

accept God's way of salvation if they did but know it; they are akin to those of whom the apostle said, 'And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it.' If you will instruct them God will save them: is it not written, 'The entrance of thy words giveth light'? If the Holy Spirit blesses your teaching, they will see how wrong they have been, and they will be led to repentance and faith. I do not believe in that preaching which lies mainly in shouting, 'Believe! believe! believe!' In common justice you are bound to tell the poor people what they are to believe. There must be instruction, otherwise the exhortation to believe is manifestly ridiculous, and must in practice be abortive. I fear that some of our orthodox brethren have been prejudiced against the free invitations of the gospel by hearing the raw, undigested harangues of revivalist speakers whose heads are loosely put together. The best way to preach sinners to Christ is to preach Christ to sinners. Exhortations, entreaties, and beseechings, if not accompanied with sound instruction, are like firing off powder without shot. You may shout, and weep, and plead, but you cannot lead men to believe what they have not heard, nor to receive a truth which has never been set before them. 'Because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge.'

While giving instruction, it is wise to *APPEAL TO THE UNDERSTANDING*. True religion is as logical as if it were not emotional. I am not an admirer of the peculiar views of Mr Finney, but I have no doubt that he was useful to many; and his power lay in his use of clear arguments. Many who knew his fame were greatly disappointed at first hearing him, because he used few beauties of speech and was as calm and dry as a book of Euclid; but he was exactly adapted to a certain order of minds, and they were convinced and convicted by his forcible reasoning. Should not persons of an argumentative cast of mind be provided for? We are to be all things to all men, and to these men we must become argumentative and push them into a corner with plain deductions and necessary inferences. Of carnal reasoning we would have none, but of fair, honest pondering, considering, judging, and arguing the more the better.

The class requiring logical argument is small compared with the number of those who need to be pleaded with, by way of *EMOTIONAL PERSUASION*. They require not so much reasoning as heart-argument – which is logic set on fire. You must argue with them as a mother

pleads with her boy that he will not grieve her, or as a fond sister entreats a brother to return to their father's home and seek reconciliation: argument must be quickened into persuasion by the living warmth of love. Cold logic has its force, but when made red hot with affection the power of tender argument is inconceivable. The power which one mind can gain over others is enormous, but it is often best developed when the leading mind has ceased to have power over itself. When passionate zeal has carried the man himself away his speech becomes an irresistible torrent, sweeping all before it. A man known to be godly and devout, and felt to be large-hearted and self-sacrificing, has a power in his very person, and his advice and recommendation carry weight because of his character; but when he comes to plead and to persuade, even to tears, his influence is wonderful, and God the Holy Spirit yokes it into his service.

Brethren, we must *PLEAD*. Entreaties and beseechings must blend with our instructions. Any and every appeal which will reach the conscience and move men to fly to Jesus we must perpetually employ, if by any means we may save some. I have sometimes heard ministers blamed for speaking of themselves when they are pleading, but the censure need not be much regarded while we have such a precedent as the example of Paul. To a congregation who love you it is quite allowable to mention your grief that many of them are unsaved, and your vehement desire, and incessant prayer for their conversion. You are doing right when you mention your own experience of the goodness of God in Christ Jesus, and plead with men to come and taste the same. We must not be abstractions or mere officials to our people, but we must plead with them as real flesh and blood, if we would see them converted. When you can quote yourself as a living instance of what grace has done, the plea is too powerful to be withheld through fear of being charged with egotism.

Sometimes, too, we must change our tone. Instead of instructing, reasoning, and persuading, we must come to *THREATENING*, and declare the wrath of God upon impenitent souls. We must lift the curtain and let them see the future. Show them their danger, and warn them to escape from the wrath to come.

This done, we must return to *INVITATION*, and set before the awakened mind the rich provisions of infinite grace which are freely presented