

The Sin of Gambling.

BY GEO. W. MCCALL.

"They crucify him and part his garments among them, casting lots upon them, what each should take."—Mark 15: 24.

My text is a black stroke across the dark picture of Christ's sufferings. They strip off his garments and gamble for them before his dying gaze. They cast dice for them with hands stained in his warm life blood. They mingle their exclamations of pleasure or disappointment with his groans. They gamble under the sound of dripping blood and dying agony. What other evil passion than gambling can so burn out of the heart all pity and sympathy? A professional gambler is a man without a heart.

I ask you to consider two questions today. First, the sin of gambling, second, the schools where this vice is taught.

Gambling is a sin against God and a crime against humanity.

Gambling is any game of chance wherein money or money's worth is staked to be won or lost. The stake may be anything of value. Here it was the clothing of Jesus Christ. It may be articles of ornament, clothing, pictures or money. The women who play cards for a dish, the boys who throw dice for cigars, and the men who bet on a horse race are all equally gamblers. Heathen governments and pagan moralists have condemned gambling as a destructive vice. Every government in Christendom outlaws it. But where is the wrong of it?

1. The first evil I mention is that gambling rests upon and fosters a false and hurtful belief in luck as against providence and pluck. There is and can be under the government of God no such thing as chance. The sparrow falls to the ground not without his notice. The laws of God form the woof of every garment we weave. God decides even between thief and thief, allowing him the freedom of being a thief and impaling him with the penalty of his own sin. God's laws are everywhere, and chance and luck ought to be relegated to the limbo of spooks and hobgoblins of childhood. We are to teach our children to believe in Providence and industry for success. Gambling is the negation of the doctrine of Providence and hard work, and is thus a crime against humanity.

2. The second evil of gambling is that it encourages men to expect a living without work. Nothing, absolutely nothing, can be a greater curse to a young man than for him to get the idea that there is an easier way to get money than to earn it. His idea makes criminals by the thousand. But gambling is getting something without earning it. Every honest business makes a just return for all it gets. The service of brain or muscle are the equivalent of an honest man's reward. What return does the gambler make for the dollars he gets? He robs society of his living. He is the most burdensome thief humanity has to support. The loss to society from the highway robber and midnight thief are a trifle compared with the total loss from gambling. Gambling teaches men to expect money that is not earned, and thus teaches them to be thieves. Surely this is a crime.

3. The third charge I bring against gambling is that it encourages idleness. Gamblers are idlers. They follow no useful occupation. That is true of professional gamblers, and it is increasingly true of all who gamble. What useful business does the woman follow who spends day after day in the excitement of card-playing? Is she not an idler?

Gamblers are parasites on society.

They are no more service to humanity than a tick is to a cow. Indeed, their functions are alike. They both suck life blood and give no return. Gambling is opposed to the divine law. "If any will not work, neither let him eat." They devour the substance of their victims but they work not.

4. Gambling is a dishonest way of getting money and encourages almost every form of dishonesty. The district attorney of New York says there are no honest gamblers, and his opportunity for observation is the best. Marked cards, loaded dice and a thousand tricks known to the profession are indulged in to fleece the unwary. The man who thinks he can win against the gambler is a pitiable fool. Gambling houses are run in the interest of their proprietors, not of their victims. If they let you win it is to involve you or your neighbors in a deeper loss. They are robbers. I know families in this city crushed and hidden in poverty, whose income has gone into these scoundrel's pockets. I could call names if I were permitted to do so. Let no young man be deceived. They are more to be dreaded than the highway robber.

5. Time forbids me considering more than this other evil of gambling. It throws its devotee among the worst classes of men and women—Godless women, they are, who lead in the game. Do they love God, or church, or Christ? Are they the devoted Christians of the community? God pity the young girl who gets under the influence of this class of society women. As for men, the gamblers among them is worse than godless. Here vulgarity, obscenity, profanity and blasphemy befoul the very atmosphere. The man who enters the gambler's

hall bids good-bye to morality and religion. These are some of the terrible evils of gambling.

