

WINNING SOULS FOR CHRIST.

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AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED TO THE MEMBERS AND FRIENDS
OF THE

OPEN-AIR MISSION,

AT THE

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BY

C. H. SPURGEON.

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WINNING SOULS FOR CHRIST.

I CAN hardly think it is nine years ago since you came here. I wish you would come every year; I am sure you would be heartily welcomed. You have already brought a blessing with you. What sweet union we have had in prayer to-night! Truly,

“The saints in prayer appear as one,
In word, and deed, and mind;
While with the Father and the Son
Sweet fellowship they find.”

There is no unity like that which comes of intense heat. We are welded together, we are fused together, when we are all in a glow with enthusiasm for the glory of God. When we are all spending our strength in the divine service, we have no time to differ. Melted by grace, we run into one, and the mould we take is that of love to God. It is a great privilege to have to speak to so noble a band of preachers; I wish that I were more fit for the task. Silver of eloquent speech and gold of deep thought have I none; but such as I have, give I you.

Concerning the winning of souls. *What is it to win a soul?* I hope you believe in the old-fashioned way of saving souls. Everything appears to be shaken nowadays, and shifted from the old foundations. It seems that we are to evolve out of men the good that is already in them: much good may you get if you attempt the process! I am afraid that in the process of evolution you will develop devils. I do not know much else that will come out of human nature, for manhood is full of sin as an egg is full of meat; and the evolution of sin must be everlasting mischief. We all believe that we must go to soul-winning desiring in God's name to see all things made new. This old creature is dead and corrupt, and must be buried; and the sooner the better. Jesus has come that there may be a passing away of the old things, and a making of all things new. In the process of our work we endeavour to bless men by trying to make them temperate; may God bless all work of that sort! But we should think ourselves to have failed if we had produced a world of total abstainers, and had left them all unbelievers. We drive at something more than temperance; for we believe that men must be born again. It is good that even a corpse should be clean, and therefore that the unregenerate should be moral. It would be a great blessing if they were cleansed of the vices which make this city to reek in the nostrils of God and good men. But that is not so much our

work as this : that the dead in sin should live, that spiritual life should quicken them, and that Christ should reign where the prince of the power of the air now hath sway. You preach, brethren, with this object, that men may quit their sins, and fly to Christ for pardon, that by his blessed Spirit they may be renovated, and become as much in love with everything that is holy, as they are now in love with everything that is sinful. You aim at a radical cure ; the axe is laid at the root of the trees : the amendment of the old nature would not content you, but you seek for the imparting, by a divine power, of a new nature, that those who gather round you in the streets may live unto God.

Our object is to turn the world upside down ; or, in other words, that where sin abounded grace may much more abound. We are aiming at a miracle : it is well to settle that at the commencement. Some brethren think that they ought to lower their note to the spiritual ability of the hearer ; but this is a mistake. According to these brethren, you ought not to exhort a man to repent and believe unless you believe that he can, of himself, repent and believe. My reply is a confession : I command men in the name of Jesus to repent and believe the gospel, though I know they can do nothing of the kind apart from the grace of God ; for I am not sent to work according to what my private reason might suggest, but according to the orders of my Lord and Master. Ours is the miraculous method which comes of the endowment of the Spirit of God, who bids his ministers perform wonders in the name of the holy child Jesus. We are sent to say to blind eyes "see," to deaf ears "hear," to dead hearts "live," and even to Lazarus rotting in that grave, wherein, by this time he stinketh—"Lazarus, come forth." Dare we do this ? We shall be wise to begin with the conviction that we are utterly powerless for this unless our Master has sent us, and is with us. But if he that sent us is with us, all things are possible to him that believeth. O preacher, if thou art about to stand up to see what *thou* canst do, it will be thy wisdom to sit down speedily ; but if thou standest up to prove what thine almighty Lord and Master can do through thee, then infinite possibilities lie about thee ! There is no bound to what God can accomplish if he works by thy heart and voice. The other Sabbath morning, before I entered the pulpit, when my dear brethren, the deacons and elders of this church, gathered about me for prayer, as they are wont to do, one of them said, "Lord, take him as a man takes a tool in his hand when he gets a firm hold of it, and then uses it to work his own will with it." That is what all workers need ; that God may be the worker by them. You are to be instruments in the hands of God ; yourselves, of course, actively putting forth all your faculties and forces which the Lord has lent to you ; but still never depending upon your personal power, but resting alone upon that sacred, mysterious, divine energy which worketh in us, and by us, and with us, upon the hearts and minds of men.

