

unfrequently estimate too highly the degree of knowledge attained by their hearers, and therefore are not sufficiently simple and clear in their preaching. In every congregation there are those who, considering the years at which they have arrived, and the time during which they have sat under the ministry of the gospel, might be qualified to teach others; but who, nevertheless, have need to be taught the first principles of the oracles of God. With the consciences of sinners there must be close dealing, and frequent recurrence to those awful representations of their guilt and danger with which the scriptures abound. Those who are sleeping the deep sleep of spiritual death, are not easily awakened. The careless and irreligious are rarely impressed with any thing that is not of an alarming nature. To the ignorant, therefore, it is necessary that you speak plainly; to the careless and secure you must frequently cause the trumpet to send forth the loudest and most piercing sound which you are capable of producing. Allow not sinners to walk on in the broad road that leadeth to destruction, without hearing your warning voice calling them to return. You must set before them life and death, the blessing and the curse, heaven and hell, in the strongest terms. Without plainness of preaching sinners cannot be converted, nor saints edified.

The word must be preached *faithfully*. You must declare the whole counsel of God whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. You are to keep back no part, but declare the whole without reserve. You must not, for fear of offending any of your hearers, hesitate to assert and maintain any scriptural doctrine which may be offensive to their prejudices, or to inculcate any duty in the discharge of which they are glaringly deficient, or to denounce any sin of which they are notoriously guilty. You must remember that if you were to attempt, or even to wish, to please men, you will no longer be the servant of Christ; that therefore you must so speak, not as pleasing men but God who trieth your heart.

The word ought to be preached *solemnly*. And surely if the deepest solemnity is on any occasion becoming, it is when in Christ's stead you are beseeching sinners to be reconciled to God—when you are setting before them the infinitely important realities of death, and judgment, and eternity—when you are discoursing to them of heaven in all its transcendent glories, or of hell in all its unutterable horrors. How fervently ought you to pray, that on all occasions you may be enabled to preach the word with a solemnity in some degree becoming the grandeur of the subjects of which you treat—a solemnity calculated

to awe the thoughtless, and to make them feel that religion is indeed a serious thing—the most serious of all things, and that to be indifferent about it, is folly and madness which no language is strong enough to describe.

But the word ought also to be preached *affectionately*. You must endeavour to convince your hearers that you love them with tender affection, and are most anxious to promote their best interests. You must study to address them with the kindly feeling, the earnest tone and the winning manner of a parent counselling, warning and rebuking, comforting and encouraging his beloved children, according to their various circumstances and necessities. Even when you speak to them of the worm that never dies, of the fire that is not quenched, and of the wretchedness of those who go away into everlasting punishment, it will be with a trembling concern lest any of them should be subjected to so appalling a doom. The whole of your ministrations ought to be the offspring of love and affection; and with the tenderness of christian compassion you ought to beseech them to be reconciled to God, and to flee from the wrath to come.

In conclusion, then, and in the language of the apostle, "I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and kingdom, preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine." May you prove yourself a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. May you so preach, and may your people so hear, that the word may be to you and to them the savour of life unto life, and the power of God unto salvation.—AMEN.

REFLECTIONS ON THE NEW YEAR.

From Fragments, from the Study of a Pastor. By Gardner Spring, Pastor of the brick Presbyterian Church in the City of New-York

Can it be that another year has fled? With all its joys and trials, all its sins and duties, all its instructions and privileges,—is it fled? Yes, it is gone. It has terminated the lives of millions, and like an irresistible current, has borne them on to the grave and the judgment. It has gone. Like a dream of the night, it has gone!