II. I invite your consideration next to the schools where this vice is taught. Who is responsible for teaching this vice to men, and thus recruiting the army of gamblers?

1. The practice of gambling is encouraged by many questionable methods. It is hard sometimes to say just where legitimate business tends and downright gambling begins, but it is certain that much speculation is a most dangerous form of gambling, such for instance, as the buying and selling of futures. Many a man has gone down in this whirlpool never to rise again. When a man hopes to get money without work he is on the road to ruin. No enduring success is to be had without hard work. Let this great truth be the pole star in the voyage of life, and it will be safe from the shipwreck of speculation.

The man who teaches his boy by example or precept to expect riches without hard work, teaches his boy to be a thief and a gambler. I have thought it through and my conviction is fixed, that every dollar which has not been earned by brain or muscle, or which has not been given by man or by providence, is a dishonest dollar, and he robs society who gets what he does not earn and what is not given him. He teaches a school of gambling who teaches by example or precept that money may be honestly procured in any other way. This is the world's university school of gambling. The vice of gambling can never be eradicated till there is a revolution in business ideals and methods.

2. There are many practices and devices permitted by society which encourage the gambling habit. At almost every cigar stand in this city there is a slot machine, which is teaching boys to gamble. Of course, it is on a small scale, but who ever knew a sin to begin on a large scale? Throwing dice for cigars is seen at the same places. Any Christian who can handle dice without revulsion of feeling when he remembers that this was the way our Lord's garments were gambled over, is strangely hardened in sensibility. It is to me the most repulsive of all forms of gambling, for the reason that it calls up before me the cross and the soldiers gambling at the foot of it.

Then there is the raffle. Sometimes a so-called church permits raffling of various articles to make money. Such a church is a school of gambling and is a libel on Christianity. To buy a chance on a raffle is a very insidious way to begin gambling. All these things are the beginning of a gambler's career.

3. The next school of gambling is taught in the homes of cultivated and sometime Christian people. This is under the guise of harmless amusement. "Hell is populated with the victims of harmless amusements." The playing of cards and other games of pure chance in the home has been the beginning of many a gambler's career. A broken-hearted man not many months ago confessed to me that he had gambled away a large sum of his employers' money, and when asked where he learned to play cards, replied: "When a boy I learned to play at home." Ah! Here stood a man with the penitentiary in the foreground and a card-playing home in the background. What a picture!

I would sooner keep a bottle of whiskey on my sideboard than a deck of cards on my center table, for the one might occasionally find a legitimate use, the other never.

Do you who think games of chance are permissible in your home remember three things:

- (1) If a boy never learns to play games of chance he will never become a gambler.
 - (2) That if he never learns while he is a boy he is not likely to ever learn at all. In childhood is when life-habits are formed.
 - (3) That if he learns at home he may keep it up and go to ruin as a gambler. Familiarity with the weapons of vice are not likely to increase a child's fear for it.
- "Vice is a monster of so frightful a mien
That to be hated needs but to be seen;
But seen too oft, familiar with its face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

Let us teach our children to hate vice and everything that suggests it. The longer I live the more I thank God for my mother and father. No decks of cards was ever in our home. The result is I know nothing of the value of the different cards nor do I know how to count the spots on dice. Who thinks I am the worse for my ignorance? Who would wish me to live childhood over again to learn and run the risk of knowing? Which is the safe side, brother, for your boy? Especially in this city, given over to the sin of gambling, which side, brother, or sister, ought you to take on this question?

4. The last school of gambling is the club. Now, there are good clubs, with wholesome and worthy objects, though it is to be feared that the whole business of club-going is carried to excess and become a fad. Let that be as it may, I am not now speaking of clubs which have worthy aims. There are men's clubs in this city where our boys are ruined by the score. I call no names, it is not necessary. They teach drinking and gambling as fine arts. They are slaughter-pens of young business morals. One club in this city, not the saloon-

men's club either, buys beer by the car load lot. Playing cards in these clubs is extensively practiced. Small stakes are put up. Cigars may be as far as some go. Of course, the gambler must learn the art by degrees. The young man comes here from the country home. He is made believe to get into society he must join one of these clubs. He is ashamed into its evil practices. He learns to drink, gamble and dance. He drops out of church influence. He is away from home influence. A fool can predict his end. What a tragedy!

