seeks him in a right season.

Now, first, as to the way. Let there be no mistake as to the way. And we will tell you the reason why. It lies in this. It matters little if I mistake my way to this city, because if I mistake the way by one road, I can reach it by another; but it matters a great deal if I mistake my way to heaven, because there is but one way by which I can reach it. To heaven there is no road but one. We say, there