

seriously wrong estimate on money. To risk money for no good end is to waste power, and to take money unearned from others is surely the essence of evil in social life. Whether a man can afford to lose or not, it is difficult to see how one who wishes to live truly can either win or lose in gambling with a good conscience. Then, too, there are the evil effects of excitement brought on by the risk of power, and we are not surprised to find that people have spoken in pretty strong terms of the Bishop's position. It may seem a little thing to make a small bet, but it may be questioned whether it is really slight. Current history connected with betting is such that it is difficult to see how anyone can justify gambling on the grounds set forth by Bishop Welldon. The question is one of great seriousness, and we should be glad to hear from any correspondents. In what respects, if any, are we to regard gambling as sinful?

Religious Toleration

We have just read that a Colonel in Spain, a Protestant, has been sentenced to six months' imprisonment for refusing to attend Mass. He declared that it was against his conscience to attend the Service, and for this offence he has to go to prison. We are glad and thankful that such a state of affairs is impossible in Canada, but it ought to be impossible everywhere, since no man, be he Roman Catholic, or Protestant, or Mohammedan, or Jew, ought to suffer in this way on account of his religious convictions. It is evident that a great deal has yet to be done in Spain and elsewhere before there can be absolute religious toleration, but the very fact that this incident is being reported in different parts of the world will do more than anything else to bring about the desired effect. We sincerely hope that our Roman Catholic contemporaries in Canada will use their influence to bring about a better state of affairs among their co-religionists in Spain by pointing out the splendid results they enjoy over here in the possession of absolute freedom to worship God according to their conscience.

Personalities and Politics

It is very saddening to read from time to time of the extent to which people and newspapers go in dealing with personalities when prominent politicians are concerned. The distinction between the notice given to men in other professions and that given to politicians is very striking. It is rare to find a newspaper with any pretension to respectability alluding to an ordinary person in high social circles in a captious or malignant way, for, whatever be our national faults a desire for malignity is mercifully not one of them. We are far too partial to proper reserve and fair play. And yet with a politician the matter is often entirely different, for the basest motives are attributed to him, and there is a constant disposition to find flaws in his private life. Why should this be? It is suggested that politicians have a double personality—their own and the part they play in public conflicts. In the latter capacity they are like pawns in a great game, and it is as pawns they are judged, and not according to their own personality. A statesman once said that he had to show himself to his foes and friends, that the one might see he had no hoofs and horns, and the other that he did not possess wings. In the same way every politician finds himself the object of both blame and praise, but the public man, be he politician or not, will never allow these things to deflect him from what he believes to be his right course, and in the midst of attacks upon his honour and integrity he will remember the motto of the Scottish school: "They say! What do they say? Let them say."

The Soul's Attire

The figure of clothing, or investiture, is found, in both parts of the Bible, connected with the spiritual life, and the opening days of another year seem to suggest the wisdom of calling renewed attention to some of those aspects of truth which are connected with this most helpful symbol of Christian living. The Prophet Isaiah called on Jerusalem to "put on beautiful garments," while the Apostle Paul speaks of our "putting off" and "putting on." This thought of clothing, or investiture, is associated with the past, the present, and the future, and it tells its own story of requirement, power, and possibility.

In relation to the past, we are reminded that our Christian life commenced by an investiture with Jesus Christ. "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). We "put on" Christ when we enter trustfully into the power of His Death. In the same way we are said to have "put off the old man" (Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9), and "put on the new man" (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10). In both instances the statement is in the past, and reminds us of the time when we commenced our Christian life. We "put off" the old man, our unregenerate self, and "put on" the new man, our new life in Christ, by a conscious acceptance and realization of our regeneration. These are the fundamental realities which lie at the basis of our Christian life. All else springs out of them. In Eastern countries we sometimes come upon a Mohammedan Mosque which was formerly a Christian Church. The structure of the building testifies to the strangeness of its present use, for the cruciform shape shows that it was designed for the worship of the Crucified. In the same way the very existence of a child of God is a proof that he is intended for holiness and obedience. He has been created in Christ Jesus unto good works. The foundation of his life is laid in Christ, and the structure to be erected on that foundation is a life of character and service.