Then there are the women's clubs whose sole business is playing cards, morning, evening and night. They play for a prize, and they do not call it gambling. They are fine ladies and it would be vulgar to say they gamble. But the truth is they are gamblers. Nothing less is the truth. They are leading to ruin many young men in this city by their example and influence. Sometime ago one of the papers mentioned a little incident to the point here. A mother had returned from her club and was showing her son a beautiful and costly prize she had won, and was greatly elated over it. When she had done, the boy replied: "That's nothing mamma, I won ten dollars in money in a game down town last night." Her countenance fell, and it dawned upon her, that her boy was a gambler, and she had set the example. Full many mothers in this city will one day weep over lost boys whom they have led astray. Fortunately for society, women of this kind usually have but few children.

They do not want children, for they are a bother to them. Their mother instinct has been burned out by their lust for worldly pleasure. Their children are left with an ignorant negro servant while they are off to their club. O God, do give us some real old-fashioned mothers for the sake of the generation to come. Every card playing club in this city is a school of gambling where it is both taught and practiced.

In view of the wide-spread practice of this sin in our city, I appeal for three things:

1. That every Christian who has been decoyed into this habit shall to-day wash his hands and repent and get on the side of God and righteousness. That some of God's children have been led astray, I do not doubt. It is Christlike to do right. You have done wrong, now turn to the right. You have spent much money, wasted much time; compromised your influence, and sapped your own spiritual life. Great has been your sin, but God will forgive, if you repent. Do it now.

2. The second thing I appeal for is that every Christian seek to make popular sentiment against this evil. No vice was ever uprooted by silence, but by agitation. Instead of weekly conniving at a sin that is ruining our young men and women, let each be outspoken against it.

3. My appeal is that the church shall take a firm stand against this evil. If the church does not stand for righteousness who will? Let it be made clear that the church is no home for gamblers. "Withdraw yourself from every brother that walketh disorderly." This is God's commandment. We are here to save men from sins. For the sake of the rising generation, I appeal to all good men to help put down the sin of gambling in Beaumont.—Rx.

Soul-Winning the First Duty.

BY REV. THEO. L. CUYLER, D. D.

What the Lord Jesus Christ put first His ambassadors and servants have no right to make secondary. Our blessed Master came into this sin-cursed world to seek and to save the lost. The ministry of His apostles had almost exclusively this one aim. To convert sinful men and women to Jesus Christ by the aid of Holy Spirit was the master purpose of Paul and all his fellow-missionaries of the cross. The great Reformation of the sixteenth century was far more than a protestation against the errors of Rome; it is a direct bringing of benighted souls to the only Saviour of sinners. The Wesleys and Whitefields, and that intellectual giant, President Edwards, made this their chief business. "My witness is above," said the seraphic Rutherford, "that your heaven would be two heavens to me, and the salvation of you all as two salvations to me. It were my heaven even to spend this life in gathering in some souls to Christ."

He that is wise winneth souls. This is really the chief end of the best preaching. The great commission of every preacher worthy the name is to bring sinful men to repentance and to a living faith in Christ Jesus and obedience to him. Whenever and wherever Christ's ministers have most intensely and unflinchingly kept this grand purpose before them and worked up to it, there have the most powerful and permanent results been reached. The man who strives, with the Spirit's help, to save souls is the man who actually does it; the man who does not attempt this is never likely to accomplish it. He may utter from his pulpit much valuable and quickening thought; he may aid many social reforms; he may say many eloquent and plausible things about elevating humanity, and about developing the latent good that may exist in men, etc., but he does not awaken sinners. He does not draw them to the crucified Jesus as the only sacrifice for sin, and the only name known among