Brethren, we have been greatly disappointed, have we not, with some of our converts ? We shall always be disappointed with them so far as they are *our* converts. We shall greatly rejoice over them when they prove to be the Lord's work. When the power of grace works in them ("Glory !"), then it will be, as my brother says, "Glory !" and nothing else but glory ; for grace brings glory, but mere oratory will

only create sham and shame in the long run. When we are preaching, and we think of a very pretty, flowery passage, a very neat, poetical paragraph, I wish we could be restrained by that fear which acted upon Paul when he said that he would not use the wisdom of words "lest the Cross of Christ should be of none effect." It is the duty of the gospel preacher, indoors or outdoors, to say, "I can say that very prettily, but then they might notice how I said it: I will, therefore, so say it that they will only observe the intrinsic value of the truth which I would teach them." It is not our way of putting the gospel, nor our method of illustrating it, which wins souls, but the gospel itself does the work in the hands of the Holy Ghost, and to him we must look for the thorough conversion of men. A miracle is to be wrought by which our hearers shall become the products of that mighty power which God wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly place far above all principality and power; and for this we must look out of ourselves to the living God. Must we not? We go in, then, for thorough down-right conversion; and therefore we fall back upon the power of the Holy Spirit. If it be a miracle God must work it, that is clear: it is not to be accomplished by our reasoning, or persuasion, or threatening, it can come only from the Lord.

In what way, since the winning of souls lies here, can we hopefully expect to be endowed with the Spirit of God, and to go forth in his power? I reply, that a great deal depends upon the condition of the man himself. I am persuaded we have never laid enough stress on the work of God within our own selves in its relation to our service of God. A consecrated man may be charged with the divine energy to the full, so that everybody round about him must perceive it. They cannot tell what it is, nor whence it comes, nor perhaps whither it goes; but there is a something about that man which is far beyond the common order of things. At another time that same person may be feeble and dull, and be conscious to himself that he is so. See! he shakes himself as at other times, but he can do no mighty deed. It is clear that Samson himself must be in a right condition, or he can win no victories. If the champion's locks be shorn, the Philistines will laugh at him; if the Lord be gone from a man he has no power left for useful service. Dear brethren, look carefully to your own condition before God. Take care of the home-farm; look well to your own flocks and herds. Unless your walk be close with God, unless you dwell in that clear light which surrounds the throne of God, and which is only known to those who are in fellowship with the Eternal, you will go forth of your chamber, and hasten to your work, but nothing will come of it. The vessel, it is true, is but an earthen one, but yet it has its place in the divine arrangement, for it will not be filled with the divine treasure unless it is a clean vessel, and unless in other respects it is a vessel fit for the Master's use. Let me show you some ways in which much must depend in soul-winning upon the man himself.

We win some souls to Christ by acting as witnesses. We stand up and testify for the Lord Jesus Christ concerning certain truths. Now, I have never had the great privilege of being bamboozled by a barrister. I have sometimes wondered what I should do if I were put into the

witness-box to be examined and cross-examined. I think I should simply stand up and tell the truth as far as I knew it, and should not make an attempt to display my wit, or my language, or my judgment. If I simply gave straightforward answers to his questions, I should beat any lawyer under heaven. But the difficulty is, that so often when a witness is put into the box he is more conscious of himself than of what he has to say ; therefore is soon worried, teased, and bored, and by losing his temper, he fails to be a good witness for the cause. Now, you men in the open air are often bamboozled; the devil's barristers are sure to come to you; he has a great number of them constantly retained in his service. The one thing you have to do is to bear witness to the truth. If you enquire in your own mind, "How shall I answer this man cleverly so as to get a victory over him?" you will not be wise. A witty answer is often a very proper thing; at the same time a gracious answer is better. Try to say to yourself: "It does not after all matter whether that man proves me to be a fool or not, for I know *that* already. I am content to be thought a fool for Christ's sake, and not to care about my reputation. I have to bear witness to what I know, and by the help of God I will do so right boldly. If the interrupter questions me about other things, I shall tell him that I do not come to bear witness about other matters, but this one thing I do. To one point I will speak, and to no other."

