

Under the old dispensation we have a striking account of the *ancient mode of preaching*. In the eighth chapter of Nehemiah, we read how Ezra "standing in the streets on a pulpit of wood which they had made for the purpose, read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." Good old Mathew Henry remarks on this passage, "Sacrifices were to be offered only at the door of the Temple, but praying and praising, and preaching, were and are sacrifices of religion as acceptably performed in one place as in another." Are we ambassadors for Christ? then our commission is, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature:" wherever there is an unsaved sinner, it is our duty to go, and make known the glad tidings of salvation. In the parable of the great supper, the Lord Jesus Christ enjoins open-air preaching by a *direct command*, "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in that my house may be filled." And again we read, "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets; she crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words."

At the time of the great persecution in Jerusalem, "the disciples went *everywhere* preaching the word." We need more of the spirit of the early disciples of Christ, who braved every danger and were ready to lay down their lives for the sake of Jesus, and the salvation of souls. God has greatly owned the faithful preaching of the Gospel, in the streets, lanes, highways and hedges. We have evidence to this effect, in the history of the Church, in every age. Who has not either read or heard of its success in modern times? George Whitfield was abundant in labours in the open-air. In Great Britain and Ireland, as well as in America, he preached to thousands of earnest listeners. In Scotland, he addressed as many as 30,000 people, and multitudes were awakened and brought to the Saviour through his instrumentality. He had to suffer persecution, as those will have to do more or less, who thus take up the cross. Some went so far as to say that "*the wark at Cambuslang was a wark o' the devil*." The Erskines and their adherents appointed a *public fast*, to humble themselves, among other things, for his being received in Scotland, and for the *delusion*, as they termed it, at Cambuslang, and other places, and all that, as he has testified himself, because he would not consent to preach *only* for them. Whitfield, in writing to a friend in regard to his first visit to Edinburgh, said, "I preach twice daily, and expound at private houses at night; and am employed in speaking to souls under distress a great part of the day. Every morning I have a constant *levee of wounded souls*. I have a lecture in the *fields*, attended not only by the *common people*, but persons of *great rank*."

Wesley, Fletcher and the Haldanes were greatly blessed in the open-air. Dr. Macdonald, "the apostle of the Highlands," preached to many thousands of people, sometimes ten and fifteen thousand people gathered to hear the Gospel at his lips, and there are, not a few still alive, who can testify that it was under his preaching they were brought to Christ.

Last year Mr. Moody and others preached in Glasgow and Aberdeen, to from 20,000 to 30,000 people. Intelligence of those meetings, and the success attending them, has been conveyed from time to time in the columns of the *Canadian Independent*.

It is frequently urged that there is no necessity now, for open-air preaching, as there are plenty of churches and chapels. Let us thank God that it is so, but do all the people attend church, and read their Bibles?

If the people will not go to hear the word preached, are we to let them perish? Surely not; we have a solemn duty to discharge, something to give the people that will benefit them through time and eternity. Are the masses of ungodly, unconverted people being brought to the Saviour? Are the people flocking to Christ, as doves to their windows? We do thank God for the measure of success that has attended the preaching of the gospel during these precious days of blessing, we have enjoyed, but alas! alas! thousands are perishing, going down to an un-