

WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE ?

In the Bible, the supreme repository of moral teaching, there is no specific prohibition of gambling. The reasons are not far to seek : (a) This is a vice to which the ancient Jews were not addicted. Their clear recognition of an over-ruling Providence, and their habitual thrift, promoted by having a stake in the soil, removed them from this particular temptation. Gambling was specially rife in countries where the Goddess of Fortune was worshipped, and practically the only references the Bible makes to this habit are in connection with heathen, such as the Roman soldiers around the cross.

(b) The moral principles inculcated in the Scriptures amply deal with the situation, and show that gambling is not to be approved by the healthy and educated conscience of mankind. Such words as—" The love of money is a root of every kind of evil," " Be ye kind one to another," " If any should not work neither should he eat," " Let him that stole, steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good that he may have to give to him that needeth," " Thou shalt not covet . . . that which is thy neighbour's "—imply that to appeal to chance in order to possess one's self of an unearned gain at the cost of one's neighbour, is inconsistent with the spirit of Christianity.

WHAT IS GAMBLING ?

1. We must *distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate transactions in commerce and on the Stock Exchange*. As society grows more complex, differentiation of function becomes necessary. Special persons must effect the transference of capital from one enterprise or one individual to another. This is the proper function of the Stock Exchange. Moreover, in the effort to win control over nature for the supply of the needs of large populations, the necessary forces of human intelligence and industry must be directed by men of experience, judgment, foresight, splendid audacity. In all such commercial experiments, great risks must be run, certainties must be staked upon uncertainties, present possessions must be hazarded for future gains.

The legitimate speculations of business and experiment are distinguished from illegitimate speculation or gambling by these notes :—

(a) The former demand and develop the highest activities of men's judgment and reason ; the latter tends to eliminate them.