The attire of the soul is also associated with the present life of the believer. He is exhorted "to put on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 13:14), to "put on the whole armour of God" (Eph. 6:11, 14; Rom. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:8), and he is to "put on" the various aspects of Christian character which mark the true follower of Jesus Christ. And "above all these things," as a robe which covers and completes the whole, he is to "put on love, which is the bond of perfectness" (Col. 3:12-14). This clearly means the discipline of a holy life and its various virtues. The call is imperative. The time past is to suffice to have lived in the garments of sinful flesh; we are to invest ourselves with the garments of salvation, the armour of light. Because we are Christ's, and a new creation in Him, we are, "therefore," to put on love. The medieval symbol of faith is a figure holding a cup and gazing on the Cross. Our faith views the Atoning Sacrifice and takes the cup of blessing from our Master's pierced hand. This holy character and conduct made possible by Christ and protected by the armour of God is the great proof of our true Christianity. "We love because He first loved us." The spring of Christian love is the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. We cherish a true attitude towards others because we are ourselves the objects of Divine consideration. This disposition of the child of God represented as apparel is as searching as it is beautiful. "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness" Col. 3:12-14). Every one of these elements calls for special meditation and personal appropriation. When our hearts are full of compassion and kindness we are living a true Christ-like life, because it will be the expression of our love. It was said of the late Lord Shaftesbury that "the ragged children of London were rarely out of his thoughts, waking or sleeping." The Workhouse and the Infirmary were the constant haunts of General Gordon, one of whose favourite sayings was, "Love is the object of discipleship." And on that wonderful night when the death-blow was given to the Slave Trade, Wilberforce playfully asked, "What shall we abolish next?" How unlike the attitude of another man, who is reported to have said concerning some people whose case was being pressed upon him for aid: "Why should I concern myself with them; they are not my poor?" Divine grace is Divine philanthropy, and pours itself out not only upon the good and gentle, but also upon the unthankful and the evil. So with the other elements of this wonderful "clothing": humility, meekness, long-suffering. These, too, are God-like and Christ-like. "Bear all men," said Ignatius to Polycarp, "as the Lord also hath borne thee." This attire of the soul also looks forward to a wonderful future, for we are pointed to a day when this corruptible must "put on" incorruption, and this mortal must "put on" immortality (1 Cor. 15:53). Then will our garments be, indeed, complete and perfect, with spirit, soul, and body, redeemed, restored, and transformed for evermore.

This thought of the attire of the soul, past, present, and future, may seem beyond our possibility and power in its severe demand and high standard. But God never commands without providing grace for obedience; "God's biddings are enablings." And the promise of the Holy Spirit under this same figure of attire is the encouragement to every soul to go forward and upward in the Christian life. "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). It is the consciousness of the gift of the Holy Spirit that enables us to respond heartily to the calls to "put on" Christ, the armour of God, and the true Christian character. The watchword of the Middle Ages was the imitation of Christ, but the New Testament takes a step further and speaks of the impartation of Christ as well. We are able to follow our Lord only as we receive Him, and any idea of reproducing His perfect life is only practicable as the outcome of receiving into our souls His Divine grace and power. The question is sometimes asked, "What would Jesus do?" But this is only answered when we have asked a previous question, "What has Jesus done" for us, and in us? Thus by the impartation of Christ, the imitation of His perfect life is not only rendered possible, but has actually commenced. It is the completion of this process that the Apostle has in mind when he urges us to "put on" that which we need. And as we look forward to another year let us never forget that our life is Christ's, that we are to cultivate what He has implanted, to live His life over again, and to show in every possible way Whose we are and Whom we serve. A familiar motto for the New Year reminds us a little of this life dressed in God's "beautiful garments," as we endeavour to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour" in all things:—

"Speak a shade more gently
Than the year before,
Pray a little oftener,
Love a little more,
Cling a little closer
To the Father's love;
Life below will liker grow
To the life above."