

they earnestly entreated God to show them in what their "talent" consists, and to open a door for them by which they may enter and endeavour to be useful?

Perhaps they have no heart for work and are too fond of ease. If so the pulse of their own spiritual life beats all too feebly. Indeed it is a serious question whether they live at all. Apathy and indifference belong to the dead.

Perhaps they are wondering what they could do. Then we say to them—the Sabbath school is open to you, the sick chamber is open to you, the missionary field is open to you, the distribution of tracts needs your aid: choose ye which ye will serve.

Perhaps they think that ministers alone are called to labour in the service of God. This is a mistake, for *all* are to be followers of Christ,—all are to do "whatsoever their hand findeth to do,"—all are to give an account of their stewardship at last, and state what use they made of their "talent" on earth.

Christian friend! whether young or old, rich or poor, be assured that there is enough for you to do. Your own soul's salvation requires your vigilance; the world which lieth in the wicked one is, like the whitened fields, waiting to be reaped; and the Lord hath need of you—why stand you all the day idle? Look around and see what you can do. Ask yourself every morning, "what can I do this day for God and souls?" not forgetting to look up to the Holy Spirit to qualify you to perform the will of God from the heart.

This is no time for Christians to be idle. The Lord is calling us all to activity in the many additional means which are in operation for the spread of the gospel. The call is loud and distinct, and it comes from Him "whose voice once shook the earth." Let us see that we obey it: for if we refuse Him that speaketh, how shall we stand before Him at His appearing and His kingdom? "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light." "Wherefore, beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

"A weak faith cannot do much, but it can embrace a whole Christ"—*J. Milne*.

A MOTTO FOR ALL.

"Apt to teach" should be the motto of every man in all that he says and does. It is a short text, but no small one. It extends to all life's duties. It touches all our words and all our acts. It should be regarded in the performance of every Christian duty, whether public or private.

Our *words* should be such as becometh the gospel of Christ, *i. e.*, "few"—designed to do good—seasoned with grace—calculated to instruct, admonish and reprove. Now, if the Christian labors daily to gather fruit, he will always have something *new* to talk about; and in doing this, he should study to be "apt to teach." It is to be regretted that aptness to teach things both new and old, is so little studied by members of churches, that meetings for social worship become uninteresting.

To be apt to teach by our *acts* is the only successful way of fulfilling the Saviour's command: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, who is in heaven." We met the other day with the following instructive fact: A certain poor man was sick in the neighborhood of a certain deacon, who visited him, laboured with him a long time about his soul, and left without saying anything about the needy, suffering body. Soon after a young man went to visit him, and gave him a dollar. The effect was such that the poor man was led to seek his soul's salvation. "Ah," said the sick man, "Deacon—came here, said a great deal about the soul, but nothing about the failing body, but this young man's dollar led me to think of God's goodness, first in the ways of His providence, and then in the gift of His son."

By the improvement of all proper circumstances and privileges connected with ourselves and others, we should be apt to teach. Whoever has observed, his own feelings in various situations, has discovered quite a difference in the effects produced by useful instruction. Individuals who are light and frivolous in times of prosperity, are often found, in seasons of adversity, to have ears, eyes and taste for more serious things. The Christian should improve such golden opportunities, and be ready with the seasonable truth.

However good our instruction, if not suited to the mental and spiritual state of those we teach, it will fail to accomplish the largest measure of good. "Strike while the iron is hot" and every blow will tell. Strike with skill and the result will reward your pains.

The most important thing of all is to teach in a proper spirit, "speaking the truth in love,"—in the spirit of Christ. The truth in love is always apt to teach. It is like "apples of gold in pictures of silver,"—beautiful to behold,—impressive to the hearer—carrying conviction with it,—not too easily forgotten. The Christian should scan himself narrowly "try the spirit," and see whether of self or of what sort it is: for, as a rule, the spirit we possess when we speak to others is found to possess them more or less. The hardest heart will melt before "the truth in love."

POLITICS AND RELIGION.

The tide of political excitement rises higher and still higher, as the general election for the House of Commons draws nearer. Let the Christian look well to himself! The Christian may take an interest in public affairs—nay, he ought to maintain a ceaseless jealousy over the well-being of his country; but a constant and noisy and factious meddling in party politics is as injurious to his own personal piety, as it is to the general interest of Christ's cause. We do not cease to be citizens when we become Christians, but we are in danger of ceasing to be Christians when we become politicians. It is with politics as with money; it is not the temperate use but the immoderate love of it, that is the root of all evil. Thousands of professors of religion have made shipwreck of their faith, and a good conscience during the tempests of political agitation. Let Christians, then, as they value their lives, be cautious how they embark on this stormy and tempestuous ocean.

"There will probably be two great subjects of surprise to God's people in heaven; one, how much and the other how little they have done:—'much,' when they thought it was little; 'little,' when they thought it was much."—*F. P. Power*.