Brethren, the witnessing man, then, must himself be saved, and he should be sure of it. I do not know whether you doubt your own salvation. Perhaps I should recommend you to preach even when that is the case; since if you are not saved yourself, you yet wish others to be. You do not doubt always you once enjoyed full assurance; and now, if you have sorrowfully to confess, "Alas! I do not feel the full power of the gospel on my own heart," you can truly add, "Yet I know that it is true, for I have seen it save others, and I know that no other power can save *me*." Perhaps even that faltering testimony, so truly honest, might bring a tear into your opponent's eye, and make him feel sympathy for you. "I preached," said John Bunyan, "sometimes without hope, like a man in chains to men in chains, and when I heard my own fetters rattle, yet I told others that there was deliverance for them, and I bade them look to the great Deliverer." I would not have stopped Mr. Bunyan in preaching so. At the same time it is a great thing to be able to declare from your own personal experience that the Lord hath broken the gates of brass and cut the bars of iron in sunder. Those who hear our witness say, "Are you sure of it?" Sure of it? I am as sure of it as I am sure that I am a living man. They call this *dogmatism*. Never mind about that. A man ought to know what he is preaching about, or else let him sit down. If I had any doubt about the matters I preach from this pulpit, I should be ashamed to remain the pastor of this church; but I preach what I do know, and testify what I have seen. If I am mistaken, I am heartily and intensely mistaken; and I risk my soul and all its eternal interests upon the truth of what I preach. If the gospel which I preach does not save me, I shall never be saved, for what I proclaim to others is my own personal ground of trust. I have no private life-boat; the ark to which I invite others holds myself and all that I have. Now, a good witness ought

himself to know all that he is going to say; he should feel himself at home in his subject. He is brought up as a witness, say, in a certain case of robbery; he knows what he saw, and has to make a declaration of that only. They begin to question him about a picture in the house, or the colour of a dress which was hanging in the wardrobe. He answers, "You are going beyond my record; I can only witness to that which I saw." What we do know, and what we do not know, would make two very large books, and we may safely ask to be let alone as to the second volume.

Brother, say what you know, and sit down. But be calm and composed while speaking of that with which you have personal acquaintance. You will never properly indulge your emotions in preaching, so as to feel at home with the people, until you are at home with your subject. When you know what you are at, you will have your mind free for earnestness. Unless you open-air preachers know the gospel from beginning to end, and know where you are in preaching it, you cannot preach with due emotion; but when you feel at home with your doctrine, stand up and be as bold, and earnest, and importunate as you please. Face the people feeling that you are going to tell them something worth hearing about which you are quite sure, which to you is your very life. There are honest hearts in every outdoor assembly, and every indoor assembly too, that only want to hear honest beliefs, and they will accept them, and be led to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

But you are not only witnesses, you are pleaders for the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, in a pleader, much depends upon the man. It seems as if the sign and token of Christianity in some preachers was not a tongue of fire, but a block of ice. You would not like to have a barrister stand up and plead your cause in a cool, deliberate way, never showing the slightest care about whether you were found guilty of murder or acquitted. How could you endure his indifference when you yourself were likely to be hanged? Oh no! you wish to silence such a false advocate. So when a man has to speak for Christ, if he is not in earnest, let him go to bed. (Laughter.) You smile, but is it not better that he should go to bed than send a whole congregation to sleep without their going to bed? (Laughter.) Yes, we must be in downright earnest. If we are to prevail with men we must love them. There is a genuine love to men that some have, and there is a genuine dislike to men that others have. I know gentlemen, whom I esteem in a way, who seem to think that the working-classes are a shockingly bad lot to be kept in check and governed with vigour. With such views they will never convert the working-man. To win men you must feel: "I am one of them. If they are a sad lot, I am one of them; if they are lost sinners, I am one of them; if they need a Saviour, I am one of them." To the very chief of sinners you should preach with this text before you, "Such were some of you." Grace alone makes us to differ, and that grace we preach. Genuine love to God and fervent love to man make up the great qualification for a pleader.

I further believe, although certain persons deny it, that the influence of fear is to be exercised over the minds of men, and that it ought to operate upon the mind of the preacher himself. "Moved with fear Noah prepared an ark for the saving of his house." There was salvation

for this world from perishing in the flood in the fears of Noah; and when a man gets to fear for others, so that his heart cries out "They will perish; they will perish; they will sink to hell; they will be forever banished from the presence of the Lord," and when this fear oppresses his soul, and weighs him down, and then drives him to go out and preach with tears, oh, then he will plead with men so as to prevail! Knowing the terrors of the Lord, he will persuade men. To know the terrors of the Lord is the means of teaching us to *persuade*, and not to speak harshly. Some have used the terrors of the Lord to terrify; but Paul used them to persuade. Let us copy him. Say, "We have come out to tell you, men and brethren, that the world is on fire, and you must flee for your lives and escape to the mountain lest ye be consumed." We must give this warning with the full conviction that it is true, or else we shall but be as the boy who in foolishness cried "Wolf!" Something of the shadow of the last tremendous day must fall upon our spirit to give the accent of conviction to our message of mercy, or we shall miss the pleaders' true power. Brethren, we must tell men that there is pressing need of a Saviour, and show them that we ourselves perceive their need and feel for them, or else we are not likely to turn them to the Saviour.

He that pleads for Christ should himself be moved with the prospect of the judgment-day. When I come in at yonder door at the back of the pulpit, and the sight of that vast crowd bursts upon me, I frequently feel appalled. Think of those thousands of immortal souls gazing through the windows of those wistful eyes, and I am to preach to them all, and be responsible for their blood if I be not faithful to them. I tell you it makes me feel ready to start back. But then fear is not alone. I am borne up by the hope and belief that God intends to bless those people through the word which he will enable me to deliver. I believe that everybody in that throng is sent there by God for some purpose, and that I am sent to effect that purpose. I often think to myself, when I am preaching, "Who is being converted now?" It never occurs to me that the word of the Lord will fail. No, that can never be. I often feel sure that men are being converted, and at all times that God is glorified by the testimony of his truth. You may depend upon it that your hopeful conviction that God's word cannot return to him void is a great encouragement to your hearers, as well as to yourself. Your enthusiastic confidence that they will be converted may be like the little finger of a mother held out to her babe, to help it to make its way to her. The fire within your hearts may dart a spark into their souls by which the flame of spiritual life shall be kindled in them. Do let us all learn the art of pleading with the souls of men.

Still, dear open-air preachers, and all of you Christian people here, *we have not only to be witnesses and pleaders, but we have also to be examples.* One of the most successful ways of taking wild ducks is the use of the decoy bird. The decoy duck enters the net itself, and the others follow it. We need to use more, in the Christian church, the holy art of decoy; that is to say, our example, in ourselves coming to Christ, in ourselves living godly lives in the midst of a perverse generation, our example of joy and sorrow, our example of holy submission to the divine will in the time of trouble, our example in all

manner of gracious ways, will be the means of inducing others to enter the way of life. You cannot, of course, stand up in the street and tell of your example; but there is no street-preacher who is not better known than he thinks. Some one in that crowd may be in the secret of the speaker's private life. I once heard of an out-of-doors preacher, to whom a neighbour cried out, "Ah, Jack, you dare not preach like that at your own door!" It so happened, unfortunately, that Mr. John — had offered to fight one of his neighbours a little while before, and therefore it was not likely that he would have done much preaching very near home. This made the question an awkward one. If any man's life at home is unworthy, he should go several miles away before he stands up to preach, and then, when he stands up, he should say nothing. They know us, brethren; they know far more about us than we imagine, and what they do not know they make up. At the same time our walk and conversation should be the most powerful part of our ministry. This is what is called being *consistent* when lips and life agree.

My time is short; but I must say a word upon another point. I have said that the working of the Holy Spirit depends largely upon the man himself, but I am bound to add that *much will also depend upon the kind of people that are round about the preacher.* An open-air preacher who has to go out quite alone, must be in a very unfortunate position. It is extremely helpful to be connected with an earnest living church which will pray for you; and if you cannot find such a church where you labour, the next best thing is to get half-a-dozen brothers or sisters who will back you up, and go out with you, and, especially, will pray with you. Some preachers are so independent that they can do without helpers, but they will be wise if they do not affect solitude. May they not look at the matter in this way: by bringing in half-a-dozen men to go out with me I shall be doing good to those young men, and shall be training them to be workers? If you can associate with yourself half-a-dozen who are not all very young men, but somewhat advanced in their knowledge of divine truth, the association will be greatly to your mutual advantage. I confess to you all that although God has largely blessed me in his work, yet none of the credit is due to me at all, but to those dear friends at the Tabernacle, and, indeed, all over the world, who make me the special subject of their prayers. A man ought to do well with such a people around him as I have. My dear friend and deacon, Mr. William Olney, said: "Our minister has hitherto led us forward, and we have followed heartily. Everything has been a success; do you not believe in his leadership?" The people cried "Yes." Then said my dear friend, "If our pastor has brought us up to a ditch which looks as if it could not be passed, let us fill it up with our bodies, and carry him across." This was grand talk: the ditch was filled, nay, it seemed to fill up itself at once. If you have a true comrade your strength is more than doubled. What a blessing is a good wife! You women who would not be in place if you began to preach in the streets, you can make your husbands happy and comfortable when they come home, and that will make *them* preach all the better! Some of you can even help in another way if you are prudent and gentle. You can tenderly hint that your spouse was a little

out of line in certain small matters, and he may take your hint and put himself right. A good brother once asked me to give him some instruction, and he pleaded thus: "The only instructor I have had was my wife, who had a better schooling than fell to my lot. I used to say, 'We was,' and 'Us did it,' and she quietly hinted that people might laugh at me if I did not attend to grammar." His wife thus became to him a professor of—of English language, and was worth her weight in gold to him, and he knew it. You that have such helpers ought to thank God daily for them.

Next to this, it is a very great assistance to join in brotherly league with some warm-hearted Christian who knows more than we do, and will benefit us by prudent hints. God may bless us for the sake of others when he might not bless us for our own. You have heard, I dare say, the monkish story of the man who had preached, and had won many souls to Christ, and congratulated himself upon it. One night it was revealed to him, that he should have none of the honour of it at the last great day; and he asked the angel in his dream who then would have the credit of it? and the angel replied, "That old deaf man that sits on the pulpit stairs, and prays for you, was the means of the blessing." Let us be thankful for that deaf man, or that old woman, or those poor praying friends who bring down a blessing upon us by their intercessions. The Spirit of God will bless two when he might not bless one. Abraham alone did not get one of the five cities saved, although his prayer was like a ton weight in the scale; but yonder was his nephew Lot, who was about the poorest lot that could be found. He had not more than half-an-ounce of prayer in him; but that tiny fragment turned the scale, and Zoar was preserved. Add then your odd half-ounce to the mightier weight of the pleadings of eminent saints, for they may need it.

Dear brother open-air preachers, I am not trying to instruct you; some of you could far better instruct me; and yet I do not know, but I suspect I must be getting rather old from what I hear. A woman at the beginning of this year was trying to get something out of me, and she said: "I remember hearing your dear voice more than forty years ago." I said: "Heard my voice forty years ago! where was that?" She said: "You were preaching at the bottom of Pentonville Hill, near where Mr. Sawday's Chapel is." "Well," I said: "Was it not more than forty years ago?" "Yes," she said, "It might be fifty." (Laughter). "Oh," I said, "I suppose I was quite a young man then?" "Oh, yes," she said, "You were such a dear young man." That of course was a needless assurance; but I do not think she was quite so sure of my dearness when I told her that I never preached at the bottom of Pentonville Hill, and that fifty years ago I was only three years old, and that I thought it shameful for her to suppose that I should give her money for telling falsehoods. However, I shall presume upon the woman's statement to-night, and suppose myself to be that venerable person she described me as being, and I shall make bold to say to you: Dear brethren, if we are going to win souls, *we must go in for downright labour and hard work.* And, first, we must work *at our preaching.* You are not getting distrustful of the use of preaching, are you? ("No.") I hope you do not weary it, though you certainly sometimes

must weary in it. Go on with your preaching. Cobbler, stick to your last ; preacher, stick to your preaching. In the great day when the muster-roll shall be read, of all those who were converted through fine music, and church decoration, and religious exhibitions and entertainments, they will amount to the tenth part of nothing. But it will always please God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. Keep to your preaching, and if you do anything beside do not let it throw your preaching into the background. In the first place preach, and in the second place preach, and in the third place preach.

“Happy, if with your latest breath
You may but gasp his name ;
Preach him to all, and cry in death :
Behold, behold the Lamb !”

Believe in preaching the love of Christ, believe in preaching the atoning sacrifice, believe in preaching the new birth, believe in preaching the whole counsel of God. The old hammer of the gospel will still break the rock in pieces ; the ancient fire of Pentecost will still burn among the multitude. Try nothing new, but go on with preaching, and if we all preach with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, the results of preaching will astound us. Why, there is no end after all to the power of the tongue ! Look at the power of a bad tongue, what great mischief it can do ; and shall not God put more power into a good tongue, if we will but use it aright ? Look at the power of fire, a single spark might give a city to the flames ; even so the Spirit of God being with us, we need not calculate how much, or what we can do : there is no calculating the potentialities of a flame, and there is no end to the possibilities of divine truth spoken with the enthusiasm which is born of the Spirit of God. Have great hope yet, brothers, have great hope yet, despite yon shameless midnight streets, despite yon flaming gin-palaces at the corner of every street, despite the wickedness of the rich, despite the ignorance of the poor. Go on ; go on ; go on ; in God's name go on, for if the preaching of the gospel does not save men, nothing will. If the Lord's own way of mercy fails, then hang the skies in mourning, and blot out the sun in everlasting midnight, for there remaineth nothing before our race but the blackness of darkness. Salvation by the sacrifice of Jesus is the ultimatum of God. Rejoice that it cannot fail. Let us believe without reserve and then go straight ahead with the preaching of the Word.

True-hearted open-air preachers will be sure to join with their preaching very much earnest *private talk*. What numbers of persons have been converted in this Tabernacle by the personal conversation of certain brothers here, whom I will not further indicate ! They are all about this place while I am preaching ! One Monday night I recollect that a brother was speaking to me, and suddenly he vanished before he finished the sentence which he was whispering. I never quite knew what he was going to say, but I speedily saw him in that left-hand gallery, sitting in the pew with a lady unknown to me. After the service I said to him, “Where did you go to ?” and he said, “A gleam of sunlight came in at a window, and made me see a face which looked so sad that I hurried upstairs and took my seat in the pew close to the

woman of a sorrowful countenance." "Did you cheer her?" "Oh, yes; she received the Lord Jesus very readily; and just as she did so, I noticed another eager face, and I asked her to wait in the pew till after the service, and I went after the other—a young man." He prayed with both of these, and would not be satisfied until they had given their hearts to the Lord. That is the way to be on the alert. We need a body of sharp-shooters to pick out their men one by one. When we fire great guns from the pulpit execution is done, but many are missed. We want loving spirits to go round and deal with individual cases in the singular by pointed personal warnings and encouragements. Every open-air preacher should not only address the hundreds, but he should be ready to pounce upon the ones, and he should have others with him who have the same happy art. How much more good would come of preaching in the streets if every open-air preacher were accompanied by a batch of persons who would drive his nails home for him by personal conversation!

My dear brother last Sunday night told us a little story which I shall never forget. He was at Croydon Hospital one night, as one of those appointed to visit it. All the porters had gone home, and it was time to shut up for the night. He was the only person in the hospital, with the exception of the physician, when a boy came running in, saying that there was a railway accident, and some one must go round to the station with a stretcher. The doctor said to my brother, "Will you take one end of the stretcher if I take the other?" "Oh, yes," was the cheerful reply; and so away went the doctor and the pastor with the stretcher. They brought a sick man back with them. My brother said, "I went often to the hospital during the next week or two, because I felt so much interest in the man whom I had helped to carry." I believe he will always take an interest in that man, because he once felt the weight of him. When you know how to carry a man on your heart, and have felt the burden of his case, you will have his name engraven upon your soul. So you that privately talk to people, you are feeling the weight of souls; and I believe that this is what many regular preachers need to know more of, and then they will preach better.

When preaching and private talk are not available, you *have a tract ready*, and this is often an effectual method. Some tracts would not convert a beetle: there is not enough in them to interest a fly. Get good striking tracts or none at all. But a telling, touching gospel tract may often be the seed of eternal life; therefore do not go out without your tracts.

I suppose, beside giving a tract, if you can, you try and find out where a person lives who frequently hears you, *that you may give him a call*. What a fine thing is a visit from an open-air preacher! "Why," says the woman, "there is that man come to see you, Bill; that gentleman who preaches at the corner of the street. Shall I tell him to come in?" "Oh, yes," is the reply; "I have heard him many times; he is a good fellow." Visit as much as you can, for it will be of use to yourselves as well as the people.

What power there is also in *a letter to an individual!* Some people still have a kind of superstitious reverence for a letter; and when they get an earnest epistle from one of you reverend gentlemen, they think

a great deal of it; and who knows, a note by post may hit the man your sermon missed. Young people who are not able to preach might do much good if they would write letters to their young friends about their souls: they could speak very plainly with their pens, though they might be diffident in speaking with their tongues. Let us save men by all the means under heaven; let us prevent men going down to hell. We are not half as earnest as we ought to be. Do you not remember the young man who, when he was dying, said to his brother, "My brother, how could you have been so indifferent to my soul as you have been!" He answered, "I have not been indifferent to your soul, for I have frequently spoken to you about it." "Oh, yes," he said, "you spoke, but somehow I think if you had remembered that I was going down to hell, you would have been more earnest with me; you would have wept over me, and as my brother, you would not have allowed me to be lost." Let no one say this of you.

But I hear it observed that most fellows, when they grow earnest, do such odd things, and say such strange things. Let them say strange things, and let them do strange things, if these come out of genuine earnestness. We do not want pranks and performances which are the mere sham of earnestness; but real white-heat earnestness is the want of the times, and where you see *that*, it is a pity to be too critical. You must let a great storm rage in its own way. You must let a living heart speak as it can. If you are zealous, and yet cannot speak, your earnestness will invent its own method of working out its purpose. As Hannibal is said to have melted the rocks with vinegar, so earnestness will one way or another dissolve the rocky hearts of men. May the Spirit of God rest upon you, one and all, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

OPEN-AIR MISSION.

ESTABLISHED 1863.

OBJECTS.

To UNITE Christian Workers of all Evangelical denominations to make known the glad tidings of Salvation by means of Open-Air Preaching.

To undertake the VISITATION of Races, Fairs, Steeplechases, Regattas, Fêtes, &c. To hold Services and Special Missions, wherever the masses assemble out of doors. This is the only Society which visits these gatherings regularly.

To GATHER TOGETHER the Preachers and Workers for mutual counsel, and to serve as a BOND OF UNION for Open-Air Preachers; to seek out recruits, to revive drooping energy, to guide and encourage zeal, and to promote union in the army of Christian Workers.

To COLLECT and DISSEMINATE information on Open-Air Preaching throughout the world.

To INITIATE the Work in places where no effort is being made to reach the careless or godless.

To CIRCULATE Gospel books, papers, tracts, cards, and Scripture portions amongst the people found in the towns and villages, the streets, parks, squares, courts and alleys, lanes and hamlets.

Treasurer, LORD KINNAIRD; Bankers, RANSOM, BOUVERIE & Co., 1, Pall Mall East, S.W. Income for 1886, £1,766.

JOHN MACGREGOR, *Hon. Sec.*; GAWIN KIRKHAM, *Sec.*

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